

Memories of Salluit: An Oral History

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ABSTRACT

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Inuit elders hold a wealth of knowledge about the history and formation of their communities in what is now called Nunavik, as many of them have seen these communities from their genesis, and through development, to the present day. As Qallunaat started establishing trading posts or military bases around the early twentieth century (1920s), most settlements were established by the mid century (1950s), before formally inaugurating or legally incorporating towards the end of the century (1980s). My grandmother Alacie Naluiyuk was born on Pujjunaq in 1946, an island that is now a part of the Nunavut Territory. She was born on the land in an iglu and raised in a semi-nomadic manner with her family before eventually settling with other families in the area today called Salluit. She lived in a Western-style wooden house for the first time later in her youth and witnessed the first Western houses being built in her community, and also observed the introduction of governmental public service establishments built and led by Qallunaat. She however also saw the emergence of Inuit-led organizations and initiatives as a response to colonialism and structural violence. Alacie Naluiyuk has seen and experienced firsthand the social and cultural shifts that Inuit have faced since the temporary and permanent settlement of Qallunaat and Ui-Uiit (non-Inuit and/or anglophone and francophone European settlers and their descendants, respectively). In this thesis I draw on Alacie's oral history and lived experiences to explore the ways in which Inuit have navigated and adapted to the intricate colonial cultural and infrastructural fabric that constitutes the community today.

Trigger & content warning

Some content in this thesis refers directly or indirectly to:

- Colonization
- Suicide
- Trauma / intergenerational trauma
- Child welfare system
- The 60s Scoop
- Residential Schools, Federal Day Schools
- Physical/sexual violence
- Child sexual abuse
- Addictions including drug or alcohol abuse and misuse

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview of Alacie Naluiyuk's life

Alacie Kulluajuk Naluiyuk told me about her parents Arnaituq and mother Qillasie, as well as about their parents. Her family genealogy is ingrained in her. She knows the genealogy of her husband, of her community members, and of community members across the Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, and Ungava coasts. Her personable nature has granted her the ability to learn an extensive number of stories about hunters, travellers, storytellers, and the like across Nunavik. And she has developed a keen sense of storytelling herself. It seems that she has a story about each Inuk we cross paths with together, even those we see in pictures, Inuit who have passed on. And she has a sharp wit that captivates any and every passerby who happens to enter into contact with her. Alacie Naluiyuk has learned from a young age to keep up with the times, to be vocal and engaged. She quickly adapted to sedentarization, to the process of reading, writing, working to provide for her family and herself, to voice her opinion and share her knowledge through the local FM radio. She lived through the RCMP dog slaughter and Federal Day School in her youth, and did not understand Qallunaat' ways, language, and culture for some time. Yet, she took all the opportunities available that would allow her experiences to connect with people, to travel before it was common for Inuit to do so and share her stories and knowledge widely in various spaces and contexts.

Her family and she lived in tents during the warmer seasons and in iglus during the colder ones, travelling by qamutik (dog sled) and umiaq (boat), speaking solely in Inuktitut, living in small camps throughout the years while hunting, gathering, and fishing. She was baptized in Kangiqsukallak, where Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Hudson Bay Company (HBC) workers were settled. One of her older brothers had a wife in Salluit, so she and her family went to settle there with her parents and little brother Noah Qoperqualuk, who would later be sent to a Residential School in Manitoba and return to work all his life at Taqramiut Nipingat Incorporated in Salluit. Alacie Naluiyuk remained in Salluit during that time, but attended the

local school that was run by a European priest who had several functions, including offering dental and medical services to Inuit.

From a young age, she lived in an iglu and went to school in the morning after her classmate would ring a bell that would signal that youths had to go to school. One year, in the middle of November, her family and her moved into a wooden house, and she started working at the Hudson Bay Company at the age of 17.

She made a living by working as a concierge, seamstress, artist, caregiver, and other jobs. She saw the last qajaq being built, airstrips and governmental establishments being built on harvesting and hunting grounds. She recalls the stories of the land before any building started to be built upon it. She also saw mining companies and governments gaining interest in owning and extracting land locally and regionally, and subsequently, Inuit mobilizing and advocating for self-determination, more and better rights, as well as grassroots organizations that address local needs.

This thesis aims to present a version of Nunavik's history from an Inuk perspective through exploring the lived experiences of Alacie Kulluajuk Qoperqualuk Naluiyuk's and that of other Inuit who have also lived through the process of forced settlement and sedentarization. It also acts as a platform for Inuit voices, perspectives, and methodologies, and knowledges to be valued, notably in the spheres of research and academia specifically.

1.2 Overview of Nunavik colonial history

According to many Western or Euro-centric encyclopedias, dictionaries, and history books, Nunavik's history begins when it came under the ownership of Charles II of England's cousin, Rupert of the Rhine, first governor of the Hudson Bay Company, thus rendering it Crown land. "Rupert's Land" covered much of what is now known as Canada and was the "exclusive commercial domain" of the HBC from 1670 to 1870 (McIntosh & Smith, 2006, para. 1). By the

end of this 200-year period, the HBC realized early on that it lacked the administrative funding to govern the extensive northern region of Rupert's Land and considered selling the territory to the highest bidder. In colonial history, the independence of the United States was already enacted by then, and while they had the funds to buy Rupert's land, (having already purchased Alaska), the newly confederated country of Canada did not. And because the Crown refused to financially and politically encourage its former colonists turned American separatists (having become newly 'sovereign' from the Crown), John A. MacDonald sent two of his ministers to bargain for the territory to endorse colonist expansionism and claimed it in 1869 for CAD\$1.5 million, making it the "the largest real estate transaction (by land area) in the country's history" (McIntosh & Smith, 2006, para.1). The territory became what was then called the Ungava District in the Northwest Territories, before becoming part of the jurisdiction of Quebec in 1912, or so-called Nouveau-Québec (Rivet, 2021). It is later officially called 'Nunavik,' in 2007, meaning 'Great Land' in our dialect. It is a term coined following the settlement of Inuit in today's Nunavik communities (Rivet, 2021). Meanwhile, none of this history recognizes the presence of the Pre-Dorset (3800 BP to 2500 BP) (Desrosiers & Gendron, 2015), Dorset (ca. 800 to 500 BCE to ca. 1300 to 1400 CE) (Jolicœur, 2015) or Thule (ca. 1200 CE to early contact with Europeans in the region) (Jolicœur, 2006), and subsequent contemporary Inuit peoples (1850 CE to present) on this land (Desrosiers & Gendron, 2015). Most recently, Qallunaat began establishing trading posts and/or military bases throughout the North, including this region, around the early twentieth century (1920s), with fourteen settlements permanently established by the mid-century, before each was eventually incorporated by the 1980s.

It was not until 2007 that the territory today called Nunavik was officially established, with the creation of a self-governing entity representing Inuit in the 14 communities through the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (Makivvik Corporation, 2023). While the Inuit-led and Inuit-serving organizations (Makivvik Corporation, Kativik Regional Government, Kativik

Ilisarniliriniq, Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec/Ilagiisaq, Inuulitsivik, etc.) we know and use today seem to have been around for a very long time, many of the very generation of Inuit who led this movement towards self-government were born and raised in a time where Inuit lived in a semi-nomadic lifestyle in their youth, are still alive today, and have witnessed a plethora of exponential changes that western settler colonial expansion has brought to the North in less than a century.

Salluit, for its part, has a very recent history of its own. In most sources, it starts with the Europeans or Euro-Canadians settling in the region for capitalist opportunities, just shy of a century ago in 1925, with subsequent settlers moving to the region to evangelize and westernize Inuit. Sallumiut (person or people from Salluit) Tumasi Kaitak remembers a time in his youth when “[there] were only three tents in Salluit,” with a total of 24 people living there before settlement became widespread in the area (Ilisituk, 2016, p.62). At the same time that the first residential houses were being built in 1959, Inuit were being subjugated to Qallunaat culture, and started adopting Qallunaat religious, mercantile, and organizational systems, and working towards becoming leaders within these new institutions. The administrative aspect of this process took years, and Salluit was officially and legally a Nunavik community in 1979 (Makivvik Corporation, 2023). Although these are the general facts about the history of Salluit; there are myriad ramifications that come into play when considering the history of the region and of the people who have inhabited it, from an Inuk perspective.

1.3 Self-situating within my research

Following Margaret Kovach’s approach to reintegrating the relational aspect of engaging in and with Indigenous research, throughout this thesis I integrate and foreground my personal perspective and my relationality to my research. In her words: “I am introducing myself purposefully for it is relational work. ... It is a precursory signal ... [that] there will be story, our story, for story is who we are” (Kovach, 2021, p.2). For me, this begins with my name, Christine

Qillasiq Lussier. My last name, Lussier, reveals my franco-quebecer self as a fluent navigator of colonial systems, notably academic ones. My Inuktitut name or ‘middle name’ denotes that I am my grandmother’s mother, my maternal aunt, and countless other ancestors throughout centuries: Qillasiq. As their atiapik (namesake), I have been endowed with their name and characteristics and hope to honour and embody their warmth and facilitation abilities through this current work¹. Furthermore, the main participant is my anaanatsiaq (grandmother), Alacie Kulluajuk Qoperqualuk Naluiyuk, and I am also related, to different degrees, with each of the three interpreters we collaborated with (Elaisa Papigatuk, Kitty Okituk, and Linda Kaitak). We refer to each other according to our namesakes’ relations. Through each interaction we perpetuate and maintain the mutual accountability of our kinship ties (Flaherty, 2013; Otak, 2014). I am an Inuk-Quebecer graduate student who has had the privilege of pursuing my studies in Tio’tià:ke (Montreal) on Haudenosaunee territory, far south from my family in the northernmost region of the province of Quebec. My studies in anthropology rendered clear the fact that positionality impacts how Indigenous issues, histories, and realities are discussed. I enrolled in First Peoples courses and often noticed the lack of Inuit-specific written sources, which I have come to understand, through the barriers I noticed my Inuit peers facing once they attended postsecondary education. The structural reasons for this lack of Inuit representation in academia and research will be addressed within this thesis. Although I have left the community with my family at a very young age towards Tio’tià:ke/Montreal, I wanted to use my positionality

¹ Inuit have intricate naming systems which hold significant and complex meaning beyond sharing the same name and/or surname. Traditionally, names were genderless and were passed on intergenerationally to maintain and perpetuate systems of mutual accountability and responsibility, endowing a newborn with its saunik’s characteristics, skills, and personality traits. Because my great-grandmother’s name was Qillasiq, I call my grandmother Alacie “daughter of mine,” while she calls me “mother of mine,” and so on. Additionally, because my maternal aunt’s name was also Qillasiq, I call my cousins “daughter/son of mine,” regardless of age, to honour my relation to my saunik. My namesake(s) therefore determines how I address my relationships. It should be noted that Inuit names were traditionally solely phonetic, generating a range of variations in spellings to names. And while it is still a standard practice in the Arctic for newborns to have a saunik, the combination of religious influence and governmental policies such as ujamiit (Inuit disc numbers) discouraged Inuit to keep Inuktitut names, or more traditional names. For more information on ujamiit, see Obed (2021), Mackay (2023), Osborne (2023), and Filice (2016).

as a student and researcher to widen the pool of Inuit-centric and Inuit-authored sources by presenting, through my research, a focus on Inuktitut, Inuit perspectives, and oral history sources, which better align with Inuit ways of knowing and doing. As a family and community member, my research is personal and participatory in nature, as I trace the steps of those who have experienced the first years of the formation of what was first called Sugluk but is now called Salluit through my own family history. A year prior to the start of my degree, personal circumstances led my grandmother Alacie Naluiyuk to share her upbringing with me in detail, describing many aspects of her life which I had never known before, which led to her becoming the key participant in my research.

