INTERVIEWING INUIT ELDERS

Volume 4

Cosmology and Shamanism

Mariano and Tulimaaq Aupilaarjuk, Lucassie Nutaraaluk, Rose Iqallijuq, Johanasi Ujarak, Isidore Ijituuq and Michel Kupaaq

Edited by Bernard Saladin d'Anglure
Interviewing Inuit Elders
Volume 4
Cosmology and Shamanism

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to

Iqallijuq Rose Ukumaaluk and to

Lucassie Nutaraaluk,

two elders who contributed so much to the book

and who passed away shortly before it was completed;

and to Johansi Ujarak, Isidore Ijituuq and

Michel Kupaaq, also deceased,

who contributed so much

to the second part of this book.
With much heartfelt gratitude we would like to thank
the Pairijait Tignonmtivik Society for funding the
publication costs for this series.

Without their contribution this series may not have become a reality.
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Cosmology and Shamanism

This book is the result of a course of the same name that I directed at Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, in March 1998, at the request of Susan Sammons, the head of that institution’s Inuit Studies program. I had met Susan four years earlier in Iqaluit on the occasion of the 9th Inuit Studies Conference, which she had agreed to organize. My colleague, Louis-Jacques Dorais, and I started these biennial conferences in 1978 within the association Inuksiuutit Katimajiit Inc. Every two years, these meetings bring together researchers from different countries and Inuit involved in Inuit studies. In 1994, I was the chairperson and Susan invited me to give the opening address. The transcription is as follows:

Madam Premier of the Northwest Territories,
Mister President of the Arctic College,
Dear Colleagues and Friends from all parts of the world,

ilakka nunaqatuit Kalallit Nunaaani, Nunavimmiut, ilakka Inuviitit, Inupiallu, Yupiillu, Yupigiillu, ilakka Nunavummiut, Labradorimmiut...

One year after the signature of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement here at Iqaluit, it is a great pleasure to welcome all of you to this capital of the Eastern Arctic.

This place has played an important role in the history of contact between Europeans and Arctic peoples. Forty years before Henry Hudson arrived, in what we now call Hudson Bay, Martin Frobisher made this region famous to Europeans in the 1570s, when he brought back ships loaded with gold ore, or so he thought. It was in fact iron ore.

Part of this cargo is still visible today on a wharf at the port of London. He was also sure he had discovered a strait—the passage to China and Japan, the famous Northwest Passage—which was in fact this long and beautiful fjord.

He even brought back to London some supposed Tartars or Samoyeds he had captured here, provoking an immediate protest from the Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, for this abuse against his subjects.

Unfortunately this misrepresentation and general misunderstanding about what this country was, and who these peoples were, are not only things of the past.
Indeed, one could find plenty of such misunderstanding in the field of contemporary Inuit studies. We still have a long way to go to gain a full understanding of the people and their land, both from the inside and from the outside.

Although we have succeeded in analysing large segments of Inuit culture, language, history, and society, there are still many gaps in our knowledge and understanding, for example:

- Why has there been such an increase in the number of suicides among youth?
- Why has there been such an increase in interpersonal and domestic violence?
- Why has there been such an increase in alcohol and drug abuse and in mental illnesses?
- Why is there such a high percentage of babies born to very young single mothers?
- Why is there such a high rate of obesity and deterioration in the state of health?
- Why is there such a social crisis, when at the same time the Inuit have succeeded so marvellously in their political negotiations? For the first time since their territory was colonized by a major nation-state, the Inuit have succeeded in partly restoring their rights over an almost continuous stretch of land from East Greenland to the Bering Strait.

May I propose a tentative answer?

Perhaps it is because the Inuit have been losing their value system, their ideology, their traditional religion, and their last shamans.

We social scientists have long considered merchants, policemen, and missionaries to be the main agents of repression against the last Inuit shamans, for their reduction, their social death, and their extinction.

But we share some passive complicity in this process because no fieldwork has been done to describe, analyse, and understand Inuit
shamanism since the brief investigations by Knud Rasmussen in the 1920s. Even his work was ambiguous, if we keep in mind that a catechist from Greenland accompanied him and strove to convert many of the Inuit they encountered.

This is an open question, a major point, maybe for upcoming Inuit conferences.

Perhaps our passivity is due to our belonging to a Christian tradition and to the evolutionist perspective that is still so prevalent in the social sciences, that considers shamanism to be an archaic, primitive stage of religion.

Should we not instead regard shamanism as being the first religion of humanity, the most widespread one both in time and space?

Should we not pay attention to the fact that a revival of shamanism can be witnessed today in many regions of the world?

Let me tell you what my wife, Françoise Morin, and I discovered last year in Eastern Siberia and last month in the Peruvian part of Amazonia. Working together in a comparative study of shamanism and leadership among Eastern Siberian peoples, Amazonian peoples, and Inuit people, we were very surprised last year to discover, among nomadic Yukaghirs and Chukchi, old shamans who had preserved their knowledge and power despite sixty years of Communist repression. We were surprised to discover five-year-old children who were being raised to become shamans because they had manifested early signs of clairvoyance and supernatural gifts.

In Amazonia, we recently spent two months among the Shipibo, a group of about thirty thousand people. There were one hundred active shamans, among whom five had reached the highest level. Some of them work with nurses and doctors. All of them heal with plants and the help of spirits. We even found a great shaman trying to establish a centre for basic and advanced training of shamans. This centre will also attempt to modernize and promote shamanism.

If the Inuit would like to follow this way—and I am sure that deep down many of them suffer from the discrimination directed at this ancient and fundamental part of their culture—they will have to deconstruct the current conception of shamanism disseminated by the different Christian religions and rebuild it with Inuit categories and values.
I will finish with a call for help to the spirits of the numerous Inuit shamans of the past who still live among us through the people bearing their names.

Thank you.

The address was greeted with reserve by some religious representatives and with unconcealed enthusiasm by the Arctic College students who were in the hall. They came up to me during the break and told me they were keenly interested in having me teach a course for their Inuit Studies program on the theme of “Inuit Cosmology and Shamanism.” This was the starting point for a fruitful joint effort.

I had already carried out much fieldwork on this theme in Nunavut between 1971 and 1997, particularly in Iglulik. This experience provided me with the material for a course syllabus, especially the data gathered from interviews with Inuit elders in that village in 1972. The transcriptions are in the second part of this book. The first part contains the questions that the eleven students, under my supervision, asked Nunavut elders who had been invited to the class in March 1998.

Bernard Saladin d’Anglure
Part One

Iqaluit
1998
My class had eleven students: ten Inuit and one qallunaq. The latter had spent several years of his childhood in an Inuit village in Nunavik. The first week of the course was taken up by classroom lectures, mainly in English with many quotations from Inuititut texts. After a few days on a general introduction to the subject, I divided the group into four subgroups: three groups of three students and one of two. Each subgroup was given a theme and had to prepare questions on it for the elders who had been invited for the second week. The students had access to anthropological publications on various subjects, films in the Inuit language, and illustrations by Inuit artists.

The elders were Mariano Aupilaarjuk, from Kangiqsiq, and his wife, Tulimaaq. Both are of Natsilik ancestry and had immigrated to the Aivilik area. They had known the last shamans and were the repositories of much of the oral tradition. Also present was Lucassie Nutaraaluk, from Iqaluit, the son of Alariaq, one of the great shamans of South Baffin. Alariaq was born in Nunavik where he had spent part of his youth. When his father died, his mother married a man from Kinngait (Cape Dorset) on Baffin Island. Later he settled there and converted to Christianity in the late 1920s. Finally, Célestin Erkidjuk (Iqiqjut), the president of the Pairijait Tigummivik Elders Society, and a cousin of Aupilaarjuk, took part in one of the sessions.
The week of interaction between the students, the elders, and myself followed a schedule of four hours per day over five days, entirely in Inuktitut. All conversations, and their simultaneous translations into English, were recorded on tape. This enabled the head of the Inuit Studies program to make an inventory of the interviews and have them typed up every evening. Every day, each team had an hour to question the elders on one theme. The four chapters that make up this first part are largely organized along the lines of the themes.

Aupilaarjuk and Nutaraaluk, the two main Inuit resource persons were both practising Christians, the first being Catholic and the second Anglican. Both were very active in social and cultural life. Both had personal knowledge of traditional shamanism because of the ritual injunctions they were subjected to in their childhood (Aupilaarjuk) or their very close kinship ties with former shamans (Nutaraaluk). They both belonged to Christian denominations that had fought shamanism in order to become permanently established. Today, however, we see much less reticence to talk about shamanism and the old cosmological beliefs among the Catholic elders than among the Anglican ones. The other Christian denominations that proselytize among the Inuit, such as the Pentecostals and the charismatic fundamentalists, have often in the past spoken out very harshly against shamanism, at times even branding it as diabolical. Paradoxically, these same Christian movements, which are more recent than the ones that have evangelized the Inuit for about a century, are seen by many Inuit as having practices that remind them of the shamanistic practices of past generations.

Cosmology and Shamanism
Shamanism and the Life Cycle: 
Names, Souls, and Spirits

Introduction

One of the best ways to come to an understanding of Inuit shamanism, angakkuniq, is probably by examining beliefs and customs about personal names, atit, and their relationship to the life cycle, inuusiq, and the way people conceive the person, inuk, the soul, tarniq, and the spirits, tuurngaa. Some shamans would be given a helping spirit with the same name as their birth name. Thus, when Ava became a shaman, his helping spirit was also called Ava—a small female shore spirit. Similarly, Nanuq, a Natsilik from the Naujaat area, was named at birth after a close relative. When the relative died, he was given Nanuq as a helping spirit. A shaman who was training him at the time gave him a new personal name, Qimuksiraq. If a shaman wished to save the life of a seriously ill child, it was not uncommon for him to give it the name of one of his helping spirits, as Aupilaarjuk will tell us further on.

A name was to a person as the helping spirit was to a shaman. It was a source of vitality, power, and social bonding, as much with the world of the humans as it was with the world of the spirits and the world of the dead. If a child was given the name of a living person, a very strong bond was created between the two namesakes. They would be called atiqatigiik (Iglulik dialect), sauniriik (Aivilik or Nunavik dialect), or kiigutigiik (language of the spirits and shamans).

Some names could be chosen before birth, others at the time of birth, and still others later on if the person’s physical or mental health required a change of name. Often a child’s personal name would be chosen following a dream by one of its parents. If a living or deceased person appeared in a dream and asked to come in to drink and eat, this was considered to be a sign of the person’s wish to bestow his or her name on the infant. These wishes had to be respected. Besides the personal names given to a child, there were affectionate little nicknames from the aqausit, or songs of affection, that the immediate family composed for the child. These nicknames, like the songs they were associated with, were truly part of an individual’s personality. Names, nicknames, and aqausit could be passed down from generation to generation together with the powers, either positive or negative, that they contained because of the acts performed by those who bore them.

Names, atit, and nicknames, airusit, are a major component of the human person. The soul, tarniq, is another. In the language of the spirits and shamans, it was called by the term pullaq, meaning a bubble. People believed that somewhere in a living person’s
body was the soul, in the form of an air bubble containing a scaled-down model of the individual. When the individual died, the air bubble burst. The miniature image then grew to human size and, in an ethereal form, went to live in the land of the dead. The souls of the living were fragile, especially those of children and women. Malicious shamans would endeavour to steal the souls of those they wished to harm.

Women were subjected to many ritual restrictions and injunctions during their childbearing years. They could nevertheless become powerful shamans. They were greatly feared after menopause, when only their tattoos distinguished them from the men. They were then believed to be very powerful.

Human life, *inuusiq*, was predetermined at birth. The lifespan of each individual was therefore determined in advance and people were supposed to try to live out their allotted time to the very end. Amulets or a shaman’s action had the power of bringing people back from death if their time was not yet up, *inuusinga nungunngimmat*. These temporarily dead people were called *angirraqtut*.

### About the word *angakkuaq*

**Where does the word *angakkuaq* come from? What does it mean?**

*Is it related to the word angak, maternal uncle?*

**Aupilaarjuk**: We use the word *angakkuaq* in the Nattilingmiut dialect. It can only be used for a very wise discerning person. There are dangerous and powerful things that can happen when you are an *angakkuaq*. I have seen *angakkuit* and I have seen an *angakkuaq tupilattuq*. You can wish to be an *angakkuaq* but you cannot just become one. You cannot see how a person becomes an *angakkuaq*. You cannot see it, but it comes upon a person and then that person begins the process of becoming an *angakkuaq*. Beginning to see invisible things and hearing things that others can’t, are the first signs of becoming an *angakkuaq*. The word *angakkuaq* has nothing to do with *angak*, maternal uncle.

**What does that word *angakkuaq* mean?**

**Nutaraaluk**: There were two types of *angakkuit*. Those that used their powers to kill people and those that tried to help by healing people. These *angakkuit* were even more powerful than doctors because they could revive a dead person. That’s the way it used to be. These are the things I have heard about shamanism. I have never actually seen an *angakkuaq* practising myself, but I strongly believe that *angakkuit* can lure wildlife. They can go down to Sedna to find out why the wildlife is remaining down there. They can ask why she is luring all the animals to her. Even the caribou can go there. If we had been disparaging towards the animals in any way, then we had nothing to hunt. We had to be happy about the animals and if for some reason we were unhappy about them, they disappeared. That is the best way I can describe what the word *angakkuaq* means.
When I was in Puvirnituq, I said that I was glad that there were no longer any *angakkuit*, but I was told that every community has an *angakkuq* and that *angakkuit* will always exist in every community. This was told to me.

Are there still *angakkuit* today that go after people to kill them, or put *hexes* on them?

**Nutaraaluk:** I used to be happy that there were no longer any *angakkuit* because the communities seemed healthy and organized. The communities were finding answers for their problems. There were *angakkuit* that killed people, ones that healed, and ones that dealt with wildlife.

My father used to visit Sedna to get wildlife. My father was a very powerful *angakkuq*, before he converted to Christianity. My father never tried to kill people, because he did not want this to be a hindrance when he was trying to save a person’s life. My father told me he saved a person who was very ill and about to die. My father was not shy to talk to me about his powers. Tunukallak was the old woman that made him into a very powerful *angakkuq*. My father used to help her every day and that’s why she made him into an *angakkuq*. Tunukallak was a very powerful *angakkuq*.

Around the time when the *qallunaat* first started coming up here in sailboats to Nuvuk, a ship was wrecked. At first the people tried to save them, but later because they wanted their knives and other things, they killed them during the night. They put long mitts on their victims so they were easier to kill. They did not know that they would have been rewarded for saving them. They wanted all the metal they could find.

**Naming, the soul, and shamanism**

Some pregnant women dream about a deceased person. Maybe they dream about that person because they want their name given to the unborn child. As the person’s body no longer exists, is it the tarniq that is coming to the pregnant woman in the dream?

**Nutaraaluk:** There are two children that I have named after having a dream. I used to really love my uncle Paujungi, when I was a small boy. He used to tell a lot of old stories to me while we were out hunting. Maybe he did this to try and keep me happy. I dreamt about him just before my grandchild was born, so I named this child Paujungi. I never carried my older brother Usuarjuk’s name on, although I carried on his siblings’ names with my children. I gave his name to the child that also carries my wife’s name after I dreamt about him. I always played with his hunting equipment and he didn’t mind me using it. My youngest son’s youngest son is named after my older brother Usuarjuk and
after my wife Piuliaq. My wife and I dearly loved each other. I think three months passed before we first slept together. In the old days, marriages were arranged and back then women were very reluctant to sleep with a man.

Have you ever heard what a pregnant woman had to do to make an unborn child into an angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: I cannot fully answer that question but certainly she had the option to shape the child and bestow qualities, such as wanting the child to be very capable and talented, or determining the strengths that the person would have. For example, after my birth my father verbalized things I would be very strong at, the things I would be very good at in life, and the way he wanted me to be. Certainly they could give the newborn child special abilities or traits they wanted the child to have. This was not necessarily done to make the child into an angakkuq.

Where did the name Aupilaarjuk come from?

Aupilaarjuk: I am named after my paternal uncle’s wife. My uncle had a very strong love for his wife. My uncle gave me his wife’s name after she passed away. He gave me the same love that he used to give his wife Aupilaarjuk. That is who I am named after.

Nutaraaluk, did Tunukallak give your father a special name when she made him into an angakkuq?

Nutaraaluk: No, she never gave him a name. Simply through words, she turned my father into a powerful angakkuq. She gave him part of her power. Some angakkuit are said to bump into a person when they are trying to make them into an angakkuq. She gave him one of her tuurngait and made him into an angakkuq. I don’t know exactly which of her tuurngait she gave him. My mother used to tell me that my father used to pierce himself through his chest with a knife made out of an old saw blade. I would look for scars but there weren’t any. I was told these things when I was a child because I was named after my grandfather.

When a person became an angakkuq, would they be given a different name?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t think I can respond to whether they would be given a new name or not but as angakkuit they could give new names to small babies or adults. Through their power, they could find out what kind of sickness a person had. They could give a name to a sick person, either to a child or an adult, by finding out who it was who wanted their name carried on in the sick person. That’s how it is among the
Nattilingmiut. I have a younger brother who was named by an angakkuq. He was very strengthened by this. He was very sick when he was a small baby. The angakkuq named my brother Kakiarniut. That was the name he gave to my brother, the name of one of his tuurngait. He was named by an angakkuq and he’s still alive today. You know him as Guy Kakiarniut.

What was the name of the angakkuq who gave Kakiarniut his name?

Aupilaarjuk: This angakkuq was named Alakannuaq. Kunuut [Knut Rasmussen], called him Uqpigalik, but we Inuit called him Alakannuaq.

Have you heard of Iksivalitaq? He was a great angakkuq who had a big kinngaq, a hill, for a tuurngag.

Aupilaarjuk: Iksivalitaq’s father was Alakannuaq, the angakkuq that named my younger brother Kakiarniut after one of his tuurngait names, in order to keep him alive.

Do you know how many tuurngait he had?

Aupilaarjuk: They never talked about how many tuurngait they had. If they talked about them they were afraid that someone else would try to take their tuurngait away. You have to be wise to be an angakkuq, as evil is always present.

Did he name other sick people?

Aupilaarjuk: If there was a real sickness in a person, that person might be carrying a name that was not right for him. The angakkuit wouldn’t be aware of this but the tuurngag would find out that the person shouldn’t have had that name. That’s how it was in the Nattilik area. We also have to be aware that there are different ways that the angakkuit would saka, perform shamanism. Qilaujjarniit, songs that were sung with a drum, were mistaken as sakajjutiit, the songs of angakkuit. These were not used to saka. In the Nattilik area if we were an angakkuq and our tuurngag, helping spirit, came and was close by, the sound of the tuurngag would come out of us. We wouldn’t be singing. We would be using the voice of the tuurngag. Other regions had different ways of doing this.

Have you heard of the term kiiguti?

Aupilaarjuk: If another person has the same name as me, kiiguti is how I would refer to him or her. It means we have the same name.
If you were named after an angakkuq, were the powers passed on as well?

Aupilaarjuk: Angakkuit had different strengths and abilities. Some of them could pass on their strength, but I don’t think others could.

Your younger brother that was named after one of the tuurngait, did he receive powers?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. Every time he talks and tells stories you can tell he has enormous abilities. He was named by a powerful angakkuq. You wonder if it was because he was named after the tuurngaq of an angakkuq. We mentioned how people came back to life. This angakkuq came back to life once after having died. He is no longer alive today.

Is it evident every time he tells stories?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. Every time he tells stories he is very eloquent. One time when he told a story, I knew he was very capable. Maybe we think of it as an evil thing now. I think if we do, we would be wrong. Of course, there was also evil back then that they did not like.

You were saying when your brother got sick he was helped. What was his name before?

Aupilaarjuk: Qimirluk. He was named after my mother’s father, who passed away before I was old enough to remember. I remember very clearly when my brother was very sick. I think the angakkuq could see that he was really suffering from the sickness. That’s why the angakkuq started helping my brother. He named him Kakiarniut after his tuurngaq. After he received the name Kakiarniut, he was no longer sick.

When the angakkuq gave the name Kakiarniut to your brother, was the tuurngaq no longer his?

Aupilaarjuk: No, the angakkuq still had that tuurngaq. I think they were sharing that tuurngaq and both of them were helped by this tuurngaq.

When he gave that tuurngaq to your brother, did the angakkuq become weaker?

Aupilaarjuk: No. He could still request that tuurngaq to assist him and it would still have the same power, the same strength. Uqpigalik, or Alakannuaq was very powerful. Not long ago, I was travelling alone and I was near his grave. I knew he had been a heavy smoker. I gave him a cigarette and asked him to turn the bad weather into good weather.
weather. His grave was way up high, and I gave an offering from way down below. Later on, I looked up into the sky and it seemed like it had split in the centre and the weather was becoming nice again. I was very happy. I knew it was because of the angakkuq. I told his grandson, Angutinngurniq, that his grandfather had done that for me, and that I was really thankful.

Have you ever heard of someone who carried on an angakkuq’s name? If they have the name of an angakkuq, can you tell if that person has any of the angakkuq’s powers?

Aupilaarjuk: My younger brother has the name of my wife’s grandfather Kukigaq, who was an angakkuq. He murdered people with the help of his tuurngaq. My younger brother has his name. He also has another angakkuq’s name.

What was the other name?

Aupilaarjuk: Kuugjuaq is the other powerful angakkuq’s name he carries. I saw him. He was very powerful. I saw him when he was tupilattuq, attacking a tuurngaq, when I was a boy. I didn’t see the tuurngaq, but I saw his hand becoming full of blood. I saw that personally.

Is it evident that your younger brother has the angakkuq’s power through his name?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t want to brag about how talented he is because he is my younger brother and we share the same feelings. We should be very modest about our abilities. But his knowledge, the way he puts words together, and his dreams, all make sense. It is very evident that there were abilities that were passed on to him. You can tell that he is probably carrying on some of these abilities through his name.

Could you recognize that these dreams were influenced by the person he was named after?

Aupilaarjuk: Through his words and through his dreams, you can tell that part of this power was passed on.

Could you explain the word mikiaqatinga?

Aupilaarjuk: It means we are connected through the umbilical cord because we have come from the same mother. A tuurngaq would call brothers mikiaqatigiyik. If I were to qila I would refer to my brother as my mikiaqatigi. 

Shamanism and the Life Cycle
Even though I am not living in the same community as my miq&iaqatiit, can I experience the same feelings as they do?

Aupilaarjuk: If you are not born of the same mother you are not miq&iaqatigiik.

My siblings live far away.

Aupilaarjuk: Your siblings are your miq&iaqatiit. A tuurnqaq that we wouldn’t see would say your miq&iaqatiit are somewhere in Greenland. The tuurnqaq would be talking about your siblings, the ones that were born of the same mother as you. If it were my mother the tuurnqaq was talking about, she would be called puuq, a bag, by the tuurnqaq. My wife would be called saniliq, the one beside me.

I also heard that if my miq&iaqati died, I would feel a pain in my belly button. Is that true?

Aupilaarjuk: Probably. I can’t really say anything about this. I have just learned something new. What I do know is that this is just a confirmation of what I have always thought. We have the same feelings. If something happens to them, we can feel it, as they are our immediate relatives.

If there was another Aaju, my atiqati, in another community, if that person died would I feel it?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. Either through a dream or some other means, you would find out he or she died. We might not know exactly who it is, but we would feel that something had happened to someone.

Substituting personal names from aqausiit

Did you have aqausiit as children?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. I was the only boy in the family and all my uncles loved me dearly so they used to aqaq me all the time. My aqausiiq names were also used as nicknames, Angutinnuaq and Anguti&&uarjuk. My real name is Aupilaarjuk. I was embarrassed about my aqausiiq until I became an adult.

When did you start using the name Aupilaarjuk?

Aupilaarjuk: My mother and father used to refer to me as Aupilaaq, even though I was Aupilaarjuk. Anytime my father wanted me to do something in a hurry, he always
referred to me as Aupilaaq. He never called me Angutiaarjuk. Only my uncles and other relatives called me that because that was their aqausiq for me. My father called me Aupilaaq or Aupilaaqarjuk.

What are aqausiit? What are they used for?

Aupilaarjuk: Aqausiit were used to show love to a child. When you love a child you call them many names, just like today. I don’t think this has changed from way back then. We have a grandchild we adopted from our daughter-in-law. He is now an adult. I love him so much. When he was just a little child I would aqaq him, saying, “taalangit nauk?, Where are your dollars?”, referring to his genitals, and he would pretend to show his dollars. I don’t do that anymore because he is now old enough to be embarrassed. When he was a small child that was how I would aqaq him.

Nutaraaluk: I have two grandchildren that I always aqaq. My aippaapik, my dear spouse, and my sauniapik, my dear namesake. These are my aqausiit for my aippaapik and my sauniapik. [Sings his aqausiit:]

1) Pillariapiiga pia piiga aippallariapiiga
Really my own. My real spouse

Aipparulumminik qiunitsaruluk
Cries more easily than her own spouse

Qiqunitsaruluk. Aakuluk.
Cries more easily. Love you.

2) Saunik saunik sauniapiruluk.
Namesake namesake, dear dear namesake.

Pisikkaaparuluk aippaapimminik.
Very skilled more than the other.

Pisitaunitsaparuluk saunik.
Much more skilled namesake.

Saunik saunittuparuluk.
Namesake, very much a namesake.

Aupilaarjuk: Some have beautiful aqausiit that rhyme.
Nutaraaluk: I used to be quite good when I was a small boy starting to learn. I used to be a swift runner and all my grandchildren have been the same. The child that is named after me is just like this. My namesake was quite modest about his skills. This child is exactly like I was as a child, very modest. He doesn’t show off, and doesn’t brag. I have seen this child running. He is a good runner, but he doesn’t show off.

Are the given name and the aqausiq name different?
Nutaraaluk: Yes. Aqausiq names are different from regular names. My grandchildren have different aqausiq names. Even as a small boy, I used to have different names in my aqausit.

Aupilaarjuk you said earlier that your wife’s name was her atirusiq, her nickname, not her atillarik, her true name. Was that a name that came from an aqausiq?
Aupilaarjuk: Yes. It comes from an aqausiq. In the Aivilik dialect it is arnakuluk, which means dainty, little lady. That’s what she was like as a small child and that was her aqausiq name. Arnallakkaaq was just her aqausiq name. That was not her real name, it was her aqausiq name. They really appreciated her as a dainty little girl, so that was the name she went by, but her real name is Tulimaaq.

Your younger brother is named after the angakkuq Kukigaq, your wife’s grandfather. Do you have any comments about a person being named after an angakkuq?
Aupilaarjuk: It is a name that has been passed down from generation to generation. That was a name from our ancestors and it was passed down to my wife’s grandfather. Also before Kukigaq, her grandfather, there were others before him that had the name Kukigaq. Then my younger brother picked up the name Kukigaq.

Qimuksiraaq, the powerful angakkuq, had Nanuq as a name. When he turned into an angakkuq, did he have a nanuq as a tuurngaq?
Aupilaarjuk: I cannot clearly say if he did or not, but he was able to grow canine teeth like a bear, and he could only do that if his tuurngaq was a nanuq.
Did the name they had before they became an angakkuq become their tuurngaq when they became an angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. Some people could be like that. I recognize what you are saying and I think it might have been like that.

Ava is another story. As he had the name Ava, was his tuurngaq an ava?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, that’s how it probably was. Aupilaarjuk is my name and I try to use it to keep me alive. It is not my tuurngaq. It is my name. It keeps me alive. I think that is how it must be.

The soul as a tiny bubble

Pullaq, bubble, or pullakuluujaaqtuq, that which looks like a little bubble, is that a tarniq?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, to an angakkuq’s eyes a pullaq is a tarniq. It does not have blood. It does not have bones. It keeps us alive. We are told that God gave anirniq, breath, to give us life. That is our tarniq. Regular people did not use this term, but according to the angakkuit who can see our tarniq, they describe it as a bubble.

When a person dies the pullaq leaves the person. They say when newborns come into this world, they receive a pullaq. Is this the pullaq of a person that died?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know how to answer this question. My feeling is that the tarniq comes from more than one place. I can say this to you. When our child died from sickness, my wife was really sick and we were out on the land, all by ourselves. There were these two bubbles in front of me that were hovering. They were both beautiful but they had different colours. I am talking about the boy that we had. This is not the first time I have talked about this. I’ve spoken about this with my family. I speak about this whenever I remember it. We have understood that the tarniq is not a physical entity, but I am sure I was watching my wife and my child’s tarniik. I could clearly see their bubbles. That’s why, even though I think I know, I often ask people what the tarniq is and what shape it has. I keep asking because I want to confirm my own experience. I can’t go any further than this.
We each have a tarniq. Do animals also have a tarniq? If I catch a natsiq, a ring seal, I have to deal with it in a certain way to keep other seals happy. Is that because they share their tarniq?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know, although I have heard that they have tarniq. I don’t think about whether they have one, two, or more tarniit. The only tarniit I really think about are human tarniit. I want my tarniq to be with me at all times. I ask that it remains with me all the time, even though I can’t see it.

Women and shamanism

There is a story about the first Inuit both being men. Are there stories like that about tuurngait as well?

Aupilaarjuk: I cannot tell you if there were tuurngait in that story, but there was an irinaliut in it. It is amazing how the whole thing started. There were just two men. There were no women. Sometimes I wonder if they were real people. I wonder sometimes about that. One of the men became pregnant. He was totally confused as to how he was going to deliver as there was no place for the baby to come out. The other man made an irinaliut, an incantation, just before it was time to have the child. This is what he said in his irinaliut, according to my mother.

Inuumuna usua una nirutuluni paatuluni paa paa.
This person’s penis let it be wide, let it have a wide opening, a door a door.

So the baby came out. He used an irinaliut to create that channel so the baby could come out and be born. I don’t remember the rest of the story.

Was he the first angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: Probably he was, but I cannot really tell you for sure. But those two were the first people.

You are named after a woman, Aupilaarjuk. Were you raised as a woman?

Aupilaarjuk: I was never raised as a woman but I was made to tirigusuk, made to follow many restrictions, as a tirigusiq had been placed upon me according to an Inuit maligaq. No woman was allowed to step over my legs when I was sitting on the floor. I was forbidden to wear women’s clothes at all but this eventually came to an end. Even though I was a man named after a woman, I was fully raised as a man.
My mother did not drink water after I was born. I don’t exactly know for how many days. I was born on July 22, when mosquito season was at its peak. My mother couldn’t drink any water even though it was hot and she was very thirsty. Even her tongue would be dry from lack of saliva. She did this for me. She wanted me to have a decent life, a rewarding life, and therefore she went through this great ordeal. My parents wanted me to have a fulfilling life and have good abilities even after my mother died, as I was the first-born son. For this reason my mother didn’t drink any water, although she did have some liquid. I don’t remember just how long she had to go without water, but when the sun would be descending, when the night was coming, she could scoop up water that collected on rocks after a rain. That was the only type of water she could drink. I asked her why she could drink the water from the rocks and not other types of water. She said the water from the rock would dry up and if I ever had an infection inside me, it would dry up also.

When I was born my father took me and with his words shaped my future. He said, “This is the way I want you to be. This is how I am making you. You won’t wear women’s clothing. This is the way you will be until I die.” He also said that when he died I was to be the only one to look after his body, the same way he was looking after me. I was to wrap his body and bury it. After three days, I could wear women’s clothing for the first time. I was to take my wife’s mitten and put it on. After that I could wear women’s clothing. This was done according to my father’s wishes.

Did you ever know of women who were angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: There were some. A female angakkuq was said to be a lot more powerful than a male angakkuq. I don’t know why. Qimuksiraaq’s wife, Pangakkaq, did not show her powers but she was more powerful than her husband. A lot of times there would be angakkuit who did not show they were angakkuit at all. I look at myself, it seems I know a lot, but when I talk about shamanism, that is not so. I am just passing on to you what I have known. What I give to you, you can carry on to the next generation and to our grandchildren. This is why it is important for me to talk about Inuit knowledge, so it will be passed on.

Was the husband an angakkuq as well, or was it just the wife?

Aupilaarjuk: There could be two of them at the same time being angakkuq. Ulikattaq’s parents, Saumik and his wife, were both powerful angakkuit. She was more powerful than her husband. We never knew that she was an angakkuq. Saumik was the only one we saw performing shamanism. His tuurngait were an akčak, a brown bear, and an aarluk. To our eyes he was very powerful, but his wife was even more powerful. Tony
Ulikattaq, the man who reads the news at CBC, his father’s mother is the one who we are talking about. Saumik’s wife was Tiaksaq. Her real name was Arnaluaq but she went by her atirusiq, Tiaksaq. Tiaksaq was more powerful than her husband. I think she died in Igluligaarjuk.

When would women become angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: I can’t completely answer that. Women could decide to become angakkuit by themselves or they could be chosen to be an angakkuq. These are the two ways I know. We cannot specify the time when they would become angakkuit. If a person became an angakkuq on their own, then they would be able to tell when they started noticing something. We cannot say exactly when, because the times vary. I almost became an angakkuq. It was in early spring but I can’t tell you what year. I can explain this by using my own experience. We can’t say exactly when someone became an angakkuq. If I were an angakkuq, then I could turn another person into an angakkuq. I could teach him to be an angakkuq and we would be able to say that they started at a certain time or year.