1.4 Summary statement of my research question

In this research-creation master's thesis, I explore my grandmother Alacie Naluiyuk's life history and illustrate this through a short film to explore the history of Salluit. I base my research in the conceptual framework of relationality, accountability, and Indigenous research processes. I first detail how I implement more broadly Indigenous frameworks into my Inuit-specific topic. I then discuss the research-creation aspect of my project, before offering a detailed account of what I have learned through the conversations held with Alacie Naluiyuk and our interpreters in November of 2022. Weaved throughout this written work, I put Alacie Naluiyuk's words in conversation with other Inuit-created written and audio-visual works. By doing this, I hope to make space for emerging and future Inuit researchers and other Indigenous students to see themselves represented in research and academia, while also demonstrating that Inuit are the most suited and appropriate people to speak on their own histories, realities, and issues.

1.5 Summary review of the relevant literature

As previously mentioned, a vast and innumerable volume of literature about Inuit has been produced by non-Inuit. For over a century on Turtle Island, non-Inuit created narratives

about 'exotic' or 'primitive' Inuit, such as those advanced in the movie *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty, 1922), and the book *Agaguk* (Thériault, 1958), have coloured the dominant southern Canadian – and global – imaginary of who Inuit are and what life in the North is like. These problematic settler narratives construct bodies and imaginaries about Inuit, in ways that make sense to those who create them (Steckley, 2007). In this way, settlers not only erase Inuit ontologies, histories, and realities, but graft and impose their own biased ideas about who Inuit were and are, and historically do not acknowledge or reflect the complex realities of Inuit according to their historical, geographical, socio-cultural contexts. Today, Inuit are starting to be heard and seen expressing and communicating Inuit issues and realities on their own terms.

Consider, for example, just some of the range of works across different mediums which centre Inuit voices and perspectives, and which constitutes the basis from which I build upon. Us Inuit are reclaiming our discourses through film (Kunuk, 2001; Innuksuk, 2022; Asinnajaq, 2017; Qilavvaq, 2012), documentary (Isaac, 2003; Arnaquq-Baril, 2016; Weetaluktuk, 2009, Ammaaq, 2015; Gjerstad, O. & Lajoie, B., 2015), literature, (Patsauq, 2011; Nappaaluk, 1984; Freeman & Dunning, 1978; Tagaq, 2019), scholarship (Price, 2007; Igloliorte, 2011, 2013, 2017; Pfeifer, 2018), activism (Watt-Cloutier, 2015; Nungak, 2017; Illauq, 2021), and in a multitude of other disciplines, professions, and circles relating to Inuit issues, perspectives, and epistemologies. As previously mentioned, the pool of academic and creative resources available to learn about Inuit issues that have been created by Inuit and for Inuit is remarkably limited yet growing. Therefore, in this thesis I draw from an interdisciplinary pool of Inuit knowledges gleaned from across the arts and social sciences, including those listed above.

Furthermore, several books have endeavoured to also compile, document, record, and discuss Inuit oral histories, especially the oral histories of Elders, and in this thesis, I draw on these texts and also aspire to contribute to this growing body of research. This work is quite prominent in Nunavut, featuring oral history texts such as *Uqaluraît* (Bennett, Rowley &

Evaloardjuk, 2018), *Atiqput* (Payne et al., 2022), *Ukkusiksalik* (Pelly, D. F., 2016), *The Ancestors Are Happy* (Pelly, D. F., 2021), and *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (Karetak et al., 2017). This thesis aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in this field for Nunavik, and specifically Salluit; here, there exists one key resource for the region upon which I have greatly relied. Putulik Ilisituk's 2016 book *Inutuinnauvugut = We Are Inuit: Life Stories of the People of Salluit* is the main source I draw from to frame how I have approached my Inuit oral history project in the way that it is Inuk-centric and accessible in Inuktitut syllabics, roman orthography, and English. I am inspired by how it promotes Inuit knowledge systems, Inuit-run organizations, and Inuit epistemologies; all elements which I hope to implement within my own project. I also demonstrate close parallels between Alacie Naluiyuk's stories and that of the ones of the three Inuit women in Nancy Wachowich's 1999 book *Saqiyuq*, an intergenerational anthology based in Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet), Nunavut, which also details the socio-cultural impacts of colonization through an Inuk lens. Wachowich, an anthropologist, provides a platform for the three generations of Inuit women to describe their own impressions and experiences related to the impacts of Qallunaat-Inuit contact, much in the same way Alacie Naluiyuk has shared her own with me. Moreover, Taamusi Qumaq's book *Je Veux que les Inuit Soient Libres à Nouveau* (2010) translated to French by anthropologist Bernard Saladin d'Anglure is also cited frequently in my work, as it also echoes with many of the topics and lived experiences described by Alacie Naluiyuk. Qumaq provides a first-person oral history of life in another Nunavik community, Inukjuak, during a time of transition. These juxtaposed accounts paint a cohesive portrait of a shared, intersecting and widespread experience of the collectively lived impacts of forced settlement and its resulting socio-cultural shifts in their respective regions. Indeed, it applies what Stó:lō scholar Jo-Ann Archibald's book *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008) elaborates on in terms of the role of Indigenous storytelling and its role in making meaning out of experiences and knowledge, whether the narratives are traditional, historical, or contemporary. Her coining of the term 'storywork' may become a significant way to

make sense of how Inuit telling their stories can become valuable sources to think about producing knowledge for community as well as for future Inuit students, especially given that our culture for millennia has been primarily based in oral history (Archibald, 2008).

Section 2: Methodology

Part of the epistemological framework that I use to uncover the history of Salluit through an Inuk lens is to privilege the use of oral history to honour and maintain millennia-old culturally grounded approaches to Inuit knowledge production and transfer. Embedded in this methodology is the firm and evidence-based belief that Inuit (and specifically Inuit elders) themselves have been, and still are the authority figures of Inuit knowledge by the passing of knowledge orally through generations. Therefore, while the APA 7th edition style guide indicates that I should cite my field notes from my interviews as 'personal communications' with Alacie Naluiyuk, I instead cite each citation as a 'formal interview'. Ngāti Porou scholar Nēpia Mahuika endorses Monty Soutar's view, contending that in the context of Indigenous research using oral history methods, "the oral records are considered primary sources, while written documents are viewed as secondary evidence" (Mahuika, 2019, p.64). Interviews in the scope of my thesis, then, hold more weight than mere exchanges, informal interviews, or personal communications.

I share Jo-Ann Archibald's imperative to learn about Indigenous stories and to translate these into educational content, especially for Indigenous peoples, and to give back to community. In her words: "I coined the term "storywork" because I needed a term that signified that our stories and storytelling were to be taken seriously" (Archibald, 2008, p.3). The legacy of the biased and prejudiced academic texts about Indigenous peoples by Western European and Euro-Canadian anthropologists and ethnologists taint the credibility of accounts of Indigenous peoples by colonial institutions. Mahuika similarly challenges this notion by providing a range of interesting discussions about the process of reclaiming oral history, as it has always been an

inherently Indigenous method of transmitting and processing knowledge. For instance, part of this reclaiming process includes differentiating the term 'oral history' and 'oral tradition,' and consciously using the former denomination. He writes:

Somewhere in the colonizing process indigenous oral histories were claimed by invading scholars and then remade and named as oral traditions. In this colonizing of indigenous knowledge, the native oral past was stripped from its history and repositioned as the unreliable ramblings of suspicious savages. This displacement reduced indigenous precolonial and preliterate experiences to the realms of "prehistory," essentially removing from native people the power to assert their own oral accounts as legitimate histories. Claiming indigenous oral history within this new intellectual framework where oral tradition and oral history diverged had a severe impact for native peoples. (Mahuika, 2019, p.17)

Oral history thus "became a set of sources and practices defined not by native peoples, but by their colonizers" (Mahuika, 2019, p.17). Indigenous peoples, including Inuit, have always used oral history as a way of passing knowledge, often in story form, with an imperative to teach and instill cultural values and morals. Indigenous epistemologies are rooted and enshrined in the process of oral history. It defines language, world views, politics, kinship and identity, not solely myths, legends, and anecdotes. Mahuika discusses the power dynamics inherent in the discredited use of oral history by Indigenous peoples, versus the 'scientific and objective' way it is corroborated by western peoples, notably in research and academia. There are intersectional power relations at play when considering who has historically had platforms to talk about Indigenous issues, histories, and realities. Settlers have spoken on the behalf of Indigenous people, and have also represented them in inaccurate, and decontextualized ways. This applies to many spheres, including academia. The historical discrediting and invalidating of Indigenous peoples' knowledge systems, and by extension, the potential for the implementation of their

methodologies, among other aspects of research, still today result in Indigenous peoples having to justify how and why they want to carry out their research. I make it a point to reclaim oral history as a methodology that is culturally grounded, in a way that gives Alacie Naluiyuk the authority to be considered an expert on the matter at hand. I also select other works of oral history to parallel and corroborate Alacie Naluiyuk's knowledge, therefore recalibrating the sway of Indigenous peoples' voices and lived experiences in the realm of knowledge production.

Included in the oral history literature of this thesis mentioned above are works that resonate with Alacie Naluiyuk's experiences, and of Inuit across Inuit Nunangat. I closely examine personal accounts of other Inuit who have grown up on the land, and who have transitioned to a sedentary lifestyle, and who share how this has intimately shaped their everyday lives, families, and communities, similarly to my grandmother. Across many sources that I have researched, it has widely been documented that Inuit Elders want to record their experiences to discuss the legacies of colonialism. They do this so that youth and emerging scholars alike can understand how these legacies continue to shape the state of our communities today. In telling their stories, our Elders are calling to have more adapted and culturally relevant content that reflects their own histories so that history is learned and so that new, Inuit-led changes can be implemented. This is echoed by one of the participants in the aforementioned 1999 book *Saqiyuq*, for example, in which Rhoda Kaukjak Kastak, an Inuk woman from Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) expresses her desire "to see Inuit texts, including her own family's stories, replace the Euro-Canadian school texts which she was taught as a child" (Wachowich, 1999, p.152). Such accounts give me the impetus to conduct meaningful research that honours Inuit experiences, and that responds to the needs that are communicated widely by community members. Oral history, Inuktitut, and Inuit-centric accounts are therefore crucial to the delivery of my research-creation project, as it will allow community members to better relate

to how I understand and present my research questions and outcomes and contribute to the existing literature available.