Could women be angakkuit even though they menstruate?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, women could become angakkuit even though they had a monthly menstrual cycle. A woman’s period would interfere in certain shamanistic rituals. If she started becoming an angakkuq as a young girl, starting her period did not prevent her from continuing to be an angakkuq. The blood did not hinder her. If the ones that are invisible are happy with this person, and she has the abilities and strength, then they would choose her as their angakkuq. But shamanism is not easily attained. We have to learn an enormous amount of knowledge to become an angakkuq, just like students. We have to be careful to make sure that what is coming to us is not evil. We have to make sure to check that it is not evil, before we ask for it to come. If it comes by itself without us asking for it, and we start noticing it, we are not to accept it right away. We have to check it out to see if it is a good tuurnqaq or an evil one. This is why I keep telling you that there are good and evil things about shamanism.

Piluqtuuti, do you know of him?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t clearly remember him, but I saw him once when my father and I went to Ivujivik to go walrus hunting. A lot of people came to see him. Some people that usually did not go walrus hunting came because they wanted to see my father. My father used to talk about Piluqtuuti.
Have you heard that since the angakkuaq Piluqtuuti never wanted to bleed, his granddaughter, who bears his name, never had her period?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, I have heard that.

Could a woman’s period weaken her power as an angakkuaq? Since a woman was not to have sex during her period and there were many tirigusuusiit surrounding menstruation, was an angakkuaq weakened by her period?

Aupilaarjuk: In the Nattilik region a woman who was menstruating was feared. I heard about two men who tried to kill each other with a knife after they met. One died from open wounds. The other one almost died. A woman who was having her period, who was related to the surviving one, followed the tracks of the man that died. This was to prevent the man that had died from retaliating. Whenever he would try to come back, the air would stir up blood like steam and then it would disappear. The woman had made it impossible for him to come back and retaliate by cutting off his tracks with her period. If this didn’t happen, he would have come back to retaliate.

So a woman’s menstrual blood was very powerful?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. It was very powerful. This is well known and is common knowledge amongst the Inuit.

Have you ever heard stories about women being more powerful angakkuit than men?

Aupilaarjuk: In some stories the woman is a more powerful angakkuaq than the man. I cannot tell you the reason why they were more powerful than a man. Women are an integral part of Inuit culture. A woman is a person you long for. I think this is the reason why they become more powerful than a man when they become an angakkuaq. I don’t know why exactly they become more powerful.

Are the angakkuit more powerful if they are modest about the fact that they are angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. They tend to be powerful if they are more modest about the fact that they are angakkuit. Your question is very important. If you are an angakkuaq, you are not to brag and not to talk about it. I am very happy you asked that question.
Following Qimuksiraq’s words, when a newborn boy was born, they said “angutaugaluarnguna,” “this one’s a boy, though.” When a baby girl was born they said, “arnarulunguna,” “yuck it’s a girl,” if she was going to be killed, when the baby was not going to be kept. If they wished the baby girl to live, they said, “qujana arnaugaluarluni qiturngiulaarmimmat,” which means “even though she is a girl, she will produce offspring.” Have you heard about this?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. I have heard about this because my mother had a baby girl. Because she bore a baby girl, her parents deliberately let the baby die. My mother was crying all night and the baby was crying all night. This was very hard for her. If it had been up to her, she would have kept it. Our ancestors tended to dislike baby girls more than baby boys, even though baby girls are not to be disliked. Maybe they thought the baby girl was not going to be able to hunt and would just be an extra mouth to feed when there were times of hunger. Maybe that’s what their thinking was. That’s what I think.

Have you heard if they named the baby before it was killed?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know. I can’t really answer that. They suspected the gender of the baby while the mother was still pregnant, whether it would be a boy or a girl. Maybe they started thinking before the delivery that they would let it die, if it was a girl. I have never actually heard somebody say that if it was a girl they would let it die. Maybe they would have prepared mentally for this before the baby was born, and once it was born, and it was a girl, then they would let it die. I have never really heard a lot about it. This was practised a long time ago.

Did this only happen when they were experiencing hunger?

Aupilaarjuk: It was not necessarily during a time of hunger. They were preparing for that hunger period. I think they thought they would have fewer mouths to feed when hunger struck the camp. If it were a boy, he would be able to go out and hunt for the whole camp. But at the same time they would also be saying that if it were a girl she would be able to reproduce and help connect families. For example, if you were my wife and you had lots of relatives in Greenland, even though I don’t know the Greenlandic people, the relatives would be the gain in having you. That is what they would say. I don’t know exactly why they used to kill baby girls.
Why didn’t they put the baby girl up for adoption? Was that option available?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know exactly how to answer you. I am not that old yet. But I have certainly listened to the words of my mother and father. It was easier to adopt out a baby girl. If it was a baby boy, they were more inclined to keep the baby. Even when our sons become adults, we still have a strong bond. We don’t separate from them. Our daughters go away from us. They marry into another family. They live with another family separate from us. When we get a daughter-in-law, that daughter-in-law becomes the replacement for the daughter we have lost. But I am always going to have that close relationship with my son. That’s how it is with Inuit. Today the relationship is a little bit different, because today Inuit tradition is changing.

Have you ever heard of angakkuit killing babies, so the camp would be successful in hunting wildlife, or so they would have good weather when they went out hunting? Did they sacrifice babies to Nuliajuk?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know how to answer this. In Nattilik we did not do this.

People affected by the evil actions of a deceased angakkuq

Which one of you had a grandfather who was an angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know if either of my grandfathers were angakkuit. I know Tulimaaq’s grandfather was a powerful angakkuq.

Was it her mother’s father or her father’s father?

Aupilaarjuk: Her mother’s father.

Tulimaaq, what was your mother’s name?

Tulimaaq: She was called Arnaqtasaaq.

Aupilaarjuk: It is the name in her aqausiq. Nappaqtuq was her real name.

What was Nappaqtuq’s father’s name?

Aupilaarjuk: My wife referred to him using his nickname, Surusiquq, but Kukigaq was his real name. I always use the real name for people I am describing to you.
Was Kukigaq a powerful angakkuq?

Tulimaq: Yes, he was. My grandfather was an angakkuq, but I do not remember him.

Aupilaarjuk: She was not around him very much, but I personally knew her grandfather.

Can you tell us about Kukigaq?

Aupilaarjuk: I can tell you about one of the things that he did that was sinful which became a problem for us. We ourselves lost eight children because of him, because of what he did. We say that being an angakkuq can be very rewarding, but it also can be very dangerous. I learned at a very young age that there were two sides to shamanism. We are the descendants of a powerful angakkuq who used his tuurngaq to murder someone. Because he murdered someone, of Tulimaq’s mother’s children, only she and her brother survived. They adopted our first child. Before our children became a year old, they would die. We are afraid of this in the Nattilik region. If a child died before they were a year old, we had a maligaq we had to strictly follow.

Our eldest child who was adopted by my in-laws died. The next child that we had also passed away. The rest of the children that we had kept dying on us also. This happened because her grandfather had committed a murder. That’s why we were suffering. I have one son who was able to survive because of the intervention of a powerful person.

Arnauaq, Qipanniq’s mother, loved us dearly. She gave us clothing so that our child could live. Because we could not have our own children and because she had strong love for us, she gave a piece of her clothing to him. Because of this gift of clothing he is still alive. Tulimaq’s grandfather was the cause of our children dying because he did not follow the maligait.

Is there anything that can be done so you can stop suffering for his acts? Can this be changed so that future descendants don’t suffer?

Aupilaarjuk: I think the only way it can be stopped is through someone very powerful. If I as an angakkuq asked a tuurngaq to kill, there is a danger that the tuurngaq might turn on me after it killed, and this would be dangerous for me.

Is it the victim’s tuurngaq that is causing the deaths?

Aupilaarjuk: The tuurngaq of her grandfather is the one that’s causing all this death. It got a taste for killing and became evil. We always ask for good tuurngait. If it’s a good...
tuurngaq it will have a bright qaumaniq. If it is bad, it will not have a qaumaniq and we should not ask for it. Earlier you asked if one had a pebble for a tuurngaq would it have a qaumaniq. Yes, it too could have a qaumaniq if it was a good tuurngaq.

Can you talk about the person the former Kukigaq was named after?

Aupilaarjuk: Kukigaq is my wife’s grandfather’s name. The person he was named after was very much a warrior and a fighter. His grave in Arviligjuaq had his arrowheads on it. The priest who was in Mittimatalik, the one that died in a fire whom we called Atata Mari, took all the things that were inside Kukigaq’s grave. My brother, who is also named Kukigaq, is also the descendant of this former Kukigaq.

Are some of the traits of that person’s name inherited by the next generation?

Aupilaarjuk: I have only recently started thinking about this and therefore I won’t be able to answer it very well. Kukigaq was very much a person who liked to fight and kill people. My wife’s grandfather, who was named after the former Kukigaq, is the one who killed with a tuurngaq. I’m not sure that this is the cause, but what you are saying might be true. I did not think of it like that before.

Have you ever heard that as he was a warrior and liked to kill people, that his traits were passed on to people who were named after him?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know if this trait of liking to kill was passed on to the ones carrying the name. But when we name someone after a person, there are certain aspects of the behaviour that carry on. I have a grandson who is named after my father. My father used to have a hard time writing. My father used to say, “When you name someone after me please put a pencil in their hand.” Now our grandson has granted my father’s wish, as he has excellent penmanship.

What happened to the person who took things from Kukigaq’s grave?

Aupilaarjuk: The priest who was up in Mittimatalik was interested in archaeology and excavation. He was the person who took all the arrowheads that were on his grave.

Was he not supposed to take them?

Aupilaarjuk: Inuit believe that we are not to disturb any grave.
What would happen if we disturbed a grave?

Aupilaarjuk: It would be very dangerous. It would be scary. For example, if I was disturbing a grave, I would be scared because it might not be me that suffered the consequences, it might be my wife, it might be my children. We wouldn't be sure who would have to pay the consequences of disturbing the peace of the graves.

My grandfather who I call my father had an argument once with an angakkuq. The angakkuq said, “Your sons will die by drowning.” Four of his sons have drowned. My father also ended up in the water, but he was saved. Palluq is my name. My cousin who also carries the same name used to be very close to my father. Three years have passed since my cousin drowned. My son was born the day they were out hunting and this accident occurred. What can I do to prevent this from happening to my son?

Aupilaarjuk: If our parents or our ancestors committed a wrong-doing it was hard for them to have children. This happened if they had done something wrong, or if they had been affected by an angakkuq’s powers. Even though we don’t want this to happen, if there were things that our parents or forefathers did, such as committing murder, then definitely future generations would suffer because of the retaliation. My wife’s grandfather committed a murder and because of this future generations are few in number. They die. My mother-in-law’s children all died except for my wife and her brother. My wife’s grandfather’s tuurnaq is the one killing the descendants. It doesn’t care about anyone. Even my wife and I have been affected by this. Including our first born, we lost eight children to sickness. It is because of her grandfather that this is happening. We have one surviving son. A very old lady gave him her clothes and she said to him, “I am giving you these clothes so you can have a long life like I have.” That’s how this was broken. Maybe you have to go to an old person and ask them to give a piece of their clothing to your son. That might work.

Nutaraaluk: I can also answer this. When you are an elder you like people who are helpful. I used to help an old woman take her sewage out, and I used to get ice for her. I used to love going out on a small little dogteam to fetch ice for her. The old woman told me I would live a very long life because I helped her. I was honoured when she said that to me. I was very thankful. Elders are always very thankful for everything that you do for them. The elders have very strong minds and I think what they wish for you will come true. This is what I personally think about having a long life. If I have terrible thoughts or negative thoughts, then I won’t have a long life at all.
Even though my son is no longer a baby, if I give him another name, can I prevent something bad from happening to him? Uniuqsagaq told me that his father was given that name so that misfortune would uniuq, pass by him.

Aupilaarjuk: The person who said that is correct. It’s very true. Whoever did this for him didn’t do it right away. It had to be something that was thought about for a long time. Although I don’t know that person, I really feel what you have said is true.

Nutaraaluk: When a child is born and keeps getting sick, maybe it is because someone who has died wants to be named through that child. When the child gets that person’s name, then the child gets well. I have heard that this happens. I have not witnessed it personally. Even if the child got the name after it was older, then the child got well.

Coming back to life

Aupilaarjuk: Nutaraaluk talked about angakkuit that killed people, but they could also revive persons who had died. I believe this. I mentioned Alakannuaq. He drowned and then came back to life.

Can you talk about angirraqtuq, a person that has died and come back to life? Do you know anyone who this has happened to?

Aupilaarjuk: I have no first hand experience about that. I do not know anyone who has come back after dying, but I do believe it has happened. That is their destiny. It is their destiny from the time they are born. My father shaped my nephew’s destiny so that he would be able to return, but I don’t know whether it’s going to happen or not.

The angakkuq that your brother is named after, did that happen to him?

Aupilarjuk: It’s not through shamanism that he will come back to life, it is his destiny. Sometimes, people were given that power and that ability. This may or may not be true. We don’t know all the marine life forms that are in the ocean. But we do see what is in the stomachs of bearded seals and ring seals. We can find what we call igutsaup siggungit, because they resemble bumblebee stingers. This is what my father put on the back of my nephew’s parka so that, if he was going to die before his time, he would come back to life. This was taken out of a bearded seal’s stomach, and placed on the back of my nephew’s parka. They have a beak exactly like a bird, I don’t know what they are, but we call them bumblebees.
When that person dies and comes back again will he be said to angirraq, come back home?

Aupilaarjuk: He would be said to angirraq because he did not completely die and came back to life. Kupak is probably a person that has come back after dying. It is quite well known that after a bad wind, a tent pole broke and hit him on the head and he died. His adoptive parents left him there because they couldn’t revive him. He came back to life when he was alone. It had become fall and ice was forming. He is still alive today. His time to die had not come, so he came back. He is an example of “one who came home.” I don’t know if this is going to happen to my nephew. We can certainly see whether my father’s practice is going to work or not, as long as he doesn’t have something which would impede it. There is one thing that you have to understand. We Inuit can have a beautiful life, especially if we don’t have anything blocking our way. It is very obvious what I think, and I’m not the only one who thinks this. If there were angakkuit, we could figure out the problems a person was having. Angakkuit would be able to find out what was bothering a person, even though the person did not say anything, and did not confess. Because there are no angakkuit to find these things out, there are people dying today. If we still practised shamanism, I think we could have prevented a lot of deaths. Since we no longer practice it, we are living an unsatisfactory life. Our present way of living does not help us at all. Inuit culture must be brought back, if it is possible, so we can live the way we are living today and also maintain our traditional values.

Before Christianity came, where did the Inuit believe people would go after they died?

Aupilaarjuk: I can tell you what my mother and father told me. They never talked about going up to heaven, but they knew that there was a place that they would go. They never referred to it as God’s place. They knew that the dead would go to another place. They also saw that some people who had died remained on earth. Some were evil, some were good. This is what my mother said. Only after Christianity arrived did we refer to heaven. But before Christianity, Inuit knew there was a place that was very bright that people went to when they died.

Did the angakkuit know where the people went after they died?

Nutaraaluk: They would know where a person went after they died, but they wouldn’t know where a person was going before they died. My mother used to say that shortly before her husband died, he said that he would go down below because the people there were very nice. They used their forefinger as an angmaaq, a flint to light fires. That was
the only difference between the people here and the people that lived below. They played a lot, and they were very nice people. That is the only person I have heard of, who knew where he was going after he died. Even the angakkuit would not predict where people were going after they died.

_How did they light fires with their forefinger?_

**Aupilaarjuk:** When something is lit in the Nattilik dialect we say _ingniqsijuq_. _Naniruaq_ is when you hold a light for someone after it is lit.
Introduction

Not everyone was fortunate enough to become an angakkuq. Certainly, many Inuit could have special powers or gifts, such as the power to stop a wound from bleeding by licking it, the power to interpret dreams, the gift of premonition, the gift of making game animals appear, the power of divination, and so on. An ordinary person could have these gifts but there was still a special category for shaman. The vocation of shaman could begin early in life, even before birth, as was the case with Ava, whom Rasmussen met in Iglulik in 1922. While Ava was still in his mother Ataguarjugusiq’s womb, a female shaman predicted he would become a shaman because he reacted every time his parents broke a ritual prohibition—and there were many of them during a woman’s pregnancy. The delivery was difficult and the baby almost died at birth, having been almost strangled by his umbilical cord. The same female shaman was called to the rescue. She saved the child, confirmed her initial diagnosis, and then imposed a large number of restrictions on the parents and the child.

Some shamans began their vocation later in life, on the occasion of an exceptional event such as a serious accident, the loss of someone in the immediate family, or a meeting with a spirit. Such people were self-made shamans possessing very great powers—in exchange for a shorter life. Too much power was dangerous.

Most shamanistic vocations began in adolescence and involved a training period under the supervision of one or more recognized shamans. The length of this apprenticeship varied from one Inuit group to the next, but it usually stretched over several winters. The first objective was initiation into the language of the spirits and into the conduct of rituals—both private and public. Then came the acquisition of clairvoyance, qaumaniq, which showed itself in a clear, brilliant aura visible to animals, spirits, and shamans. To acquire a strong qaumaniq, long periods of isolation and abstinence were needed. Some candidates never managed to acquire it. According to Aupilaarjuk, the shamans and tuurngait who committed bad actions had a very dark aura, taarniq.

The last phase of the apprenticeship was the acquisition of tuurngait, i.e., helping spirits. Many such spirits would solicit an apprentice shaman if he had a brilliant qaumaniq. Caution, however, was needed before agreeing to enter into a relationship with them. It was better for an apprentice to wait for his mentor to offer to share one of his tuurngait. There were all kinds of tuurngait: tarnit of deceased parents; great
mythical figures; spirit masters of different animal species or of any entity belonging to space (such as heavenly bodies), the land world, or the sea world; spirits of lakes, mountains, or rivers; and invisible spirits belonging to human-like groups. All of these spirits could assume human form. Some were composite in their appearance, with chimerical forms. There were also male and female spirits, giants and dwarfs [cf. Representing Tuurngait, F. Laugrand, J. Oosten, and F. Trudel, Arctic College 2000].

Once he had obtained the assistance of different tuurngait, the apprentice shaman could work on his own and prove himself by responding to requests for help from individuals, by caring for the ill, or by carrying out public performances. In some emergency situations, however, there was no time to organize a shaman’s séance, sakaniq. One would resort at such times to incantations called irinaliutiit, either recited or sung, or shouted prayers called qinngarniq. Shamans would use these, but so would ordinary people if they had been taught.

The acquisition of the angakkuq’s power

How did people become angakkuit?

Nutaraaluk: Some people became angakkuit simply through words, like my father. The angakkuq with the help of his tuurngaaq would bump heads with the person who was to become an angakkuq. Both my stepmother and my father used to talk about this. They both had been angakkuit.

Who was your stepmother?

Nutaraaluk: Aliguq was the second wife of my father. He was probably older than me when he remarried. My father was over a hundred years old when he passed away.

Earlier you talked about becoming an angakkuq simply through bumping heads together. Would the person have to agree first?

Nutaraaluk: What happened first was, the angakkuq would ask if the person wanted to become an angakkuq or not. Tunukallak was a very powerful angakkuq and simply used words to turn my father into one. At first when he was asked, he refused. The angakkuq knew that some of the angakkuit were evil and tried to take lives. She wanted to give him something that would protect him. My father was very clear in explaining how he turned into an angakkuq.

Aupilaarjuk: I can say that someone who is to become an angakkuq could make himself into an angakkuq, but this was regarded as more dangerous because he might go beyond what was acceptable and shorten his life. If a person who had the potential to be an
angakkuq agreed, then he could be turned into one by an angakkuq. He might be given one of the angakkuq’s tuurngait, and others could also come from somewhere else. This is what I know about angakkuit.

Did only those who were destined to become angakkuit, become angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: Although some were destined to become angakkuit, others were told not to become one. My father didn’t want me to become an angakkuq but I almost became one. Nobody helped me. When a person is becoming an angakkuq, it is very difficult to sleep. There is a sense of euphoria. When the person is sleeping, even though you can’t see it, it seems that something is emanating from them and it is wonderful. When I told my father about this, he didn’t want me to become an angakkuq because he thought it might shorten my life. He said that because of my quick temper I might kill someone. If I were to become an angakkuq, and I thought I was powerful, I might mistreat a person, and someone might take revenge on me. This is an aspect of shamanism that we feared.

Would it be possible to tell if a young child would grow up to become wise?

Aupilaarjuk: I think you can see this through their behaviour and how they do things.

According to some sources Alariaq felt this profound emotion. Were only those who experienced ilungiqsurniq given qaumaniq to become angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: I can say this. Even if one were a child, if he had experienced profound emotion, he had an unseen entity that loved him. He would be able to receive qaumaniq, but not everyone receives it. This is what I was told. If I came across a child who was an orphan and was being mistreated, I was not to mistreat the child and I should try and help him. This child could have an unseen entity protecting him. If a very old person does not have anyone to give him assistance, I should try and help him because he also could have an invisible entity protecting him. This entity is able to prolong someone’s life through gratitude. It would prolong my life and even my grandchildren’s due to its gratitude.

Nutaraaluk, was your father an orphan?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, he lost his father. His father was out walrus hunting at an ulli, a place where walrus bask. When they got close enough to the walrus, they would harpoon it and tie the other end of the rope to a rock. The rope must have gotten wet and tangled around his foot, and that was how my father’s father died. My father was then taken
care of by his uncles. Inugjuaraarjuk must have taken my father’s mother as his wife. When my father was older he was made into an *angakkuaq* by Tunukallak. He was very open about talking about becoming and being an *angakkuaq*. He tried out his powers once on a bull caribou. He did something to its intestines and then asked his son-in-law and his uncle to cut up the caribou. He killed the bull caribou with his powers and so he found out that he did possess powers but he never used them to kill people. If he did, it would make it impossible for him to save someone who was dying. He did save someone who was dying because he wanted that person to live.

*In the old days before Christianity, if you were born crippled, were you destined to become an angakkuaq?*

**Nutaraaluk:** It was only after my parents had turned to Christianity, after they had encountered Reverend Peck in Kinngait and after there was more then one *qallunaat* at the Hudson’s Bay Company, but after there were no more whalers, that I was born.

*If someone had been born earlier, would they have been an angakkuaq because their mid-section was crippled?*

**Nutaraaluk:** Maybe they would have just died. I think I was a sign of the Creator’s powers and that my healing was not done through shamanism. My father had already given up his *tuurngait* by the time I was born. When my father still lived in Nunavik, before they moved to Kinngait, he had given up his *tuurngait*. He used to be a very powerful *angakkuaq*. He never performed evil shamanism against other people. He didn’t want to be unsuccessful when he would try to save a sick person. Some *angakkuit* were unable to save sick people even if they tried, if they had used their powers to kill people. If they tried to kill someone and they weren’t successful, that *tuurnguoj* could come back and kill the *angakkuaq* himself, or his relatives.

**Aupilaarjuk:** I mentioned there was both good and evil about shamanism. We feared the evil aspect of shamanism. That’s why a person has to be very wise if he has an *angakkuaq*’s powers. If I saw myself as a powerful *angakkuaq* and I killed someone with my *tuurngaq*, it could come back and kill me as well. That’s why it is so dangerous to use shamanism for evil purposes. We were encouraged to use the good aspects so that we would be successful in healing sick people.

**Qaumaniq, aura and light**

*How did they receive qaumaniq?*

**Nutaraaluk:** *Angakkuit* are said to have *qaumaniq*. The *angakkuit* would try to take away each other’s *qaumaniq*. My stepmother had an experience where an *angakkuaq* was trying
to take hers away. The other angakkuq's tuurngaq was present in human form holding a bucket that was tipping towards itself, away from my stepmother. The more the bucket tipped, the more my stepmother's qaumaniq would be pulled away from her. My mother's tuurngaq was also in human form, crouched behind her. When it seemed that the other angakkuq's tuurngaq was about to succeed in pulling out her qaumaniq using the bucket, my stepmother's tuurngaq removed her kamiik and pounced at the other tuurngaq. The other tuurngaq moved out of the way. If my stepmother’s tuurngaq had succeeded in knocking over the other angakkuq's tuurngaq the angakkuq would have died. Alurut's husband, the other angakkuq said, "ajai." Alurut thought he didn't know anything. He almost killed himself when the tuurngaq came back and turned on him. The angakkuit who use ilisiirniutit and tuurngaat to kill other people are said to die when whomever they are trying to kill is too strong for them. With some they succeed. When they find that the person they are trying to kill is too powerful, their tuurngaq can turn on them and kill them instead.

You were mentioning that some of the angakkuit had very short life spans.

Aupilaarjuk: For example, if I was an angakkuq trying to take away another angakkuq’s qaumaniq and that angakkuq found out, he could retaliate. Of course, the tuurngaq that I had sent, although it is my tuurngaq, is not going to have any feelings for me, and it could turn on me instead. It doesn’t think like a human being. That’s why my father urged me not to become an angakkuq because I have a very short temper, and becoming an angakkuq could shorten my life. I think Nutaraaluk described it beautifully. That’s what was feared about shamanism. There is qaumaniq and there is taarniq.

The angakkuit had qaumaniq. Did they also have taarniq?

Aupilaarjuk: My father said before that some angakkuit had very bright, powerful qaumaniit and when the qaumaniit were too powerful they would shorten the life span of the angakkuq. He thought that qaumaniq came from God because Jesus was the only true light. Some had very powerful qaumaniit that were given by God. A long time ago, before Christianity, Inuit had their own beliefs. I think these beliefs came from the Creator. I think they were destined to change and today we have seen the change. But we have to hang on to the good aspects of our beliefs. For example, we have always been told not to commit suicide because we know we have a taarniq. We believe and practice Christianity, but despite that, suicide is out of control. God did not create us to do that. Inuit have always been told not to commit suicide. Of course, when a person was old and tired, and was no longer able to see, then they might commit suicide. In the old days this was very rare. Today, I wonder how we can work together to combat this?
Can you explain a bit more about taarniq?

Nutaraaluk: Some of the angakkuit might have gone through danger but I think that they each had a qaumaniq that helped them. Once, some hunters were going through bad weather. Their wives were with them in the boats when they all drowned. When night came this bright light went up straight into the sky. I think this came from the people who drowned.

Nowadays, I think some people who drown could be saved but there are people, the so-called experts, who are unaware of certain procedures. There was a person I knew whom Simigaq and I found drowned in a lake. He was dead. He had been trying to get a piece of wood in the lake. We pulled him by his legs and put him on his stomach on top of a small hill. We positioned him so that no one would be in front of his head. When bubbles started coming out his mouth, no one was to wipe them off. I didn’t think he was going to come back to life but he did.

It is the belief that if you wipe off the bubbles it would take away the anirniq. Even though it seems like you should wipe off those bubbles, doing so would take away the anirniq, the air. Also, no one should be in front of a person who has just drowned. This practice still needs to be followed today. This has been passed on to us from our ancestors.

There used to be qaumaniq. Was there also taarniq?

Aupilaarjuk: My father used to talk about this. Some angakkuit had taarniq, especially if they were evil, angakkuitianngittuq, not all that good, naammaluanngittuq. The other angakkuit could tell by the dimness of their qaumaniq that these angakkuit were naammaluanngittuq, and they knew to be careful with them. Some of them had a lot of qaumaniq. They weren’t allowed to check out each other, tirliijainiq. Tirliijainiq is when one angakkuq checked up on another angakkuq to see how powerful he was. This was also dangerous. Some had a lot of qaumaniq. The others could see this without having to check them out. Today, if we think of the angakkuit as being in darkness, taaqtumiittut, we might be wrong, because back then there was also a lot of qaumaniq.

Have you heard about taarniq and qaumaniq?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, I have heard about it. My stepmother and my father were very open about their shamanistic practices. When I was very young and just married, we used to live with them in an iglu and they used to tell stories openly. I told you the story about how my stepmother’s qaumaniq was being pulled into a bucket by another angakkuq’s tuurnaq.
How did they get their tuurngagq?

Aupilaarjuk: I cannot say if they asked for them. But I can tell you what I have experienced and what I have seen. Once I had a vision of a qallunaaq. I was very happy to meet this person even though I didn’t know him. I wanted to keep talking and speaking English even though I didn’t understand what I was saying. After this, when I used to get together with my mother and father I used to speak English even though I didn’t know what I was saying. I didn’t know where this qallunaaq came from. I had not asked for this experience. Later, when we went trading we went into the store. What really stood out was, when this supervisor and clerk were speaking, I could understand them as if they were speaking Inuktitut, even though they were speaking in English. Maybe it was because a qallunaaq had liked me and come to me, even though I had not asked him to. It was only afterwards, when I was alone, that I could visualize his face. The rest of him was covered by something that looked like a caribou skin. This person was glowing very bright, qaumajummarik. He later disappeared.

I don’t understand the word tulliliqtaujuq.

Aupilaarjuk: It would be like somebody covering me with caribou skin and only my head would be visible to you. The person was no longer visible.

My younger brother had a wife. His wife would be told to follow Inuit customs. I’m not talking about criminal activity, but following the maligait. Remember I told you people were not allowed to wear my clothes, not even my wife, when my father was still alive. My sister-in-law, while she was having her monthly period, put on my kamikpak to test the maligait. She tested this. Then she became fatally ill. Quinakturuuq is when a tuurngagq was said to be squeamish. It must have been able to tell right from wrong. We all know that a man is not supposed to have sexual intercourse with his wife when she has her period. It is also evident that the tuurngagq knew it could not touch women’s blood. This is what made my sister-in-law fatally ill. Quinaktuq is when a tuurngagq is being squeamish. I know this from experience.

They have qaumaniq and taarniq and it was evident that some of them were good, and they could be used to heal the sick. The one that tried to come to me used to say that it came from Europe. It said that it came from the black people. I didn’t ask for it to come from over there. This is what I experienced. Ever since it vanished I have not had any more experiences like this. Now I am just an ordinary person. I am following Christianity. I am just an ordinary person, now.

Did the tuurngait have qaumaniq?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. They had a lot of qaumaniq. Some didn’t have much light and some were very dark. The tuurngagq could be an animal, a dog, a person or anything. The evil
ones would have to be killed. They were the ones that would make a person very sick. Maybe it is the same everywhere. You can see all these diseases through microscopes, but I think it is the same thing. Inuit would see them through their own eyes. They would see something large. That’s the difference between the past and today.

_If I had a tuurngaq that was a rock, would that rock have a qaumaniq?_

**Aupilaarjuk:** If it was a good spirit it would have a _qaumaniq_. If it was an evil _tuurngaq_, if it had been used for murder, it would not have a _qaumaniq_. It might have been used in a killing before. You have to pay close attention to see if it had a _qaumaniq_.

**Sakaniq, consulting the tuurngait, the helping spirits**

_How did the angakkuit go about getting the tuurngaq they wanted?_

**Aupilaarjuk:** My father told me it was a very difficult process. An evil spirit could pretend to take the form of a good spirit. When you start visualizing the _tuurngaq_ that is going to be assisting you, you cannot accept this _tuurngaq_ immediately. You have to investigate first to find out if it is good or evil. As soon as you know it is a good _tuurngaq_ then you can accept that _tuurngaq_ as your assistant. But be careful, because they can take the form of a good spirit even if they are evil. So I, through thinking wisely, would check all aspects of that _tuurngaq_. Even though it was an animal, it could appear in a different form if it was evil. It is very difficult to determine whether or not it was a good _tuurngaq_.

If I was in the process of becoming an _angakkuq_ and another _angakkuq_ was going to give me a _tuurngaq_, I would know in advance it was a good _tuurngaq_ because it was being given to me. Trying to turn into an _angakkuq_ by oneself is very dangerous, I can tell you this.

_Were do tuurngait come from?_

**Aupilaarjuk:** A _tuurngaq_ could come from anywhere. It could even be a rock. It could be any object. It could be a living thing, it could be anything. It could be land, something alive, something that had died. It could be a dog.

_We heard from you that you have to be very cautious in trying to figure out if a tuurngaq was evil or good. I have often wondered if it was the angakkuq who chose the tuurngaq, or the tuurngaq that chose the angakkuq._

**Aupilaarjuk:** If we wanted a good _tuurngaq_ it was very difficult. It might have been easier if you were a powerful _angakkuq_. Even if it was an evil _tuurngaq_ it could appear as a good _tuurngaq_. If you asked it to be your _tuurngaq_ it could very well be evil. Maybe
it would kill off your family, if it had been a bad tuurngaq who had been ordered to kill 
by a previous owner. Tuurngait that had previously had other owners could become 
someone else’s tuurngaq. Nuavgiriq had several owners. It used to have sexual 
intercourse with women. I know that it was used to make advances to women, because 
my wife’s grandfather told me. If you wanted a tuurngaq it might be someone you knew 
who had passed away, like your parents. You shouldn’t have bad thoughts about them, 
and if they are trying to help you, you have to accept them. But if we start noticing 
another tuurngaq approaching us, then we have to try to find out what it is. If we know 
an elder who is knowledgeable, we can consult them and they can tell, through what we 
say and from our behaviour, even if they can’t see it, what kind of a tuurngaq it is.

Can you abandon tuurngait if you no longer need them? If I didn’t like 
one of the tuurngaq, could I get rid of it?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, you could certainly get rid of it. But if you liked your tuurngaq you 
didn’t need to get rid of it. We were told to get rid of our tuurngait by the missionaries. 
We believe that there is a Creator. We are physical beings. We have bones, we have 
blood, we have breath. But we should have kept the good tuurngait as they could have 
protected us. Sometimes I regret this.

I did not understand if the angakkuq would choose or the tuurngaq 
would choose.