The ways in which I hope to make my research accessible and relevant to Salluit is to centre my research around Alacie Naluiyuk's and Sallumiut's first language- Inuktitut. While my personal linguistic limitations do not allow me to compose my thesis in Inuktitut, I do feel strongly that in the long-term, we should be collectively working towards building enough capacity in academia to allow for theses to be written in Inuktitut, so that Inuit may have their own research questions explored, answered, and presented in ways that are useful to them in the future. Beyond the written aspect of my thesis, which will mainly be accessible to those familiar with scholarly texts, the aim of creating a short film in Inuktitut is to allow space for my community members to also reflect and possibly initiate conversation about topics relevant to Sallumiut that are seldom addressed directly due to the heavy load of intergenerational trauma. This mixed oral history, Inuktitut-inclusive, and film-based approach of dissemination could also prompt youths to also connect with their elders. Through this inclusive approach to research, I hope to engage in what Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson calls *relational accountability*—the responsibility of maintaining and developing good relations with our participants and kin, which one should emulate through one's research process (Wilson, 2008). Through my own research process, I seek to allow a platform for strong voices that have been historically silenced, dismissed, and erased through historical and ongoing racism and colonialism. In this work I foreground Inuit voices as the experts on the subject of Inuit histories and issues. Wilson argues: "We as Indigenous scholars who wish to participate in [Indigenous research] must begin with an active and scholarly recognition of who our philosophers and prophets are in our own communities. These are [...] the keepers and [...] teachers of our epistemologies" (Wilson, 2008, p.119). I seek to shift the colonial preconceived idea that Inuit have lost their languages and cultures, and have a genetic or inherent predisposition for

addiction, poverty, and/or laziness. Rather, I expose the structural issues that Inuit are forced to grapple with that they have inherited from a colonial system that has historically oppressed them, and which continues to do so in many ways today. Keeping Wilson's relational accountability in mind, my goal through this research is to promote the perspectives of people who have rich lived experiences regarding the transition from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to one that has been forcefully instilled to a sedentary one by the federal and provincial governments and to incorporate Inuktitut to the best of my ability. By doing this, I value and honour Inuit epistemologies and self-representation in academia. I therefore have a "vested interest in the integrity of the methodology (respectful) and the usefulness of the results if they are to be of any use in the Indigenous community (reciprocity)" (Wilson, 2008, p.77). Indeed, I use an oral history approach to credit millennia-old ways of transferring knowledge and hope to make my research accessible through an artistic medium to be returned to the community of Salluit, in addition to my written research.

A word should be said about the methods used to promote Inuktitut despite my current lack of fluency. While I am an Inuk, I have not had the opportunity to develop and maintain my ability to speak Inuktitut. And while I fully acknowledge and embrace both my heritages and cultures, I relate to the need to reflect on the question of 'sharing authority' within the parameters of identity, which is a sentiment shared by Canadian-Ukrainian Stacey Zembrzycki, who also conducted research with her Baba (grandmother) to discuss the history of their urban cultural milieu zeitgeist. She remarks that she felt like a "community insider and an outsider, maintaining not only a subjective connection to it through [her grandmother], but also a real distance from it because [she] had not participated in it" (Zembrzycki, 2009, p.223). Not having my language to fully understand and accommodate my grandmother has led me, like Zembrzycki, to hire interpreters. This intentional attention to centre my work around Inuktitut, despite my limitations in that regard, is motivated by my intended audience for the delivery of

this work. I am creating this research-creation master's thesis primarily for and with the community of Salluit, not solely for the university. Like Zembrzycki, I also found more ease in the notion that when it comes to collecting and documenting life histories through oral histories, there is "no need to worry about breaking rules because there are none" (Zembrzycki, 2009, p.227). It is essential that I consider the nuances about how to best use my skills and positionality to serve the purpose at hand, which is to honour my community's language, lived experiences, and ways of doing best suited to communicate my findings. This insider-outsider dynamic resonates with John U. Ogbu's works that explore some of the many ways that dual cultural identities are navigated and enacted in a dominantly White society by those who belong to both dominant and minority cultural identities (Ogbu, 1978; 1998; 2004). This insider-outsider perspective also echoes the works of American academic Patricia Hill Collins, who coined the term and concept of the "insider within," which looks at the intersectional ways that identity markers, including race and gender, impact how we experience the world (Andersen & Hills Collins, 2004; Hills Collins, 1990).

To undertake this research-creation master's thesis, I borrowed equipment from the Concordia University Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling which allowed me to record conversations with Alacie Naluiyuk and our interpreters, as well as to film different parts of the town. I then worked with Félix Nault-Laberge, a Tio'tià:ke-based motion designer, who helped me create the short film. Conversations with my participant and interpreters occurred over four consecutive days at the Centre d'Études Nordiques (CEN) in the Northern Village of Salluit. On the first day, we practiced our roles as participant, interpreter, and researcher/ filmmaker by going over the information and consent form where I explained the motivation, goals, and expected outcomes of my research. Each day, I would drive over to my grandmother's house down by the bay to pick her up with the truck I rented from the CEN, and then we would go pick up our interpreter, and I would cook brunch and prepare snacks before we sat down. Although I

had prepared questions, Alacie Naluiyuk, being a seasoned storyteller, would sit down on the couch facing the living room window which overlooked part of the community, and would start talking about a topic she had in mind.

Section 3: Summary of my findings

In this section of my thesis, I examine and highlight my discussions with Alacie Naluiyuk, and explain how her stories relate to many other Inuit, thus creating a pastiche of lived experiences that paint a picture of the colonial history of Nunavik, and in many ways, that of many places in Inuit Nunangat (the four Inuit regions of what is now called Canada). By retracing the steps of my grandmother in her personal life journey, I learned about the macro-level structures and power dynamics at play when considering how Qallunaat have obstructively transformed Inuit realities and cultures as they settled in the Nunavik region and governed from afar. I thus offer a perspective on the colonial history of Nunavik which demonstrates how assimilatory governmental policies have directly impacted the social changes that Sallumiut have experienced. Through hearing and researching the stories of some of those who have lived through forced settlement and assimilation, I uncover stories which beg to reformulate colonial narratives and discourses associated with these socio-cultural shifts. I explore how these Inuit elders and community members have experienced the effects of these assimilatory policies, and attribute accountability on the systems that have initiated and that perpetuate the oppression experienced by Inuit through time in Nunavik, and beyond. Their languages, cultures, and ways of life have not been lost. They have been made to feel ashamed of their identities and cultures by government and church officials, who prohibited Inuit from speaking their languages, singing their songs, passing down their tattoos, stories, and intergenerational belief systems, and who (through proselytization, residential schools, and other means) indoctrinated Inuit into western culture and language, leading Inuit to adopt the church and state's intolerant views towards Inuit spirituality, sexuality and other pre-contact lifeways. In this

thesis and through my research-creation short film, I present first-person accounts which allow space for better understanding our histories, to spark conversation about ways to reclaim our own narratives and identities, to discourage lateral violence and to foster lateral empowerment, to create safe spaces to explore how to collectively heal and reconnect on our own terms.

In this master's thesis in Inuit oral history, first I "disentangle and reweave the truth of our oral histories and traditions" (Mahuika, 2019, p.14), and "speak back to "that bit of cognitive imperialism" in ourselves and beyond" (Simpson, 2017, p.72). I consider how early relations between Qallunaat/Ui-Uiit and Inuit generated power dynamics wherein the former subjugated by dehumanizing, exploiting, and profiting off the labour of the latter. I then look at how this unequal footing generates little to no equitable opportunity for Inuit to progress in the labour market which advantages Qallunaat, but not Inuit, especially in the long term across the Arctic. Following this, I explore how government-mandated widespread dog slaughters in Salluit in particular, and the Arctic in general, caused severe collective and cultural trauma, which generated the forced dependence of Inuit on newly established Western public systems. Here, I highlight the direct link between the RCMP dog slaughters and the emergence of skyrocketing rates of abuse and suicide in Nunavik, especially among Inuit men. Following this, I examine how the instilled Western public systems, notably the Department of Youth Protection and Social Services in Nunavik operate on the principles of displacement of Inuit bodies, usually towards the south. Because communities do not currently have the funding possible to address large-scale structural and infrastructural gaps which allow and perpetuate unfavourable living conditions, Inuit are often relocated towards southern urban centres to access adequate public services. The foster care system in Nunavik often removes Inuit youths from their families and communities, which generates a range of personal, social, cultural and interpersonal issues. I analyze how this disconnection paralyzes, aggravates, and adds to existing challenges in communities, which, as previously mentioned, are already grappling with structural violence

from forced sedentarization and social issues from assimilatory policies. Finally, I assess some of the important work of Inuit-led organizations and initiatives that have emerged and that constitute the basis from which we should develop further.

By promoting our voices, I, and other Indigenous peoples help correct “preconceived notions of the Arctic and Inuit that many people hold” about “a culture rich in traditional wisdom, collective spirit and technological and artistic skill” (Watt-Cloutier, 2015, p.xxi). And while some Inuit are reluctant to share their stories, there is a will to do so, so that “younger people will learn” (Wachowich, 1999, p.36). With this thesis, I hope Inuit emerging and future students and community members see themselves represented, and likewise promote the use of Inuktitut and Inuit epistemologies in academia, to correct the previously held western conception that Qallunaat are the experts on Inuit histories, experiences, realities, and issues.

The short film, which constitutes the research-creation portion of my project, is an edited version of the subjects and themes explored within this thesis. While the film is largely in Inuktitut, I weave some quotes from Alacie Naluiyuk with a voiceover to contextualize what she is discussing and add visuals of Salluit to make linkages between the stories she tells and the people and places these stories are about. The short film intends to reverse narratives about culture and language loss, and to make direct links between governmental policies that have organized and dictated daily life for Inuit in Salluit, Nunavik, and across Inuit Nunangat. Through this short film and thesis, I demonstrate how the colonial attempt at our complete societal westernization continues to impact the socio-cultural composition of Inuit identity, health, and governance today. Above all, this short film and this thesis are meant to pay homage to those who have come before us and who have acted in the best interest of those to come, and who have shared their knowledge and stories vulnerably, demonstrating remarkable strength and resilience. Although I convey the many ways that Qallunaat institutions and governments have and continue to oppress Inuit since settlement, it is imperative that I also emphasize the many

ways that Inuit have demonstrated strength and resilience. Alacie Naluiyuk describes how community members have gathered and mobilized to create institutions that reflect their needs in reaction to the advent of western culture, and to conserve their languages and ways of doing. The final section of this thesis reveals how Inuit-led organizations and initiatives are on the rise, and highlights movements that are emerging to promote Inuit healing, wellness, and empowerment. It is my hope that an increasing number of publications focus on Inuit perspectives on such uplifting initiatives, now that Inuit attend postsecondary education at higher rates than ever.

3.1 Pre-contact

In this section, my grandmother shares some of what she remembers about the general principles and values that her family and other Inuit adhered to daily during their semi-nomadic lifestyle across the Hudson Strait region. Alacie Naluiyuk's earliest memories are from her life living with her parents and siblings on the land in camps, before there were any villages. Contact with Qallunaat merchants was periodic as families and groups followed the seasons and migration of animals and lived off the land. One of the key values that structured social interactions and everyday life on the land was the notion of helping and supporting each other. During our third conversation, Alacie explains, through the words of my aunt Linda Kaitak:

When [I] started to remember, [Inuit] [would] help each other. People [helped] each other, and [...] they didn't know anything else. And felt like they were the only living people. Like, there [was] nobody else. But today they have police, social service, youth protection; they didn't know about that (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 16, 2022).