Aupilaarjuk: How can I say this. If it was a good tuurngaq, I would choose it. As soon 
as I was clear it was a good tuurngaq I would choose it.

Would the tuurngaq come to you first?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, it would come to me first. As soon as I realized this and began talking 
about it, my father or an elder would be able to tell if it was a good tuurngaq or a bad 
one, just by listening to my words. If they recognized that it was an evil tuurngaq from 
the past, they would advise me not to accept the tuurngaq.

Was it very dangerous to accept a tuurngaq without having asked about 
it first?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, it was very dangerous. You could take on too much power and 
shorten your life. This is what we were afraid of. That’s why you had to ask first.
If a person wanted to become an angakkuq by themselves, could they ask for the tuurngag to come?

Aupilaarjuk: Some would be successful at this and some would be unsuccessful. I was really hungry one time. I was asking to have the ability to dream well and I was asking to know how shamanism works, but I didn’t receive an answer. I would have found the answers if what I was asking for would have come to me. Nothing came, even though I put all my efforts into it. On the other hand, I could become an angakkuq even if I wasn’t seeking this. If the tuurngait liked me, they would come to me. This kind of angakkuq is very powerful and has great abilities. But if I became an angakkuq that way, I was warned not to exercise my powers too much, because my life could be shortened.

Could too many tuurngait shorten your life because one of them might try to get back at you?

Aupilaarjuk: If I was using a lot of powerful tuurngait my physical being would not be able to handle the power. It is only when your body is very strong that you can control them.

Sometimes there are people who we refer to as mentally challenged. Could there be a person like this that was an angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: What do you mean mentally challenged?

For example, people who had been listening to voices and spirits. Some people who are distressed start listening to voices. Did these people become angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know. I can’t really answer that. Now I am even more curious. I used to ask that question myself. Now I really want to find out. I hear voices myself. I wonder if the voices are just coming from within my brain, or are they coming from somewhere else? I talk to my wife about that a lot. You hear voices and there is nobody there, and I do hear voices, sometimes my name Aupilaarjuk is called. At other times they talk about the government, but these are not my thoughts. These voices that are coming in, I can clearly hear them. I keep asking, “Where are these voices coming from?” I don’t know where they are coming from. Regarding your question, as to whether people that hear things become angakkuit, I hear voices but I am not an angakkuq.
In Talurjuaq, there was a person that killed someone. She had become very strong. Have you heard about this?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. In Nattilik, uimmaktuq means losing one’s mind. Some of these people became really powerful and they became a threat to the whole community. My mother’s uncle stabbed his own wife because he was losing his mind, and he had to be killed. I think it was either his older brother or younger brother that killed him. This has always happened, people losing their minds, losing their senses, uimmaktut, going crazy. Some of them become physically very strong.

Could that type of person become an angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know. It is obvious that some angakkuit are being helped by something we cannot see. Maybe they are not helping the community and in that sense what they do is disagreeable.

If the angakkuq had a tuurnqaq and the angakkuq died, where did the tuurnqaq go?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know, but the angakkuq could certainly give it to the person he loved most dearly, or to the relative that he loved the most, if he wanted to give his tuurnqaq away.

Could he give it to another angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: He would either have to give it to another angakkuq, or the person he gave it to would become an angakkuq. But the angakkuit themselves do not want to give too much strength to one person because the life of the angakkuq would be shortened. With shamanism, there is good, and there is evil. If you start noticing that you have abilities as an angakkuq, you have to figure out which tuurngait are good and which ones are dangerous. You have to be careful. You can’t just accept a tuurnqaq right away.

If an angakkuq was helping someone become an angakkuq, would the angakkuq give or share some of the tuurnqaq with that person?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. Some angakkuit could give a tuurnqaq to a person they were helping to become an angakkuq. If the tuurnqaq approved and accepted that person, and if that person agreed, then the angakkuq could give him the tuurnqaq. Some of them might also get other tuurngait.
Have you ever heard that tuurngait had different levels of power? Was there a hierarchy of tuurngait?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. There was very much a hierarchical level. I can’t see them so I might be wrong. There were certain levels of tuurngait that were less dominant, and more dominant. According to Qimuksiraaq, Nuvaq&iq could go anywhere. He was not the boss, but he could go to anyone. He was the tuurngaq that could go to anyone, the one that Qimuksiraaq used.

Do they have a hierarchy like bears do?
Aupilaarjuk: They have a similar hierarchy.

Can you tell the story about the tuurngaq that was a dog that had absolutely no fur? This is one of the stories we have heard that is quite amazing. Have you heard about this?

Aupilaarjuk: In the old days anything could be a tuurngaq. It is hard to describe things when you have only heard about them. If I would have seen them myself it would be easier to talk about them. Some people were not labelled as angakkuit even though they were. Some angakkuit could heal people. Some just used their powers for amusement. Others used their powers for personal gain. There were all sorts. There were things that an angakkuq was not allowed to do. An angakkuq could use anything for an evil purpose. If I had an evil tuurngaq and I asked for another evil one this would be possible.

Maybe they would have tuurngait that we would never even think of.
Aupilaarjuk: I think that’s how it was.

We have heard about a tuurngaq that was part human and part animal.
Aupilaarjuk: I have heard stories like that from my father. Angakkuit are very powerful. Nutaraaluk mentioned that an angakkuq was not allowed to use his powers to find out about another angakkuq, or the other angakkuq might retaliate. That’s the way it was in Nattilik. There was one angakkuq who had another angakkuq as a neighbour. He tried to find out about the other angakkuq. Ijituq was his name. It was not Kappianaq’s son. It was before that. He woke up his wife in the middle of the night and said, “Qagviqtailijaujuq. There is someone whose explorations into my powers will now be blocked.” The other angakkuq’s wife came in and opened the door. She said that her husband couldn’t get up. They gave her the qanaq, the wood that was holding up the tent, to give to the other angakkuq. When the other angakkuq got up, his face had become
wrinkled and old and he had lost a lot of weight. He said that what he had seen ahead of him had incapacitated him. That one wasn’t so bad. The one that had fingertips that were on fire was very powerful. This is what he said. This angakkuq had tried to explore the other angakkuq’s power to see how strong he was. The other angakkuq retaliated and it backfired on him. One of the other angakkuq’s tuurngait had cheekbones that were seal hip-bones. The other tuurngait had fingertips that were on fire. His fingertips were red hot. Its name was Aumaaq. Aumaaq was much used as a tuurngaq by the Nattilingmiut. I didn’t think I would remember this, but as you ask me questions, I begin to remember.

Could an angakkuq have too much power?

Aupilaarjuk: Some of the tuurngait were evil. If I was searching for tuurngait I couldn’t use them immediately. I had to investigate them to see if they were good or evil tuurngait. They could deceive you. They could pretend to be good. You might think they are good when they are really bad. My father used to tell me this. When I started becoming aware of tuurngait, I had to be very careful to make sure I knew what they were. I wasn’t to accept them right away. If one came to me from a person’s ill thoughts towards me and I accepted it, not recognizing what it was, it was very dangerous. Either myself, or someone in my family could die. That’s what I keep saying to you. Being an angakkuq carries with it some dangers as well as some rewards.

If I started experiencing tuurngait, would I have to tell someone about it?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, you would have to tell the elders in the community. Even if I thought that I was very capable, my knowledge would be limited. My father would know whether what I was experiencing was good or evil by the way I moved, the way I talked. This is very difficult to distinguish and find out. I could be very wise and articulate but if I got drunk and said the same things, you would be very leery about what I was saying. You might be able to sense danger. Shamanism could be the same. Even if I were an angakkuq I might use an evil tuurngaq thinking it was good, because I didn’t know how to find the difference between a good and a bad tuurngaq. My father would be able to find out because he had lots of wisdom and lots of experience. He could tell whether it was a good tuurngaq or a bad one.

Did they use different tuurngait for different things?

Aupilaarjuk: Tuurngait are very different from each other and they have different powers. I have heard that you could take a tuurngaq that had already belonged to someone else. If I took it, I could also be getting something evil, by mistake. It might be
that the tuurngaq that I was trying to use had previously been used in a murder. There were tuurngait that were used for murder. Stones, shrimp, or anything else could be used for tuurngait.

Nutaraaluk: For example, any animal, even a lemming or a weasel, could be used as a tuurngaq in the old days. Even seaweed from the ocean was used as a tuurngaq. Anything that is in the tidal flats and the ocean could be used for a tuurngaq. The angakkuq was able to use them as tuurngait.

I have heard that it is very hard to have a raven for a tuurngaq.

Nutaraaluk: In the old days the angakkuit even used qallunaat for tuurngait, even before we had encountered them. They also used other races and all kinds of animals as tuurngait. Even though it wasn't an actual animal, they used tuurngait that had their form. Satan can look like anything; the tuurngait could also.

Did the angakkuit ever turn into animals?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. If they had an animal tuurngaq then they could take the form of an animal. Qimuksiraaq mentioned having animal tuurngait. Nuvaq&qiq, nunuq, and pisuktì were his animal tuurngait. Maybe there were others, as well. Qimuksiraaq’s older brother once saw him in the form of a caribou. He used to check out his fox traps and he used to come back very quickly. The older brother did not believe that he could have checked out his fox traps so fast. Qimuksiraaq told him that it was because he took the form of a caribou. Still, his brother Nagjuk did not believe him at first. After he looked through his scope and he saw a big bull caribou with a long beard moving really fast he believed this.

Was he using a tuurngaq?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, he was using a tuurngaq. He never actually said that it was a caribou tuurngaq. He mentioned having nunuq, nuvaq&qiq, and pisuktì as his tuurngait. He might have had more.

Was it a pisuktì?

Aupilaarjuk: They are the little animals that walk, but the tuurngaq refers to them as pisuktì.
Is it because they are always walking?

_Aupilaarjuk:_ Yes. The _tuurngaq_ refer to the land as _iqqaq_. _Innarmiitq_ or _mamaitturmiaq_ are used in the _tuurngaq_ language to say it is a form from the ocean. _Nuvaqēetàq_ is said to be _innarmiutaq_, _mamaitturmiutaq_.

_Do you know when an angakkuq would saka without being seen?_

_Aupilaarjuk:_ When a _tuurngaq_ entered an _angakkuq_, the _angakkuq_ would start to make the sounds of the _tuurngaq_ and use the language of the _tuurngaq_. These beings have words of their own that are different than ours. _Tau_ is their word for _Inuk_. A _qallunaaq_ is called _tauērusiq_, not a true _Inuk_, not a real _tau_. _Saniliaq_ is the term for wife. I am _isarutalik_, a man. These are some of the words that the _tuurngait_ used.

_When would the tuurngait sing through the angakkuit?_

_Aupilaarjuk:_ The Iglingmiut and Paallirmiut did this. In Nattilik we didn’t have those songs, _imngirniit_. In Nattilik what would come out of the _angakkuit_ would be _tuurngaq_ sounds. According to Qimuksiraaq, if I had a polar bear _tuurngaq_ I would growl like one, sounding like a bear.

_When would this happen?_

_Aupilaarjuk:_ When we asked the _tuurngaq_ to help us heal sickness the _tuurngaq_ would come. It didn’t just appear. When they were becoming _angakkuit_, they would growl, even though they were trying not to. I keep going back to how dangerous it could be if they got too powerful. I will always come back to that, how dangerous it could be. If I became very powerful and I had many _tuurngait_, my life could be shortened.

_Saumik_ was a very powerful _angakkuq_. He had a grizzly bear _tuurngaq_ and a deceased person named Aaluk as a _tuurngaq_. Every time he practised shamanism, the sounds of a grizzly bear would come out when the _akēak_ would be helping him. That’s how he used to perform shamanism because he had a grizzly bear for a _tuurngaq_. When he had the _Inuk_ as a _tuurngaq_, it would be an eerie-sounding voice. My wife and I heard this. My wife knew about this from the time she was a small girl. One time there were two sounds that sounded like planes. Children ran into their homes. Saumik had a difficult time trying to stop these sounds using his _tuurngaq_. The wife was a more powerful _angakkuq_ because she was a woman. As soon as she went outside these sounds disappeared. The _angakkuq_ were very capable.

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_Angakkuuniq: The Powers of the Angakkuq_ 47
*Irinaliutit, incantations; and qinngarniq, shouted prayer*

**What does irinaliut mean?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* It is similar to singing or chanting, which can either be very good or very evil. There are all kinds of ways to create an *irinaliut.*

**Can you talk about irinaliutiit?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* We were not supposed to know any *irinaliutiit.* I heard one *irinaliut* made by Uqpigalik. It was both very strong and very short. My father and I were the only ones present. Uqpigalik was a very old man. We were caribou hunting and at the time we were in a tiny iglu made of snow. I was just a child. Because I was not tired, I was asked to go out first in the morning and open up the entrance. That particular morning, this old man said that he would open up the entrance himself. He told me I shouldn’t do it. He said he wanted to see the daylight. I didn’t know he was going to make an *irinaliut.* It was short. He was singing it as he was opening up the entrance to go out. When he went out, we went to scan the horizon. There was nothing. There were no tracks. Then two muskoxen appeared. They had walked from afar. That was evident since their fur was frosted up. I don’t know how he made them come with his *irinaliut.* I don’t remember all the words that he used but the first words were, “*maniaqtuutaa,* *maniaqtuutaa.*”

**What do they mean?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* It means that something unexpected was going to happen. He used an *irinaliut.* It is said that when dogs were used to hunt muskoxen there was a strong possibility the dogs would be killed. The dog would be *manijaujuq,* sacrificed. In his *irinaliut* he was saying that the dogs would not be used to hunt the muskoxen. He wanted to kill the muskoxen himself. He said that since he had already caused the death of one of his son’s dogs through an *irinaliut,* he didn’t want another dog to die this way.

**What is an irinaliut?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* An *irinaliut* is very strong. I can’t really explain what it is. When we pray to God we use our voices. An *irinaliut* is similar to a prayer.

**Is it a request for something?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* It is a *tuksirauti,* a prayer, but it is not a *qinngaqtauti,* a shouted prayer. *Qinngaqtauti* and *irinaliut* are similar to one another but they are not the same.
Are they both requests for something?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, they are. I was doubting my knowledge, but through your questions I am reminded of things that I had forgotten.

What did they use qinngaqtautiit for?

Aupilaarjuk: If I had been stricken with illness for a long time, then they would use a qinngaqtauti. They would ask for the person to be made better. They could also be used if a person was really hungry and needed to get wildlife, or they could be used to improve the weather. If it was bad and I was worried about the hunters, I could use one and then the weather would get better.

Who would grant the request?

Aupilaarjuk: Probably silaup inua, the spirit of the air, was who you would ask.

Did Qimuksiraaq have a song for the weather?

Aupilaarjuk: I heard his song. I don’t know it but I’d like to learn it. There are people in Kangiq&iniq who know it.

Can we refer to aqausiit as irinaliutit?

Aupilaarjuk: No. Aqausiit are very different. Irinaliutit are not aqausiit.

Ilisiqsiniq, hexing

When the angakkuit were trying to kill someone, were they made immobile?

Aupilaarjuk: Maybe this happened to some. Nutaraaluk explained before about ilisiqtaujuq. I also have experienced ilisiqtaujuq. I have lost children to ilisiirmiq. It seems that I could almost see this person who had done the killing. When I confronted this person I said, “Kinguningnut utirit, go back to the one who has sent you.” I didn’t want this to stay with us. When summer came the tuurngaq that he had ordered to kill went back to him. He was unable to survive this, because after it had killed, when it came back to him he was not able to live, and he died. It is true that the whole thing can come back to you.
I would like to ask about siggajji, when out of enormous envy you come to a point where you dislike a person. It is not jealousy. It is when you dislike a person because of their abilities. Did some of the angakkuit dislike people?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, some of the angakkuit were jealous. I would call it tusujug, envious. Some people were killed by ilisiiqtaujuit, hexes. This was one of the dangers of shamanism. Some people were pursued by angakkuit. In the old days some people did not help each other. They did not cooperate at all. We don’t want to be like that. I hope that with the Nunavut government we are going to help each other out.
Encounters with Inurajait: Human-like Beings

Introduction

The notion of inurajait has never been precisely described in the anthropological literature. So I will borrow from Iqallijuq (of Iglulik) the distinction that she made for me in the early 1990s, with regards to the helping spirits of shamans, between human-like spirits, the inurajait, and animal-like spirits, the uumajuit. The inurajait are helpful and well-disposed to humans, with whom they like to enter into relationships. The uumajuit are more ambivalent and easily become aggressive. Ernest Burch (1971) confirms this last point in the beliefs of the Inupiat of North Alaska: “Theoretically, any empirical animal can have a giant nonempirical counterpart [...] these creatures are all regarded as highly dangerous...”

According to the Inuit of Iglulik, the inurajait would include certain descendents of Uinigunasittuq and her dog companion. Some of these descendents are the ijirait, beings who live inland and are close to the caribou. Others are the inugarulligait, a dwarfish people who live as the Inuit do. The inurajait also include the tarriassuit, a people who live inside rocks along the fjords of North Baffin. On the west coast of Nunavik and on the Belcher Islands, the name tuurngait is given to invisible beings who have fairly similar properties to those of the above spirits. Again, we lack systematic region-by-region inventories. Most inurajait love humans and wish to form lasting affectionate relationships with them. There are many stories of humans who have gone to live with ijirait (Iglulik area), tarriassuit (Kangiqtugaapik area), or tuurngait (Belcher Islands), and who have had children with them. These spirits are often found among the helping spirits of shamans. They are usually invisible to humans, unless they wish to be seen and enter into contact with them. Shamans, however, have the ability to see them. At times, humans will see the traces that some inurajait have left on the ground. Most often, however, these traces are said to disappear very quickly. It is said that the places where the spirits are most easily met are tumitaittuq, places without any footprints or tracks.

Spirits, like animals, come in different sizes. There are dwarfs, inugarulligait, and there are giants, inukpait or inukpasujjuit, just as there are miniature and giant animals. Thus, the nanurluk, a giant polar bear, is highly valued as a helping spirit. There are sea animals that correspond to land animals, i.e., that are their replicas. There are dogs or wolves that live in the sea. There are also composite beings, like the mermaids or Iqalu nappa (Nunavik) who combine the head of a human with the trunk of a fish. There are
animals like Luumajuuq, a wicked grandmother who tricked her blind stepson and deprived him of his first bear. She was punished and dragged down into the sea, where she sometimes appears.

**Encounters with inurajait**

*Can you talk about tracks? We would like to know more about tumiiit.*

**Aupilaarjuk:** If I was alone and I wanted to make a request to catch wildlife, it would make it a lot easier if I went to an area where there were absolutely no tracks. Why? We talked about how tuurngait could be squeamish around a woman with her period. If I went to an area where there were already tracks they might have been made by a woman the tuurngait were squeamish about. Also, if I were to request wildlife in an area where there were already tracks, someone who had done something they weren’t supposed to might make my request impossible. There is a reason behind all the piusiit, our Inuit customs. I don’t know the maligait of the gallunaat, but I do know it would be a lot easier if people followed them. In the same way it is a lot easier for me if I follow the Inuit maligait. If you choose not to follow the maligait, then it becomes very difficult for you. That’s the reason why I would only go to a place without any tracks to make a request for wildlife, so I could qimngaaq, make a shouted prayer, and have a better chance of being heard.

How should we deal with tarriassuit, human-like shadow-people, and ijrait, invisible human-like people, if we run into them?

**Aupilaarjuk:** I am unable to tell you about tarriassuit. We call them inurajait, human-like beings. I can tell you about ijrait and inugarulligait, little people. Perhaps Nutaraaluk can tell you about tarriassuit. The tarriassuit exist in east Baffin Island. In the Nattilik area we do not experience them. I can talk about ijrait and inugarulligait.

I have seen an ijrarq. I once saw a pangniq, a bull caribou that looked really different. The antlers were very different, really bent down low. I saw this quite recently with my son. I didn’t want to see this because I am a Christian, but this being was showing itself to us. I could see it through my binoculars. If it had been a real caribou it would have been thick, but it was very thin, even though it had the form of a caribou. The difference between this caribou and other caribou was that it looked around while it was eating without lifting up its head. You could tell it was very scared. From what I had heard, I believed this to be an ijrarq. Ijrait can look like caribou. These ijrait that look like caribou were humans that turned into ijrait after they died. This is what I believe I saw.

My father ran into an inugarulligaq once. In Aivilingmiut you would call it inugarulligaarjukuluk and in Nattilingmiut inugarulligannua&uk. There are two
different types, the inugarulligasugjuit, ones which become the same size as their opponents, and the inugarulligaarjuit, smaller ones. I am sure they are still out on the land, but we just don’t see them. Once my father was on top of a rock lying on his stomach scanning the horizon with a telescope. He thought he saw somebody and when he turned to look, he saw what appeared to be a small person. He wasn’t afraid of it. It started looking at him from his feet right up to his face. It told my father to lift up a long, narrow rock and place it on top of another one. He didn’t want to try to lift it, because he didn’t think he would be able to, but it insisted. When my father lifted it, it was very light and he placed it upright on top of another rock. It told my father that he should tell his relatives to come and see the rock and tell them that it was as big as the rock was. We never went to see it. My younger brothers and I would still like to go. It is located in the Naujaat area.

Nutaraaluk: I have never run into a non-human being or heard one either, because I have prayed not to experience this. One time, I almost ran into a tarriassuk and if I hadn’t been praying, I would have had to face it. There is an area that can only be climbed by a strong snowmobile. We were tracking caribou and when I got on top there were these fresh snowmobile tracks. I had to climb up without my sled. What I saw in front of me looked to be shimmering, like an ujurumiaq. I wiped my glasses and my goggles but what I saw didn’t change. My vision wasn’t returning to normal. I think I almost encountered a tarriassuk but I didn’t because I had prayed not to encounter non-humans in my life.

An ujurumiaq is when the sun is shining brightly on the top of the water. It is as if it is covered with fog, like a mirage. This also happens when it is very hot. We call that ujurumiaq. Even the top of a stove or a heater can get like that when it is too hot. I knew I was catching up to the caribou because the tracks were becoming fresher. I went back to my sled because I was afraid I would run out of gas and as I did this my vision returned to normal. That was the only time I suspected I might have encountered a non-human. At the time I had been worrying about my grandchildren. My son had been with another woman, and wasn’t with his children. I think that because I was worried, this caused me to have this encounter.

Another time I almost encountered an ijiraq behind a lake when I was with my nephew and Harry Tataqtuapik. Tataqtuapik had a problem with the ski of his snowmobile so we took the ski off and left it at Ippiit. We found some caribou tracks. We should have gone after the caribou at dusk, but instead I wanted to sleep. I didn’t want to hunt in the dark. After we slept and it was daylight, my nephew and I were working on the bearings of his skidoo. The early skidoos had boogie wheels and there were always problems with the bearings, so we were dealing with that. We knew that Janipu and his son-in-law were going to the same place we were, so when dusk came and we
were still working on the snowmobile, we headed towards Tasirjuaq to spend the night. We could see a light. I thought it was the other hunters. Because I wasn’t sure they had caught anything, I wanted to bring some meat over to them. I went over to where the light was, but when I got there, there were no tracks and no one was there. Because there was no one there, I just went back and we continued on because I wanted to camp at Tasirjuaq. Tataqtuapik was sitting on the qamutiik, and could see a light following us. Just before it reached us, it disappeared behind a hill and it didn’t reappear. Before we left on the Sunday morning, as we were getting ready to go home, the others arrived. They had caught caribou. This was before there were a lot of snowmobiles. I think when I was trying to find the other hunters, I was actually going towards some ijirait.

Are ijirait and tarriassuit different?

Nutaraaluk: I only know about ijirait. I only learned about tarriassuit when I moved to Iqaluit. In Kinngait we only talked about ijirait. Maybe they are deceased people’s tarniiit that remain on the land.

When people die, if they don’t go to heaven, do they stay on earth? Do they become ijirait and take on an animal form?

Nutaraaluk: Sometimes I think they are people who have died and turned into ijirait. Nowadays they are said to use snowmobiles. They used to use dogteams and even the kalirrangit used to be audible when we were children. Of course when you catch up to them, they are not there.

What does kalirrangit mean?

Nutaraaluk: It is the sound that a qamutiik makes going through the snow when it’s being pulled by a dogteam. When the runners of a qamutiik hit the snow they have a very distinctive sound.

Is it possible to recognize ijirait?

Nutaraaluk: Some people who pass away become qallunaat. Some of them just stay here on earth, roaming around. My adopted daughter who is now deceased, said “Atatavinira, ataataga ilaak, My father who is deceased, you are him for sure,” when she was given something by someone who looked just like her deceased father. She said this to a man who had been the stoker on a ship. Also, my cousin Suvigaq was given something by his deceased father as well. When my uncle Milia died, we heard that he was living down south. Some find homes down south after they die up here.
Can people see them?

**Nutaraaluk:** You can probably see them in human form for awhile.

Would they be wearing Inuit clothing?

**Nutaraaluk:** They would be fully clothed, just like everybody else. Some of those who roam the earth are said to never leave it.

Would they turn into **ijirait**?

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes, I think some of them turn into **ijirait**. There are some **ijirait** living around Apex. There are bushy parts on the tundra, **miqquugaq**. You know there are **ijirait** around there. Takunnagaq talked about this. He used to go and live with the **ijirait**. They would have a home in the tundra.

I don’t understand what **miqquugaq** is.

**Nutaraaluk:** It’s a bushy area on the tundra. There is no housing just before Apex. Takunnagaq said the **ijirait** have homes there.

Could you tell us more about **miqquugaq**?

**Nutaraaluk:** **Miqquugaq** is a place where there is a lot of willow, brush and grass. It is an area that is very bushy and full of plants. Any place which is no longer being used as a camp has more vegetation. The plant life grows back around it and on it. These **ijirait** have homes in particularly bushy areas. Their homes are probably inside the earth. **NUNALIQQAVIVINIQ** old camps, always have lots of plant life like grass growing on them. **MIQQUGAQTUQ** is the word we use to describe this kind of area.

Can you tell us about what Takunnagaq said?

**Nutaraaluk:** Takunnagaq said that he used to associate with **ijirait** and **inuunngittut**, non-human beings, and **inuviniit**, deceased people. He was very open about this and was not shy to talk about it.

What did he say about them?

**Nutaraaluk:** He just used to talk about being with them. He said that all the things that we lose are taken by the **inuviniit**. He said if I lost something and I couldn’t find it, it was taken by an **inuviniq**.

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**Encounters with Inurajait: Human-like Beings**
If an object that had been taken was returned, should it be thrown away?
Nunalluk: No. You shouldn’t throw something away if it has been returned.

Aupilaarjuk, have you heard about the ijirait and how they live?
Aupilaarjuk: I can only tell you that the ijirait were former people. Some people see them as animals, such as caribou. There was one man from Kangiqiniq who caught an ijiraq. He recently passed away. He shot a caribou that had really unusual legs, like kamiik without the patterns on the sides. This caribou had legs just like a human has kamiik. When he inspected the caribou closely he saw the mouth moving. The face was really twitching. He was scared of the caribou he had shot and ran away. As he went back to his camp a thick fog rolled in. The whole camp was covered in fog and even houses close by could not be seen. The people were scared because the caribou that had been shot was an ijiraq. Dead people can become ijirait. I can’t tell you about tarriassuit. I think we call them inurajait. The tarriassuit are also said to be people who have passed away.

Is it the souls that turn into ijirait?
Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know. Dead people turn into ijirait. That is what I have heard. I have not seen this personally, but I believe it.

If an ijiraq takes the form of an animal, you shouldn’t kill it?
Aupilaarjuk: You shouldn’t kill them. The angakkuit used to kill them. It was only angakkuit that went after them to kill them. Ordinary people encountered them, but they were not supposed to kill them. I saw one myself. It was a caribou and I didn’t want to kill it.

Was this ijiraq an angakkuq or an angakkuq’s tuurngaq?
Aupilaarjuk: It was not an angakkuq or an angakkuq’s tuurngaq. When an angakkuq and an ijiraq came across each other they would battle each other. If I myself, as an ordinary person, saw an ijiraq, we wouldn’t fight. We don’t have the desire to kill them.

Could an angakkuq have an ijiraq as a tuurngaq?
Aupilaarjuk: Yes. They used the ijirait as their tuurngaits. They used polar bears, ijirait, everything. Angakkuit can use anything to assist them.
Nutaraaluk: They were even capable of having inanimate objects as *tuurngait*. The *angakkuit* could use them also.

Would the *angakkuit* and the *ijirait* fight each other?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, the *angakkuit* were capable of killing invisible beings. Because the *ijirait* belong to the land they are not visible like we humans are. But these *ijirait* know what an *angakkuq* is doing and therefore would fight against the *angakkuq*. This is what I think, but I don’t know for sure. For us regular people, there is no need for us to fight with the *ijirait*.

Have any *ijirait* become emotionally attached to human beings?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know. I have never heard of this happening. But if I was an *angakkuq* and I had an *ijiraq* for a *tuurngag* it could become attached to me and become my helper.

What I am asking is, if someone was not an *angakkuq*, would they be able to be assisted by an *ijiraq*?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know. I think we can see *ijirait* even if we are not *angakkuit*. Whether they would assist us, I just don’t know.

Nutaraaluk, have you ever heard that if we started seeing *ijirait*, they could become our assistants?

Nutaraaluk: I think some ordinary people do end up associating with the *ijirait*, and *tarriassuit*. For me, *ijirait* and *tarriassuit* are the same. When I moved here the term they used was *tarriassuit*. In Kinngait they call them *ijirait*. In Nunavik they also refer to them as *ijirait*. They are just different words for the same thing.

Are the *ijirait* dark like shadows, or are they white?

Nutaraaluk: They can wear the same clothes that you and I wear. They can go to the store, but no matter how many times they shop the stock never depletes. Over time they can buy snowmobiles just like we do. When we had dogteams, they had dogteams. When we no longer used dogteams and we used snowmobiles, they used snowmobiles. I told you earlier that I had seen this snowmobile light and when I went to check it out there was nothing there because it had belonged to an *ijiraq*. I knew if it had been human I should have been able to see a person there. I was trying to find the tracks everywhere but I couldn’t find any. I knew there was an *ijiraq* that was trying to communicate with me.
When people associate with ijjirait, do they become unhappy?

Nutaraaluk: I have never heard that. I think some people see them and mingle with them.

Aupilaarjuk: He just reminded me about something when he said their stocks are never depleted. My wife saw a boat that she had never seen before. It was a really unique boat that we knew did not belong to our community. She didn’t think much about it until later, when she went back again, and it was gone. Perhaps this boat belonged to an ijjiraq.

Can the ijjirait live in our communities?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. They must be able to. We just don’t see them. But my wife saw one, and therefore they must be able to come into the community.

When a person starts seeing ijjirait, do they keep coming back to the person more and more until the person talks about them to someone?

Nutaraaluk: Most likely. As long as the person does not talk about associating with ijjirait, that person can continue to mingle with them. Kuutuusi from Kangitugaapik used to mingle with the ijjirait and visit with them. Takunnagaq is the one I knew who regularly mingled with them.

If my ancestors could see ijjirait would I be able to see them also?

Aupilaarjuk: If your ancestors could see the ijjirait the following generations would probably have the same ability.

Did mingling with ijjirait create problems for a person?

Nutaraaluk: Takunnagaq used to mingle with ijjirait. Sometimes his eyes would be closed while he was mingling with them and he had a hard time opening his eyes trying to get back to us Inuit.

Why would his eyes be closed while he was mingling?

Nutaraaluk: Some people thought that it was hard for him to open his eyes because he was looking at the ijjirait, who are not people.
Do people lose their appetites or lose weight when they mingle with ijirait?

Nutaraaluk: Their diet does not change. Their appetite does not change. The only thing is that you cannot eat ijirait food because as soon as you try to swallow it, it falls out through your throat. They can eat human food, but humans cannot eat theirs. The food comes out above your Adam’s apple; it just falls out. You cannot swallow ijirait food.

Aupilaarjuk: I have never heard that you can’t eat ijirait food. If I started to mingle with ijirait, I would keep my appetite. But if I kept it a secret, it would be obvious to others that because of my contact with them I was not interacting with my fellow humans as much. My behaviour towards other people would change. Because of the way I would approach people, and the way I would present myself, it would eventually become obvious that I was associating with ijirait.

Would keeping your contact with them secret be similar to having a nightmare and not talking about it?

Aupilaarjuk: I can’t really say. If I am having a nightmare I know that part of it is true and part of it isn’t. Some dreams can be very accurate and can warn you about what’s ahead in the future, perhaps something bad. I have eight children that have died from sickness. I used to have dreams where my house was on fire. This was a clear indication that one of my relatives inside the house was going to be stricken by sickness. I couldn’t explain why I was having this dream but it was a sign for me. Part of a dream is not true, but part of it is very accurate. When I would dream about this burning house I did not tell anyone. This is what I have experienced.

Have you heard if the ijirait have belly buttons or not?

Aupilaarjuk: I heard a story about a woman named Javaranaaq who had brothers and relatives that were ijirait. Ijirait like eating caribou fat and bone marrow. Javaranaaq’s husband said to her, “You always want to eat bone marrow and caribou fat. Go run after your brothers.” That was what he said to her. Afterwards when the men were out hunting, her ijirait brothers killed all the women in the camp. A woman who had a newborn baby was the only one who was not killed. She had been engulfed in a fog and was not visible. After this she began braiding caribou sinew to tie arrowheads to the arrows and wore her fingers to the bone. When the men returned they planned their revenge on the ijirait. The ijirait were killed. Javaranaaq was overpowered by her husband and was thrown to the ground. Her wrists were tied together with rope. She
was forced to run and then the rope was yanked so hard that her arms were pulled off. When her arms fell off someone said, “Javaranaaq no longer has arms. Her blood is spurting out, but she continues to run.”

Do the ijirait see fog when they look at people?

Nutaraaluk: They are probably able to see us.

Would you have to be an angakkuq in order to see ijirait, tarriassuit or tuurngait?

Aupilaarjuk: No, they are not only seen by angakkuit. Ordinary people can see them too. I saw an ijiraq in Tikirajuaq. I saw it as a caribou. Ijirait are said to be deceased persons that turn into caribou. You don’t have to be an angakkuq to see them.

Nutaraaluk: People can see ijirait. Some spirits of deceased persons can be seen by ordinary people. I told you about the incident when that snowmobile was following us. It was an ijiraq. At that time there were very few snowmobiles and few people in that area. I went over to where I had seen the snowmobile and it wasn’t there, not even the tracks. It must have been watching me.

Were the ijirait scared of ordinary people?

Aupilaarjuk: Most ordinary people cannot see ijirait. Even when an angakkuq is being attacked by a tupilaq, an evil spirit, most people are unable to see it, although some people can.

Why are some people able to see them?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know why. My wife and I are very different. My wife can see things that are not visible to me. Every time she says she sees things, I truly believe her. Even though she did not ask to see them, she sees different things. I can’t see things she can. This is something quite awesome. Some people can see certain things and some people can’t.

If you experienced an ijiraq coming to you, did you always have to bring out a sealskin float?

Aupilaarjuk: In Nattilik we didn’t do that. We did not have sealskin floats. It was only in the Eastern Arctic they used avatait. If an ijiraq was trying to get at me, if I had a kigijuq, a tattoo between the eyes, that marking would act as a defense and protect me. The ijiraq would be afraid of that marking. This is the way it was in Nattilik.
The coastal Inuit, when going inland, fear the visit of the ijiraq. To impress the ijiraq, the Inuit start playing with avatait, sealskin floats. The ijiraq being inlanders, don’t know what sealskin floats are, and think they are boulders. The ijiraq, believing that the Inuit must be very strong to be able to toss the boulders, flee. That’s all I know from what I have heard. Thank you.

Enoogoo
When people are talking about ijirait, can they hear us?

Aupilaajuk: I don’t know if an ijiraq can hear us for sure because I can’t see it. But they might be listening to us. We are not to make fun of powerful tuurngait and we shouldn’t challenge them either because they might be listening to us. Even though we can’t see them, they can probably hear us. That’s how I can answer your question.

Should we be scared of the ijirait?

Aupilaajuk: There is no need to be scared if you don’t have a reason to be. I have heard, and I believe this, that an individual who has killed an ijiraq before has a tattoo mark between the eyes. The ijirait can be dangerous. If you killed one when it was not threatening you, the others could retaliate.

The ijirait would retaliate?

Aupilaajuk: Yes. There was one angakkuaq that killed an ijiraq. The others tried to retaliate when the angakkuaq was by himself. There was one story where Johnny Kopak’s father’s oldest brother snared an ijiraq in the form of a siksik, a ground squirrel. Then he saw a person coming who was said to be an angakkuaq and he didn’t know what to do, so he covered his face with the rope he had used to snare the siksik because he had nothing else to use. The angakkuaq, who was also an ijiraq, had come to retaliate but when
it got closer to him, it fled as soon as it saw his face. Maybe the *ijiraq* was scared. It started running away. The hunter started pursuing it even though he had been scared of it when he thought it was an *angakkuq*. They were in a very wide deep valley. The *ijiraq* jumped from a hill on one side of the valley to a hill on the other side. The hunter tried to do the same thing and also jumped right across the valley. The story was told to me by my father. *Ijirai* will retaliate when one of them is killed.

**What was the hunter’s name?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* One of Johnny Kopak’s father’s older brother’s is Sik&utuuq but Itirusak is the one I am talking about.

**Would the *ijirait* try to retaliate?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* Yes, they would retaliate, but only against some people. You should not bother them because they are very nice beings. That’s what my father told me.

**If they retaliated, what could we do to protect ourselves against them?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* I don’t know what you could do. I probably would request a *tuurngag* to help protect myself against them. Something made that hunter aware that he had to wrap his face with the rope and that’s when the *ijiraq* started running away. Maybe because he wrapped his face, he became ugly in the eyes of the *ijiraq*. Being an *angakkuq* himself, maybe this hunter’s *tuurngag* was assisting him as well. Some *angakkuit* were very powerful because of their *tuurngait*. I believe this.

**If an *ijiraq* is trying to entice you to go with it, what should you do?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* If you see an *ijiraq* and it isn’t bothering you, you should leave it alone.

**Can an *ijiraq* make a person feel disoriented so the person becomes lost?**

*Aupilaarjuk:* If they are doing that, there has to be a reason why. If a hunter didn’t come back from hunting, there would be a reason why the *ijiraq* went after the hunter. For example, if I was really ill because I had done something really terrible in the past that I had not confessed, an *angakkuq* could not help me. If an *ijiraq* went after a person and he did not come back, then there was a reason for him not to come back.

There are two stories about two men born at about the same time. One of them was raised properly but the other one was not raised as well. One man killed the other when they were out hunting. The mother of the murderer called out through the window to the woman whose son had been murdered and said, “My son killed your son.” The woman replied that her husband was not a very good hunter. She was not afraid of her
son starving, but she was worried about him getting thirsty. She said, “When he gets thirsty he’ll come back.” That’s what the mother answered after her son had been killed. I forget how many days they slept. It might have been three days or five. When people die there is a period of three days when you would have to agliqtuq, abstain from doing anything. When the waiting period was over, the murdered man was thirsty and came back. If a person did not have a reason to return he would not return. The person that died came back and took revenge on the person that killed him. The mother of the man who had been murdered went to the other mother and told her that her murdered son had come back, and that he had killed her son. The woman said that her husband was very good at hunting so she was not afraid of her son going thirsty, but that she was worried about him being hungry. She said, “He’ll come back when he gets hungry.” When the waiting period was over he came to the window and said, “The food that I’m carrying is too heavy. I will not be coming home,” and when he left he never returned.

What does agliqtuq mean?

Aupilaarjuk: I will explain it to you. If I was asked not to eat for a certain number of days, and I ate, I would be committing a wrongdoing. That is agliqtuq, following a prohibition. In the Nattilik dialect it is tirigusuktuq or pitnailsjuq. That’s what it means.

Sometimes people see beings inside a house. Are these ijirait?

Aupilaarjuk: I think there are beings amongst us all the time. They are not scary or dangerous. You can hear their footsteps. Sometimes we know they are there. The reason I say they are not dangerous is because if they were dangerous they would not be so obvious. They would be very discreet. That’s the way I think of this. You might be scared if you experienced them but I don’t think they are dangerous. One time in Kangiqsiniq my wife was out visiting and I was in the porch. I could see something out of the corner of my eye and I turned and I saw it going out. I followed, as I hadn’t heard anyone coming in. When I got outside my hair was standing straight on end, and I had a strong feeling of fear even though I am an older person. I try to be very confident and very strong but this force just overpowered me. That’s why I think these beings still exist today.

What should you do if you have an experience like this?

Aupilaarjuk: These days, if this happens inside a house too often, then we have to bless the house. This will settle the house and calm the spirits. In the past it would be an angakkuq who would calm the spirits. The angakkuq would find out if there was a spirit in your house.
Have you ever heard of tunnittuarjuk or kajjutarjuk, beings that only have a head and legs?

**Aupilaarjuk:** We used to be very scared of those. I’ve never seen them but we often heard them. We call them *apsat*. They usually come in family groups. Some make more noise than others. The sound they make fades as they get further away. We used to place the oil lamp on rocks in the *iglu*. When we were leaving the *iglu* for good, we had to take these rocks out because the *apsat*, which we were very afraid of, might live in them if we left the rocks there. The *apsat* could create a fire inside an *iglu*. If I was alone and sleeping on the land—the *apsat* only stay on land, they never go on the sea ice—I would have to build a second *iglu*. I would have to make a small little *iglu* right beside mine and put all my belongings in it. The reason I would hear them in my *iglu* was because I had built it in a place where there had been an *iglu* previously that had become inhabited by an *apsat*. When that happened I would have to move out of there.

What kind of sound do they make?

**Aupilaarjuk:** The sound they make is like something banging together inside the ground. When you hear this sound you know it is being made by a family of *apsat*. It is not really known if they are just rocks or if they are alive. They really do exist. In the Nattilik area there are a lot of stories about them. I think they still exist, but we don’t hear them any more because we live in communities now.

Would they be present at old tent sites?

**Aupilaarjuk:** No. It’s only in the winter when you build an *iglu* that you hear them, never in tents. You only hear them in the winter. We had to make sure we never left rocks inside an *iglu* not even small rocks. If we spent the winter in an *iglu*, we had to totally clean it out before we left. We had to remove all the stones and place them quite a distance from the *iglu*. You had to take everything out, and it had to be brought quite a distance from the *iglu*. In the old days, they tried to leave the *iglu* meticulously clean. I once asked my mother, “Why are you cleaning it if we’re not going to use it again?” She said, “Because the *tuurngait* might live in it, if it is dirty.” We had these rules we had to follow. We had to clean the *iglu* before we could move to another one.

Do we still have to do this today?

**Aupilaarjuk:** Oh yes! This has not changed.
Encounters with unusual animals

**Nutaraaluk:** We believe that there are beings everywhere. There are all kinds of creatures that live under the sea that never surface. There are even birds down there. Twice I had experiences with sea dogs. Even though I had a scope on my rifle, before I took a shot at this sea dog, it submerged. It had a black marking on its back. Its head was also black. It looked exactly like a dog. Even its tracks on the ice were perfectly formed. I went after another sea dog at a crack in the sea ice. I only saw its head. It looked like a puppy. It wasn't a big sea dog. Because I mistreated a dog in Kinngait when I was young, I haven't been able to catch a sea dog.

*Have you heard what happens when you kill a sea dog?*

**Nutaraaluk:** I don't know what happens but I think their pelts would be very expensive. There are all kinds of animals that live under the sea. I once heard about a weasel that jumped into the ocean and never came back again. Everything that lives on the land also exists in the ocean.

**Aupilaarjuk, have you ever heard stories like these?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** I have heard them. We don't call them sea dogs, we call them sea wolves. We have different words for this because of where we are from. The idea is very much the same. He just reminded me about sea wolves. They live in the ocean.

**Nutaraaluk:** The ocean has everything that the land has. Qallunaat have not seen nanurluk, the giant polar bear. There was one time I almost saw one. Out of nowhere there were waves. Somebody said they must be from an iceberg. When I went to see the iceberg, someone said it was a nanurluk that was on the ice hunting seals. It had already gone down under the ice by the time I got there. Another time, when I was a small boy, my uncle had gone to set traps. I used to go with him to check the traps, but this one time I didn’t go with him. He saw a nanurluk. Its ears, its nose, everything was visible. He could see the shape of this huge creature. They are bigger than large ships.

Qallunaat do not tell stories about nanurluit. Qallunaat also don’t have stories about Lumaajuuq, the old woman who was pulled by a beluga. Lumaajuuq is the leader of her fellow whales. Once I was surrounded by a huge pod of whales and I heard her surfacing, but it was not close by. She sounded as though she was very tired every time she came up. The rope that was pulling her was said to be very thick. It is only when the world will come to an end that Lumaajuuq will die. She has been called Lumaajuuq since she was pulled into the water by the beluga. She is still alive today. There is a reason why she is called Lumaajuuq. There was a blind boy that shot a bear with his bow and arrow through the window of a qammaq. This boy was not given any of the bear meat.
by his mother. Instead, he was fed the flesh of a dog. His sister would hide pieces of polar bear meat inside her parka so she could give them to her brother. When the loons returned for the summer, he asked his sister to take him to a lake and leave him there. He told her to make inuksuit to mark his way home. The loons in the lake held his hands and took him into the water. They submerged him in the lake until he thought he was going to drown. They did this repeatedly and then they asked him if he was still blind or if he could see. He said he could see the grasses way off in the distance. After he regained his sight he followed the inuksuit back to his home. He found his mother and his sister cooking. They went out whale hunting together and he used his mother as a weight. His mother became entangled by the rope attached to the float and was pulled out to sea. Ever since then she has been pulled by the beluga. She sings a song which ends with “lu.” That is why her name is Lumaajuq.

Could you tell us more about nanurluk, the giant bear creature?

**Aupilaarjuk:** There were some hunters that came across a nanurluk breathing hole on the ice while they were searching for seal breathing holes. Everyone ran away except for one man who was pouring water on his aglu, a seal breathing hole, to make it narrower and thicker. The aglu got smaller and thicker as it was freezing. He sharpened his harpoon head and his knife until they were extremely sharp and went to the nanurluk breathing hole. The nanurluk was in a shallow area of water, lying at the bottom. The hunter started casting his shadow over the hole to get its attention. The nanurluk looked up and began to emerge from the water. As it emerged the hunter started poking it all over. Once it got on top of the ice it was just spinning around because it could not see or hear anything. After it fell over and died the ice was dented from its weight because it was very big. After it died the hunter went to tell the others what had happened and they survived on the meat. The nanurluit were also used as tuurngait by the angakkuit.

**Did they use the meat and the skin?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes, they used everything. This is an old story. I don’t know if it’s true or not but my mother and father used to tell this to me.

**Nutaraaluk:** I believe it was the offspring of an adult nanurluk. It sounds like it was a cub, because it doesn’t sound like it was as big as an adult nanurluk.

**Was it an angakkuq that killed the nanurluk?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** No. It was a hunter that killed it. As it was emerging through its breathing hole the man harpooned it in the eyes to blind it and in the ears so that it could not hear. He even harpooned it through the nostrils so that it could not smell. Because it could not
see or hear or smell anything it was just spinning around. Because all its senses were
gone, it just kept spinning around and around, and it eventually died. This is a true
story. I believe this story because Nutaraaluk has heard about this as well.

**Nutaraaluk:** I think the hunter killed an offspring of an adult *nanurluk*. Around Ivujivik,
Hudson Bay is very deep. There has been more than one sighting of a *nanurluk*. Before
I was born, there were bearded seal carcasses scattered all over. I think this was done by
a *nanurluk* spitting them up. I think they travel the same routes as other sea mammals.
That’s why people know about them. I think *Lumaajuq* travels those routes as well.

**Aupilaarjuk:** There are also stories about *inukpasugjuit*, which Nutaraaluk would call
*inukpaits* in his dialect. In one story an *inukpasugjuk* had adopted an Inuk, and when it
was fighting a *nanurluk* it placed its adopted child in the ankle strap of its *kamik*. The
*nanurluq* definitely did exist.

**Sexual intercourse with inurajait, human-like spirits, and inuruqsimajuit, animals in human form**

*Can you talk about uiksaliit, women who have non-humans as husbands, and nuliaksaliit, men who have non-humans as wives?*

**Nutaraaluk:** Some people are said to have had non-humans as wives or husbands. In
the Kinngait dialect, *ijirait* is the word we use. In Iqaluit, they call them *tarriassuit*.

*Have you ever known a person who had such a wife?*

**Nutaraaluk:** No. I have never known a person who had a non-human as a wife. I have
only heard about this second-hand.

**Aupilaarjuk:** I am going to tell you something about having a non-human as a spouse.
We refer to this as having a sexual relationship with a *tuurnqaq*. We are told not to do
this. If you start having sexual relationships with beings you cannot see, that can have a
profound impact on you. We are told not to do this. I was told to tell someone if I
started experiencing this and it would stop happening. We are told to only have spouses
that exist physically. Any other kind of relationship is not approved of. I did not
experience this myself but my father told me about this many times.

It’s not like the person would actually have a wife or a husband, but a woman could
have a sexual encounter with a *tuurnqaq*. A man could have sexual experiences with a
*tuurnqaq* as well. We weren’t supposed to do this. Any time we had an experience like
this we had to talk about it. If we didn’t talk to someone about it, then we could get
stuck in the relationship, and become embarrassed to talk about it. Then we would not be able to lead a proper life. This was part of the advice we were given while we were growing up. It was the tuurngaq that didn’t want you to talk about it. We had to try to overcome this by telling someone about it.

**Nutaraaluk:** If a person had a non-human for a spouse, they would have a short life. I never knew anyone personally who had a uiksaq or a nuliksraq, a non-human spouse.

**Aupilaarjuk:**

*Aupilaarjuk, did you ever know a person who had a sexual encounter with an ijiraq or a tuurngaq?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** I haven’t heard of a person having an ijiraq as a husband, but you could have a tuurngaq as a spouse, although you were not supposed to. Throughout our lives, we will encounter difficulties. We are being lured to do sinful things. If you give in to these things you will have a short life. If you lead a good life you will have a long life. If I had a tuurngaq as a wife, I would have to talk about it immediately. I would not seek this tuurngaq. The tuurngaq would have come to me on its own. As soon as I experienced this, I would have to tell my relatives, and then it would leave.

*Would a person who was having a sexual relationship with an ijiraq, tuurngaq or tarriassuk turn into one?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** I cannot tell you if they would become one or not. But I can tell you the person would lead a very unsatisfying life.

*Sometimes we hear stories about people who had an animal for a spouse. Was that dangerous?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes. That was very dangerous. I want to be very clear about that. Having a sexual relationship with a non-human being is very, very dangerous. There are people that do have sexual relationships with non-humans and with animals. This is very evil and can have the severest of consequences. This is what we have been told. That’s why I ask you to understand it very clearly. This is my personal thinking as well. This is still practised today but it should not be.

*Do people who do that have a shorter life?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes, these people have shorter lives. Their appearances also become very unpleasant because this has ruined their life. That’s why it is very dangerous.
In the old days, what happened to those who had an animal as a spouse when this was found out?

Aupilaarjuk: They couldn’t hide it. Of course people found out about those committing bestiality, even though they didn’t say anything about it and they tried to hide it. That’s why the angakkuit were the ultimate judges. Even when there was nothing said, the angakkuit would know. The angakkuit would confront the person to make them confess, but if they didn’t confess, it would eventually kill them. They would have a very unpleasant life if they didn’t confess.

Was it possible for a human to make an animal pregnant?

Aupilaarjuk: I cannot answer that. I don’t know if human beings got animals pregnant. I think if this had happened, we would have known about it.

Do you know the story of Uinigumasuittuq, the woman who didn’t want to have a man as a husband and got pregnant from a dog?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, I’ve heard this story and I truly believe it. My wife and I believe that there was a woman who didn’t want a husband at all. Her father would ask her to take a husband, but she would refuse. As she didn’t want to have a husband, her father said to her, “If you do not want to have a human husband, you will have a dog as your husband.” The father had a big, white, male dog. After her father had said this to her, this handsome man, beautifully dressed, would come in during the night and start kissing her. When he asked to have sex with her she would accept because she really liked him. One night he came in and he took her out of the iglu and they got stuck, just like dogs. She got pregnant. She had puppies and her father took them all to an island.

The young woman was very unhappy. Her father killed her husband because she had taken a dog for a husband. Some of the children were brown, some were dark and some were white. The grandfather would come by qajaq to bring them food. The children knew that their grandfather would bring them food and they would run to meet him. The mother told her children, knowing the grandfather was coming back, “Ittusi isumilaapakkasiuk. Your grandfather doesn’t know what he is doing, please kill him, maul him to death.” Of course the little children went to the grandfather as usual and sniffed the qajaq. They pretended to fawn over him and then they mauled the grandfather and killed him.

The sole of the kamik is removed when it needs to be replaced. The woman who had a dog for a husband removed a sole from a kamik and put her children in it and sent them adrift on the ocean. As it drifted further out to sea it became a ship. Some of the
puppies became Dene and it is very obvious that some became qallunaat. Some qallunaat have white hair exactly like in the story. She sent them adrift and now there are qallunaat, and there are brown people like the Dene.
Shamanic Performances and Rituals:
Qilaniq, Sakaniq, Ilimmaqturniq, Pavunngaarniq, Nakkaaniq, Nalliunniq and Tupilanniq

Introduction

For the Inuit, being a male or female angakkuq was not a profession in itself. It did not mean living a life apart from the others. Male shamans had to hunt and fish to feed their families, and female shamans had to take care of their children and make and mend clothes for the family. Nevertheless, angakkuit often had an unusual personality, a more highly developed sensory perception, keener sensitivity, and an overall understanding of events and people. They devoted a significant part of their time to responding to special requests from their parents and neighbours and to collective requests from their group. The benefits, tunijjuuti, they received for the private services they provided may be thought of as a compensation for the time and energy they spent serving others.

Little is known about the angakkuit’s daily life, aside from a few biographies collected by the first missionaries on the east coast of Greenland. We know that they liked to seclude themselves in the wilderness away from settled areas, where contact with the spirits would be easier.

Chapter 2 listed some of the shorter procedures practised by shamans, such as incantations, irinaliutiit, and shouted prayers, qinngarniq, which ordinary Inuit could also perform. Shamans and ordinary Inuit alike could use a commonly used divination ritual, called qilaniq, in emergency situations. This ritual performance involved an actor, the qilajuq, an instrument—usually a qilajjuti, a leather thong—and the qilajaq, a medium who could be a human being, an object belonging to someone such as a piece of clothing, or a stone of a certain weight. The ritual consisted of tightly wrapping the thong around the head or leg of the medium (lying stretched out), the piece of clothing, or the stone, and asking a spirit, the apiqsaq, to descend into the wrapped object. One could call for the spirit of a deceased parent or any other spirit with whom one had a special relationship. The spirit was supposed to make its presence known by making the wrapped object heavier. Once it made its presence known, the qilajuq would put questions to the apiqsaq, who answered by making the wrapped object heavier or lighter. The answers were either yes or no and could thus be used to solve simple problems.
True shamanistic performances were more complex and the most common ones involved a shaman’s helping spirit. They were known as sakaniq or tuurnginiq. People resorted to these performances in many circumstances, either private or public, such as when searching for the causes of an illness or the cause of a famine. Sometimes, the shaman would imitate the desired game animal and stab himself or have himself harpooned in order to induce the animal to do likewise.

The greatest shamans were the ones who could travel by flying through the air, ilimmaqtuqtuq, to get news from Inuit living far away. Or they could ascend, pavungaagtiq, into the heavenly upper world to find deceased parents or ask for the intercession of the moon spirit, taqqiup inua. Another kind of journey made by shamans was the descent into the underworld, nakkaanniq, where the mistress of the sea animals and many souls of the dead lived.

Shamans also acted as organizers of certain major seasonal rituals, such as the tivajuut celebrations among the Amitturmiut, the Inuit of the Iglulik area. The festivities took place in a large ceremonial snowhouse, called a qaggiq, at the time of the winter solstice. Also celebrated collectively were performances of first-time achievements, pijariurniq, by children or teenagers (the first kill of a game animal by a boy or the first piece of sewing by a girl).

Whenever epidemics occurred and many ill people were in danger of death, shamans would be sought out and asked to try to kill the bad spirits, the tupilait that hovered invisibly around the campsite. When a shaman succeeded in killing one and when his hands were completely splattered with the tupilaq’s blood, he sometimes remained in a prostrate position for some time and would need to be helped back to full consciousness.

*Qilaniq*, predictions made through an apiqaq, a spiritual helper

*Can you demonstrate some of the practices of the angakkuit?*

Aupilaarjuk: Not only angakkuit performed qilaniq. Anyone could do it. I think one of you could do this. This is not a sinful or an evil thing. We are not trying to make you do evil. I am not an angakkuq. I want to be very clear about this. This is just a demonstration. Please understand that I am not an angakkuq. I am a Christian. But I will show you an accurate demonstration of the qilaniq ritual. Through this demonstration I will try to show you something about Inuit culture. Since we are talking about shamanism, I want you to know that the qilaniq ritual was not only performed by angakkuit, but some angakkuit were very good at this. I will not actually perform qilaniq, but I will demonstrate how it was done. If I was really performing qilaniq I could find out things about you, even if you didn’t want these things disclosed. I will use the words that the angakkuit used. I will use the tuurnqiq language in this demonstration. Those that were
very good at performing this ritual could do it just using a small pebble. I am going to use a person. I myself have been used as an object by an angakkuq to perform this ritual. This ritual was performed by both angakkuit and non-angakkuit. I think one of you might be able to do this. This was not done frivolously.

Where do you want me to be?

Aupilaarjuk: You have to lie down. That’s exactly where I want you to be. If this was actually happening, the angakkuq would ask a lot of questions, but don’t forget this is just a demonstration, not the real thing. Please understand that I am not a real angakkuq. I am a Christian and I believe in God. This demonstration is not a bad thing and it is not evil. This was a real skill, a real strength.

This is what we are going to do. You have to be totally relaxed. Let’s pretend I wanted to catch an animal because everyone here was really hungry. We are going to use this as our reason to find out where the animals are. Please do not try to sit up or move around. These are the words you would say while you would perform: “Apiqsauvitit, apiqsaqarlanga,” “You are the apiqsaq. Let me have an apiqsaq.” The apiqsaq does not want to come close. There may be a reason why it is not coming. What could it be? This is very difficult. When the head becomes really heavy, the head could be my ikajuqti, my assisting spirit. If it was not helping me, it could be because one of us in this room had bad thoughts. A bad feeling in the room could stall the whole process. We would have to be very cautious to ensure this process was not coming from someone’s bad thoughts. This could be dangerous if somebody was trying to do evil. I think we have a good understanding of this now.

Nutaraaluk: I want you to understand very clearly that Aupilaarjuk is not an angakkuq. Non-angakkuit used to do this as well to find out the reason why a whole community was suffering.

You said earlier that this was not a shamanistic practice.

Aupilaarjuk: No, it’s not. It is a procedure to find out answers to problems facing the community. If someone was lost they could also try to locate them like that.

What would they find out?

Aupilaarjuk: If a person had been lost they could locate him.

Nutaraaluk: If the question they were trying to find an answer for was asked with sincerity, then the truth would come out. Sometimes this ritual was practised by non-angakkuit. This is what I have heard. I have personally not seen this before.
Aupilaarjuk: I can say that in the Nattilik region, the head would become very heavy. Even though no one was saying anything, I could tell that the apiqsaq was present. It was like there was a magnet right underneath the object being used to qila. We truly believe in this.

If the head was heavy, what would it mean?

Aupilaarjuk: The angakkuaq would ask, “Who is causing this terrible thing? Is it this person? Is it that person?” If the head became really heavy when you pointed at the person, then the guilty person would have been found. That’s how they used to find out the presence of an evil thing or a terrible thing. The apiqsaq would make the head very heavy. People would think this was shamanism but it wasn’t. When you are an angakkuaq and the tuurngaq comes close to you, it’s really hard work. You don’t want to be an angakkuaq when a tuurngaq comes close. It is a scary experience when a tuurngaq comes close because they are very powerful. A deceased person could be a tuurngaq. Animals, non-living things, birds and dogs could also be tuurngait.

When the guilty person was identified because the object became heavy, did that person have to confess?

Aupilaarjuk: If the person was there, then he would have to confess. If he wasn’t there, at least we could figure out who the person causing the problem was. Even people’s thoughts could be seen by the angakkuit. If a person had not talked about what was really bothering him, this person could become a burden to the whole community. The angakkuaq could find this out. That’s how my father used find out if someone had had evil or bad thoughts.

Did the angakkuaq tell people what the problem was?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. The angakkuit would be very reluctant to talk about it, but the tuurngaq would say it through them. People would have to go through the angakkuit to get rid of bad feelings and bad thoughts. If we were the angakkuit we had to be a channel to get the bad thoughts out.

Did the angakkuit perform qilaniq using a small pebble that became too heavy to lift?

Aupilaarjuk: My wife and I went through this when our daughter was very sick. Saumik’s wife was a powerful angakkuaq. She came over to our home to perform qilaniq. She wanted to use a pebble. I almost laughed because this was the first time I had seen this. She put a small pebble inside our daughter’s hat and started to perform qilaniq. She
asked the apiqsaq to help her. We also call our helping tuurrngaq, an apiqsaq. She asked, “Is it his apiqsaq? Is it her apiqsaq?” She was trying to find out whose apiqsaq was present. The apiqsaq did not acknowledge anyone. Mary’s husband was Jusipi. As soon as she said, “Is it Jusipi?” it became really heavy and as she was trying to hold the hat up, the hat tore and the rock fell out, and she fell over backwards. I really wanted to laugh when that happened. But after that our daughter’s illness went away and she got completely better. For us Inuit in the Nattilik area, this is not a shamanistic practice. A real angakkuq would chant and get harpooned and stabbed and kill tuurngait when he was performing shamanism.

After this incident, did you re-name your daughter Jusipi?

Aupilaarjuk: No, we did not. We just figured out what was causing the sickness she had. The apiqsaq Jusipi was the medium used to find out the reason for her sickness. Without the apiqsaq, no matter how much we try, for us ordinary people, we will not be able find the source of a sickness.

People who were not angakkuit wouldn’t have tuurrngait. Who did they ask to help them when they were performing qilaniq?

Aupilaarjuk: If you are not an angakkuq who is capable, you can give a small object to an angakkuq and then they can perform this ritual. That’s how it was in Kangniq&iniq. There was a qallunaat I had never seen before who came to see me. He had a young Inuk as an interpreter. When he came in, he said he was from Yellowknife. He wanted me to help him figure out why he was having this dream. That’s why he came to see me. I told him I wasn’t an angakkuq and I wasn’t able to help him. I asked him what he was dreaming about. He said he kept dreaming about his house catching on fire and this frightened him a lot. I asked him if he had ever made an Inuk or a qallunaat unhappy. He said he had not. I told him if he hadn’t done that, I couldn’t help him. I told him that if he had more dreams about his house being on fire to come back and see me. He never came back. He reached into his pocket and he gave me some tobacco, just like an Inuk would. I am pretty sure he learned this from an Inuk. I believe what he told me. He acted like an Inuk would have when he gave me a gift. Bernard, I am pretty sure you understand this, because you have written about it. A lot of these things were also written down by Catholic priests and Anglican ministers. They used to write down what Inuit used to do also. When you hear about some of the things that have been written it becomes clear that not all the written materials are accurate. I think they need to be corrected soon.
When qilaniq was being performed by a non-angakkuq, who would they ask for help?

**Aupilaarjuk:** If a person wanted to try this out, they could try it, even without asking questions. That option was there if they wanted to try. As I said, this is not only a shamanistic practice. Maybe one of you, even though you are not angakkut, might be able to do this. What I was doing was also done by someone who was not an angakkuq, in Kangiqsiqiniq. I am not trying to lure you away from Christianity. I am telling you what Inuit used to do. Qilaniq can be used to help us. We can learn from this.

Could the person who was being used as the object talk during this ritual?

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes, they could say anything they wanted. Once they started seeing something or envisioning something they could describe that. As soon as the person started doing that, then we would start investigating it. Of course they could certainly talk and describe what they were seeing.

**Sakaniq or tuurnginiq, the ritual of consulting a tuurngaq, for inuulitsiniq, healing, or to escape hunger and misfortune**

Would the angakkut perform sakaniq in front of the others?

**Aupilaarjuk:** When someone was ill or if people were going hungry, the angakkut would be given a small gift to perform. If I knew the angakkuq I would give him something. It didn’t have to be something big. The angakkuq would start looking for the cause of the illness but he would be behind a blind. The angakkuq would either be in the kangiralluk, or in the kilu at the back of the iglu, behind a blind so no one could see him.

When an angakkuq was performing where you could see him, we called that tuurngijuq in Nattilingmiutut. Maybe the Uqqurmiut and the Amitturmiut would call that sakajuq. I was saying earlier that I was not an angakkuq. I remember seeing a person, who is no longer alive, who had many different bones attached to the back of his parka. I don’t fully understand the meaning of those, but the qalugiujaq, the gifts that were made to an angakkuq, were the tools of this angakkuq’s tuurngaq. I have seen those. I did not use them. The qalugiujaq were tied at the back, just like aarrnguat, amulets, but these were not aarrnguat. Aarrnguat had a different purpose. I had my own aarrnguat. I was embarrassed to have aarrnguat when other people didn’t have any. Aarrnguat were used for a different purpose.

Every time there was a new moon, would they perform sakaniq?

**Aupilaarjuk:** This was done by the Iglulingmiut and it was very important to them. We did not do this.
Do you know how the angakkuit would go to a tarniq?

Aupilaarjuk: They would try to locate the tarniq first. When they would look at a person who was very sick, they would look for the tarniq because they believed the person was sick because their tarniq had left them. They looked for the tarniq to see where it was or who or what had taken it. If somebody wished them evil they could have taken the tarniq. The person himself might be the cause of the problem, perhaps because of a wrongdoing which he committed in the past. That’s why they always tried to locate the tarniq first, so they could join the tarniq and the physical being back together. The person had to confess the wrongdoing they had done. That’s the only way the tarniq would go back to the physical being. If the person had not confessed it would be hopeless. It would be almost impossible to get the tarniq back to the physical being. It is the same thing in court. Wrongdoers get cross-examined. So it was with Inuit. The angakkuq would know if the person was telling the truth through his tuurngaq and he would not forget if they did not confess.