This statement points to the independence and sovereignty that Inuit held over their lives and affairs, outside the scope of Western mores, norms, values, and expectations. Inuit have

developed intricate and sophisticated ties with the land and with their environments which directly impact language, belief, study and experimentation, justice, accountability, education, social, and governance systems. There are many accounts shared by Inuit that can help illustrate what this could mean and look like, in a pre-contact context.

While some Inuit write about governance structures in academic terms, some document traditional solidary values through personal oral histories, and others detail storytelling in literary terms. Inuit are also seen using digital media to (re)tell and (re)make Inuit stories that adapt and appeal to their contemporary mediums. For instance, Puvinirtumiut Lisa Qiluqqi Koperqualuk writes about traditional leadership and social organization in her book *Traditions Relating to Customary Law in Nunavik* (2015) which explores through archives and oral histories of Inuit elders, the governance systems and laws which formed everyday life for our semi-nomadic ancestors. She discusses the terminologies related to leadership roles in various camps. She talks about the “angajuqqaq, or sometimes [called] tuqqagaq: the one people went to, to give important news and for advice, like the isumataq” (Koperqualuk, 2015, p.449). Inuit had their own terms and ways of organizing themselves to address emerging issues daily, and defined their leaders based on their facilitation abilities, in addition to having community-wide consensus-based consultations to determine courses of action based on local situations. Inuit lived in smaller-scale groups, which allowed each group to collectively decide, with the guidance of elders and leaders who were more knowledgeable about the traditions, prohibitions, customary laws to achieve balance and social harmony in the group (Koperqualuk, 2015).

Another example of literary modes of recording and passing on Inuit knowledge about Inuit contemporary realities is Taamusi Qumaq’s autobiographical book *Je Veux que les Inuit Soient Libres à Nouveau* written by Bernard Saladin d’Anglure, an oral history based on his lived experiences (Qumaq, 2010). This elder from the area of what is now known as Puvirnituk who was born one generation before Alacie Naluiyuk records some of the ways in which

governance was addressed by people in his camp. He says that some group members who were wise with experience were highly esteemed in terms of decisions, and so, in a way, each group of Inuit would have their own governance system (Qumaq, 2010). Furthermore, all accounts shared by Inuit elders, from books, oral histories, archives, and legends, point to the vital importance of food sharing, notably in times of hardship. Taamusi Qumaq recalls how commonplace food sharing was, notably during times of food scarcity, which could mean the difference between life and death. He states: “La loi [!]nuit, que nous tenions de nos ancêtres, était de nous aider les uns les autres” (Qumaq, 2010, p.54).

This fundamental reliance on solidarity is enshrined in unwritten laws, and in cautionary tales across Inuit myths and legends, which continue to be told by Inuit in new forms, such as in the forms of children’s books and short films. Such widely known stories warn against ostracizing orphans such as the story of Kaukjajuq (Lewis & Smith, 2011), about the importance of maintaining social harmony through avoiding revenge as seen in the Lumaajuuq story (Arnaquq-Baril, 2010; Nappaaluk, 1984), as well as myriad other tales. Countless other traditional mythical figures and stories have been passed down for millennia, such as Qalupaliit (Lewis & Smith, 2011), tunnituaqruk, tuniit/tuurngait and small people, shapeshifters, etc. (Nungak et al., 2000). Sometimes, we have the opportunity to access fuller descriptions of these figures, what they represent and warn against. For instance, some specifically acted as devices for how Inuit maintained accountability and healthy dynamics through acknowledging imbalances in the soul or in the group to maintain personal wellbeing and social harmony. Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk discusses this in the most recent edition of her book Sanaaq, which fictionalizes traditional relationships with the spirit world, such as nuliarsaq/uirsaq figures which are meant to discourage isolation and strengthen social bonds in times of personal despondency (Nappaaluk, 2014). The literary form has been an effective way to maintain oral histories in contemporary mediums and settings.

In film, most of Zacharias Kunuk's films also contain such figures and legends tied to Inuit ontologies. Inuit had incredibly rich universes borne from their existences directly on the land, and carried systems of belief and mechanisms of social regulation that were specifically adapted to their way of life. Thousands of Inuit stories, today deemed as traditional stories, have always been contemporary for those who told and heard them. Mahuika articulates this idea once more in his book *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition* (2019). He writes: "oral history for indigenous peoples was always seen to be recurring in the present, thus traditions were not viewed as something beyond the lifetime of a person, but inextricably connected to their contemporary worlds" (Mahuika, 2019, p.41). A plethora of stories and experiences were recorded orally and passed down to entertain, teach, warn, and advocate for certain behaviours and values. Social mores and perceptions related to morality, identity, gender, sexual preferences were also experienced and navigated differently before contact, and some have been stigmatized with the arrival of Qallunaat and their own biases and judgements. Myriad cultural activities and conceptions passed down for millennia that were practiced and embodied by our ancestors have been demonized and prohibited for two generations. Today, younger generations are having conversations, starting revitalization movements, and advocating for a return to normalizing some of these aspects. For instance, some explore the trajectory of the banning, silencing, loss, and revitalization of cultural activities that were indigestible by Qallunaat, such as throat singing, tattooing (Arnaquq-Baril, 2011; Johnston, 2017), plural marriages (Kunuk 2001, Arnaquq-Baril 2006), arranged marriages (Wachowich, 1999), nonbinary sexualities and identities (Woods & Yerxa, 2016; Uhttuvak, 2001), among countless other cultural phenomena. The push towards destigmatizing these topics and reframing them according to Inuit epistemologies, by attempting to rid these from the weight of colonial prejudice and intolerance that has been internalized and perpetuated for decades. Inuit societies and cultures have developed complex organizational and social structures and laws in a continuum stretching for centuries. In this thesis, I depict how the severing of Inuit from their

cultures by Western organizational entities has disrupted longstanding connections and relationships with land and each other. Being self-reliant and sustainable in harsh climates required Inuit to be interdependent among groups living together through daily tasks while collectively maintaining social harmony, consensus-model decision making, relying on the land, and passing on knowledge and stories. Today, Inuit live according to new societal mores, values, and taboos. With increasing interest in the north for economic, religious, political, extractive purposes, Qallunaat would in the soon frequent the north around and attach their values and morals to the experiences of Inuit, notably in the 30s when missionaries started settling in Salluit (Makivvik Corporation, 2023).

3.2 Early Qallunaat-Inuit relations

At the time of Alacie Naluiyuk's upbringing in the 1960's, the French merchant company Revillon Frères was settled across the Arctic. And although the Hudson Bay Company was already gaining in popularity as a preferred site for exchanging kamiks (skin boots), sealskin, and fox furs in exchange for "tobacco, or ingredients to make bannock such as flour, lard, and baking powder [and even] fabric for clothing" (Ilisituk, 2016, p.158), and hunting equipment such as guns and ammunition (Wachowich, 1999), visits to these outposts remained transient. After being born on the land, in her family's camp, Alacie and her family moved around a lot, and went to outposts from time to time. Through the words of our interpreter Elaisa Papigatuk, Alacie Naluiyuk recalls: "After living in Ivujivik, [Alacie and her family] moved to Kangiqsukallak. There were RCMP and Hudson Bay Company people working there; white people, and she got baptized over there" (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 12, 2022, 02:48). With more Qallunaat presence on the territory, it added new paths and modes of sustaining their living, while allowing western influence to spread through the way of religion. Priests started establishing long-term presence in communities to offer different services, such as teaching the reading and writing of Inuktitut as well as other basic activities. In one of the oral history

archives of the Avataq Cultural Institute, as part of the Salluit Community History Project Collection, Alacie Naluiyuk shared one story of the beginnings of education in the region. She shares: “My first class was in Inuktitut; we were living in Ivujivik when school started. I was about 5 - 7 years of age. We had an audience when we were going to school. The locals and parents were invited to watch us children trying to learn” (A. Naluiyuk, Avataq Cultural Institute, July 26, 2005). Early experiences of integrating western education into the lives of Inuit children seem to have had some level of involvement with the parents and community members, and to be an experience that is additive to the culture, rather than prohibitive or oppressive. There seems to be nuances to the experiences of Qallunaat-delivered education programming in the initial stage of its integration in everyday life. Additionally, Alacie recounts moments when she had been sick with tuberculosis, and had received medical treatments through vaccinations and pills, or had been aware of local priests assisting in difficult births, giving dentistry services, and so on (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 12, 2022; November 15, 2022). However, not all Qallunaat in the north had the same level of involvement or rapport with Inuit. Some power dynamics between Qallunaat and Inuit could be rather hostile and transactional. For, besides proselytism, the purpose of some Qallunaat in the Arctic was to exploit Inuit hunting labour for profit. Inuit hunted animals and sold the pelts in exchange for a few cents or for several food items, while these same pelts sold for handsome amounts as luxury goods in Europe. Sallumiut Annie Qavavauq recalls how Inuit hunted animals and sold the pelts in exchange for a large square metal token (Ilisituk, 2016), a currency item conceived by the HBC itself specifically for Arctic fox pelts and benefited from and “maintained a profitable trade emphasizing fancy fur” as they were auctioned to British merchants (Animals of the Fur Trade, n.d.). Meanwhile, these square tokens could not afford what the other “round metal” HBC currency units could afford, that is, “flour, rice, beans, oatmeal, lard, baking powder, sugar, and salt,” and in fact, Inuit “never held actual cash in [their] hands,” as only after “the Qallunaat had arrived up north, [they] started seeing paper money” (Ilisituk, 2016, p.158). This passage demonstrates the undervaluing of

Inuit labour in terms of remuneration, comparatively to the wealth that the exchanged goods generates as it transitions towards European hands. Taamusi Qumaq associates his early memories of the HBC with arrogant and dismissive attitudes from one of the first clerks in his region. He recounts one such story about preventable hardships, such as Inuit dying from famines while food items would mold in the stores due to the lack of wildlife on the territory at a certain time, rendering it impossible for Inuit to hunt or to buy food items (Qumaq, 2010). In Salluit, one community member shared his impression about how one early HBC clerk who had made a lot of money in the north, who deemed “residents of the entire Arctic as inferior” despite spending many years working alongside Inuit for most of his career (Ilisituk, 2016, p.178). Others remember missed opportunities for HBC clerks to help Inuit by wasting food and shelter, which reinforces the idea that clerks were merely intermediaries strictly present for making money, while allotting no consideration to building meaningful relationships or to support Inuit even when it was possible (Ilisituk 2016). What’s more, Qumaq also remembers shortages of food in the region of Puvirnituk, where only the Inuit who were the best at sculpting soapstone could afford to buy items at the store to eat, in addition to the fact that hunters who would bring more fox furs would be better treated than ones who brought less (Qumaq, 2010). These early interactions between Inuit and Qallunaat illustrate the unequal power dynamics inherent in the early settlements economically and epistemologically especially. Inuit are shown not to be treated as equals, but as not-yet naturalized westernized citizens under Crown or Canadian rule.