Do you know any songs that the angakkuit used?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know the songs. In the Nattilik region we did not use songs while conducting shamanistic practices. The Uqqurmiut used those. There was an old man who had a second wife who had a daughter. The daughter had been wrapped up to keep her warm since it was cold. She started crying and the old man pulled a piece of caribou skin off the covers and shoved it down the baby’s throat and killed her. The mother didn’t know exactly how she died. It was only later that the old man began having a problem urinating. Because he needed to urinate so badly, he went to an angakkuq he had heard about and gave him a small gift. The angakkuq started practising sakaniq. He chanted over and over,

quarinngitanuna¹ qualiqsuujjalli
This is not your child, but you have taken it as your child

saniliviniqpilli quangalu una
This is the child of your former wife

qanialu una tukturavinirmigli
The mouth has been stuffed

simiqakkallak&uni.
with a piece of caribou skin.
All the things the angakkuq was chanting, were about what the old man had done to the little girl. Then the old man remembered. He said, “Ilumigaarjuk’s daughter started crying. We were out hunting and I used my knife to cut a piece of caribou skin and put it in her mouth and choked her.” He confessed. The same thing was happening to his urinary tract. It was clogged with caribou skin. The piece of caribou that killed the little girl went back to the old man and clogged his urinary tract. Because he confessed, the piece of caribou skin disappeared. If he had not, he would have died from this.

I can tell you another story from the Nattilik area. My wife was told not to go with other men and I was told not to go with other women, even though I saw good-looking women when I was young. Sometimes I thought my wife was ugly and I saw other women as being good-looking, but I never went with another woman. I knew my wife was not going to be with another man. When I was young, I could have been with women I found beautiful but I wasn’t. Now I am an old man, I can control that desire. I am going to die in peace without having been with another woman.

In this story there is a man that had a wife. One evening he said to his wife, “I brag about you to other men. I won’t be angry with you if you have been with another man. Please tell me.” The woman said she had never been with anyone else. The husband kept repeating his question. Then he said, “When a knife faces us it is scary. If you have been with another man I won’t get upset.” The knife stabbed the woman in the head by itself. Then the woman confessed. She said, “I had an affair with a man who was a close relative who I was not supposed to be with.” These are the things that happen that cause hardship in life. The laws of the Inuit had to be followed.

What did the angakkuq do if a camp was going through hunger?

Aupilaarjuk: When the camp was going through a period of hunger, Nuliajuk [Sedna] was said to be keeping the animals close to her. When she would start controlling them too much, that was when the whole camp would go hungry. The angakkuq would have to perform sakaniq. My father told me about an incident where they had been hungry. They were hunting at the aglu in the winter. Tasiuq, from Iglulik, his father was a powerful angakkuq. He is still alive today. His father and my father were out hunting at the aglu. Tasiuq’s father harpooned himself through his foot and my father went to him. He said to my father, “I went to harpoon a seal and instead of harpooning the seal, I got my foot.” He was in a lot of pain on the way home. He was holding on to the end of the harpoon. The head still pierced his foot. Mablik, my father’s mother, told them to lie him down. She put a cover over him, like the angakkuit do when they perform sakaniq, and she pulled out the harpoon. That was how she was able to save his foot. The next day
they went out hunting again and someone caught a seal. They were able to catch wildlife again. He harpooned himself but actually he was harpooning the bad thing or the evil that was preventing them from catching game.

*Did that woman perform sakaniq to help the man that had harpooned himself?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** No, she was not really performing shamanism. It was the *tuurngaq* that removed the harpoon from his foot as soon as no one was watching. His *tuurngaq* was the one that removed it.

*When they were performing shamanism, would the qulliq, the seal oil lamp, be lit?*

**Nutaraaluk:** Some of the *qulliit* would be blown out. My mother said my father used to stab himself on the side of his body with an old saw blade. I used to look for the wounds but there were never any.

*Why did he do this?*

**Nutaraaluk:** They performed that particular practice of stabbing themselves to locate wildlife.

*Who would be permitted to be present while an angakkuit was performing shamanism?*

**Nutaraaluk:** There would be a particular *iglu* that was set aside for performing shamanism. Children were not allowed to be present, perhaps because children are too pure and too powerful.

*Why did they stab themselves?*

**Nutaraaluk:** Since animals are often stabbed to death, the *angakkuit* would stab himself to emulate an animal, in order to lure them closer.

*What tuurngaq did your father have?*

**Nutaraaluk:** He had all sorts of *tuurngait*, walrus, land animals, and people. He even used seaweed from the ocean as his *tuurngaq*, and even krill. The *angakkuit* were able to use anything as their *tuurngaq*.
The old woman who turned him into an angakkuq, did she pass on some of her skills to your father?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, she passed on some of her powers to my father. She was said to be a very powerful angakkuq. There was a boat that capsized at Nuvuk. Those people on board were murdered during the night by Inuit. The people that committed the murders wanted their equipment and weapons. They didn’t know that they would have been rewarded if they had kept them alive until other ships arrived. They took all their knives and weapons. Some qallunaat and allait were getting ready to retaliate for the murders. They had travelled all day. They were by a lake when Tunukallak’s tuurngait almost wiped out all of them. Tunukallak didn’t know about this. Another very powerful angakkuq had borrowed her tuurngait to assist his tuurngait in wiping out the qallunaat and the allait. There were only two people left alive, a husband and a wife. They were spared so that they could live to tell the story. These allait that were almost wiped out were the Cree from Nunavik. This husband and wife would cry every time they would talk about their experience. They said that the Inuit that attacked them didn’t die. That’s because they were not real Inuit, they were tuurngait. The next day when people went back to the lake, you couldn’t see the bottom because of the blood. I guess the tuurngait sank all the bodies of those they killed in the lake. This is quite an old story.

What things did they use as tools to perform shamanism?

Nutaraaluk: They used what they were given as tools for healing. They would be given gifts to save a person from death, whether it was a child or an adult who was suffering from illness. My father described more than once how he had saved a person from dying from illness.

At one time my father wanted to see how difficult it would be to kill a person with his shamanistic powers. He was out hunting with his brother-in-law and his uncle. They sighted a bull caribou. When the caribou was out of sight, he killed it. He asked his uncle and his brother-in-law to cut it open. The intestines had been completely destroyed. It was my father’s tuurngaq that had killed this caribou.

Aupilaarjuk: People would dance to a drum in a qaggiq. If there was a sick person there, the angakkuq would be given a small gift to heal the person. He would perform saka but he wouldn’t use a drum. If you gave the angakkuq something, he could find out what was causing the sickness.
What were the angakkuit given?

Aupilaarjuk: It could be the smallest thing. It varied. Of course you wanted to give something to the angakkuq because the angakkuq was helping you. If the tuurngaq was very thankful, the tuurngaq would be more powerful.

When the qilaniq ritual was performed on your daughter, what did you have to give?
Aupilaarjuk: With qilaniq, you didn’t have to give anything.

If an angakkuq was helping someone, and he wanted to have a sexual encounter with a man’s wife, what would happen?

Aupilaarjuk: This was not acceptable. The angakkuq would be following his own desire. The tuurngaq would never initiate this. It would only follow the angakkuq’s thinking. It is only the angakkuq that would try to use the tuurngaq to lure a woman into a sexual encounter. This desire only comes from the angakkuaq. The tuurngait would never think of this first. They would only do this if an angakkuq asked them to.

There was one angakkuq who desired this woman. He wanted to use his tuurngaq to scare her into submission. She was his sister-in-law. He got his tuurngaq to help him get her to submit to him. This was found out and a song was sung to him. The song said,

ukuat aittaaa. tuurngarnngut
Your sister-in-law, how sad. Using your tuurngait,

apiqsarnut, arnaqsiarijait.
Your apiqsait, you have had her sexually.

tuurngaqpit arnaqsingitaa.
It wasn’t your tuurngait that had her.

igvit. usurulukpit kisiani
It was you. It was your penis

pijumaagaaqtanga.
That wanted her instead.
If an *angakkuq* wanted to commit a murder the *tuurngait* would listen, but they would never initiate this by themselves. This is why it is important to know what is good and what is evil. It is important to pay attention and learn about this. In the future, you will have to think wisely. You will need to be enormously knowledgeable to become an *angakkuq*. If you are not knowledgeable and wise, you are liable to break the traditional laws. If shamanism is brought back in the future, you will have to be very wise. You need to learn all about the things you are allowed to do and what you are not allowed to do.

*If you weren’t an angakkuq, could you see tuurngait?*

*Iqijjut* [visiting elder]: If you were not an *angakkuq* you could not understand or see that which was visible to the *angakkuq*. *Qimuksiraaq* was a powerful *angakkuq* who used to have canine teeth just like a bear. He used to use a knife to stab himself. Once I tried to watch him while he was doing this. He wasn’t able to pierce himself and people were asking why he couldn’t do this. My uncle’s wife knew something was causing this to fail. *Qimuksiraaq* called me his nephew because I carried the name of my father who was his nephew. He said, “I think my nephew is trying to look.” Of course I was trying to look. Because I was not an *angakkuq*, he was unable to perform. I was the reason he was unable to perform.

*Ilimmaqtuqtuq* or *qangatajuq*, the aerial journeys of the *angakkuit*

*Have you ever heard of ilimmaqtuqtuq?*

*Aupilaarjuk*: I have heard about *ilimmaqtuqtuq*. *Ilimmaqtuqtuq* is when the *angakkuit* are in mid-air. My father said that he saw *Qimuksiraaq*, the one we think is very capable, do this. I have only heard about this. My father personally saw *Qimuksiraaq ilimmaqtuqtuq*. He was visiting at his home when *Qimuksiraaq* arrived. I can tell you exactly what he told me. One night, my parents were visiting his wife *Pangakkaq* in their *iglu*. This was before I was born. The woman said, “Ata, listen.” They could hear movement in the air. The sound became louder and louder. Then it landed in front of the window. Soon after, they heard something even louder approaching. That too landed right in front of the window and they heard a person saying, “It.” *Qimuksiraaq* came in. His hair was frosted from having been too hot in the cold. It turned out the first bump they heard was the sound of his *tuurngaaq* that enabled him to fly, landing. It arrived a little bit before he did. When he came in he said, “My fox trap was dragged away by a fox. I was trying to track it down but I could not catch up to it. Because I was still walking when darkness came and I wanted to head home, I started running and it felt like I was not touching the ground. When I looked down I could see the light from
the window.” He was flying just like an airplane and was looking down. I did not see this myself, but I truly believe it because my father told me this. Qimuksiraaq was very capable, from what I have heard.

What does this picture represent? [Showing picture to Aupilaarjuk]

**Aupilaarjuk:** It is a picture of an *angakkuk* practicing shamanism. The *angakkuk* has been tied up with rope. I know he can untie himself without any assistance. I don’t think this picture is from the Nattilik area, I think it is from Naujaat. I wonder who that *angakkuk* is? I don’t know him.

**Nutaraaluk, have you heard about ilimmaqtuqtut?**

**Nutaraaluk:** It is *qangatajuq*, flying. It is going to check out other camps and other areas by air to see how they are doing.

**Could the angakkuit go to other camps?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** The *angakkuit* were able to go to other camps to check things out but it was only on rare occasions they would do so. The *angakkuit* would check to see if people were alright and sure enough, later people would confirm that this had indeed been so. I really believe that they could go to other camps, but they could only do this if they had not committed any wrongdoings.

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I am glad you are asking about these things, but when we talk about shamanism there are a lot of people who object because they think of shamanism as an evil thing. A lot of people object to me, because they see me as a non-Christian, but I am a Christian. If I was an angákuq, I would still follow Christianity. I would not use evil. If there was someone who was sick or someone in distress, I would be able to find out who or what was causing this. Perhaps I could even help someone before something bad happened. Shamanism is not all evil. Some of it is very good. The angákkuit would not have had a qaumaniq if they were evil. Inuit knew there was good in the world but they didn’t refer to it as God. They knew there was a God but they didn’t refer to him as God.

**Pavunngaasit, the shaman’s journey to the upper world**

*Could you talk more about the practices of the angákuq?*

**Nutaraaluk:** Tunuallak was the old lady that turned my father into an angákuq. My father always helped that old lady by carrying ice and helping her around her dwelling. Simply by using words she turned my father into an angákuq. She had wanted to give him protection because some angákkuit would try to kill people. Even though he was quite young, she turned him into an angákuq.

*Can you describe what they would do first when they were becoming angákkuit?*

**Nutaraaluk:** My father started realizing that he had powers and that he had a tuurngaq. By trying his powers out he became more powerful. He used to go down to Sedna. He used to qila. He would have himself tied up tightly with aliq, thick rope. Then he would begin to bounce until he went through the roof of the iglu and went up to the aqsarniiq, the Northern Lights. Once he had arrived there, he would be used as a soccer ball by the people of the day.

*Your father did this?*

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes. The rope that he had been tied up with would fall back to the earth in a round ball. The rope would come down first, and after the rope, he would come back from where he had gone. That’s how he used to describe this to me.

*What did he do with the aqsarniiq?*

**Nutaraaluk:** When we play soccer we use a ball. He was used as a ball by the aqsarniiq. When you whistle at the aqsarniiq, they come really close to you.
Why did the angakkuit go to the moon?

Nutaraaluk: Perhaps they went there to look at the earth from the moon. My father was not the only one who was capable of doing this. Angakkuit in those days were capable of doing anything.

Did they ever ask taqqiup inua, the spirit of the moon, to help them do something by offering something to him?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know if they gave gifts to taqqiup inua, but there is a story about taqqiup inua that is told in every region. My father used to tell this story. I also heard another story from a Qamanittuarmiut, a man from Baker Lake, who is still alive today.

Can you tell us this story?

Aupilaarjuk: According to one story, there was a woman who went up to the moon. In another story, there was a man who was out seal hunting on the ice, who was brought up to the moon. I will tell you the story my mother told me about the woman who went up to the moon. This woman had been abused a lot by her husband. Her husband had been angry with her and she had been outside for a long time underneath the full moon. She heard a dogteam coming and she started to wait for it. The dogteam appeared. It stopped right in front of her. There was an old brown dog that was limping. When it came to her, it was so hot from exhaustion it lay down right away. The man on the qamutik didn’t say a word, but waved for her to come. She went to him and he asked her to sit on the qamutik. He asked her to close her eyes, so she closed her eyes, and the dogteam started off. She could clearly tell that they were going through the tidal flats on the ice because it was so rough. After she felt that, it was totally quiet. She could only feel the wind. She could feel that, and then she started getting curious about the whole experience and started to open her eyes. The person who came from the moon said, “Ai, ai, ai.” She closed her eyes again, and she could feel the dogsled landing. She felt the ice again. When they stopped he asked her to open her eyes. She stood up and saw lots of houses.

The people there were playing kickball with a walrus head. They were very happy. The house that he wanted her to enter was very large. He asked her to go in. When she went in, she saw huge rooms lit by a powerful light. Even the fur on her parka was singed by this light. She looked around and she recognized her older sister who had died long ago. Her sister said to her, “That woman laughed too easily. That’s why her stomach is no longer there. Aagjuk is going to come to dance this night, and she is going to make people laugh. You are going to have to try not to laugh even though she is going to be very comical. If you laugh, your intestines are going to be taken out. Once this

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happens you will not be able to return where you have come from.” Someone tried to
give her caribou fat to eat. Her older sister told her not to eat it. She said if she did she
would not be able to return to earth. Her sister opened her sleeve and told her to look
inside. It looked like caribou anaq, but it was probably people she was looking at from
far away. When Aagjuk came into this place she was really comical, and the woman was
trying to keep from smiling. While Aagjuk was dancing, she never saw anyone smile.
Aagjuk left the house because no one smiled. I forget how the woman was returned to
the earth.

That’s one of the stories I have heard about someone going to the moon. In another,
there was a man, who is still alive today, who was out seal hunting on the ice, and he
was taken up to the moon. He saw singuuri, the big dog. We call it kajurjuq. That’s the
dog you see every time you look up at the sky. We Inuit went up to the moon before the
Americans did.

Iqijjut [visiting elder]: He skipped one part at the end of the story. Her sister opened her
ikpati, her sleeve, and when they looked down they saw their relatives. Her sister sent
her home through that.

Nakkaajuq or atqaqtuq, the shaman’s journey to the underworld

Have you heard of nakkaaniq?

Nutaraaluk: Nakkaaniq was when the shaman would go down into the sea to Sedna and
fetch animals. They say there are people that live down there. They use shrimp as dogs.

Aupilaarjuk: In the Nattilik area we say atqaqtuq. My father saw the angakkuit do this
but I haven’t seen this particular saka ritual myself. The angakkuit are said to be very
nangiaqtut, fearful of falling, because there is only one passage they can go through and
it is very dangerous. We call this ritual, when the angakkuit go down through the earth,
atqaqtuq. This one passage that they have to pass through has a very smooth, slippery
rock. That part is very dangerous and when they reach it, they make the sound,
“uh, uh, uh.” It is like the sound one makes when one falls in the water because of the
cold. When the angakkuit who is performing the saka ritual starts saying, “uh, uh, uh”
because he is afraid of falling, the people start saying, “uvajairuagut, uvajairuagut.” They
are saying they want him to pass through without tipping over. Once they pass this,
then the angakkuit are no longer in danger. The people who live down there are said to
be very friendly.

My mother told me that my father said he would go to be with the people down
there after he died because they were very friendly. The only differences between us
were that they would *inniqsiujaq*, use their index fingers to light their fires with, and that even the adults had openings in their pants. *Angmaaqtuq* is when little children have openings in their pants at the groin so they can urinate without taking their clothes off. Those were the only differences. They liked to play a lot and were very happy. My father wanted to go there. My mother said he told her this shortly before he died and I believe it. I have not seen these people myself.

**Would the angakkut display his love and his desire to Nuliajuk?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** Nuliajuk has been talked about for a long time. Taliilajuq, Takannaaluk, and Sedna are other names that she is called. We use Nuliajuk in the Nattilik region. Sometimes she is good and sometimes she is evil. That’s how the angakkut see her. She is very powerful. As a man, I think I would do the same thing as the angakkut, I would *maniguutijuq*, put myself at her mercy, and following that I would try to comb her hair and seduce her. That is what I think, this is not something that I have heard. I have heard that Nuliajuk is very powerful and sometimes she is good and sometimes she is evil.

**If she was not happy, how would you appease her?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** By following her rules. If we didn’t do what she wished, then we wouldn’t be able to catch wildlife. There were some angakkut that were more powerful than she was that could defeat her. Nuliajuk’s husband was a sculpin, a *kanajuq*. He probably had another name also. The *kanajuq* went out hunting, but he couldn’t catch any seals. No wonder! One time the *kanajuq* couldn’t catch anything because his wife had hidden the seals underneath her lamp. He could not get his wife to release them so he started stabbing the seals that had been hidden underneath the lamp and all the seals started escaping. The next day he went out hunting again, and he caught a seal. People were able to catch seals again also.

**Nalliuniq, celebrations; and pijariurniq, rituals connected with spiritual events or with individual first catches**

**Why are we told to follow the path of the sun?**

**Aupilaarjuk:** My mother used to *siqiniq malilliqa*, follow the path of the sun. We always thought that the sun was revolving around the earth but instead it is the earth that is revolving around the sun. Every time a person entered your camp in the old days, the person would follow the path of the sun, so that they would bring good and peace, and not bring bad or evil. My mother would walk around the person in a full circle following...
the path of the sun. Even graves were circled like that. I still follow this practice today when I visit my deceased relatives’ graves. Because I wish them well, I circle their graves following the path of the sun. I still follow this practice.

**Why do we have to do that?**

Aupilaarjuk: We need to do this if we want to lead an uneventful life, without danger, and without becoming sick. My mother constantly practised this.

**Did the angakkuit have to follow this practice as well?**

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. The angkkuit were most powerful. They could see things that were not visible to an average person. It was very important for them to follow this practice so they would know about dangers and could keep people safe.

**I want to ask you whether the weather has a spirit, silaup inua?**

Nutaraaluk: I do believe there is a spirit. My father used to tell me about this. Naarjuk is the name of the weather spirit, silaup inua. According to my father, the spirit is said to be female and is very strong. I can’t tell you more than this. That is all I know.

**Can you tell us what the tuurngait would say through the angakkuit concerning silaup inua?**

Aupilaarjuk: Naarjuk is the name of the weather spirit, silaup inua, but I rarely heard of that spirit. I did hear how powerful that spirit was. The Uqqurmiut in the Eastern Arctic are the only ones that really know about the silaup inua. They used to cut the strength of silaup inua to calm the wind. The Nattilingmiut don’t do that.

Naarjuk is said to be very powerful. In Kangniqiniq there is one person I talked to who told me that the weather had a very powerful spirit. This person I talked with heard this from Qimuksiraq. Qimuksiraq said that the weather had a very powerful spirit.

**What did they do when there was bad weather?**

Aupilaarjuk: In Uqqurmiut in the Eastern Arctic, they used to cut the strength of the wind but in the Nattilik area we didn’t do that. The angakkuq would search for the reason why the weather was bad. He would perform qilaniq to make the weather better. In this we are different from the Uqqurmiut.
Did they use qilaniq to find out the cause of the bad weather?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. Through qilaniq and sakaniq they would try to find out what was causing the bad weather. If I didn’t know how to perform sakaniq but I was good at qilaniq, I would use qilaniq to try to find the reason.

If you were born on a beautiful day would you be able to use that to help the hunters?

Aupilaarjuk: I tried that before but I don’t know whether I helped or not. I was born in the summer during beautiful weather. I tried to help once when the weather was bad. I went outside with my top off, but I was still wearing my pants. So I don’t think I changed the weather. If the weather was bad, you were supposed to go outside stark naked and pretend to cry to the weather like a baby, “ungaa, ungaa,” if you were to make the bad weather turn into good weather.

Have you ever heard of Iqallijuq? She is from Iglulik. She was born during good weather. When her father didn’t come back because of bad weather, her mother asked her to go out stark naked and ask the weather spirit, “Silaga nauk? Where is my weather?” Did you do that as well? Was it the same for you?

Aupilaarjuk: No. What you are saying is similar to the Kiviuq story. Kiviuq also says, “Silaga nauk?” In the Nattilik area we don’t say that. We cry and roll around on the ground in our region. But I have heard both stories.

When the sun was coming back, did the community have a feast?

Aupilaarjuk: In Nattilik when the sun was coming back, we had to do certain things. We would pay attention to this, but I think it was the Amitturmiut that had to do a lot of things when the sun came back. The Amitturmiut and Paallirmiut had a lot more laws. The Nattilingmiut were not as strict about this.

Did your relatives have a feast?

Aupilaarjuk: We would not have a feast in a qaggiq, a ceremonial iglu, but there would be certain times when there had been a successful harvest, either of marine mammals or land animals, when we would celebrate. When I was a small boy, we used to put all the food together and be thankful that plentiful times had arrived. The women would eat
separately from the men. This was a way of expressing our gratitude for the food. When there was leftover food we would store it well, as we would have to use it later on. We always had to think of the future.

On what occasions would these feasts happen?

Aupilaarjuk: I think in Iglulik they tended to celebrate more. In Nattilik, when it was no longer winter, or when we were celebrating a first time kill, we would dance using a *qilauti*, a drum. The people would pretend to fight over the food, whether it was fish or meat.

Were angakkuit involved in these celebrations, for example, if there was a first kill?

Aupilaarjuk: No. The *angakkuit* did not get involved with this. They did not make animals appear for this purpose. Maybe some *angakkuit* used the drum for shamanism, but for us that was not the case. A long, long time ago, when people would get together from different camps, they would get together in a *qaggiq*.

Did people have a lot of celebrations back then?

Aupilaarjuk: To my mind there are too many celebrations today, we even celebrate birthdays. A child’s first steps are very important in the Inuit community. To my wife and I anyway, that was a very special moment. I can say we never celebrated birthdays, but we did celebrate when a child took his first step. The first time after they could stand, and crawl, when they took their first step, that was a proud moment. Why we celebrated that I don’t know.

When there was a celebration, did angakkuit used to ask women to have sexual encounters with them?

Aupilaarjuk: When an *angakkuaq* liked a woman, he could use a *tuurngaq* to make the woman like him, but he was not supposed to do that. There is even a song about that. It is very *kanngunaqtuq*, embarrassing. The *angakkuaq* wanted to have sex with his *ukuq*, his sister-in-law, and used a *tuurngaq* to lure her to him. The *tuurngaq* did not want the woman, it was the *angakkuaq*.

Could a woman do this too?

Aupilaarjuk: A woman could do the same thing, if she was a female *angakkuaq*. That was against the rules for both men and women. They were told not to do this.
Could the angakkuit be bribed to arrange a relationship for someone?

Aupilaarjuk: They could arrange wife exchanges but the men had to agree to it first. You had to let a man know that you wanted to be with his wife. If the man did not approve then the relationship wouldn’t proceed.

Tupilanniq, the killing of evil spirits by the angakkuit

Aupilaarjuk: When my father and I went caribou hunting, this angakkuaq we went hunting with caught a caribou. After that we went to our igluvigaq and we slept there. Later on in the evening, the angakkuaq was supposed to come to our iglu. We slept through the night and he still had not come. Because he never arrived, we started to head home. We had to overnight again before getting back. On the night we got back home, the angakkuaq arrived after it was dark. He said while he was trying to get home, he became disoriented because there were sparks of fire and lightening around him. He encountered a man who was wearing a funny hat and had an icicle on his nose. He knew right away that it was an evil tuurngaq that was making it impossible for him to get back. Sparks would light around him. He knew he could tupilattuq, defeat that evil, but since he was alone he was afraid he might make a mistake and there wouldn’t be anyone around to help him, so he didn’t do anything. If he had just been an ordinary person with no powers, he probably would not have returned.

Was the tuurngaq he encountered trying to make itself into the angakkuaq’s tupilaq?

Aupilaarjuk: Tupilattuq was when the angakkuaq defeated and killed an evil spirit. I watched someone tupilattuq. The blood of the tuurngaq that was not visible was all over his arms. The angakkuaq had to wash in urine to clean this off. This is how the angakkuaq had to clean off the blood if he killed it.

What does tupilattaujuq mean? Was it when a tuurngaq was trying to kill a person?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. It was when a tuurngaq was trying to kill a person. The angakkuaq used his tuurngaq to help him defeat this evil tuurngaq. We couldn’t see his helping tuurngaq. The angakkuaq killed this evil tuurngaq that was trying to kill him, and he got blood all over himself in the process. Then the person who was sick would be healed because this evil tuurngaq causing the sickness was dead. If you had committed a wrongdoing, for example, if you had stolen something and never told anyone, or if you had hexed someone and not told about it, you could get sick from this. These are some of the reasons why you would not be healed. You would have to confess your wrongdoing. In
order for you to be healed you would have to confess all the wrongdoings you had committed and never told about. Even if you confessed, it might be an evil tuurngaq that was causing your sickness, and if this was the cause, the angakkuq would have to tupilattuq, kill the evil tuurngaq.

Could you explain more about tupilattuq?

Aupilaarjuk: Tupilattuq was the killing of a tuurngaq by an angakkuq. There was an enormous amount of blood when the tuurngaq was killed. The angakkuq’s hands became full of blood while he was killing the tuurngaq. The tuurngaq couldn’t be seen by ordinary people. Only the angakkuq could see the tuurngaq.

When angakkuit were together would they try to kill tupilait?

Aupilaarjuk: Only an angakkuq that had the ability to kill a tupilaq, would do it. Even some great angakkuit were unable to do this. If the angakkuq had the ability to kill a tupilaq then people would ask him to do so. Tupilait have different strengths and abilities.

What did they use to kill tuurngait?

Aupilaarjuk: Tupilat is the word for when an angakkuq kills a tuurngaq. I myself have seen an angakkuq’s hand covered with blood. Remember the snow-knife I showed you. It was part of an angakkuq’s collection. In the Nattilik region, when there was a sickness in the community, the angakkuq would look for the thing that was making the person sick. He would try to kill that tuurngaq. We have doctors that find out what is wrong with a person today, but before, in the Nattilik region, it was the angakkuq who found out what the cause of the sickness was. Today, doctors might say a sickness was caused by a tiny bug or virus, but to us it could be caused by something very large. It could be a person, a dog or whatever tuurngaq the person had that was causing the sickness. When the angakkuq killed the tuurngaq, his hands were full of blood. After it was dead you could see the outline on the floor. It could take the shape of an animal. If it was a person, it would have the outline of a person.

Which hand would they use to kill it, the right or the left?

Aupilaarjuk: I cannot tell you whether they used the right hand or the left hand but they would really fight and struggle with the tuurngaq. Some tuurngait were very strong. When they killed a tuurngaq, sometimes the angakkuit would almost be in a semi-conscious state. You would blow in their ear, or slap them on the chest. That’s what you had to do if an angakkuq had just killed a tuurngaq. You had to blow in their ear or slap them to help them regain consciousness.
I want to ask more about a kigjugaq, a tattoo between the eyes made by someone who had killed a non-human. Could both men and women have a kigjugaq?

**Aupilaarjuk:** Usually it would be men that had that marking. In the old days when an **angakkuq** killed an **inuunngittuaq**, a non-living being, the other **inuunngittutut** would try to retaliate once the **angakkuq** was alone. They put this tattoo between their eyes to help keep them safe. I believe this works but I don’t know for sure. I saw this myself. Iksivalitaq had one like that.

**Nutaraaluk, have you ever heard about this?**

**Nutaraaluk:** I have heard about people putting markings on the face. They were made with a needle and thread with soot. This marking was to show that they had killed before. The ones who took part in the killings at Nuvuk were given such markings.

**In the old days before they had steel needles, did they use needles made of bone to make the tattoos?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes. They used bone to make needles. Of course they had to have clothes. They didn’t have steel needles, only ones made of bones. They used bearded-seal skin for thimbles.

**When they had this tattoo between the eyes could they still experience spirits?**

**Nutaraaluk:** In the Eastern Arctic this tattoo meant an **angakkuq** had committed a murder before. It was a way to show that he had killed someone.

**Do you remember ever seeing a person with a tattoo as a small boy in Kiningait?**

**Nutaraaluk:** When I was a small boy I never saw that. It was before I was born that this was practised. I came into this world after Christianity had already arrived. Inugjuaraarjuk had such a marking. I was named after him. He had been dead a long time before I was born.

**Footnote**

1 *Quaq* is the term for a child in the language of the **angakkuit**.
Part Two

Iglulik
1971-1972
This second part covers the same major themes as Part One. It contains interviews conducted in Iglulik in 1972, i.e., twenty-six years before the interviews in Part One (1998). It is as if we are going back in time—a generation ago. Actually, we are going further back. In 1972, the elders were interviewed in order to check the data that Knud Rasmussen had collected in 1922, in the same community, and had published in “Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimo” (1929).

During my first stay in Iglulik, in December 1971, I visited Reverend Nasuk—at the time the Anglican minister in Iglulik—to talk to him about my fieldwork on traditional cosmology and shamanism. He encouraged me to meet with the elders, including two relatives of his: Rose Iqallijuq, a cousin on his father’s side, born in 1905, and Johanasi Ujarak, a cousin on his maternal grandmother’s side, born around 1901. Both had known Rasmussen and had worked with members of his expedition. I devoted this initial fieldwork to ritual prohibitions. When I returned, in 1972, I picked up where I had left off in my work with them. For the interviews, I also invited a cousin on Iqallijuq’s father’s side, Isidore Ijituuq, and Iqallijuq’s son-in-law, Michel Kupaaq. All of them had shamans in their family trees. Iqallijuq’s first husband, Amarualik, was himself a former shaman, as were two of Ujarak’s sisters: Nujaqtut and Atuat. As for Kupaaq, the two grandparents on his father’s side, Ittuksarjuat and Ataguttaaluk, had been great shamans.
My assistant during the interviews was Élise Qungattalluriktuq. She was Kupaaq’s daughter and Iqallijuq’s granddaughter. Transcription of the interviews was done by Bernadette Imaruittuq and completed by Alexina Kublu and Papatsi Kublu-Hill. The last two were respectively Iqallijuq’s granddaughter and great-granddaughter. They also revised the English translation.
Like Part One, this part has four chapters. They are divided up differently, however, because the accounts contain such a wealth of information. Part Two goes deeper into most of the themes and gives many examples from the personal experiences of these elders, all of whom are now dead. I would like to pay homage here to their invaluable assistance and friendship, without which this book would never have seen the light of day. I especially wish to honour Iqallijuq, who recently passed away in October, 2000, at ninety-five years of age.
The Healing of Nanuraq, a Sick Woman, by Angutimmarik, in Salliq

Introduction

This chapter describes a case of healing by a shaman. The account is quite unique in the ethnographic literature on the Inuit. It is a complete description of a group healing séance officiated by a shaman, and the only one to be written by an Inuk witness—a Greenlander called Jacob Olsen. The events took place on Salliq Island (Southampton Island) on January 24, 1923, at the camp of Angutimmarik, the great shaman, and his wife, Nivitsanaaq. She too was a shaman and a cousin of Iqallijuq’s mother. Around them lived a group of families, including two other shaman couples: Makkik and his wife Nanuraq (Iqallijuq’s aunt on her mother’s side) and Kappianaq and his wife Uviluq (Ijituuq’s parents). The author of this account, Jacob Olsen, originally wrote it in Greenlandic as a member of the Fifth Thule Expedition, headed by Knud Rasmussen.

In mid-August of the previous year, Jacob Olsen and his companion, the Danish archaeologist Therkel Mathiassen, left the post at Naujaat (Repulse Bay) and went by boat with Aullanaaq to the mouth of the Thomson River, north of Salliq Island, to
conduct archaeological excavations. This was the site of the temporary camp of Angutimmarik and his wife Nivitsanaaq (Aullanaaq’s mother). Aullanaaq left right away for Naujaat after his stepfather agreed to take the Danes back to their base, with his own boat, once they had finished their work.