3.3 Forced or coercive sedentarization

At the time of Alacie Naluiyuk’s upbringing, incentivization of settlement was occurring across the Arctic. Several sources denounce the insidious and sometimes less subtle ways in which family allowances, paired with the guise of the necessity for youths to attend school, were used to lure Inuit into permanent settlements. Some governmental and religious agents would

persuade Inuit that allowances, along with a sedentary lifestyle, would place some vulnerable Inuit (elders, handicapped people, families, etc.) in an advantageous position as they would be well taken care of by receiving financial support (Kunuk, 2019; Nappaaluk, 1984; Wachowich, 1999). This economic incentive/threat, devoid of any form of consultation process, is compellingly depicted in Zacharias Kunuk's 2019 film *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk*. In the short film, a European government agent and his Inuk interpreter suddenly appears on the ice one day in 1961 near Kapuivik, north Baffin Island, where Piugattuk's nomadic Inuit band live and hunt by dog team. The group is subtly yet forcefully instructed to move to permanent settlements, have assigned E-number discs under 'Canadian law' for their children to attend school, and eventually make money to buy things. The group of Inuit express their disagreement, and the Inuk leader of the group, insulted and annoyed, disconcertedly asks the government agent: "When they get money, what do they use it for? What is money to us?" (Kunuk, 2019, 40:50). The question is rhetorical. The band resists throughout the movie and as tension builds, there is clear indication that the group hold no interest in relinquishing their way of life for one that appears arbitrarily and incongruous with their interests or values. At the end of the movie, Noah Piugattuk and his wife are no longer surrounded by their kin. He eats un nourishing food while exuding a sense of defeat and a lack of fulfillment. Indoctrination into western ways of living through sedentarization has paralyzed Inuit as their social and cultural aspirations have shifted from hunting and maintaining social harmony, to living in houses and maintaining economical balance.

Other forms of westernization occur in other films generated by Kunuk as well. In his 2006 film *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, he explores the system of belief that would shift from traditional spirituality to Christianity. The implications for this shift run deeper, as stigma is added to the equation. In this story, agitation and disjunction occur in a Nunavut camp in the 1920s, as a group of Christianized Inuit contrast a nearby group of Inuit led by an angakkuk

(shaman). The latter must eventually decide whether to convert to Christianity and a western lifestyle, or to continue eking a subsistence lifestyle. The Christianized group follow a new structure which concentrates power to one person, imposes the renouncement of Inuit culture and beliefs, as well as conversion to Christianity in exchange for help to access resources and food. There is movement towards the new group, which takes advantage of the vulnerability of those struggling. As Inuit abjure, they are instructed by the priests as follows:

Turn away from your own way of life ... do not hunt but come pray on Sunday. Do not exchange wives or husbands, but only when my father allows it. Sing only Jesus' songs, do not drum and sing Satan's songs that tempt Inuit to burn in Hell forever. Your sins are in your hands [...] and minds. Shamans serve Satan and cannot heal us. Tonight, we cross over, eating organs shamans have forbidden. This way we become Christians. (Kunuk, 2006, 1:27:55).

Kunuk's film illustrates the high stakes that our ancestors have faced in the name of survival, and to allow Inuit to live as comfortably as possible. However, the movie demonstrates that religious figures in the north have operated on opportunism to spread their influence. The group of Christianised Inuit in the film do not seek to help Inuit in need, but to manipulate, gain power, and influence through coercion, with an 'ends justify the means' mentality. The conditional help they offer reveals the assimilatory agenda they have inherited by European missionaries, by disseminating their resources in exchange for Inuit to vilify their own culture, identity, and ways of living to conform to western colonial ideologies which are inherently intolerant and racist. The last frame of the movie shows the angakkuk abandoning his spirituality, in the face of this remarkable pressure for himself and his group to survive. He is seen summoning his helping spirits and sending them away, signaling his conversion to Christianity, and the start of their new way of life. These stories of affliction and resistance are seldom told, but remind us that our stories, songs, epistemologies, have not been carelessly forgotten or lost. Many aspects of Inuit

culture such as throat singing, drumming, tattooing, spirituality, have been made to be associated with shame through terms like sin, and western taboos have replaced Inuit ones, with additional taboos being attributed to the latter. This layering of taboos associated with Inuit culture and identities, coupled with the consolidation of power among a select few, derived from these introduced belief systems, have contributed to the internalized racism and lateral violence across the Arctic through time. Stories like those of Kunuk allow younger generations to realize the gravity of the situations our ancestors have been through during contact with Qallunaat. They show us that core parts of our identities and cultures have been associated with shame, danger, and disdain as they were being compared to Satanic activity. Cultural manifestations of identity have generally been discouraged, demonized, and carefully dissected, repressed, and erased by imperialist figures and systems. A word should be said about those Inuit who maintained Inuit cultural activities despite the encroachment of missionary influence on Inuit culture. Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, a prolific Inuk filmmaker based in Iqaluit, Nunavut, discusses how traditional Inuit tattoos, among other cultural practices, have suffered through conversations with Inuit elders all over Nunavut in her film *Tunniit: Retracing the Line of our Ancestors* (2011). She offers rich information about her journey of interviewing over fifty Inuit elders in nine communities in Nunavut, collecting various accounts about the meaning of the tattoos and their designs across regions, the methods used to perform the tattoos, the spiritual aspects related to these, as well as the role of missionaries and priests in forcefully stifling, stigmatizing, and attempting to erase throat singing, drum dancing, the use of Inuktitut, as well as Inuit spirituality of everyday life. It puts into perspective the indoctrination that our grandparents have experienced and explains the opposition or discomfort that some elders and even subsequent generations feel towards this practice to this day. The forced sedentarization period consists of missionaries and governmental delegates who are shown to have colonial ambitions of proselytism or colonial subversive expansion of western cultural influence that were out of touch with the realities, wants, and needs of Inuit.

As Inuit settled in settlements and adopted a new religion, the promises of a new life filled with abundant resources and opportunities soon revealed gaps. Arnaquq-Baril, for her part, explores false promises related to deceitful housing incentives in Mark Kenneth Woods' and Michael Yerxa's documentary *Two Hard Things, Two Soft Things* (2016), which addresses the deeply misleading advertisement of the low cost of living with subsidized wooden housing that government entities promised, who contrived this settlement agenda. She explains: "People were forced in in different ways- they were told their children had to go to school ... they were told they would have 2\$ rent every month for all time, that it would never go up so Inuit wouldn't be afraid to be dependent on the government" (Woods & Yerxa, 2016, 0:05:13). The government's pledge to allow Inuit a solid footing into the economic system through allowances and access sufficient, adequate, and affordable housing was quickly revealed to be a falsity. With no tangible and consistent system of currency or infrastructure in place to fulfill these promises, newly settled Inuit had to improvise with little available resources. The lack of formal economic currency is observed and addressed by Taamusi Qumaq, who describes in his book *Je Veux que les Inuit Soient Libres à Nouveau* (2010) how federal governmental financial assistance for families and disabled people in 1953 would help on a monthly basis but recalls the manner in which allowance was issued. Money did not exist in the forms of pennies, dollars, bills, and cheques, but in the form of a piece of ordinary paper delivered by the HBC. This arbitrary mode of managing finance in the north demonstrates the lack of intent to empower Inuit in this new system; to use authority instead of meaningfully engaging them within the capitalist system (Qumaq, 2010). Because Euro-Canadian food stuffs, often processed goods such as wheat and sugar, were the only items available to purchase since houses and employment opportunities were still not available, this means that Inuit were still merely trading without actually being engaged in capitalist activities, rendering the act of saving money to buy a house, or investing for future purchases, difficult if not impossible. For instance, Sallumiut Mark Kadjulik talks about the first materials being sent by the Department of Northern Affairs (today

known as Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs) to build small wooden houses that cost either “\$600 or \$800” (Ilisituk, 2016, p.231). He says: “They were only shacks,” (Ilisituk, 2016) while Sallumiut Isaacie Padlayat reckoned that “[Inuit] would have been a lot warmer in [iglus],” which are much more adapted to the Arctic climate, compared to early houses which caused people to freeze in them (Ilisituk, 2016, p.236). Proper housing was not available until Qallunaat came to settle. Sallumiut Aajia Naulituk recalls how only two Qallunaat lived in houses, one of whom named a river after himself, which exhibits the inherent colonial outlook of early settlers (Ilisituk, 2016). Naulituk also talks about how most Inuit scavenged for discarded wood and driftwood, which resonates with Alacie Naluiyuk’s early memories, which are articulated through our interpreter Elaisa Papigatuk:

People started building their own house from the leftover woods that they were collecting from everywhere. They started building their houses with ... canvas covers from tents ... Her older brothers and her father collected every wood they found, and they didn’t have enough wood to build a house for them. And there was no floor, it was only sand. The canvas with the grass [were used as insulation] and it was not until many years after the development of houses that honey buckets would be replaced with flushing toilets and more decent amenities (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 12, 2022).

The imposition of sedentarization without adequate resources to carry out this infrastructural project to instill a suitable lifestyle for Inuit attests to the intention of government bodies to effect power and influence, without intent to empower Inuit in this new system.

3.4 Socio-cultural shifts caused by sedentarization

Some of the stories that were being told in the community in which families and groups gathered in Salluit engaged the whole community. In the morning of our second day of discussions, Alacie Naluiyuk looks outside and reminisces, thinking back to some of her earlier

memories of when her family and herself moved in the region. Alacie Naluiyuk shares, and our interpreter Linda Kaitak conveys the story of how adults told children that babies came from the ceiling of the iglu during winter, or from the chimney in the springtime. The community would come by to visit the newborn to shake the baby's hand (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 15, 2022). And while families used to travel independently, the sedentarization of multiple families in one place allowed for communal visits to occur after births, with new relationships forming. Alacie and Linda then discuss the relationship between a sanajik and arnaqtik (godparent) and arnaliaq (for girls) and angusiaq (for boys) respectively, whose role is to help youths develop skills for self-sufficiency by offering their sanajik, for instance, their first hunt which would be shared with the community. Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who has experienced some of the same socio-cultural changes as Alacie Naluiyuk throughout her lifetime, also shares about the significance of these kinship bonds and associated rituals in her 2015 book *The Right to Be Cold*. She writes about an anecdote wherein her grandmother performed a ritualistic choreograph as her angusiaq brought her his first catch and proceeds to discuss the discomfort that some of them felt from witnessing this ceremonial performance. She writes about how it made herself and other grandchildren feel shy and embarrassed “yet [they] understood that this ritual was a necessary part of our hunting culture and tradition” and that the intent of this ritual would be to highlight that the youths’ “work had been affirmed, validated, and valued” by their sanajik, but also among their kin (Watt-Cloutier, 2015, p.58). This ritual would be normalized by Inuit in their Ungava region by their ancestors, even celebrated, as it has been practiced for millennia. This kind of elaborate ritual may appear out of place as western social expectations shift towards activities less tied to survival and towards school and office employment, which added to the cultural pressures to conform to westernization. Indeed, these cultural ties and rites would soon be forcefully replaced by the western expectation for youths to attend school to the behest of the government so that Inuit could one day ‘help Inuit’ (Qumaq, 2010), as it was supposed by government officials that this “southern education was an important to step in

training young Inuit to be the future leaders of their communities” (Watt-Cloutier, 2015, p.27).