In the summer of 1922, however, the waters north of Salliq Island from Repulse Bay (Naujaat) to Danish Island, the base of Rasmussen’s expedition, were obstructed by ice floes, as happens once every ten years. On September 6, Mathiassen, Olsen, and Angutimmarik, accompanied by Saraq, tried to put out to sea and head back to the Danish base. But they could not. The two Danes had no provisions or winter clothing.
They had no choice but to accept Angutimmarik’s hospitality with a promise to pay him back next spring. The winter was harsh. The Inuit and Danes ran short of everything, including food and munitions. Many fell ill and the Inuit began to accuse the two Danes of being the cause of their misfortunes. Were not they the ones who disturbed the graves of the dead, who dug up the soil unduly, and who ground up animal bones in violation of Inuit prohibitions? Angutimmarik’s own wife, Nivitsanaaq, blamed her frequent headaches on the misdeeds of their guests.

More than once, Jacob Olsen, who understood the local dialect, saved Therkel Mathiassen from difficult situations that he had gotten himself into because he poorly understood the Inuit language and the ritual prohibitions. The stressful atmosphere and the hardships of winter probably explain the increasing number of shamanistic rituals described by Mathiassen in his logbook. The atmosphere was tense in the winter camp. The spirits seemed to be displeased. The situation was dangerous for the Danes and they had to get out at any price. In early January, Olsen and Mathiassen left Angutimmarik’s iglu and moved into the iglu of Makkik and Nanuraq, who were friendlier to them. This was the location of the shaman’s healing séance, which is described further on.

It is known from Mathiassen’s report that nearly ninety Inuit lived that year on Salliq Island: thirty-three children and fifty-four adults. The adults were divided between twenty-eight women and twenty-six men. Most surprising was the very large number of shamans. There were twenty-one (according to a list of names made at my request by Ujarak), composed of seventeen men and four women. This means that more than half of the men were shamans with varying degrees of ability. Of these, only three were very great shamans. Nonetheless, the proportion of shamans was almost three times higher than in the other groups between Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) and Tununirusiq (Arctic Bay) in North Baffin. This situation may be ascribed to the large numbers of whaling vessels in the Salliq area from the 1860s to the First World War. Many prominent Inuit moved into this area from adjacent regions to work for the whalers.

In short, Jacob Olsen and Therkel Mathiassen had come to the island to spend two weeks digging for archaeological remains. They ended up, however, being immersed in the intimacy of a group of Inuit families for nearly six months. Jacob Olsen was certainly a Lutheran catechist but he was also an Inuk and very curious about what his Canadian cousins knew and believed. Without him, we would never have had the following description. Though a Christian, Olsen was familiar with shamanism. When Therkel Mathiassen fell ill and his life seemed to be in danger, Angutimmarik tried to convince Jacob Olsen to perform shamanistic healing to save his companion’s life. Olsen initially
refused. Then, fearing that his refusal would make others think he was responsible for Mathiassen’s death, he went along with the idea. He was apparently successful—Mathiassen’s health improved.

On January 21, word arrived that two Inuit had died at a campsite further north. Immediately, the three shamans—Angutimmarik, Makkik, and Nanuraq—came together to try to ward off the evil that threatened them. Nanuraq started sewing new soles for her kamik to protect herself. It was all in vain and the next night she fell ill. In his logbook, Mathiassen wrote:

January 22. Last night Makik performed head-lifting with Nanøraq because she was [feeling] poorly and had pains in her breast; there were 16 causes, including: that she had recently sewn mittens; that yesterday she had scraped skin; that once when a little girl she had eaten marrow; that she had used bear-fat in the lamp, for which reason she was afraid that the bear would eat her and her children. This morning Angutimmarik held a short seance in our house. For five days Jacob and I must not eat meat that is cooked by Nanøraq.

January 24. At noon yesterday Makik performed head-lifting with Nanøraq. Last night Angutimmarik had a long seance in our house; first, Ugpartøq [another shaman] walked up and down the floor wearing his [shaman’s] belt and talking; he found three causes; then he went out. Makik thereafter went out with a box of sinew thread as an offering to Nuliajuk. Then Angutimmarik, wearing a wide belt of cloth, spoke, facing the door all the time. Twenty-four causes were found. During the whole performance (1 1/2 hours) Nanøraq, who was very ill, had to sit upright on the platform, naked down to the waist; she had a good deal to say, however. This morning early Angutimmarik spoke again, with the same belt on; this time it did not last so long.

January 25. Last night Angutimmarik held a very long head-lifting seance with Makik, lasting from 5.15 till 7 o’clock; Nanøraq, who is still very ill, sat up part of the time, naked to the waist, and frequently joined in the talk. Nanøraq says that since the bear was shot she has been afraid, more and more each day that passed, and at last she fell ill...[In a footnote, Mathiassen adds: The full course of this seance is described in “Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos,” pp. 132-141.]
The shamanistic healing described in this chapter falls into the category of qilaniq or “head-lifting,” which we will describe further on in Chapter 6. Angutimmarik officiated at the healing séance. He used his shaman’s belt as a thong and wrapped it around Makkik’s head. Makkik was lying on his back on the platform of the iglu. The shaman called for help to his apiqsaq (spirit that one questions) Aksaqquarnilik, who penetrated Makkik’s wrapped head and made it heavier. We will go into these details in Chapter 6. It is worth noting, however, that the English version of Rasmussen’s monograph uses the term tuurnqaq and not apiqsaq. The Greenlandic version of this ritual, which Jacob Olsen published in 1927 from his field notes, explicitly refers to “qilaniq.” So the healing treatment clearly falls into this category.

These were the dramatic circumstances that led to the healing described in this chapter. The name of Nanuraq means “bearskin” in the Inuit language. If a person has the name of an animal, he or she has to obey especially strict rules with respect to that animal.

Twelve days later, on February 5, Aullanaaq finally arrived by dogsled from the mainland. He had been sent by Rasmussen to bring his two unfortunate companions back to their base. As Mathiassen admitted later, this bad luck gave him and Jacob Olson the privilege of sharing the daily life of their hosts and penetrating their most important rituals.

In August 1972, fifty years after the fact, I was lucky enough to find some Inuit in Iglulik who were very close to the people involved in the shaman’s healing séance. Ijituuq was still a child in 1923 but belonged to Angutimmarik’s group. Iqallijuq was closely related to the main protagonists. As for Ujarak, he also belonged to a shaman’s family, as the son of the angakkuit Ava and Urulu, and the brother of the shamans Nujaqut and Atuat. He was forced by Angutimmarik and his wife Nivitsanaaq to give up his first wife, who had been promised at birth to their son.

The Healing of Nanuraq

Iqallijuq: In those times the few angakkuit that I knew used to saka during the evening.

Ujarak: The angakkuq called on his tuurnqaq in the evenings because of the hard life they had in those days. In the times when there were angakkuit life was different. They were required to pittaili, even for things that didn’t seem important. I had inner caribou pants made from a caribou shot in the Tasiujaq area on the mainland. When we went hunting in the Uqquat area I still had those pants. I didn’t have any other ones. Arraq and I shot some caribou. We ate the bone marrow in order to lighten our load. Everytime Arraq and I ate caribou marrow I had to remove my inner pants before I could eat the marrow.
Was that because you couldn’t wear the pants from a caribou that was caught in another area when you were eating caribou marrow?

Ujarak: This was done if the caribou had been caught on the other side of the sea.

Was that a form of pittailiniq?

Ujarak: It was alright to wear my inner caribou pants when I was eating the meat, but I had to take them off when I was eating the marrow. Women were completely forbidden to eat marrow. I had to act like a woman because I had a pittailiniq forbidding me to eat marrow with my pants on.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The woman Nanuraq, the wife of Makkik, lay very ill, with pains all over her body. The patient, who was so ill that she could hardly stand upright, was placed on the bench. All the inhabitants of the village were summoned, and Angutimmarik enquired of his tuurngait as to the cause of the disease. The shaman walked slowly up and down the floor for a long time, swinging his arms backwards and forwards with mittens on, talking in groans and sighs, in varying tones, sometimes breathing deeply as if under extreme pressure. He says: “It is you, you are Aksaqquarnilik, I ask you, my tuurngaaq, whence comes the sickness from which this person is suffering? Is it due to something I have eaten in defiance of taboos, lately or long since? Or it is due to my saniliaq, to my wife? Or is it brought about by the sick woman herself? Is she herself the cause of the disease?”

That is what Angutimmarik asked his tuurngaaq, Aksaqquarnilik. What do you think about that?

Iqallijuq: Angutimmarik, the angakkuq, called his tuurngaaq to find out what was causing the sickness.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

He walked slowly, swinging his arms with mittens on.

Iqallijuq: He was walking back and forth to indicate he was going a great distance to search for the cause of the sickness. He was asking the tuurngaaq the cause for the sickness. Even though he was staying in the same place he was walking a great distance.

Cosmology and Shamanism
Bernard quoting Rasmussen:
He was talking in groans and sighs, sometimes breathing deeply.

**Iqallijuq:** He had to really concentrate to find out the cause of the sickness.

**Ujarak:** He, himself, acted as if he was the *tuurnqaq*.

**Iqallijuq:** When the *tuurnqaq* entered his body it enabled him to speak of the cause of the sickness. When the *tuurnqaq* was within him he spoke on behalf of the *tuurnqaq*. The *tuurnqaq* spoke through the man like a person speaks through an interpreter.

**Ujarak:** The man looked as if he was walking around on the floor because his *tuurnqaq* was within his body. When the man and his *tuurnqaq* looked for the cause of the sickness, they would follow the footprints of what was causing the sickness to find out the cause.

*And then he asked his *tuurnqaq* if it was something he had done, such as eating something he wasn’t supposed to. Was it possible that someone became sick because of something the angakkuaq had done?*  

**Iqallijuq:** We people are all alike. For instance, when our children or husbands get sick, we think, “Maybe I’ve done something bad so I have caused somebody’s sickness.” The angakkuaq tried to cure the sick person by himself. Because he too didn’t know the cause of the sickness he would wonder if he might be the cause of it.

*Could it be caused by something the angakkuaq’s wife had done?*  

**Iqallijuq:** Angutimmarik and his wife Nivitsanaaq were camp leaders. If Angutimmarik made somebody eat something they weren’t supposed to, he would blame himself if something happened to them. The angakkuaq would blame himself. My mother Nuvvijaq was his wife’s niece. Even though they had their own children, his wife treated my mother and her brothers as her own.

**Bernard quoting Rasmussen:**
*The patient Nanuraq answers:* “The sickness is due to my own fault. I have but ill fulfilled my duties. My thoughts have been bad and my actions evil.”

**Iqallijuq:** She remembered her wrongdoings, although she would never speak of them.
Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The *angakkuq* interrupts her, and continues: “It looks like peat, and yet is not really peat. It is that which is behind the ear, something that looks like the cartilage of the ear? There is something that gleams white. Is it the edge of a pipe, or what can it be?”

The listeners cry all at once: “She has smoked a pipe that she ought not to have smoked. But never mind. We will not take any notice of that. Let her be forgiven. Tauva!”

**Iqallijuq:** Nanuraq was not allowed to smoke tobacco that had local plants added to it. In those days people used to add plants to their tobacco to increase the quantity. Women were not allowed to smoke tobacco with plants added to it after they had given birth. This woman had disobeyed this rule and smoked tobacco with plants added to it. That’s why the *angakkuq* said it looked like peat. Maybe he was referring to the smoke when he said it looked white. Even though she was not supposed to, she smoked it anyway, which is why it was a wrongdoing. This is why the listeners asked to let her be forgiven by saying *tauva*.

Why weren’t new mothers allowed to smoke?

**Iqallijuq:** This was the way people used to live. Women used to be forbidden to smoke for certain reasons. In those days, Inuit lived far from the *qallunaat*.

**Ujarak:** They used to add some local plants called *atungajait* to their tobacco.

The whole community would gather together in one place and when the *angakkuq* discovered a wrongdoing the people gathered would add what they knew about it. Those who were listening said she had smoked when she wasn’t supposed to. The listeners said, “But never mind. We will not take any notice of that. Let her be forgiven. Tauva.”

**Iqallijuq:** Yes. All of them would say *tauva*.

**Ujarak:** They wanted so much for the cause of the sickness to be removed that they would all say *tauva* together because they wanted the sick person cured.

Did they all talk at once? Would those who were listening be allowed to talk?

**Ujarak:** Only to add something if the sick person had forgotten it.
Iqallijuq: The people only spoke of things the sick person left out of her confession.

Ujarak: Anybody who observed something the sick person had left out of her confession could speak up even though they were part of the audience. This was to help the sick person be cured of her sickness.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq added: “That is not all. There are yet further offenses, which have brought about this disease. Is it due to me, or to the sick person herself?”

The patient then answers: “It is due to myself alone. There was something the matter with my abdomen, with my insides.”

Then the angakkuq said: “I espy something dark beside the house. Is it perhaps a piece of a marrow-bone, or just a bit of boiled meat, standing upright, or is it something that has been split with a chisel? That is the cause. She has split a meat bone which she ought not to have touched.”

Iqallijuq: While the sick person was not supposed to have eaten some meat she snuck out of the house to where the meat was kept. She hadn’t taken a knife with her so she had to use something used to chop meat to eat with. That’s why she was in darkness.

Is that why the angakkuq couldn’t see it very well? Even though he was able to say it was beside the iglu in the dark and was upright, why couldn’t he really tell what it was?

Iqallijuq: If the sick person had eaten marrow and hadn’t disclosed it, the angakkuq would not state outright what the wrongdoing was because if he hadn’t observed it in person, he didn’t want to make a false accusation.

Ujarak: This helped the sick person to remember. Even though the angakkuq didn’t describe it in detail, he exposed it. That’s why what he described seemed to be upright. Because she didn’t want to be discovered she used a chisel to eat the meat with. After the angakkuq had exposed this she began to talk about it.

Iqallijuq: After this, she would disclose what she had omitted.
Would she fully explain what she had done even if the angakkuq hadn’t?

Iqallijuq: Probably. Perhaps because the angakkuq couldn’t describe it in detail, and because these were her actions she had to tell about them herself in order for them to be removed. If the angakkuq were to describe it and the wrongdoer didn’t confess it, then it the wrongdoing would remain with her and continue to make her sick. They were told to do it that way.

And the listeners would say, tauva?

Ujarak: After they would say tauva they would talk about another wrongdoing.

Ijituuq: They would say tauva after a wrongdoing was disclosed.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “It still has not been removed. She is not released from her evil. It is dangerous. It is a matter for anxiety. Helping spirit, say what it is that plagues her. Is it due to me or to herself?” Anguitimmarik listens, in breathless silence, and then speaking as if he had with difficulty elicited the information from his tuurngaaq, says: “She has eaten a piece of raw frozen caribou steak at a time when that was taboo for her.”

Listeners: “It is such a slight offence, and means so little, when her life is at stake. Let her be released from this burden, from this cause, from this source of illness. Tauva!”

Iqallijuq: The woman was so sick she had difficulty talking. Because the audience could answer on her behalf they were trying to have her wrongdoings removed.

Ujarak: Because she had eaten what she was not supposed to eat, she became more ill.

Iqallijuq: She knew very well there were certain foods she was not to touch. She ate this food knowingly, so as a result she became sick.

Ijituuq: Nanuraq and Makkik stayed the whole summer and half of the winter down there.

Ujarak: They travelled down in the wintertime and stayed until the following spring.
Ijituuq: They were brought back by boat from the Aqiarunnak River. The days had become longer when they started travelling.

Iqallijuq: That year, they moved on to Igluligaarjuk in the spring. On their way back, they went to Salliq.

Ijituuq: They went to go and get them with Aullanaaq’s dogs. A great number of dogs were lost that year. Kanguq had a small camp, which he was the head of. I know and remember them. They lived at Nagjuktuuq. Aullanaaq lived at the end of the inlet of Nagjuktuuq. Aullanaaq bought a boat which was worth two hundred fox pelts when he returned. This was after he had been recorded by a Greenland. Jaaku [Jacob Olsen] wrote in his journal when he was in Salliq and also when he visited Aqiarunnak the second time. He also came to collect information. There is probably something written somewhere about these incidents and about the people involved in this story who used to live there. In Salliq, most of us couldn’t have marrow or eyes to eat. Even though I never ate eyes, my sight still gets blurry.

Bernard quoting from Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “She is not yet released. I see a woman over in your direction, toward my audience, a woman who seems to be asking for something. A light shines out in front of her. It is as if she was asking for something with her eyes, and in front of her is something that looks like a hollow. What is it? What is it? Is it that, I wonder, which causes her to fall over on her face, stumble right into sickness, into peril of death? Can it indeed be something which will not be taken from her? Will she not be released from it? I still see before me a woman with entreating eyes, with sorrowful eyes, and she has with her a walrus tusk in which grooves have been cut.”

Listeners: “Oh, is that all? It is a harpoon head that she had worked on, cutting grooves in it at a time when she ought not to have touched anything made from animal parts. If that is all, let her be released. Let it be. Tauva!”

Iqallijuq: That woman was skilled in sewing. She probably made clothing when she ought not to have. Perhaps she made her husband some hunting clothes at a time when she ought not to have. That might have been one of the reasons why she was sick.
Were the women able to help her?

Iqallijuq: In those days, women were forbidden from doing a lot of things. There were a few women who didn’t have a pittailiniq to follow who would help with the chores when the husband had something else to do. This woman we are talking about helped her husband at a time she was to pittaili, perhaps because she was menstruating or for some other reason. Times when she wasn’t following a pittaili she would help her husband as much as she could. Everything was made from walrus bone or tusk, such as harpoons and harpoon heads. She must have helped him and that’s what made her sick.

Ujarak: The only job a woman could have helped her husband with was when he was making a harpoon with a toggling harpoon head. She would braid sinew to attach the harpoon head and the harpoon handle together.

Was the sick woman pleading to the angakkuq with her eyes because she was so sick she couldn’t speak?

Iqallijuq: She had things on her mind, which she wanted to say.

Ujarak: She couldn’t talk about them. Perhaps because she couldn’t talk about them she tried to indicate to the angakkuq with her eyes to let him know if what he had said was right or not.

Iqallijuq: Perhaps she did not want to let anybody know about what she had done. Perhaps she made a sign to her child with her eyes to indicate a piece of material she wanted to work on.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: "Now this evil is removed, but in its place there appears something else; hair combings and sinew thread."

The patient: “Oh I did comb my hair once after giving birth to a child. I ought not to have combed my hair; and I hid away the combings that none might see.”

Iqallijuq: In those days, a woman was not allowed to comb her hair during her period or after she gave birth. After a birth a woman would bleed for a long time. Sometimes she could bleed for a whole month. This woman used a comb while she was having her period. After she combed her hair, she hid the loose hair that had been in the comb.

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Cosmology and Shamanism
Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners: “Let her be released from that. Oh, such a trifling thing; let her be released. Tauva!”

The angakkuq said: “We have not yet come to the end of her offences, of the causes of her sickness. Here is a caribou breast come to light, a raw caribou breast.”

The listeners: “Yes, we know! Last summer, at a time when she was not allowed to eat the breast of a caribou she ate some all the same. But let her be released from that offence. Let it be taken from her. Tauva!”

Iqallijuq: That was another thing she wasn’t to do while having her period. Because someone had observed this they brought it up.

Ijituuq: That was another thing that made her sick.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “She is not yet free. A seal comes forth. It is plain to see. It is wet. One can see how the skin has been scraped on the blubber side; it is all plain as could be.”

The patient: “I did scrape the skin of a seal which my son Qusaagat had killed at a time when I ought not to have touched sealskins.”

Iqallijuq: This was not post-partum bleeding, because she could no longer conceive. She had her menstruation only. The reasons for her sickness were sewing and eating during her menstruation. During her period, she wasn’t allowed to do certain things or eat certain parts of animals. During her menstruation, a woman was not allowed to scrape a newly caught sealskin. She hadn’t disclosed this, but the angakkuq saw the shadow of the sealskin and brought it up.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “It is not yet removed. It has shifted a little way back. Something very like it, something of the same sort is visible near by.”
The listeners: “Oh that was last summer, when her husband cut out the tusk from a walrus skull, and that was shortly after he had been ill, when he was not yet allowed to touch any kind of game. Let her be released from that. Do let it be taken from her! Tauva!”

Did men who had recently been ill have things they were not allowed to touch?

Iqallijuq: In the times when angakkuit used to consult their tuurngait, a lot of people were forbidden from doing certain things. When a man was sick he would be given pittailiniq to help heal him. One of the things he would not be able to do was chop bones. This man had removed walrus tusks by chopping them from the skull. That’s why the wrongdoing was considered to be almost the same as the one regarding the seal because it was another sea mammal.

Ujarak: A sick man was not supposed work or make things. He was not supposed to make anything until he was fully recovered. If he made something before he was completely cured he might have a relapse, a nangit.

What does nangittuq mean?

Iqallijuq: Nangittuq means becoming ill again.

Ujarak: The person had started to recover, but when he made something when he was not supposed to, he became ill again.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “There is more to come. There are yet cases of work, of occupations which were forbidden; something that happened in the spring, after we had moved over to this place.”

The patient: “Oh, I gave my daughter a waistbelt made of skin that had been used for my husband’s quiver.”

Iqallijuq: Perhaps it was a quiver that had been used in the summer that had been made into a belt after they had moved into an iglu. Then they would have been in a place where they were catching seal and walruses.
Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners: “Let this be taken away. Let her be released from it. Tauva!”

The angakkuq: “It is not yet taken away. She is not released from it as yet. Perhaps it has something to do with the caribou. Perhaps she has prepared caribou skins at a time when she ought not to have touched them.”

The listeners: “She has prepared caribou skins. She helped to stretch out the skins at a time when she was living in the same house with a woman who had her menses. Let her be released from that. Tauva!”

Iqallijuj: She had worked on something that wasn’t for her own personal use and had helped someone else. Although she hadn’t broken a pittailiniq on purpose it was still seen as a wrongdoing and so it was mentioned.

Ujarak: The angakkuq could always discern what the person did, no matter what it was.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “She is not freed from guilt even yet. It seems now as if the earth beneath our feet were beginning to move.”

The patient: “I have picked moss at a time when I ought not to have touched earth at all, moss to melt lead with for my husband’s rifle bullets.”

Ujarak: In those days, they used to melt lead with moss. She picked moss off the ground, when she ought not to have. That was another reason why her sickness got worse. Most of the women in those days loved their husbands so much that they helped them when they ought not to have. Their feelings to help were so strong.

Iqallijuq: Some of them helped their husbands when they weren’t supposed to because they were afraid of them.
If they broke a pittailiniq but no one saw this, and they didn’t get sick from it right away, would they stay healthy?

Iqallijuq: A person would not get sick right away after they had done something they were not supposed to. They would get sick much later. The causes for the sickness would grow as they broke more of the pittailiniq. After they had accumulated a lot of wrongdoings they would become ill. As the angakkuq brought up the wrongdoings the sick person would confess.

Ujarak: The person wouldn’t get sick right away. Some people’s wrongdoings would only become apparent after a period of time. Women who followed their pittailiniq conscientiously would live to see their children become elders.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “There is more yet, more forbidden work that has been done. The patient has not only melted lead for her husband when it was taboo, but she did it while still wearing clothes made from old caribou skin. She did it before she had yet put on the garments made from the new autumn skins.”

Iqallijuq: When a woman was menstruating, she was supposed to change her clothing and put on old pants and old socks. This woman kept her new pants on during her menstruation and wore them when she melted lead for rifle bullets.

Did a woman also have to wear a different pair of kamiik when she was menstruating?

Iqallijuq: Not always. If she didn’t have other clothing to put on then it wasn’t considered a wrongdoing. The most important piece of clothing to change were the pants.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “Oh these are such little things. A woman must not be suffered to die for these. Do let her be released.”

The angakkuq said: “She is not released. It may perhaps prove impossible to release her from these burdens. What is that I begin to see now? It must be blood, unless it human filth. But it is outside the house, on the ground. It looks like blood. It is frozen, and covered with loose snow. Someone has tried to hide it.”
The patient said: “Yes, that was in the autumn. I had a miscarriage, and tried to conceal it, I tried to keep it secret to avoid the taboo.”

The listeners said: “This is certainly a great and serious offence. But let her be released nevertheless. Let her be released. Tauva!”

When the angakkuq used the term quaq what was he referring to?

Iqallijuq: If a woman had a miscarriage and she did not want to follow the pittailiniq, she covered the foetus with snow outside. She didn’t say anything about her miscarriage but she kept on about her chores. When an angakkuq uses the term quaq it means a foetus or a child.

Ujarak: It does not refer to quaq, as we use it, meaning frozen meat.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “We wish her to get well again. Let all these obstacles be removed. Let her get well! And yet I see, and yet I espy things done which were forbidden. What do I see? It looks as if it were a caribou antler. It looks like part of the antler nearest the head.”

The patient said: “Oh that was a caribou head I once stole in order to eat it, although it was forbidden food for me at the time.”

Iqallijuq: There was a mistake in your Inuktitut. You used tiglik which means to steal objects. You should have used tiglikumik which means to steal meat.

Do you use the term tiglikumik when a woman is with a man she’s not supposed to be with?

Iqallijuq: That also would be a correct usage for this word.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “That was very wrong, but all the same, let her be released, let her be released from that. Tauva!”

The angakkuq said: “There is still something more I seem to see something that as it were comes and disappears just as I am about to grasp it. What is it? Can it be the man Amarualik, I wonder? It looks like him. I think it must be he. His face is bright, but he is blushing.
also. He is as bright as a living being. It looks as if he wanted to show me something. And yet another person. Who is that? The patient must have no secrets. Let her tell us herself. Let her speak to us herself. Or can it be my cousin Qumangaapik? Yes, it is he. It is Qumangaapik. The size is right, and he has a big nose.”

The patient said: “Alas, yes, it is true. Those men have I lain with at a time when I ought not to have lain with any man, at a time when I was unclean.”

Iqallijuq: She also had sex with men other than her husband, when she was menstruating.

Ujarak: She never told her husband she had sex with other men.

Was she also not supposed to have sex with her husband when she was menstruating?

Ujarak: This was not as dangerous. It was not as dangerous for her to have sex with her husband if she had her period; but since she went to bed with other men during her menstruation, she became ill because she never told her husband, probably out of fear.

The angakkuq first described whom he saw without saying their name. Did he do this because he didn’t want to make a mistake?

Iqallijuq: He didn’t want to make a mistake. The angakkuq wanted to describe the person correctly because he wanted her to get better. That’s why he wanted to describe the person correctly.

Ujarak: Because he wanted the sick person to fully remember the incident, he would describe what he saw.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “It is a very serious offence for a woman to lie with men when she is unclean. But never mind all that. Let her be released, let her get well.”

The angakkuq said: “But there is more yet to come.” And turning to his spirit, he said ‘Release her from it all. Release her, so that she may
get well. There is still something hereabout, something I can faintly perceive, but cannot yet grasp entirely."

The patient said: “Before the snow came, and before we were allowed to work on the skins of newly captured caribou, I cut up some caribou skin for soles and sewed them onto our boots.”

What was the pittailiniq that she broke?

Iqallijuq: Before she and her family moved to a qarmaq, they were living in a sealskin tent. There was a rule that forbade women from touching fresh caribou before they moved out of the tent. She softened a caribou skin, scraped it and made it into clothing, while they were living in a tent. After that, they moved into a qarmaq. She made this clothing when she ought not to have.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuaq said: “That is there still! There is more yet. The sources of disease are doubtless all in the patient herself, or can it be there are some in me? Can it be my fault, or that of my helping spirits? Or can those here present as listeners be guilty in any way? Can they have any part in the disease? Those like Tikkilik (Therkel Mathiassen) and Jaaku (Jacob Olsen) who have been digging among the ruins, when it is considered sacrilege to touch the houses of the dead. What can be the cause of that which still torments her? Can it be forbidden work or forbidden food, something eatable, something eaten of that which was forbidden, and nothing said? Could it be a tongue?”

The patient said: “Alas, yes, I ate a tongue when it was forbidden for me to eat caribou tongue.”

Listeners: “Tauva! Let her be released from this burden, from this offence.”

The angakkuaq said: “She is not yet released. There is more yet about forbidden food.”

The patient said: “Can it be because I once stole some salmon and ate it at a time when salmon was forbidden me?”
When were they not allowed to eat char?

Iqallijuq: It would depend on what kind of fish they ate. If caribou meat was available and it was eaten during the day, and char from the sea was eaten in the evening, this was not allowed. You were not allowed to eat food from the land and food from the sea on the same day.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “Let her foolishness, let her misdeeds be taken from her. Let her get well.”

The angakkuq said: “She is not yet released. There is more yet; forbidden occupations, forbidden food, stealing. Can it be that she is trying to hide something from us? Is she trying to conceal something, I wonder?”

The listeners said: “Even if she is trying to keep something concealed, let her be released from that, let her get well.”

The angakkuq said: “There are still offences, evil thoughts, that rise up like a heavy mass, and she was only just beginning to get clean. The confessions were beginning to help her.”

The listeners said: “Let all evil thoughts disappear. Take away all evil thoughts.”

The angakkuq said: “Many confessions has the patient made, and yet it seems difficult! Can it be that she is beyond cure? But let her get well, quite well. Raise her up. But you cannot. You are not able to relieve her of her illness, though many of the causes have now been removed. It is terrible, it is dangerous, and you, my tuurngaq, you whom I believe to be here with us, why do you not raise her up and relieve her of her pain, of her sickness? Raise her up, hold her up. Now once more something appears before my eyes, forbidden food and sinews of caribou.”

The listeners said: “Once more she has combed her hair although she was unclean. Let her be released from that; let it be taken away from her. Let her get well. Tauva!”
The angakkuq said she had eaten something she was not supposed to, and that he had seen caribou sinew. But the listeners replied she had combed her hair when she was unclean. Why was that?

**Iqallijuq:** There were times they were not to igguaq, which was eating the meat off a caribou leg without damaging the sinew as the sinew would later be braided to make thin rope. As we have heard, she had a habit of stealing meat she was not supposed to eat. Perhaps the people present felt that she had committed this offence so often that they chose to talk about a different offence, combing her hair when she was not supposed to. Women who were menstruating were not to comb their hair when there were caribou legs inside the iglu caught by a man whose wife was following a pittailiniq.

**Ujarak:** The meat from an animal caught by a man whose spouse was following a pittailiniq also has pittailiniq.

**Iqallijuq:** In those days, they kept track of the caribou to make sure they knew which caribou belonged to which hunter. If a certain man’s hunt might cause pittailiniq, and his catch was inside the house when a woman wanted to comb her hair, it would have to be taken out first. I once heard a woman tell someone to put the caribou head and legs out in the porch, because she wanted to comb her hair.

**What were some of the other reasons why a man’s catch might have pittailiniq?**

**Iqallijuq:** A man’s first catch was very important in those times. A woman who was menstruating wouldn’t be allowed to touch it. There were many things that were forbidden regarding a man’s first catch. There is a saying that caribou have a very keen sense of smell. Since the caribou were thought to be really squeamish, anyone who might cause them to feel squeamish was not allowed to handle meat from a first catch.

**Bernard quoting Rasmussen:**

The angakkuq said: “Yet again I catch a glimpse of forbidden occupations carried on in secret. They appear before my eyes, I can just perceive them.”

The listeners said: “While she was lying on a caribou skin from an animal killed when shedding its coat in the spring, she had a miscarriage, and she kept it secret, and her husband, all unwitting, lay down on the same skin where that had taken place, and so rendered himself unclean for his hunting!”
Iqallijuq: He probably thought she was just having her period.

Ujarak: Perhaps, she had her miscarriage while they were out hunting. When a woman miscarried they were not supposed to lie on a new caribou skin.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuaq said: “Even for so hardened a conscience there is release. But she is not yet freed. Before her I see green flowers of sorrel and the fruits of sorrel.”

The listeners said: “Before the spring was come, and the snow melted and the earth grew living, she once, wearing unclean garments, shovelled the snow away and ate of the earth, ate sorrel and berries, but let her be released from that, let her get well. Tauva!”

Iqallijuq: She was still wearing the same clothing she had worn when she miscarried when she ate some mountain sorrel from the ground, which she ought not to have done.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuaq said: “She is not yet released. I see plants of seaweed, and something that looks like fuel. It stands in the way of her recovery. Explain what it can be.”

The listeners said: “She has burned seaweed and used blubber to light it with, although it is forbidden to use blubber with sea plants. But let her be released from that. Let her get well. Tauva!”

Iqallijuq: She dipped iquti, a type of seaweed, in boiling blubber at a time when she was not supposed to.

Ujarak: They were still travelling when they found themselves in an area where there was no heather to burn. Maybe they found some old dried seaweed and used new blubber to burn it with. They gathered up the driest seaweed they could find, added it to the blubber and built a fire. There wasn’t much wood around at the time. They were not supposed to take anything from the sea to burn, like wood. This sick woman had disobeyed these rules.

Ijituuq: When seaweed is dry it is very combustible.
Ujarak: This seaweed was quite dry by the time they started burning it. As they lit the fire, they added some blubber to keep it going, which it turned out they were not supposed to do. That was the incident which caused the woman to be sick. She probably could have used maniq, moss, as a wick to light up her qulliq, her seal oil lamp. Probably because they were travelling she lit a fire instead of using new blubber. Women with pittailiniq were not allowed to add new blubber to a fire, although it was alright for men to do this. A man could add new blubber to burning bones.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “Ha, if the patient remains obstinate and will not confess her own misdeeds, then the sickness will gain the upper hand, and she will not get well. The sickness is yet in her body, and the offences still plague her. Let her speak for herself, let her speak out. It is her own fault.”

The patient said: “I happened to touch a dead body without afterwards observing the taboo prescribed for those who touch dead bodies. But I kept it secret.”

The angakkuq said: “She is not yet released. The sickness is yet in her body. I see snow whereon something has been spilt, and I hear something being poured out. What is it, what is it?”

Ujarak: I forget the exact details, but this woman picked up a human bone. I don’t know why she picked it up. Maybe she thought it was an animal bone. When she realized it was a human bone, she laid it back where she had found it and whistled, “Kukkukiaq.” Kukkukiaq is what you whistle after someone has picked up a human bone which they ought not to have done. The angakkuq would make his patient kukkukiaq if the patient had picked up a human bone.

Iqallijuq: After someone had picked up a human bone, that person would be forbidden from doing certain chores. For example, anybody who prepared a dead person’s body for burial would not be allowed to eat anything raw.

Ujarak: When there was no one else to do so, the family would have to prepare the dead body for burial.
Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The patient said: “We were out after salmon, and I happened to spill something from the cooking pot on the snow floor.” (When salmon are being sought for, care must be taken never to spill anything from a cooking pot either in the snow, in a snow hut, or on the ground in a tent.)

Iqallijuq: I remember a time when people weren’t even allowed to spit out fish bones. I have never heard of anyone not being able to pour fish bones from qajuq down a crack. Although, if someone chewed fish bones they weren’t allowed to spit them out. They had to put them in their hands first before they put them down, because they didn’t want the fish bones to bounce lest the fish disappear.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “Here you are, helping spirit, dog Punnguq. Tell me what you know. Explain yourself. Tell me, name to me, the thing she has taken. Was it the foot of an eider duck?”

The patient said: “Oh, I ate the gizzard of a goose at a time when I was not allowed to eat such meat.”

Iqallijuq: They were not allowed to eat bird stomach if they had a pittailiniq to follow such as if they were menstruating, or had lost a child, or a member of the immediate family had just died. These were some of the reasons why women were not allowed to eat bird stomach. It was only women who were forbidden from eating bird stomach. Men were also forbidden from eating some foods after their wives had died. A man whose wife had died was forbidden from eating certain foods for a prescribed period of time, similar to a woman who had just given birth. The third day, after giving birth, a woman would be allowed to eat the food she wanted. The three days after a birth were the important days, when a woman was not allowed to eat certain foods.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “Never mind that. Let her be released from that. Let her get well.”

The angakkuq said: “But she is not yet released. There is more yet. I can still see a hollow that has been visible all the time, ever since I
began taking counsel of my tuurngait this evening. I see it, I perceive it. I see something which is half naked, something with wings. I do not understand what this can mean.”

The patient said: “Oh, perhaps it is a little sparrow, which my daughter brought into the tent at a time when I was unclean, when it was forbidden me to come into contact with the animals of nature.”

Iqallijuq: Nanuraq, the sick woman, could not have any more babies after her daughter Tarralik was born. After that she had several miscarriages. She became sterile after she had had Qusagaat and Tarralik. After that, she could not bear any more children. She broke too many pittailiniq and that’s why she became sterile. Her daughter was probably too young to obey her mother, when her mother asked for certain foods that she was not allowed to touch.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “Oh, let it pass. Let her be excused. Let her get well.”

The angakkuq said: “She is not released. Ah, I fear it may not succeed. She still droops, falling forwards, she is ill even yet. I see a fur garment. It looks as if it belonged to some sick person. I suppose it can not be anyone else who has used it, who has borrowed it?”

The listeners said: “Oh, yes, it is true, she lent a fur coat to someone at a time when she was unclean.”

Iqallijuq: I’ve never heard of anyone not being allowed to lend clothing.

Ujarak: Some people were not allowed to borrow someone else’s clothing. This woman made someone borrow some of her clothing when the other person was not allowed to borrow it. Some people who were following a pittailiniq were not allowed to borrow other’s clothing. People could borrow other’s clothing if they were not following a pittailiniq. This woman lent her clothing to someone who was not allowed to wear someone else’s clothing.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuq said: “I can still see a piece of sole leather chewed through and through, a piece of sole leather being softened.”
The patient said: “The spotted seal from the skin of which I removed the hair, and the meat of which I ate, though it was taboo.”

The listeners said: “Let it pass. Let her be released from that. Let her get well.”

Iqallijuq: Maybe she cleaned a sealskin that someone other than her husband caught while she was menstruating and ate some of the meat which was a wrongdoing.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The angakkuaq said: “Return to life, I see you now returning in good health among the living, and you, being yourself an angakkuaq, have your tuurngait in attendance. Name but one more instance of forbidden food, all the men you have lain with though you were unclean, all the food you have swallowed, old and new, forbidden occupations exercised, or was it a lamp that you borrowed?”

The patient answered: “Alas, yes. I did borrow the lamp of one dead; I have used a lamp that had belonged to a dead person.”

Iqallijuq: When someone took something from a gravesite, they were not allowed to use it. The dead person’s belongings were taken and never touched again. If someone used something that belonged to a dead person that would be considered as a wrongdoing. The dead person might become jealous of whoever had taken their belongings. In those days, some families would be really poor, so before a sick person died he wanted his belongings to be given away to his family. He loved his family so much that before he died, he placed his belongings into the hands of his family. Three days after his death, the belongings which he wanted to keep would be taken to his grave and would be put beside his body. This woman had taken and used a qulliq from a grave, which she was not supposed to do.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

The listeners said: “Even though it be so, let it be removed. Let all evils be driven far away, that she may get well.”

Here the angakkuaq ended his exorcisms, which had taken place early in the morning, and were now to be repeated at noon and later, when the evening had come. The patient was by that time so exhausted that
she could hardly sit upright, and the listeners left the house believing that all the sins and offences now confessed had taken the sting out of her illness, so that she would now soon be well again.

Iqallijuq: When the angakkuaq dealt with the sick woman, if he correctly discerned her wrongdoings, then she would remember them and confess. If a person made a full confession they would live longer.

She had been sick in the past but she had never fully disclosed her wrongdoings. It was only when she thought she was going to die that she fully disclosed them.

Did Nanuraq recover?

Iqallijuq: After she disclosed all her wrongdoings she was better for a time. It was quite some time after that that I heard she had died.

Do you know what tuurngaikt Angutimmairik had?

Iqallijuq: He had a dog called Punnguq as a helper. I’m not quite sure, but I seem to remember a woman named Miranaaq who died from a pain in her upper arm from a sickness that travelled upwards through her body. She was an angakkuaq’s tuurnga, but I don’t remember which angakkuaq it was.

Ijituq: Aqaat might have been the angakkuaq that had Miranaaq as a tuurnga.
Chapter 6

Qilaniq, Irinaliutit, Qinngarniq and Aarnguat

Introduction

This chapter will expand on some of the themes dealt with in the first part of this book, particularly in Chapter 2 (irinaliuti, incantations, and qinngarniq, shouted prayers) and Chapter 4 (qilaniq, divination by lifting). We will delve deeper into these themes and illustrate them with examples from elders who are now deceased. The first theme, qilaniq, will take us back over the material of the last chapter. In the introduction to Chapter 5, we emphasized the shamanistic nature of the healing ritual that the account described and commented on. All three people were shamans: the officiant (Angutimmarik), the medium (Makkik), and the patient (Nanuraq). Although the ritual was not reserved for shamans, they often performed it, especially when one of them fell ill.

As already noted, the ritual performed on January 24, 1923, and described in Chapter 5 was a divination ritual, qilaniq. Or to quote K. Rasmussen (1929:132): "This method of invocation, a very common one among the Aivilingmiut, is an intermediate form between the sakajut[sakaniq] type, where the shaman sits behind a curtain of skins on the sleeping place, and the qilajut[qilaniq]." It was quite complex. It involved: an officiant (the qilajuq); a spirit that could be questioned (an apiqsaq) through a medium (a qilajaq); a patient (the aanniaqtuq) who had to confess to his infringements of the rules; and finally, an audience (the naalaktut) who pointed out concealed facts or asked for the indulgence of the spirits. Throughout the healing ritual with its comments and interjections, the shaman queried the apiqsaq by trial and error, eventually pinpointing the different causes of the patient’s illness.

Two points are key to understanding the value of the qilaniq ritual. First, it was repetitive. Second, it could alternate with other shamanistic rituals, such as consulting a helping spirit by sakaniq. The entries in Therkel Mathiassen’s logbook from mid-August, 1922, to mid-February, 1923, refer to the following events:

**November 2.** Last night Angorajak [Angugasak] had diarrhea and vomiting; this morning Angutingmarik shamanized [sakajuq] over him...

**November 4.** Seance over Angorajak in the evening: Head-lifting [qilaniq], Niviatsianâq [Nivitsanaaq] lying on the platform and...
Angutingmarik tying his shaman belt over her head and asking his helping spirits what was the matter; it lasted half an hour. This morning the same performance, but shorter...

**November 13.** Angutingmarik shamanized over Jacob Olsen’s disordered stomach: Head-lifting...

**November 21.** Head-lifting, because Angutingmarik had dreamt that the other folks would come and kill us.

**December 5.** Last night Ugpartôq shamanized over Qingaq’s headache [both are shamans].

**December 15.** Shaman seances [sakaniq] have been held every day lately owing to illness … there were present Angutingmarik, Qingaq, Niviatsianâq and Malaia [four shamans, two men and two women].

**December 16.** Last night Angutingmarik held a brief head-lifting with Niviatsianâq, who is still [feeling] very poorly...

**December 18.** This morning Makik performed head-lifting...

**December 19.** Both last night and this morning Makik performed head-lifting ...

**December 22.** This morning Ugpartôq performed head-lifting with Qajarssuq...

**December 23.** In the evening there was a great seance owing to the bad caribou hunting. … this morning the seance was continued...

**December 24.** This morning Angutingmarik performed head-lifting with Niviatsianâq...

**December 26.** Last night and this morning Makik had head-lifting with Qusagak...
January 2. Morning and evening Ugpartóq performs head-lifting with his little girl, who is ill ...

January 6. While I have been ill, Angutingmarik has several times held [sakaniq] seances; last night one over me...

There were more qilaniq and sakaniq séances with the onset of the harsh winter weather and fewer from mid-February on. They lasted from a half-hour to two hours. Some days there were up to three qilaniq séances performed. This was especially so when there were severely ill people.

The other ways to try to change the course of events were through incantations, irinaliutit, either recited or sung, and through shouted prayers, qinngarniq. The irinaliutit were performed to win the friendship of game animals or to become invisible to them. These were also done to protect a child from evil spirits or to heal a sick child. Irinaliutit could be passed on or bought. Their power was confined to the person possessing them. Qinngarniq, or shouted prayers, had to be performed away from campsites, in areas free of footprints. They were often used as a last resort. They were an improvised call for help to the spirits or to deceased parents to get out of a dangerous situation.

Amulets, aarnguat, were another means to protect oneself from bad luck and the evil designs of malicious people. There were all kinds of them. An amulet could be a small wooden doll placed in the clothing of a young girl so that she would bear sons later on. It could be a bird skin with which the person had been wiped at birth and which would provide them with lifelong protection from danger and accidents. Or it could be the shell of a sea urchin, as we will see further on, whose power could be sucked in from the anus-shaped opening and then blown out in the direction of a sick person to make the illness go away, or in the direction of a dangerous animal to make it flee. The same result could be obtained by holding the sea urchin tightly in one’s hand and breaking wind in the direction of the sick person or dangerous animal. There is an unikkaaqtuaq, an old story which recounts how Itijuaat, a young woman, discovered the power of the sea urchin, combined with farting, thus becoming the first healer.

**Qilaniq performed by lifting someone’s head**

**Ujaraq:** If the angakkuiq didn’t consult a tuurngaq through sakaniq, he would qila through lifting something.

**Iqallijuq:** Sakaniq and qilaniq are different procedures. Even today, any one of us is capable of performing qilaniq even though we are not angakkuit, by lifting something using a thong.
Ujarak: As long as a person had a small thong, he could get his wrongdoings out through qilaniq.

Iqallijuq: The part of the patient that is being lifted gets lighter or heavier, depending on the ikajuki’s responses to the questions. If the response was negative then the part of the body that was lifted would become light.

Ujarak: If the response was positive the body part being lifted would be heavy. If an angakkuq had difficulty finding the cause of a sickness he would continue to ask questions until he asked the right one. Then the head would become heavy.

Ijituuq: It would be as though the body part being lifted would be cemented to the floor when it became heavy.

Ujarak: The rope is tied around the head. The person would be absolutely relaxed as though he were asleep.
**Iqallijuq:** The person on whom the *qilaniq* was being performed kept his eyes closed while his body was totally relaxed. The people couldn’t lift his body part anymore, no matter how hard they would try. When that happened they knew that they had found a helper who would help them with the *qilaniq*.

**Qilaniq performed by lifting someone’s leg**

**Ujarak:** They used to ask the person questions, with one of his or her legs tied loosely. This was the same way the head was tied.

*Was the thong tied?*

**Ujarak:** It would be tied a certain way so it wouldn’t get any tighter.

*Do you remember the words Uupa used when qila was being performed on you?*

**Ujarak:** Uupa didn’t use a lot of words. She said to the helper, “Kivva kattarivagit. You are that which I am using to perform *qilaniq*.” Then she started asking questions. It seemed as if it was light at first until the helper arrived and then it became heavy. Then she requested her *apiqsaq* to come. When it became heavy she wanted to know which of the two bears were closer. When she found out the one in front of me was closer, she stopped asking questions. She seemed to only want to know which bear was closer.

*Have you seen other people perform qilaniq?*

**Ujarak:** That was just an example I was telling you to show how the person performing *qilaniq* asked questions of their helper. However, I do remember Arraq performing *qilaniq*. My father and mother had gone to Naujaat shortly after the ice had frozen. Quite a while had passed and they still hadn’t returned. Arraq began to get worried about them. Apparently, he thought that it was taking them too long to come back. One evening, when we had finished all our chores, he decided to perform *qilaniq* using his leg to determine whether they were alright or not. The family I was staying with consisted of Arraq, his wife, his mother Nattiq, my brother Nataaq and I. Arraq decided to ask a helper to find out if anything was the matter with Ava and his wife. He tied up one of his legs and waited for his helper, which he called his *apiqsaq*, to come. He said when his *apiqsaq* came to his leg it would become heavy. When it became heavy he started asking whether or not the travellers were in danger. His leg would become very light when he would ask if they were in danger. When he ascertained that they were not in...
danger, he asked it when they would return. When he found out they would be coming back soon, and that they were not in any danger, then he concluded his qilaniq. He asked numerous questions to ascertain this information.

**How did he tie the rope around his leg?**

**Ujarak:** He tied the thong around the leg the same way he would have tied it around the head. Because he was wearing kamiik he didn’t have to wear any padding as he would have done if it had been around the head. He used a short thong. He tried to have his leg totally relaxed. At times it would be very hard to lift and at other times it would be very light. Arraq would quite often perform qilaniq on the sleeping platform using his leg. When he was finished the qilaniq, he would untie the thong. Then he would shake his leg to get it back into shape and he would say, “tauva.” I have never known him to use another person when performing qilaniq, only his leg.

**What did he call your avvait, people who had the same name as you?**

**Ujarak:** Even if one of his avvait were present, he never used them to perform qilaniq. This was probably because he considered them to be part of himself and thought that his apiqsaq wouldn’t go to them.

**Qilaniq performed by lifting clothing**

**Did he use someone else’s head as well as his own leg?**

**Ujarak:** In those days, people used different objects to elicit a helper. Back then, we used to have caribou socks. My mother used to make caribou socks for my father and brother and me. When we weren’t wearing our socks, we just left them anywhere in the house. Then we would put on our indoor slippers. My mother had her own way to consult with a helper for qilaniq: she would take any old pair of caribou socks or outer short boots, and fix them into the shape of a head. Even though the socks were really light, she would ask the helper to come into them. They would work as well as any other object. That’s how my mother used to contact a helper for qilaniq. She would also try to find out the cause of illness. If she had recently visited someone who was ill, she would try and find out if she too would become sick, as well as trying to find out the cause of the sickness. If she hadn’t ascertained the cause, the socks would become heavy and lose their shape and she was unable to lift them. If she ascertained the reason, they would become light.

**Was that the only way your mother would perform qilaniq, using socks?**

**Ujarak:** My mother always used socks.
Even when the person who was sick was present, she didn’t use that person’s head?

**Ujarak:** She never used the sick person’s head or anyone else’s head.

*Did she ever use the sick person’s clothing?*

**Ujarak:** She never used the person’s head or anything belonging to that person to perform *qilaniq*. She only used her husband’s or her son’s socks. When the person performing the *qilaniq* was finished he would say, *"tauva,"* even though he was still holding on to the thong.

**Ijituuq:** In those days, there was a certain area in the house where *qilaniq* would take place. I know Qinnguq used to perform *qilaniq* where the *igluit* were joined together. Qinnguq was trying to find out whether or not his mother had died. His mother was up in the Aivillik area while we were living down in Salliq.

When he was asking whether or not his mother was alive, when did his wife’s head become heavy and when was it light?

**Ijituuq:** After he had performed *qilaniq* he found out she was alive. When the answer was yes to her being alive, the head was light.

**Ujarak:** In those days, performing *qilaniq* was like talking through a radio to collect news.
Ijituuq: They wanted to find out how other people were.

Ujarak: Especially if they had not heard from them for quite a while.

Ijituuq: Because Salliq is on an island, it was isolated for parts of the year.

**Makittarniq, making predictions using bones**

Ujarak: Qilaniq was the most obvious way of finding out the answers to things, but some people also used bones to find out information.

Ijituuq: The part called the qimminnguaq, which is the upper forearm of a sea mammal, would be flipped to see if it would land upright.

Ujarak: You could only use a seal or bearded seal’s upper forearm bone to do this.

**Which method, qilaniq or makittarniq seemed the most truthful?**

Ujarak: Qilaniq was more truthful because you were relying on a helper. Sometimes it would be the tuurngaaq of an angakkuq. The tuurngaaq could see things that weren’t present. There was something present in the object which would indicate yes or no. There was a tuurngaaq that was helping. Makittarniq was used for fun. Children would even do this for fun.

Iqallijuq: After I had my daughter we were inland caribou hunting at Isiriaq when the weather changed and remained bad. We had nothing to do and the men wanted to continue on travelling. My brother-in-law Qattalik decided that we should perform qilaniq so we all took turns. We were doing this in fun, until it was my turn and I was unable to lift the object.

**Have you ever seen someone perform qilaniq?**

Iqallijuq: The first time I saw someone performing qilaniq was just after I was born. I never saw it again after that until this incident with my brother-in-law. That was the second time I saw it being done and I learned from that.

**Irinaliutit, incantations**

What does irinaliuti mean?

Ujarak: The irinaliutiit were used for several purposes. They seemed to be a form of sakaniq, sort of singing but not really singing. They would begin with “uai, uai.” A
person would chant about something that was bothering him that he wanted fixed. Several of us Inuksuk, Aakuainnuk, and Nutarariaq, my ningauk, had to learn these irinaliutit. It was at that time that Inuksuk got his first bear. His father Ilupaalik had the nickname Kulluqanngittuq. When we started following the bear, he said that if his son was the one to wound it, we were to wait for him before we started butchering it. He then left us behind. Inuksuk wounded the bear but didn’t kill it. When the rest of us, Aakuainnuk, Nutarariaq and myself, arrived there, my ningauk killed it. Inuksuk reminded us not to butcher it because his father wanted us to wait for him. When his father, who was an old man, finally arrived on foot he put it on its back and knelt in front of it.

Iqallijuq: He knelt at the head of the bear.

Ujarak: He was wearing a qulitaq. He pulled the hood over his head.

Iqallijuq: He draped his parka hood over his head. He didn’t really put it on.

Ujarak: He knelt down on the ground as if he was in prayer. We started chanting, “uai, uai.” We placed ourselves in certain positions as Kulluqanngittuq instructed us to. He was teaching us how to say an irinaliuti. Kulluqanngittuq was chanting. His chant was so long that we forgot the words, right after he sang them. He wanted us to learn the irinaliuti so we would be able to use it for our sons after they killed their first bear. It was so that the bears they caught after that wouldn’t have any anger towards them. Because there were so many words we forgot them, but the purpose of that irinaliutit was to prevent future bears from being angry with them.

Have you heard any irinaliutit?

Iqallijuq: The late Tulugaarjuk, who was Ijituuq’s mother’s father from Nattilik, taught me an irinaliuti out of love for me. If there was a sick person who was no longer able to eat, he showed me how to tempt the sick person to eat. I was to bow my head down and think of the sick person. He taught me the words by having me repeat them. Tulugaarjuk said in his Nattillingmiut dialect, “Arnarquaksaarajjullu, arnarquaksaarajjullu, aippattau-taanik situajumiik kivialumik nirirait nirirait.” In our dialect, it means, “Eat some of our delicious meat that belongs to the old woman.”

Have you heard any others?

Iqallijuq: I never heard any others. Tulugaarjuk wanted me to live a long life, so he showed me how to help sick people to eat again. He showed me how to tempt a sick
person with food. I know how to perform this *irinaliuti*, but I never used it. Actually, I used it once. My son Makkik and his uncle Agiaq used to go fishing with nets. They used to bring fish to our camp. Tulugaarjuk, who was named after the old man, was having difficulty eating fish. She used to have a stomach-ache every time she ate fish. Tulugaarjuk would crave fish. When Agiaq arrived with fish, we gathered around outside. Tulugaarjuk said she was really craving fish but was worried about getting a stomach-ache.

Did you have to have your hood draped over your head?

**Ujarak:** We didn’t completely put our hood on, we just draped it over our head to do the *irinaliuti*.

Why was the hood worn like that?

**Iqallijuq:** Perhaps they wanted to give more power to the *irinaliuti*.

**Ujarak:** Perhaps, so that it seemed like wearing a cape.

Did you also do this?

**Iqallijuq:** I wasn’t wearing anything on my head when I did this. They say that *irinaliuti* varied. The one I used with Tulugaarjuk is the only one I know. Tulugaarjuk had learned this from his grandmother. He in turn gave it to me. Even after Tulugaarjuk gave it to me, it still remained his.

There are *irinaliuti* in this book. There is an *irinaliuti* from Urulu. Was it only used to make heavy objects lighter?

**Ujarak:** That was indeed Urulu’s *irinaliuti*. Nataaq used that particular one. Ava learned it from his wife, who recited it so it could be put in the book. He started the chant by saying “uai, uai.” He taught it to his son so when he started hunting he would not have difficulty. As Nataaq was his first son, he taught it to him. It was during this time that it was written down. Since Nataaq had a slight build, he taught it to him to help him when he was hunting. The first time that Urulu used this was when Nataaq was a newborn.

Bernard quoting Rasmussen:

This *irinaliuti* was to be used for a sick child. The child’s inner parka was used as well as the child’s hat. Whoever was reciting the *irinaliuti* put their arms in the sleeves. They did this in the morning.
before anyone had put their feet on the floor. This irinaliuti is called a makitirut. It is called, "Irinaliuti for getting up and getting dressed in the morning."

**Ivava ivava naujannuup makitirutanik makitirusiqpunga makippanginiaqtunga tarrup (tariup) miqsaanut qiviaqtailillungu ullup miqsaanut saappangniaqtunngu.**

_Ivava ivava_ I use the seagull’s irinaliut for getting up to get up with. I will get up by not facing the sea. I will face towards the day.

**Ujarak:** This _irinaliuti_ was probably performed because the child was a boy.

**Iqallijuq:** It was done with adults too, but in this case they were being protective of the child.

**Ujarak:** This _irinaliut_ was performed to heal the sick child. It was as though through using this _irinaliut_ they could help the sick person get up. It didn’t necessarily have to be used with a child, but when they used it they spoke of the sick person as a child. They could use _irinaliutiit_ for anyone.

**Iqallijuq:** They performed _irinaliutiit_ in critical situations.

**Ujarak:** There was a period where we hadn’t caught walrus for a long time. We walked down to the moving ice in search of walrus but it became dangerous because of the ice build-up. Ivaluarjuk, my father’s older brother, told us to kneel and place our hoods over our heads. He wanted to use an _irinaliutiit_ to entice the walrus. When we raised our heads to look at the walrus, its head was bobbing in and out of the water. The next time we looked it was asleep on the ice. My father and Arraq started going towards it. When they reached it, they harpooned it and killed it without difficulty. Ivaluarjuk had used an _irinaliuti_ to put the walrus to sleep in order to make it easier to kill. _Irinaliutiit_ were used for several reasons, but because we didn’t hear them often, we didn’t learn them.

**Qinngarniq, shouted prayer**

*Have you ever heard what an angakkuq did to take away a person’s sickness?*

**Iqallijuq:** I think adults were able to do this but children were not able to. They seemed to be praying but I don’t know what they were saying. It seemed to be a form of _sakaniq._
Maybe they were saying *qimgarniq* to a dead person. There were different types of *qimgausit*. Some people would go to an area where there was untrodden snow and would *qimgaq*.

**Ujarak:** They would do this in an area where there were no tracks in the snow.

**Iqallijuq:** There was one man who was swaying his body rhythmically. He placed his hood over his head and tied it. He said, “Aaah! Aaah! I am going to go through mosquito season.” This meant that he was praying for the weather to become calm. He turned in a circle and said this again. He was praying for the wind to go and for the weather to become calm. There was another time when there was a man in a little porch of a *qarmaq*. He looked outside and saw that a storm was coming up. There were some men out walrus hunting who were in danger. This man was praying for the bad weather to clear. This incident occurred before he was baptized. He found the baptism to be very powerful and his *tuurngait* started to disappear. He started to *qimgaq* because his *tuurngait* had begun to leave him.

**How would they *qimgaq***?

**Iqallijuq:** Each individual used his own words to *qimgaq*. A person would go to a place where there were no fresh tracks and would shout the *qimgaq*. A person did not have to be an *angakkuq* to *qimgaq*. When people had a serious problem or were near starvation and there wasn’t an *angakkuq* amongst them, someone would *qimgaq*. Ulluriaq was an *angakkuq* who used both *qimgarniq* and *irinaliutit*.

**Could anyone *qimgaq***?

**Iqallijuq:** Anybody could do this except children. It was like they were praying. They would talk as if they were doing *saka*; maybe they would *qimgaq* to a dead person. There were different ways of doing this. There were occasions where a person would walk on untrodden snow and shout. The person who was going to *qimgaq* would have to be away from the camp in an area where there was fresh snow. For example, a person could walk up behind the hills here to shout their *qimgaq*.

**Would they just stand there?**

**Ujarak:** Once, my father and I shouted a *qimgaq*. We just stood in one place. Nattaq and Kublu were also with us. There were the four of us and it was windy. We were living at Maluksita and had run out of food. When the weather improved we went down to the floe edge. There was a lot of pressure-ice although the floe edge was close. We had gone down to the floe edge on foot. We had to continually check whether the ice was safe. As
my father had brought his rifle, he shot two seals. My brother, who had stayed behind with the dogs, started walking through the pressure-ice but it was taking a long time because the dogs kept on tripping. He finally got to us. Our floe-edge boat was quite large. It had been built to carry two people. Kublu and Nattaq got in the boat to go and get the seals. It was windy. The current at Malaksita flows outwards. A lengthwise crack had formed in the wood and there was a hole in the boat. The two seals were being carried out further by the current before they got to them. They had managed to put the seals in the boat and were returning when the boat sank. They were quite a distance away. There was a real danger of losing them.

Although my father had been an angakkuq, because he had become a Christian he was no longer practising shamanism. My father said that since those two were young men they needed to live. He wanted to qinngaq and he wanted me to help. Because he was no longer an angakkuq and didn’t have his tuurngait anymore, he was unable to use sakaniq. He said the only way he could save them was through qinngarniq. We went to the pressure-ice and climbed on to the highest piece and faced inland. We had our backs to them. We shouted with all our might, wanting the two to be carried towards the edge of the ice. Kublu had his pack with his bullets with him and that gave him additional weight. They clung to a paddle with one hand and paddled with the other. They managed to paddle to the ice in no time. This happened after we had stopped following pittailiniq.

**Iqallijuq:** My uncle Annannguaq, who was blind, and Pilakapsi became stranded on an ice pan that had broken off and therefore had to qinngaq. People imitated them doing this for a long time afterwards. This happened after they had become Christian, before Annannguaq had become blind.

**Ujarak:** We were just shouting, wanting the men to be brought to safety. We were shouting to the air asking that these men be brought to safety. When my father first started to qinngaq he let out a long piercing cry. That is how my father started the qinngaq when he asked to have Nataaq and Kublu brought back to safety. He shouted that if there was anything around to help, he wanted them brought back. He first said their names. That’s what he was shouting.

*Was it possible to perform qinngarniq without using sakaniq?*

**Iqallijuq:** Qinngarniq was not sakaniq. It is similar to praying, but the person would be shouting. This woman, Ulluriaq, who could no longer walk very far, went to the highest part of the land and shouted a qinngaq for the northwest wind to stop blowing. She wanted the weather to cool down because there were people that she wanted to return home.
Ujarak: She did not want the ice to blow away because she didn’t want the people who were on it to be lost.

Iqallijuq: She wanted the hunters to return home soon so she shouted for them to be helped.

Did they use qinngarniq because they wanted what they were asking for to happen right away?

Ujarak: In those days, people shouted for help in urgent situations. Sakaniq would take too long. These incidents happened when there were still angakkuit. If a group of hunters was away on a hunt, they would be gone during the day and return home by evening. They would saka during the evenings to pass time. They would do this to make the time pass more quickly.

Iqallijuq: Qinngarniq was only done during times of great stress.

**Aarnguat, amulets; and niliqsiniq, farting**

Are the things that look like mussels called itiq?

Ujarak: Yes. They are itiujat, sea urchins.

Was that an aarnguaq?

Ijituuq: What they say about them is not true. I had one as an aarnguaq but even when I was afraid, I never farted.

Iqallijuq: They were told to fart at what they were afraid of.

Ijituuq: Twice now I’ve been afraid. The first time was when I started caribou hunting. The other time was not too long ago. I had an itiujag as an aarnguaq when I was young.

Can you tell me what it was for, and how you used it? Did you have it as a helper?

Ijituuq: They said that when I became an adult, if I became afraid while I was out hunting, I was to fart at what I was afraid of. The time I was afraid I never farted.

Kupaaq: Although you had it as a helper?

Ijituuq: Yes, even though I had it as a helper.
Iqallijuq: Were you supposed to fart at what you were afraid of to get rid of your fear?

Ijituuq: I was told to fart but I never did! What they said about them isn’t true.

**But if you had farted, would the thing that you were afraid of have gone away?**

Ijituuq: If I had been afraid of it, it would have been flung away.

Ujarak: If we had an aarnguaq and we farted it would protect us.

**Did you not have it any longer, the time you were afraid?**

Ijituuq: I don’t remember ever seeing my aarnguaq but I believe I had it when I was growing up.

**Where did you wear it?**

Ijituuq: I think it was on my back. It was dry, and probably enclosed in something. It must have been enclosed in something that was sewn on.

**Was the sea urchin spiny?**

Ijituuq: It was a bit spiny. I wore it at the top of my inner parka.

Iqallijuq: They were worn there because they were so fragile. If it hadn’t been enclosed in something it would have crumbled and fallen apart.

**What have you heard about itiuujat, and about people farting on something that they were afraid of and having it flung away?**

Kupaaq: I’ve never heard of anyone farting who had such an aarnguaq.

Ijituuq: They must have used them in the old days.

**You spoke earlier about people having to say “qaa” when they farted.**

Iqallijuq: It was only the women who had to say “qaa” when they farted.

**Why only women?**

Ujarak: Perhaps it was a pittaliniq. Maybe they didn’t want to burst?
Have you ever heard of anyone who wasn't an angakkuq trying to cure sick people by farting on them?

Kupaaq: I've only heard the unikkaaqtaaq about Itijuat. She would fart. She was not an angakkuq. This was only a legend.

Iqallijuq: Whenever she farted on a sick person, the sick person would get well.

I have heard that because farts and sickness were part of the body, that was the reason the gas was able to heal a sick person.

Iqallijuq: Itijuat could heal sick people by farting.

Did angakkuit also heal people by blowing on them?

Ijituuq: This would cause the sickness to be flung out. Itijuat did heal people by farting.

Ujarak: The angakkuq would try to expose the cause of the sickness.

Have you ever heard of an angakkuq trying to cure a sick person by blowing on them?

Ujarak: The angakkuit would saka.
Chapter 7

The Private and Public Performances of the Angakkuit

Introduction

This chapter exceeds in importance all other chapters in this book. It is certainly longer than the others. More importantly, it brings together first-hand oral information from the last major witnesses of a bygone era. These witnesses were prominent elders who had lived long enough to be interviewed in the 1970s but have since all passed away. The material reproduced here is only a small portion of what they told us. Its value, however, is immense. This is probably the first published description of shamanistic rituals since the reports of the Fifth Thule Expedition by Knud Rasmussen. It thus offers new insights into the very rich documentation gathered by Rasmussen. It will also be accessible to the Inuit in their language. I hope that this book will stimulate much feedback in the form of comments and additional information from elders who are still alive and who knew the people and events of these accounts.