The transition from land to settlement altered the social and cultural fabric that composed how Inuit lived, how they related to each other and to their purpose. And while many Inuit still have sauniit and sanajit, the continuum of holistic practices related to these kinship ties has been breached.

3.5 Relocation determined by Qallunaat

The forced sedentarization and assimilation of Inuit into western ontologies, epistemologies, and culture would soon create considerable inequitable power dynamics that would abash and place Inuit in a position of subjugation in every aspect of their lives. Chronic poverty, which would generate a range of social issues, is mentioned in Nancy Wachowich’s book. Three intergenerational Inuit women detail their lived experiences resulting from the historical and ongoing colonization that they and their families and communities have undergone in their region of Mittimatalik (Pont Inlet, Nunavut). The second-generation Inuk Rhoda Kaukjak Katsak, delivers an eloquent account of her understanding of this process. She states:

[It is a] transition period that we all lived through ... It was very difficult for me ... coming in off the land and going into school ... It was difficult for me to learn when I was a child that there are other races, like the Qallunaat, who have the power, who have the authority” (Wachowich, 1999, p.194).

Throughout the book, Katsak and her mother Apphia Agalakti Awa discuss the surreptitious way that Qallunaat enforced this newfound authority over Inuit. For instance, frequently in the book Katsak enumerates the ways in which Qallunaat abused their power in the 60’s by abducting children from families and sending them to school without the knowledge or consent of parents, by threatening to cut allowance and other social services if families did not comply to having

their children be taken to school; by performing medical skin grafts with no free, prior, and informed consent; by making decisions about Inuit children welfare over that of their parents; by propagating the false *Terra Nulius* discourse that Christopher Columbus ‘discovered the Americas’; and by claiming, for example, that Franklin and Frobisher “discovered” Frobisher Bay, among many other tactics used to discredit Inuit experiences, knowledges, histories, and relationships that were associated with their identity (Wachowich, 1999). Similarly to Katsak, Alacie Naluiyuk shared some of her experiences of attending the Federal Day school in Salluit. Early in the morning, a classmate would run around with a bell and announce the start of the school day, and the students would all stand in a circle and be given an orange by the teacher, before learning how to read and write Inuktitut, sew, knit, and participate in other activities. After a time, English became the only language allowed, and eventually Inuktitut was prohibited, and harsh disciplinary measures and stern atmospheres came to reign in the classrooms (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 15, 2022). Alacie Naluiyuk’s brother, along with hundreds of Inuit youths across the Arctic, was sent down south to study away from his family and community. For some, this physical uprooting from community towards southern institutions caused severe emotional distress, especially during significant community events such as deaths of loved ones. The lack of opportunities for Inuit youths to process grief among loved ones was devastating, and this feeling lives on for those who have experienced such events. Sheila Watt-Cloutier shares her experience of being sent to a residential school in Manitoba in her youth, and not having the opportunity to properly live the difficult emotions that come with deaths of loved ones, and to heal from these. For her, it was the passing of her grandmother who had been her second parent. She recounts: “I couldn’t take part in the community grieving that would have helped to open up my heart when we buried my precious grandmother Jeannie ... It was as if being sent away had shut down my emotional response, as if the acceptance that I’d been forced to embrace had muted everything for me. Life just went on” (Watt-Cloutier, 2015, p.35). This passage reveals the struggles of Inuit youths who were placed in difficult situations,

unable to affect any sort of agency or emotional regulation in a safe and communal manner in times of personal turmoil. The effects of residential schools are also seen in the shifting dynamics that come with losing one's language. It becomes more difficult to communicate with elders, creates an 'us versus them' dichotomy, and engenders identity crises and internal conflicts, among other symptoms (Watt-Cloutier, 2015; Freeman, 2015). Federal Day and Residential School Survivors experience traumatic experiences including all types of abuse and mistreatments at different levels, and the legacies of the cultural genocide lived by Inuit still resonate through existing social issues in the community stemming from these historical government-mandated policies. For many Inuit, the experience of being forced to relocate away from their families and communities due to school at that time was a distressing one, with some never returning, and for most, returning with unresolved, unprocessed, and lingering forms of trauma which were coped with, or not, in various ways.

Epidemics, in particular tuberculosis, was also a reason for many Inuit to be forcefully sent south for medical attention. Alacie Naluiyuk recalls moments where she had to be brought to a ship meant for a yearly medical check-up wherein invasive procedures were carried out. She remembers that people who got tuberculosis did not return to the community, but were sent down south by boat, to be sent on trains to Québec City (QC), Montréal (QC), Ottawa (ON), and Churchill (MB). She shares, in the words of our interpreter Linda Kaitak: "When ... people [were] sent away, they used to cry ... cry a lot ... they never saw them again, they [had] no phone, no post office ... And only [a] few people who were sent away by ... ship ... used to send letters. Not many people used to do that" (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 15, 2022). The few who did write letters, had them sent up north at long intervals. These letters were dropped from a flying Hercules plane once a year during December. Furthermore, Sheila Watt-Cloutier also describes how most Inuit children requiring medical attention and procedures had to remain in the south for weeks at a time until there were 'more valuable' reasons to go back up north

according to Qallunaat (Watt-Cloutier, 2015). These damaging events were experienced by many Inuit, due to the negligence of Qallunaat, and were felt deeply and silently for some, and sometimes translate and contribute to the social issues experienced by community members today. The way Qallunaat government systems authoritatively managed Inuit bodies attests to the dehumanizing attitudes held towards Inuit. No regard was granted for consulting, co-managing, and following up with community members, nor about the consent, preferences and wellbeing of Inuit at any stage of the process of treatment, travel, and convalescence. Due to the lack of possible communication between patients and their families, some community members were to be left in the dark, to be grieved without ever having answers from those who displaced them. The history of Inuit who have been displaced in the system (department of youth protection, health and judicial services, and the like) have taken a toll on the relationship between Qallunaat and Inuit, one that would be further aggravated by a policy that would force Inuit to remain in that system.

3.6 RCMP dog slaughters and their impacts on Inuit suicide, especially in men

In addition to the Federal Day Schools, the RCMP dog slaughters had a detrimental effect on the lives on Inuit, notably men. The forced assimilation agenda ordered by the federal government was implemented by RCMP officers across the Arctic. Apphia Agalakti Awa recalls that time, when her and her family had just moved to Mittimatalik nearing the end of the 1960's, when the RCMP shot all of their dogs. She states: "It was our dog team that we used to travel with, the one we used for hunting ... The RCMP shot them all. We were about to move back to our camp ... and they shot our dogs (Wachowich, 1999, p.111). Alacie Naluiyuk also references this disturbing effect several times during our conversations. In one instance, in the words of our interpreter Linda Kaitak, she details: "There [were] dog slaughters, not just in Salluit. All over the north. The dogs were killed and people who had dogs for dog sledding to go hunting, they [started] to make alcohol ... After the dogs were killed, that's when- [Inuit started] to have

problems. They [started] to make alcohol themselves; they [started] to order; they [started] to bring alcohol. Because they didn't have [any] dogs. It brought problems" (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 16, 2022). This government-mandated plan of action would sever Inuit relationships with land and an entire way of life, and way of understanding and relating with the world, and with each other, and redirect Inuit towards western values, languages, learning systems, and epistemologies. It would also come to impact Inuit men particularly, as their social and cultural role was historically determined by their ability to provide by tending their qamutik, dog teams, by going hunting and fishing, and by their ability to read and navigate the land; all of this was now heinously eliminated with the slaughter of their dog teams, which made qamutik obsolete and hunting and fishing outside of their new settlements nearly impossible. The introduced copy-paste public systems from the south would become the terrain on which Inuit would have to become dependent, without any mental health support for the traumas inflicted during the implementation of this act of cultural annihilation, as well as the immediate and ongoing lack of sufficient housing, running water, accessible food, and equitable access to adaptive training or employment opportunities for all community members. This adversity experienced by Inuit men is examined in Affleck et al.'s 2022 study of suicide amongst young Inuit males in Nunavik, which analyses the direct impacts of the qimmijaqtauniq (RCMP dog slaughters) in three themes: emasculation and mental health issues; work-related anxieties and tensions related to traditional/contemporary expectations of provider-related roles in the community; and the lack of resources and supports which address these issues felt by Inuit men following the dog slaughters, all contributing to the high levels of suicide in Nunavik. The disempowerment of men experiencing a stigmatizing role reversal correlates with the emergence of high rates of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse towards community members of all demographics. With more women succeeding in school and acquiring higher-paying jobs, compared to the high drop-out rates among young men, who access lower-paying jobs with little to no access to training or adapted employment options, a more limited amount of men are able

to either spend most of the day at school or at their job, and also have the time (or income) to dedicate time to become established and respected hunters, which represents a highly esteemed status. A study of some of the catastrophic impacts of the qimmijjaqtauniq on men in Nunavik are detailed in Affleck's et al.'s 2022 article "Suicide Amongst Young Inuit Males." The authors write: "Amplifying and illustrating tainted, shamed masculinities, child abuse was inflicted on and perpetuated by generations of Inuit men. According to participants, these practices have lingered, and the associated guilt-ridden traumas still contribute to men's high and rising suicide rates" (Affleck et al., 2022, p.3). These complex abuse issues are trauma-ridden and deeply anchored in taboo, and are difficult to address for many reasons, especially in community. And while considerable trauma, abuse, and suicide can be attributed to, and has also resulted from Inuit men's experiences in Residential and Federal Day Schools, there is far less dialogue allotted to the specific and direct link between the causes of the qimmijjaqtauniq and of these issues in particular. What's more, Nunatsiavummiut national Inuk leader Natan Obed addresses the concern of publicly denouncing abusers in communities by revealing: "Our communities are small ... There are such massive repercussions for speaking out against somebody who may still live in the community, somebody who may live in your house, or somebody who may be in a position of power" (Cooke, 2016, para.33). Not only are men discouraged from expressing vulnerability by fear of breaching masculine norms, the shame and guilt associated with being inflicted with and perpetuating this act of subconsciously needing to enforce power over another amplifies its associated silence and continuation, but victims must also navigate the complexities of coexisting with their assaulters for fear of being ostracized. My intention in highlighting this difficult topic does not stem from a desire to rehash, dwell on, or critique community members' behaviours, but rather from a desire to map out and critique the causes, effects, and symptoms of the historical and ongoing colonial traumas which originate from the calculated implementation of governmental policies. These social issues reflect not the essence of these individuals, but the workings of oppressive structures of colonialism. This

concern for men and their anxieties as related to their sense of belonging (or lack thereof) in the new western order is also expressed in Elisapie Isaac's 2003 documentary *If the Weather Permits*, as several young men explore their ideas relating to their identity as Inuit men. One states: "I felt I became a man when I got my first job," while one responds: "When I started hunting, I thought I became a man, but I haven't hunted lately, so I'm not sure anymore [...] This guy Timothy is a hunter, so I think he is a real man, because he's a great hunter" (Isaac, 2003, 13:08). These reflect the complex condition Inuit men find themselves within in a contemporary context. For Inuit boys, it was a rite of passage to tend to a dog team and to become a hunter under the wing of established hunters. Today's youths face a difficult dilemma between the traditional expectations of enacting manhood through becoming a hunter, and the prevalent western expectation to engage with western education or employment and by extension, the overlying hierarchical capitalist system. Affleck et al. also mention the economic dimension related to cultural and masculine anxieties among Inuit men. The writers explain: "the transition to modern life has disrupted many of the community and family roles that men rely upon for their masculine identity and self-worth. Scheduling conflicts and the high cost of hunting equipment also prohibit many young men from fulfilling their cultural identity as hunters, fuelling problematic new hierarchies wherein only those men with the time and resources to hunt have access to the benefits associated with Inuit masculinity" and where those unable to navigate these unfavorable and unforgiving parameters fall at risk of suicidality (Affleck et al., 2022, p.4). The accumulation of social issues and identity crises produced by sedentarization, and assimilation creates a limited terrain for Inuit empowerment and fulfillment of both traditional and contemporary ways of self-actualization. Western societal, infrastructural, and hierarchical restructuration are also not limited to the confines of the individual communities, but also impact Inuit who are forcefully displaced to southern regions as communities are infamously underfunded, underfinanced, and generally overlooked. Public service systems spend millions of dollars every year to displace people to and from communities (usually outgoing for Inuit, and

incoming for Qallunaat) to compensate for the underfunding of public systems in communities. The social and cultural impact of policies aimed at erasing Inuit cultures and identities, paired with inadequate living conditions and other added traumas are all elements that intimately shape the contradictory conditions that Inuit find themselves in. While they no longer have the means to be Inuit through assimilatory policies, they also do not have the means to thrive as the living conditions are neither prosperous nor healthy. And while many Inuit feel forced to move south to relocate and seek opportunities not available in the north, some are actually forced to be sent to the south with no community member present to accompany or supervise, as children are taken from communities by the foster care system to be in the charge of Qallunaat strangers.

3.7 Disconnection through displacement

At the root of Inuit youths being uprooted and displaced to other communities or to southern centres by western institutions is the principle of disconnection and assimilation, which engenders identity issues, dissociation, isolation, and instability. While Inuit epistemologies were enshrined in interconnection, interdependence, healthy relationships, and self-sufficiency, western systems operate on the uprooting of Inuit from their families and communities towards institutions in the south that have more robust infrastructure and are better equipped, but that do not cater, or are not adequately adapted to the specific needs of Inuit. By and by, local groups have emerged to address the gaps in services that Inuit experienced within these western systems, as Inuit have been falling through the cracks when being sent south without interpreters, resources, or support. For example, many Inuit have never returned, or with significant difficulty, after having navigated judicial or carceral systems, medical and rehabilitation systems, overcrowded housing systems which do not easily permit returning students or workers from the south to access housing due to excessive housing waitlists, in addition to many more gaps. Alacie Naluiyuk shares one of her memories related to the

destructive effects of intersecting reasons for her adopted son's journey in the care of western systems, notably the foster system. The life history of her first adopted son is one of disconnection, and which resonates with that of thousands of Inuit youths in the Arctic and beyond since settlement and assimilation. Her grandson was adopted, and was suffering from respiratory issues, and therefore had to be sent to the south to remain within or close to a resourced hospital. He soon had issues fostering strong relationships with his adoptive parents, foster parents, and at the rehabilitation facilities that he would attend. Eventually, he would also have trouble (re)connecting with his community once back home. Alacie Naluiyuk recounts, through the words of our interpreter Linda Kaitak:

He was away for hospital two years in Moose Factory, one year in Montreal, and she tried to go get him, but he saw her as he changed, because she was not with him. [He] didn't really think that she was his mom ... Because he was away for hospital, he was not used to [living at] home. He was not used to [living the] Inuit way because he got used to [living] like down south ... That's when he [started] to have problems. That's when he started to not listen to her. To his parents ... Since he was little, he had three different families ... The youth protection took him to Val d'Or to a place like a group home, or rehab ... When he turned 20, he finally stayed home with them ... But he killed himself ... And that's how he was - when he was - living. When he was alive. He was never... settled. He had three different families. When finally he settled down, he had a good job, he listened well, he behaved well, [but] then, he killed himself (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 16, 2022, 20:47).

Alacie Naluiyuk's first child was one of the first to be taken in the care of the department of youth protection and social services and spent most of his life disconnected from his family, community, land, language, and culture, without the stability required to form strong bonds with his guardians and peers to form a strong sense of self in his social and cultural identity.

Moreover, the rehabilitation facility could not allow him to successfully reintegrate into his community as he had been geographically away from the community to begin with, and lacked the cultural tools that would have allowed him to establish or reestablish connections with the community. The aforementioned existing issues in community, symptoms of structural violence, including overcrowding in houses, the lack of running water, access to affordable food and culturally relevant employment adapted to the needs of the north, as well as social issues of addiction, abuse, and lateral violence, do not allow conditions for one to thrive and in his case, survive. I cannot help but think about what was mentioned by an Indigenous Elder sometime during my bachelor's degree, who said that every Indigenous youth who passes away is an entire genealogical branch that dies with them. Alacie Naluiyuk continues to lose her progeny to the same system that failed her first child. The system has changed little since. She explains how her great grandchild was also taken by the department of youth protection, to only be brought back when he will be 18 years old, like many, many other Inuit children. She elaborates:

They're not going to be home. They're being sent away. It's not just her, it's many many people ... The DYP- they bring a lot of- hurt. Because they take away a kid, or kids, until they're 18. It hurts ... She's not mad at people, but that's what happened to her. She's not angry at social service or- DYP, but that's what she's been through ... That's what Qallunaat make us do- even if we don't want to. Even if we try our best, that's what they do ... She loves her great-grandson very much, but he's going to go back home when she's no longer here (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 16, 27:50).

This statement shows the emotional impacts that families experience with the forced severing of ties with their child or children, as they are sent south to assimilate to western culture and life during their formative years. The disempowerment felt by these families exacerbates the feeling of being subjugated to adhere to western systems which have oppressed and deprived Inuit of basic human rights historically and on an ongoing basis. Alacie Naluiyuk is not critical towards

the workers themselves, but towards the system that allows this harrowing displacement to occur and to continue across decades and soon, a century. This is also felt by Apphia Agalakti Awa as she considers the disenfranchisement experienced by Inuit under western governance. She expresses: “It is not that I hate Qallunaat. ... but sometimes, I get angry ... not at specific individuals but at the people who decided to do that to us back then ... who decided to move us all off the land” (Wachowich, 1999, p.199). Alacie Naluiyuk and Apphia Agalakti Awa both share the sentiment that those who are responsible for this system are not the workers themselves, but the macro-level systems that operate on the assumption that the public systems as they are effective, efficient, and culturally adapted- but have been shown not to be through this thesis.

3.8 Unequal footings

In addition to and during these accumulating factors of underlying trauma, the labour market was the next step for Inuit to enroll into newly defined social and cultural expectations. Early on, the HBC provided jobs such as clerk assistant, or cargo unloader. However, jobs were not high enough in number, and money was not implemented as a formal currency system. Early attitudes of intolerance and discrimination would soon inform the dynamics between Qallunaat and Inuit during sedentarization, and would engender unequal power dynamics, preventing Inuit from achieving equitable standing in the capitalist system which would soon be instilled in the Arctic. For instance, several Inuit, including Alacie Naluiyuk, tell the stories of how their labour would be compensated by Qallunaat merchants or government officials, not in money but in food ingredients. Alacie Naluiyuk shares her own experience, elaborates through the words of our interpreter Kitty Okituk: “Back then, in [the] 1950’s, there was nothing, absolutely nothing. No electricity, no- no other store, ... so, when they ... carved a carving, they would sell it to the Hudson Bay Company and they would trade it for flour, baking soda, salt, sugar, and tea bags mostly” (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 14, 2022). She also talks about how she and other community members used to create dolls and other artforms which

would be bought by the government and sold for money, still in exchange for ingredients. Sallumiut Annie Qavavauk also remembers how some Inuit had offered their labour for unloading ships in exchange for “some lousy tea” (Ilisituk, 2016, p.136). Kuujjuamiut Sheila Watt-Cloutier, born ten-odd years after Alacie Naluiyuk, also shares how her grandmother and mother were hired to support their family, and would also “get some food as pay” in her book *The Right to Be Cold* (Watt-Cloutier, 2015, p.1). These accounts speak volumes to the disparaging dynamics that Qallunaat allotted Inuit. And with more frequent contact between Qallunaat and Inuit, these tensions and imbalances would intensify. With no steady job opportunities for everyone, and with no capital to accumulate, there could be no opportunities to generate intergenerational wealth equitably. Additionally, family members were still living in cramped houses. These lodging conditions added to the challenge of establishing themselves comfortably and financially equitable. The fact that there are still no banks in Salluit and in Nunavik is telling of this system that lacks the means to offer Inuit financial freedom in the management of finances and demonstrates the financial landscape. From the very beginning of Salluit history as we know it, only a handful of people were trained to offer services to Inuit - usually predominantly Qallunaat - with Inuit interpreters as assistants. The forced system of dependence of Inuit on Qallunaat systems and by extension, a Qallunaat workforce, testifies to the lack of trust in Inuit to learn, navigate, and develop their own capabilities within this imposed new societal organization.

The political and governance aspect should also be considered. The signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975 was a determinant time period, marking one of the first modern-day treaties. Kitty Okituk relays how Alacie describes that time as, “after the government [had] left Salluit, the Sallumiut people started trying to run the village, like- getting a mayor” (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 14, 2022). Inuit did not recover

their self-government in the way their ancestors did, but in a way that had been forcefully taught by Qallunaat, mostly in Residential School. She continues:

There [were] some people sent down to Ottawa to study. And those ... that went to school became the leader of the town ... everything was new, well, to them, the [western-styled self-government] ... they thought, they were just villagers when the government was owning the place. And they had to decide how to own the place- either the land, or deep down the ground ... They were- they really thought they were just home, safe, decent, but it was the government that was owning the place already. Even without informing them. (A. Naluyuk, formal interview, November 14, 2022).

The unequal footing that I talk about is the centuries-old gap of experience that Qallunaat have with their systems that they implanted in Nunavik, compared to the first generation of Inuit to experience contact with settlers and to navigate the intricacies of managing a system that had never been exercised by Inuit before. The impression of being 'villagers' testifies to the dynamic inherent to Inuit navigating these early moments of self-governance in a model that was never theirs to begin with. Additionally, throughout the years, some Inuit have developed conflicting perspectives about the signing of the treaty and their implications through time, until today. However, we must consider that the federal and provincial government, as well as corporations, have been navigating western systems, and having centuries of experience in the art of negotiating. The first generation of Inuit coming back from southern institutions were able to advocate for rights relating to land claim issues never yet discussed and managed at any capacity by Inuit, and that were being disregarded and infringed upon. That is, as the Robert Bourassa (1970-1976, 1985-1994) provincial government gained interest in the north strictly for profitable extractive projects in a manner that aligned with previously established traditions of not consulting the Indigenous peoples it would impact. The first generation of Inuit that came back to their communities advocated for mobilization to stop, or to slow down the hydroelectric

dam that was already underway. Pressure arose for consultations between the project's stakeholders and the peoples whose lands it would damage the most; that is, Inuit, Eeyou, and Naskapi peoples, who had made an appeal to bring the former to Superior Court to honour previously signed treaties which required consultative protocols to take place (James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, 1975). It had not been a consideration nor a priority to uphold these treaties for these entities and was even contested by whom. Inuit fought for their ancestral rights over their territory, which would be administered by them only. However, land under six feet would become administered by western governments, allowing profitable extractive activities to occur in different parts in Nunavik (James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, 1975). Many Inuit were conflicted about the terms of these negotiations, as many disagreed with the principle of attributing monetary value to land, and selling it for profit to Qallunaat, especially with the heavy environmental impacts that these extractive activities would have on them, their communities, and their cultures.

3.9 The state of our communities, moving forward

Inuit have inhabited many areas in the north that have their own local histories, stories, and names. However, these cultural legacies have been forced to be left behind with the arrival of Qallunaat and their megalomaniac agendas, which sought to eradicate Inuit cultures and assimilate them as it suited their colonial and capitalist intentions. Inuit reclaiming naming processes, including reclaiming the names of settlements, lands and waters - such as Frobisher Bay to Iqaluit, but also the creation of Inuit names for our regions such as *Inuit Nunangat* and *Nunavik* - are a reaction to colonial occupations and our resistance on the continent, and we will continue with this work. It is a conflicting sentiment to look back on these difficult chapters that our families have lived, and to reflect on how many Inuit “were being deprogrammed from our Inuit culture and reprogrammed for the southern world” (Watt-Cloutier, 2015, p.39) and “[relate to the] feeling of being born into one cultural milieu and being compelled to train for another”

(Wachowich, 1999, 152). Each Inuk today has a lifetime of grief to process in order to heal from the assimilatory policies made to erase or shame our strong ties with our lands, culture, languages, stories, families, communities, interpersonal relations, in addition to our exposure to sedentarization, internalized racism, southern displacement, hierarchical systems, capitalism, and other Western societal impositions. However, we also have a lifetime before us and generations to come, to learn and to mobilize in order to make our communities safer, more developed, and adapted to our specific needs. Alacie Naluiyuk's husband Kakkinik Naluiyuk talks about how he lived this transition to western life in an office job in Minnie Grey's and Marianne Stenbaek's book *Voices and Images of Nunavimmiut, Volume 1*. He states: "One thing about this job was that it did not ruin my life but ... made [it] a whole lot better. An Inuk is always [losing] his old way of life. When I thought of this, I tried hard to help the people from Sugluk [former denomination of *Salluit*], and other people from different communities and I tried to help myself also for I too am losing the old way of life" (Grey & Stenbaek, 2010, p.70). These reflections help to answer the widely pondered question of *where do we go from here?* The way forward is to tread with nuance the traditional and the contemporary, while honouring our youths, families, communities, peers, ancestors and next generations alike by considering the best courses of action to utilize our collective voices, perspectives, abilities, and organizations to mobilize, strategize, and advocate for accessing and sustaining the acquisition of housing, running water, culturally suitable and relevant training and employment opportunities, as well as other basic needs. Many Inuit-led initiatives have been created to encourage Inuit self-determination and to address community-specific needs within the western implanted institutions in Nunavik communities. Alacie Naluiyuk enumerates some of these, such as the anuvirarpik (hunter support), the mirsuvik (sewing centre), the Initsiaq women's shelter, the Iqitsivik (family house which offers free food, organizes fundraisers, promotes the participation of elders, teaches life/food skills, organizes activities, collaborates with other local groups such as the local radio, coop, community centre, etc.), the recreation committee, the two Pairitsivik

and Pirutsiaq daycares, the church, the Avataq cultural institute, as well as the Saputiit, a previously-operating youth association group. She then encourages Inuit youths to get involved in programming specifically aimed at learning about Inuit culture, history, and skills. She names Nunavik Sivunitsavut, Nunavimmi Pigursavik, and also college and university. She especially promotes the benefits of attending workshops of every and any kind that are occurring in Salluit and in Nunavik, as her attendance to these have greatly served her in her endeavors. She shares: “For education and for jobs, ... we have to work and study. Because we’re not going to go anywhere if we’re not doing anything. She encourages people to work and study” (A. Naluiyuk, formal interview, November 17, 2022, 14:35). A vast number of Inuit have gathered and established empowering projects which promote reconnection with land, Inuktitut, each other, and which help build each other up. There is a will among elders in Nunavik to promote spaces where Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit traditional knowledge) can be transmitted to younger Inuit, and there is also emphasis on “one important goal [of bringing] elders and youth to communicate more closely together” (Koperqualuk, 2015, p.437). With each local project that occurs, youths have opportunities to practice their social and cultural skills, enhancing their confidence and encouraging them to develop these further through school, training, or employment. For, when there is little programming in community, youths fall at risk of “getting bored, kind of restless, [if] they [don’t] have anywhere to go” (Wachowich, 1999, p.232), in addition to a widespread unanimous desire of having financially easier access to move around in Nunavik or to the south (Isaac, 2003). Groups like the Qarjuit Youth Council, which is based in Kuujjuaq, organize activities to foster the development of skills in governance, advocacy, project development, networking, writing, self-promotion, while also maintaining collaborations with other Inuit-led organizations, like Unaaq Men's Association of Inukjuak which address the needs of Inuit men to reclaim their cultural, collective, and personal wellbeing by reconnecting knowledge holders with youths to transmit traditional knowledge, like Nunavimmi Ilagiit Papatauvinga which address the need for integrated, culturally relevant resources for children,

youths, and families in the public services systems, like Nurrat which promote healthy living outdoor activities for youths, the Isuarsivik treatment centre, which addresses substance and addiction issues through cultural and spiritual wellbeing, among many other organizations and initiatives in Nunavik. There is also a push towards recognizing and learning about our own “Inuit stories of Nunavik personalities and legendary characters such as Aukkautik, Atungaq, Sanikiluaq, Tamurausijaq, Amarualik, Qumannuaq, and Taktuit.” (Koperqualuk, 2015, p.437) through different types of mediums. However, this important work has already begun. Many Inuit are “passing on knowledge ... through the telling of stories and tales ... to give meaning to what [is] happening in our daily lives (Grey & Stenbaek, 2010, p.9) to “show the present generation what was traditionally important to Inuit-bonding over them, and that life was hard” (Grey & Stenbaek, 2010, p.10).

Additionally, a range of works are being generated to assess how community issues are tackled locally when trying to think about integrating Inuit epistemologies into western systems in the north. Some write about education, such as *Why We Need a Canadian Arctic University* (MacKay, 2015); *Kaluraq, Nunami Ilinniarniq: Inuit Community Control of Education Through Land-Based Education* (2020), and health and wellness, such as in *Integrating Traditional Practices into Inuit Mental Wellness Programs* (Adamek et al., 2015; Carvill, Turning to Traditional Processes for Supporting Mental Health, 2020). Some, for instance, do the important work of addressing political issues, traditional modes adoption and foster care, adaptation to colonization, and the use of community local radio by elders, as seen in Piita Taqtu Inniq’s chapter “The staying force of Inuit knowledge” in Arapaho scholar Dr. Neyooxet Greymorning’s book *A Will to Survive: Indigenous Essays on the Politics of Culture, Language, and Identity* (Greymorning, 2018). Other sources explore the important work that Inuit grassroots movements and other initiatives are doing towards the bettering of wellness conditions in the Arctic (Hardy, K. & Peachey, K., 2016; Alsop et al., 2016).

Section 4: Reflections and conclusion

The conversations that Alacie Naluiyuk, Elaisa Papigatuk, Kitty Okituk, and Linda Kaitak and I had, not only during our recorded sessions, but outside of them, were equally important in allowing me to better understand how the past informs the present, how colonization impacts the structure and infrastructure in our communities, and the reasons why social and cultural issues are so complex and deeply rooted in our communities. At the start of my thesis and project, I had hoped that I would not focus on the disturbing, negative aspects of the trauma that all Inuit are impacted by at different degrees. As Alacie Naluiyuk told her stories, I became concerned that my thesis would take a turn towards the darker parts of our family and collective histories. At the end of our third day of recordings, I had asked her if she wanted me to remove these conversations as part of my project, but she refused, and explained that these stories reflect that of hundreds of families in Nunavik and across the Arctic. It is important to talk about the power structures that not only oppress Inuit, but that further the harm by spreading prejudiced falsities to deflect responsibility and accountability on the part of those who have contrived this new world order for Inuit. These prejudices impact how Inuit continue to be spoken about, how many non-Inuit peoples still feel entitled to speak on the behalf of Inuit, and how non-Inuit also feel comfortable neglecting respectful and responsible research protocols that should stem from needs identified by the community. For, our communities exist the way that they do because of specific historical occurrences, rules, and laws that have not been designed by Inuit, and where Qallunaat continue to perpetuate their role as stewards of Inuit through western public systems. We are in a period of decolonization and Indigenization now, as Inuit have become leaders in their communities and organizations and have been doing the important work of re-imagining the western organizations that have been introduced to our communities, to cater to the needs of community members in culturally safe and relevant manners, and in ways that empower Inuit by building capacity and developing programs that

reflect more and more Inuit Qaujimaningit (Inuit knowledge) and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit traditional knowledge).

Although there is quite a focus on historical processes in this thesis, I hope that future works add to the ways in which Inuit empower each other, advocate for, and access sufficient housing, running water, accessible food prices, equitable employment, infrastructure, and resources for self-sustaining communities, and self-governance at the provincial level. The long-term goal is to foster community engagement and communal healing, while integrating more land-based programming into education and professional spaces that will allow Inuit to embody Inuit cultural pride, personal fulfillment (at the familial, conjugal, and communal level as well), equitably.

Inuit ways of living, thinking, speaking, and doing in the north have emerged and developed from narrow relationships with the land, the elements, and each other. We have been interdependent among ourselves, and have been sovereign with knowledge, skills, and stories that have been passed down for millennia which have allowed us to thrive. The history of Nunavik and of its communities are recent and have been intentionally robbed of many of the cultural elements that had been preserved and maintained for thousands of generations under the guise of alleged progress and good intent. My master's thesis and short film are the product of a blend of personal interest in fostering a space for my grandmother to share personal stories she has long kept to herself and has only recently felt comfortable in sharing with me; an academic interest in amplifying Inuit voices and histories and therefore, advancing Inuit self-representation in Qallunaat-dominated fields; and a general interest in learning more about how Inuit history shapes our contemporary communities. When I spend time with Inuit youths, I often tell them to go see their elders and grandparents to learn their stories and to take care of them. This academic project allowed me to deepen and strengthen my intergenerational relationship with my grandmother, and to nurture intergenerational healing. It also allowed me to enact

mutual accountability in research, to analyze my positionality in working within both Inuit and Western worldviews. This written and audio-visual project has allowed me to learn personally about my family and community history, and to learn about how to channel my learning experience through an artistic and informative manner that could allow Inuit youths see themselves represented in academia and research. I hope to have demonstrated that despite our personal and collective traumas, Inuit persevere in the face of considerable adversity, and remain resilient, as shown through social movements which advocate for destigmatizing cultural practices but in turn, celebrate and revitalize them, all while adapting to contemporary socio-cultural shifts.

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