The Inuit custom of offering shamans a gift, tunijjuti, when their services were needed is interesting from more than one angle. To my knowledge, the custom, as such, has never been studied. The concept of money has certainly been a subject of much theoretical debate over the last two centuries. Among the Inuit, money probably existed in an elementary form when certain groups controlled a source of rare commodities, whether it was flint, iron pyrite, soapstone or, later, metal and European products. Paying for a shaman’s services, however, comes more under the heading of gift and exchange theory. All accounts agree: the gift was offered to the spirits, through the shaman, and it had to be given before the healing ritual began. Admittedly, Ujarak told us that he once offered Amak&amp;ainnuk a caribou skin after being cured by her, as a token of gratitude and on his mother’s advice. But that was another kind of tunijjuti. With respect to the Inuit, we still need to develop a gift theory that can shed light on the many forms of ritual sharing, exchange, and giving in daily life, whether it be of game animals, children, or even spouses. Western observers have usually misinterpreted and depreciated these practices, a result of their inability to look beyond their own value system.

A shaman would usually conduct a private performance in response to an individual request. The reasons could be an illness in the family, a lost object that someone wished to find, or any other reason that required resorting to a tuurngajuq—a helping spirit. A shaman could nonetheless carry out the same performances by and for themselves, or at the request of the community. In this case, there was no ritual gift.
Sakajuq and Ikiaqqijuq

1st part. Scene in the upper portion of the picture: Sakajuq
1. The man in the upper left is an angakkuq: He practises saka. This is what we call finding a lost object by using a shaman's powers. 2. Above him is a small hairy being: This is his tuurngaq. 3. In the middle is a knife: It is lost under the snow and can no longer be found. 4. To the right is another shaman. Behind him, to the right, is a polar bear—his tuurngaq: This is his helping bear spirit—his tuurngaq.

2nd part. Scene in the lower portion of the picture: Ikiaqqijuq
5. A bird flies above the iglu: The raven is his helping spirit. A skin curtain hangs from a crossbar: He is tied up behind a screen of skin stretched across the iglu. He is naked to the waist. To the left of the tied-up shaman is the text: He has been asked to inquire about someone's parents by making a shaman's flight. There has been no news from them. To the right of the tied-up shaman is the text: This is how he shamanizes, tied up very tightly. Below the tied-up shaman is the text: His helping spirit will use the loop to pull him upwards. The loop juts out from the straps, near the nape of his neck.

Consulting the spirits by sakaniq was within the purview of all angakkuit, as was divining by qilaniq, already described. Only experienced shamans with special powers, however, could perform the ritual of ilimmaqturniq—the shaman’s flight. It could be done at the request of one individual; most often, it was in response to a group request. Among the Aivilik Inuit, the ritual was performed in full view of everyone. In the Iglulik area, a skin curtain, a taluaq, would hide the angakkuq from view during the performance. The procedure was to tie the shaman down so that he could no longer make any movement. His two big toes were attached to each other, as were his two thumbs. His hands and arms were firmly tied behind his back. A loop in the thong stuck out between the top of his back and the nape of his neck. With the loop, the helping spirit would be able to pull him up and away from the iglu. The shaman was left alone behind the skin curtain until such time as the helping spirit appeared and the flight began. As the angakkuq floated away into the air, his voice would trail off gradually. Some witnesses said that only his tarniq flew away. Others said that his body travelled as well.

The spectators remained in the iglu after the shaman had flown away. They would then see a thong fall down the chimney, the same thong that had previously been firmly wrapped around his body. It now had the very recognizable shape of the helping spirit.

Most often, the purpose of the shaman’s flight was to get news about parents or friends who had travelled far away or were living in remote camps. One could also learn whether a boat was coming or whether game animals were present. This is how people found out about the tragedy that Iqallijuq will tell about further on: the famine that befell Kagaat and his family, the murder of Taqtaq and the eating of her corpse by her family to survive. Such tragedies were not uncommon before the establishment of Euro-Canadian posts in the Arctic. We have the story of Ataguttaaluk, who had to eat her dead husband and children and was later found half dead. There were rituals to cleanse the survivors of such tragedies, providing that they confessed to their acts. Those who refused to confess were called taaqtut because their mouths were very dark on the inside.

The shaman’s flight could also have the purpose of flying up to the heavenly afterworld—to the upper world of the dead, among the Ullurmiut, or to the home of Taqqiup inua, the master moon spirit. It was more common in such cases to speak of pavanngaauniq or iktiqqiniq. The souls of the dead could give news about themselves to the living. Taqqiup inua provided barren women with foetuses and supplied game animals in times of scarcity. Finally, one last ritual was reserved for the great shamans, such as Miqutui of Iglulik. This was the nakkaaniq ritual—the dive into the depths of the sea to visit Takannaaluk, the mistress of the sea animals, or to visit the souls of the dead who had gone to live in the undersea world, the Qimiujamiut.
Other public performances served to prove the powers of the greatest shamans. This was the case with the *kapijauniq* ritual, in which the shaman would stab his body or be harpooned by other hunters. These rituals were quite spectacular. The pierced shaman would lose much blood and sometimes lose consciousness, only to come back to life without the slightest trace of injury.

**Private Performances**

*Sakaniq with *tunijjuti*, fees*

*Were angakkuit given a small payment when someone wanted them to saka? Can you tell me some of the things that were given as payment?*

**Iqallijuq:** I have never seen an *angakkuq* perform *sakaniq*. I had a chance once, but at that time I had a stomach-ache. I was really sick, so my mother tied a piece of sinew around the rod that connects the blade to the handle of an ulu. She placed this under the front flap of her *amauti* and went out. I started crying because I wanted to go with her. My mother told me she was going to take the *ulu* to someone, so that *sakaniq* would be performed for me. I never knew whether it happened or not, since I fell asleep. I remember my mother giving the *ulu* to someone so that they would help me. Besides that, I have never seen anybody else ask an *angakkuq* to cure someone.

**Ujarak:** Once, in Ungalujat, Ungalaq became very ill. The *angakkuit* performed *sakaniq* on him, but no matter how hard they tried, they could not cure him. There had been requests made to my father to perform *sakaniq* on him. When they asked him to do this again they gave him the sick man’s double-edged knife made from a saw blade which had been wrapped in a piece of caribou skin.

**Iqallijuq:** That *ulu* was also wrapped in some material.

**Ujarak:** The blade of the knife was wrapped in a scrap piece of caribou skin, probably because it was so sharp.

**Iqallijuq:** I think it was wrapped because that was the way they did this, as though it were a gift.

**Ujarak:** Then Ungalaq’s wife, Pauktuut, came. She was getting old then. It turned out that my father was a powerful *angakkuq*. That’s why Pauktuut had come to give my father something to heal the sick man. That was the only time I remember my father...
being given something to perform sakaniq. My father took this tunijjuti, this gift, and put it at the back of the sleeping platform, along the back wall. He put on the mitts that he used when he performed sakaniq and he also changed into a new inner parka, different from the one he wore in the house all the time.

Did he only use these mitts to perform sakaniq?
Ujarak: He didn’t wear these on any other occasions. When he went to perform sakaniq, we children were not allowed to come along. I know my father performed sakaniq. We stayed home alone while the adults attended. I never heard how he performed sakaniq.

Iqallijuq: In those days, when a child was old enough to be aware, we weren’t allowed to go and listen to someone disclosing their wrongdoings. The adults probably didn’t want us to hear bad things.

Did they always give something to the angakkuq beforehand when they wanted him to perform sakaniq?
Iqallijuq: Whoever wanted sakaniq performed would give something to the angakkuq beforehand.

Ujarak: That’s the way this was done.

The angakkuq was given something beforehand for payment. If the sick person died, did the angakkuq still keep this object as payment?
Ujarak: The angakkuq was given something before the sakaniq was performed and he kept it.

Was the angakkuq ever given something after he performed sakaniq?
Iqallijuq: Payment was never made after sakaniq; there was never an additional payment made afterwards. This was always done beforehand.

Qingaq had been given a dog because someone wanted him to perform sakaniq. Have you ever heard anything about that incident?
Ijituuq: I don’t remember much about that, but I do remember him being given Pialaaq’s dog to perform sakaniq.
Who was the sick person? Who was it who gave Qingaq the dog?

Ijituuq: Pialaaq gave him the dog because his daughter, Aaluluuq, was sick. Pialaaq wanted her to be cured so he asked Qingaq to perform sakaniq. Aaluluuq, the woman in Sanirajaq, is Pialaaq’s daughter. Pialaaq was my distant uncle. Qingaq was originally from Salliq. This angakkuq Qingaq had a nanurluk, a giant polar bear, as a tuurngaq. It is said that giant polar bears came from the land of the inukpasujjuit, the land of the giants.

Are you aware of any other times that a payment was made?

Ujarak: One time when I was away from my parents living with my sister Nujaqtut, I got sick from diarrhea and was having difficulty eating anything. We travelled to where there were people. We moved to their camp. The camp consisted of Iq&u and his family, Quunnaq and his family, and Inuaraq and his family. Quunnaq and Inuaraq were brothers. Aqiaruq and his wife, Amak&ainnuk, who was a great angakkuq, were also there. When my sister Nujaqtut was afraid that I would die, she took me to the angakkuq Amak&ainnuk. She wanted her to perform sakaniq to take away my sickness. When we travelled there we had left our possessions behind. Since my sister had a sakuit, a scraper with her, she gave it to her as a tunijjuti, after having wrapped it. Amak&ainnuk was Uqalik’s mother.

Were you aware of her performing sakaniq?

Ujarak: Of course. The angakkuq performed sakaniq in my sister’s tent where I lay ill.

Do you recall when this sakaniq took place?

Ujarak: I was so sick that my sister was keeping me on her side of the bed. Whenever I needed to go to the bathroom my sister had to lift me onto the qurvik which was made from a can. I was suffering from diarrhea so badly, I couldn’t even eat anymore. After my sister had given the scraper to Amak&ainnuk, she came shortly afterwards. She had her mitts on when she came, as was the custom when an angakkuq performed sakaniq. They were brand new mitts. Amak&ainnuk told my sister to fasten a hook on the side of the tent to hold a blanket which would separate her from the rest of the people. She went behind the blanket at the back of the tent where we couldn’t see her. When she started to saka, she told me I was about to fall into a hollow. She said that my sister had given me food I was not supposed to eat and that this was going to cause me to die.

My parents had remained in Iglulik while we travelled to the polar bear hunting area around Tununirusiq. It turned out my younger brother had died in Iglulik and I was eating food I shouldn’t have been eating. That’s why I was suffering from diarrhea.
and was in peril of dying from it. Amak\&ainnuk found out through her tuurngaq that I was eating food I ought not to have after the death of my brother. I had helped butcher a polar bear when I ought not to have been working on it. My sister told Amak\&ainnuk I had been doing this. She told me later that Amak\&ainnuk had cured me. She brought me up out of the hole I was falling into. If Amak\&ainnuk had not been a powerful angakkuq I would have died.

What tuurngait did Amak\&ainnuk have?

Ujarak: I never found out what tuurngait she had. At the time she was performing saka on me she told me that my sickness was caused by eating meat I ought not to have and also because I had helped to butcher a freshly killed bear. Her tuurnqaq told me through her to not eat freshly killed polar bear meat raw. If I were to do this again, this could kill me.

Was it only after you were completely healed that you were able to eat freshly killed polar bear meat raw?

Ujarak: She wanted me to become well enough to start eating. She said whatever meat I started eating, whether it was caribou or seal, should not be eaten by a woman who had just given birth. For example, if I had some seal meat, none of the remaining seal meat should be eaten by a woman who had just given birth.

The first meat that you ate after being healed couldn’t be shared with a woman who just had a baby. After you were completely healed would this be alright?

Ujarak: After I became completely well, this would be alright. Throughout my sickness my sister kept asking me what I felt like eating, whether it be fish or caribou or seal, but I would never be hungry. One day I woke up hungry and told her that I felt like eating seal meat, but there was no seal meat because the ice had just gone out. I became sick in the spring when there was still ice. Amak\&ainnuk performed sakaniq after the ice had left, after we had travelled on foot to where there were people. My brother-in-law carried me on his back. When I finally became hungry I wanted to eat seal meat. My sister put on her kamiik and went to tell people I finally wanted to eat. Pauktuut, Ungalaq’s wife who was an old woman by this time, came with the hind leg of a seal. Because it was not freshly killed my sister wanted to cook it for me but I wanted to eat it raw, so she went to consult with Amak\&ainnuk again. She said it was alright for me to eat seal meat even though it wasn’t freshly killed. I ate a small piece and became very full.
When people went to give payment to have sakaniq performed, they wrapped the tunijjuti in something. Why was that?

Ujarak: I never understood why it had to be wrapped. It wasn’t because they didn’t want other people to see it.

Iqallijuq: When the angakkuq was given something it was for his tuurngait, which is not visible. That was probably the reason why the gift had to be wrapped.

How old were you when Amak&ainnuk performed sakaniq on you?

Ujarak: I was probably seven or eight years old when I was sick because I was young enough to be getting new teeth. Because I was slow, it took a long time for me to start getting my teeth. I couldn’t have been that old because my brother-in-law carried me on his shoulders, but I was too old to be in the amaunti. I had been eating food I wasn’t supposed to eat because we hadn’t heard about the death. Later on, when I was living with my parents again, and I was old enough to go hunting, when I would kill a caribou in the summer my mother would tell me to give the skin to Amak&ainnuk for her bedding.

This was because of the deep gratitude my mother felt towards Amak&ainnuk for healing me. My mother made me give this to her out of gratitude.

You did this even though it wasn’t the first caribou you caught?

Ujarak: The caribou skins I gave her were not from my first catch.

Which rituals did the angakkuit use the most?

Iqallijuq: The angakkuit used sakaniq most often. Some of the helpful acts the angakkuit performed were to find out what was happening in other communities through sakaniq. Another use of sakaniq was to find out what caused their inability to catch certain animals.

Would they saka when they themselves wanted to find out what was going on in different communities or when people paid them to do this?

Ujarak: Sometimes a person would want an angakkuq to find out about certain things. One time, at Uqquat, my father was asked to find out if the ships had arrived at Naujaat. Miqutui, my father-in-law’s father, presented my father with a file as a gift. He gave my father the file because my father didn’t have one. He was asked to use his powers as an angakkuq to ilimmaqtuq, to go to a different community.
When they were experiencing difficulty obtaining game and the angakkuit were asked to find out what the cause was, were the angakkuit paid or did they do this on their own?

Iqallijuq: Sometimes, the angakkuq would search for the cause on his own. I have not heard of an angakkuq receiving payment for this.

Ujarak: Once, we were living in Usuarjuk. Ivaluarjuk was with us. The surface of the sea-water had frozen into rough ice. The ice remained that year because the weather was so cold. Ivaluarjuk wanted someone to find out the cause of this because this was affecting everyone’s ability to get game and people were getting short of food. Ivaluarjuk gave the angakkuq a gift to perform sakaniq. He gave the angakkuq some bullets. As a successful hunter, he could afford to buy bullets but because there was no game, he had a surplus and was able to give five of them to the angakkuq, who was his younger brother. A person had to pay the angakkuq to perform sakaniq if he didn’t live in the same dwelling.

Ivaluarjuk was himself an angakkuq. Was Ava more powerful than he was?

Ujarak: Ivaluarjuk was an angakkuq but I think his younger brother, who was my father, was more powerful. Sometimes, one angakkuq combined his power with that of another angakkuq so their power would be stronger during sakaniq. One of them acted as a
conduit for the **tuurnqaq**. Through this, the **angakkug** found out the cause of the rough ice. The ice had frozen roughly and so the men of the camp had not been able to catch any walrus for a long time. The hunters used to leave their clothing just beyond the tidal flat so that the walrus would reappear. There was one man who disobeyed this rule by bringing back his boots, as they were in need of repair. That man was Qaunnaq. He should have left his boots just beyond the tidal flat. This was the cause of the rough ice. The men were supposed to leave their hunting clothing beyond the tidal flat and wear their indoor clothing back into the camp. Because Qaunnaq had wanted his boots to be repaired, he brought them back. This was the cause of the rough ice.

**Ilimmaqtuqtuq**

I have heard that our ancestors had a certain custom; they called it ilimmaqtuqtuq. Through sakaniq, they would be able to rise to the heavens complete with their bodies. Then in a very short time, they returned to the iglu. With a harpoon line made for walrus hunting they tied up the person, the one that was going up to the heavens. Because he was an **angakkug** he wanted this done to him; he wanted to be tied up. He told them to tie the rope very tight. If it was loose when he was up in the air it would hurt a lot when it would be removed. The man who was being tied up continually said, “Harder, harder; make
Public Performances

Ilimmaqtuniq

When Ava would saka, would he be behind a blind or would he just be in the iglu?

Ujarak: My father Ava was always separated from us by a caribou skin blind when he would saka.

When an angakkuk was he always behind a blind?

Ujarak: In Iglulik the angakkuit were out of sight. They were separated by a blind, but in Aivilik the angakkuit performed saka out in the open, with people looking on. The angakkuit from Aivilik could even perform saka on the floor. The Iglulingmiut, on rare occasions, performed saka out in the open, especially when there was an angakkuk who was unable to ilimmaituqtuq. It takes a lot of power for an angakkuk to ilimmaituqtuq. In this performance, the angakkuk is separated from the rest of the people. The angakkuk
sometimes stops breathing for a while. During this time the *angakkug* is completely motionless, and his tarniq deserts his body and goes off travelling. It is during this time, when his body is not breathing, that his body needs to be hidden.

**Were the ones who had the ability to ilimmaqtuqtuq more powerful?**

**Ujarak:** It was the ones who had gone through some type of extreme hardship that became *angakkuit* with the ability to *ilimmaqtuqtuq*.

**Iqallijuq:** My *anngarjuaq* Makkik was going to perform *ilimmaqtuqtuq*. Someone laid a sealskin on the floor. Then, some men wound a rope all around Makkik. His body was so bound by the rope that he could not have moved an inch, even if he tried. They carried him to the rear of the dwelling, where the blind separated the main room from the rest. They sat him up. When he started singing, “Aiq, aiq, aiq,” we heard him rising up, through the roof. We heard the words, “Aiq, aiq, aiq,” fade, as the *angakkug* went further and further away. Then the sound faded completely. The lights were all out. Behind the blind, we heard some clothing shuffling. The *angakkug* had left his inner caribou parka. The inner caribou parka was moving about and shuffling all by itself as though it was alive.

**Ujarak:** His body was bound with a rope.

**Iqallijuq:** The *angakkug* was stripped of all his clothing, except for his pants. His thighs were bound with an *aliq*, a rope made from bearded seal hide. Then his head was tied to his thighs, and his arms were tied behind his back at the wrists and above his elbows. He was not able to move an inch of his body. He was carried to the rear of the dwelling on a sealskin mat. The man was now ready to *ilimmaqtuqtuq* behind the blind, invisible to us. When he was ready to rise, he chanted, “Aiq, aiq, aiq.” Then all went quiet because he had left. My brother-in-law encouraged the audience to be quiet. They complied immediately and the house became quiet. It was quiet and dark. Even the *qulliq* had been blown out. We waited a long time in this dark and quiet. Then I heard the sound of, “Aiq, aiq, aiq.” I recall this part very well. I must have been scared. Then we heard a thudding sound, as the *angakkug* fell on the mat upon his return. We heard another loud thudding noise on the floor and then the *qulliit* were lit. Then, on the floor, we saw the rope in the shape of a dogteam which had a driver, and a polar bear for the dog. This had been formed from the same rope the *angakkug* had been bound in. I did not see the rope being undone. The next time I saw *ilimmaqtuqtuq* performed, the rope had taken another form. It was in the shape of a human body and a polar bear. In that incident the persons who were trying to untangle the rope had difficulty finding the end. When the
rope fell on a hard floor, it made a very loud thudding sound. At long last, the rope was finally undone. This was the same aliq that had been expertly secured around the man. It was said that the angakkuq’s tuurniq had made him ascend, complete with his body.

Ujarak: The rope had fallen down to the floor through the kangiq, the ventilation hole in the roof.

Iqallijuq: This man ascended through the ceiling. At least, I thought it was he himself who ascended. I was not aware that it was only his tarniq that was supposed to ascend. I think it was Makkik who came back with his body.

How did he do this?
Iqallijuq: We were wondering where he had gone. I never heard exactly where he went. I saw this man perform ilimmaqtuqtuq twice. I saw the form of a sled and a driver the first time. The second time, I only saw the form of a human being and a bear. The form was quite small because the rope was made of one piece of bearded sealskin rope that had been pulled very tight.

Discoveries of starvation and cannibalism made through ilimmaqtuqtuq

Did you hear about what they were trying to find out?
Iqallijuq: The first time he performed ilimmaqtuqtuq I did not hear why this was being done. The following year, I saw him ilimmaqtuqtuq again. We were living in Salliq. Aullannaaq and some other men had gone to Igluligaarjuk. They were overdue and we were starting to wonder if they were on their way back or if they had gotten lost. Makkik performed ilimmaqtuqtuq to find out how they were. He saw them from above. He told us the whole story after his return. The group was ready to cross through at Aivilik to return to the island. No one was sick in the group and they were all alive and well, he said. The first time I saw this I was really too young to understand what was going on. I don’t recall where he had gone or what news the angakkuq had brought back.

The following year, I was aware of everything that had happened. The angakkuq was tied up with rope before he set off on his journey to find out about the group of men who had gone to Igluligaarjuk. When the angakkuq got back from his journey above, he informed people about what he had seen. I heard every word and I was aware of everything that happened. He said he had been accompanied by taqtuuk, those who had eaten human flesh. Kaagat and his wife had eaten their stepdaughter. Because they had eaten human flesh they were taqtuuk. Makkik, the angakkuq, had found them while he was ilimmaqtuqtuq. He found them and had them brought home to Salliq because he didn’t want them starving.
Were those who had eaten human flesh considered taaqtut?

Iqallijuq: Makkik called them taaqtut, those who were dark because they had eaten human flesh. The couple did not admit they had eaten human flesh. They did not confess. Aullannaq and the group did not know what these people had done. Kaagat and his wife would never have admitted this if they had not been made to confess.

Perhaps Ataguttaaluk was also considered taaqtuq?

Iqallijuq: Probably not. Taaqtuq were people who have eaten human flesh, but Ataguttaaluk admitted this right away when she was found. She was not considered as a taaqtuq, because she confessed that she had eaten human flesh. Kaagat and his wife were considered as taaqtuuk, for they had eaten human flesh and not admitted it after this incident. Kaagat, who is buried at Igulik Point, lived for a long time.

Ijituuq: They say that even if you were not an angakkuq, you could see the ataaqtuq, the inside of the mouth that was darkened from eating human flesh.

Iqallijuq: The teeth may be very white but the mouth would be very dark. A person did not have to be an angakkuq to recognize someone who had eaten human flesh. When we take a look at the inside of our mouth, it is not dark at all. You can see all the parts of the mouth such as the tongue, teeth, et cetera. The inside of the mouth of someone who had eaten human flesh was so dark you could not even distinguish the tongue.

Ijituuq: When a person did not confess to eating human flesh as soon as possible, you could tell he had done this from his mouth, as it was usually dark. Ataguttaaluk confessed right away when she was found. Kaagat had eaten human flesh around one year after Ataguttaaluk had been found.

Iqallijuq: Kaagat was found near Igluligaarjuk, whereas, Ataguttaaluk was found at Tariuju, closer to Mittimatulik.

Were those who had eaten human flesh made to follow pittailiniq?

Iqallijuq: Because they had not disclosed what they had done, pittailiniq was not imposed on them. They continued to live as if nothing had happened. I don’t really know what pittailiniq is given to those who eat human flesh.

Ujarak: Human flesh is pale. The pittailiniq was that they were not to eat meat that looked similar to human flesh.
Iqallijuq: Sometimes, the person who had eaten human flesh did not want to touch certain meats, because they reminded them of human flesh.

Ijituuq: Ujarak’s sister in Tununirusiq, knows a person who ate human flesh, very well.

Ujarak: My sister Atuat knows this person. She knows the story very well. My sister was the adopted daughter of Palluq and Tagurnaaq. Tagurnaaq and her husband could not have a baby of their own, so they adopted Atuat. My sister Atuat, who is also called Ittukusuk, was very young at that time, but she was aware of everything that happened. The family, Palluq, Tagurnaaq and Atuat were on their way to Mittimatalik when they found Ataguttaaluk. The family brought Ataguttaaluk to where there were other people and stayed there for some time. Then they set out to the Kivalliq area and stayed there for quite a while. It was sometime after this incident that they met Kagaat and his family who had been near starvation. Kagaat and his wife had been with their two children, Ungaalaaq and Taqtaq, their adopted daughter.

The Angakkut Palluq

Iqallijuq: Ungaalaaq was the biological son of Kagaat and Inuujaq. Taqtaq was their adopted daughter. Inuujaq shot Taqtaq, with the encouragement of her husband, Kagaat. Kagaat had asked his wife to kill his adopted daughter so that they could eat her. Taqtaq was sleeping alone, since she was old enough to do so. She was in a light sleep when she heard her adopted father talking about his plan with his wife. He told his wife to bring the rifle inside from the porch of the dwelling and to tell Taqtaq to go and fetch some water. When Taqtaq entered the dwelling after fetching some water,
Inuujaq would shoot her, so that the hungry Kagaat could eat her. When Taqtaq woke up the next morning, she was given the chore of fetching water. She had heard the plan the night before but nevertheless, she obeyed dutifully. When she returned with the water, her adopted mother shot at her and wounded her. Because Taqtaq did not die right away, her adopted mother rushed at her to kill her. The mother and adopted daughter fought in the porch of the iglu. The adopted daughter was winning, so her adopted mother stabbed her with a knife, and then stomped and kicked her. The girl still would not die. She grabbed her adopted mother and was choking her when her mother ripped her heart right out of her body. It was only then that she died. I have heard that her atiq had entered her and that’s why her adopted mother had had such a difficult time killing her. The person she had been named after had also been eaten.

Ujarak: It was because the person she was named after was helping her that her adopted mother had so much trouble killing her.

Where did this incident occur?

Iqallijuq: In the Aivilik area, near Ukkusiksalik. It was between Ukkusiksalik and Qatiktalik that Kagaat and his family were found. Ungaalaaq probably ate some of his sister’s flesh. I don’t know this for sure.

Ujarak: Being there, he probably ate some.

Ijituuq: He was also starving to death.

Iqallijuq: Taqtaq’s atiq had been Autut’s younger sister.

Ijituuq: They say that Autut worried that her younger sister, who was also her biological daughter, would be eaten for the second time. She had had a premonition that they were starving. She loved Taqtaq, who was named after her real sister. My parents told me this story. Taqtaq’s biological older sister had a daughter named after her who is probably living in Kangirłiniq. This is the second Taqtaq’s older sister’s daughter.

Ujarak: My older brother’s daughter was the very first person named after the Taqtaq that was eaten by Kagaat.

Ijituuq: This was Autut’s adopted child.

Ujarak: My brother’s daughter was adopted by Autut, who in turn, named her after her younger sister, Taqtaq.

Cosmology and Shamanism
Iqallijuq: Pilakapsi was Autut’s husband. Autut was Taqtaq’s older sister.

Are you talking about the Taqtaq that is Pilakapsi’s mother?

Ujarak: Yes. She is named after the person who was eaten.

Did your brother’s daughter Taqtaq have to follow the iliqqusiq related to a hunter who had returned?

Ujarak: She was born after we had turned to Christianity so she was not forbidden from doing anything at all.

Pavunngaarniq

Have you ever heard about angakkuit going to the moon? Have you heard about them going to Takannaaluk? Have you heard about them going to graves?

Ujarak: Once while we were in Tasiujaq I heard that an angakkuq made a visit to the moon. There weren’t many of us living there. Qaumaut who I called my angutiqatannuk was Javagiak’s older brother. Javagiak is from Sanirajaq. One day, Qaumaut got so bored that he decided to go to the moon. The reason for this was that they were trapping for foxes, but the foxes were really scarce that year. He went up to the moon, even though he had not been given anything to do so. He did this just for fun.

Iqallijuq: An angakkuq who wanted to saka of his own volition was not given anything.

Ujarak: He was not given anything, because there were so few of us in the camp and he was just doing this to pass the time. Qaumaut had his hood up while he was consulting his tuurngaq. Qaumaut went out a few times while he was performing saka. Then he was told to go to the moon to fetch foxes because the fox were so scarce. People said that he had gone to the moon, while he was absent from the dwelling. He was gone for quite a while, before he came back. He was carrying something in his parka. The front of his parka was made out of one big piece of fur, and it had slits on the side. In those days, men used to have parkas in that style. When he came back, he was carrying something inside his parka. There were two young men amongst us, Kasarnak and Kigusiuk. They were teasing Qaumaut, to find out what he was carrying inside his parka. They grabbed the side of his parka. The things he was carrying were bulging out of it. While the young men were teasing him, he started to jerk, which made it difficult to grab him. Kasarnak and Kigusiuk got impatient, teasing him so they grabbed onto the big bulging thing that...
was in his parka. The more they fought him, the more the hard thing in his parka started to disappear. Then it disappeared completely. It was said that he had brought back foxes from the moon. After that incident, we kept on trapping foxes, as it was winter. After his visit to the moon, it seemed that the foxes had become more abundant. It seemed that Qaumaut had brought back foxes from the moon. In those days, people said that the game animals lived on the moon. There were only a few of us in the camp and my father was the camp leader. Whenever an angakkuq performed saka, it was done at our place. Qaumaut was the only angakkuq I ever saw consult his tuurngaq for help to go to the moon, to bring the foxes back to earth. At that time, foxes were really scarce and we were hardly able to trap any at all.

**Did they think the animals lived on the moon?**

**Ujarak:** The people thought that all the animals from the different parts of the earth lived on the moon. People believed that there were living things on the moon, including game animals. When a woman gave birth to a baby boy, and was finished her postpartum bleeding, she would go out when there was a new moon. She would pick up a small piece of snow, and take it into the house and put it into the cooking pot. She did that so the baby would be a successful hunter when he grew up. Because people believed that animals lived on the moon, they pretended that this snow the woman picked up was an animal from the moon. She melted the snow in the cooking pot and she would say, “Uuma una anngutaa” which means, “This is his catch.”

**Why did she pretend that the piece of snow was her son’s catch?**

**Ujarak:** The woman pretended that the piece of snow was a seal, a walrus, or any kind of animal, even a caribou. This was done so that when the baby grew up, he would be a successful hunter. They did that when a woman gave birth to a baby boy. They would do that so when the baby grew up to be a man, he would be a great hunter.

**Did she say why she was bringing this snow in?**

**Ijituuq:** It was so when the baby grew up, he would be a successful hunter. This was done so that when he hunted, he would bring back game animals from his hunt. We believe that this is true. I grew up having to do this. When I was old enough, I had to bring in some small pieces of snow, so that when I grew up, I would be a successful hunter. I used to do that when the moon was new, so that when I would be a man, I would be able to catch plenty of game animals.
Why did they do this when there was a new moon? Was it because the moon was newly arriving?
Ujarak: They were treating the moon as though it had just arrived and had brought game.

Ijituuq: When the moon was not visible, they treated it as if it was out hunting and when it became visible again they treated it as though it had just arrived with game.

Did they think the game were more abundant when the moon was full?
Ijituuq: Sometimes the moon took a long time to appear and when it came out, they made believe that the baby boy had come back from the hunt. We call land animals pisuktuat because they wander. When they are in abundance, they tend to wander more when the moon is full. That’s the way it is.

Iqallijuq: It is as if the moon brought them back.

Is it easier to get both land and sea animals when the moon is full?
Ujarak: Usually the best time to hunt is when the moon is full.
Ijituuq: It is better to hunt them then, and their tracks are easier to find.

Ujarak: There is more light then to hunt the animals.

Why do you think the animals are more abundant when the moon is full?
Ujarak: We believe there is a connection between the moon being full and the animals being abundant. The inua of the moon is the keeper of all the animals.

Does the moon have an inua? Is there only an inua on the moon or are there only animals? Did Qaumaut go up to take foxes or did he go to visit the inua of the moon?
Ujarak: When the angakkuart is performing saka, he is able to bring his tuurngait with him to visit the inua of the moon.

Did Qaumaut go to the moon after he went through the doorway?
Ujarak: Qaumaut started to saka, he went out through the doorway and came back in again. We were curious as to why he went out and came back again, so the next day we
decided to investigate. We followed his footprints. He had walked out the door and
gone to an ice crack near the shore. We thought that he would have gone further,
but he hadn’t.

What do you think he went to see?

Ujarak: When the angakkuaq left the house, he only walked as far as the furthest ice crack.
The things that the angakkuaq had carried in his parka had disappeared completely. They
had been there when the young men were teasing him. The angakkuaq had been clutching
on to his parka and his body was bent as if the load on his belly was too heavy to bear.
He was still performing.

Was it the angakkuaq himself who put the foxes in his parka or were they
put there by his tuurngaq?

Ujarak: It must have been the work of his tuurngaq. The man walked in a southern
direction. As the angakkuaq walked away, it was his tuurngaq that actually got whatever
the angakkuaq wanted.

Have you heard any unikkaaqтуаtuаt about angakkuit going up to the moon,
or ones about the inua of the moon?

Ujarak: The inua of the moon was known to have a kind heart. Because he was kind-
hearted, whenever a man died of unnatural causes, for example if a man drowned in the
sea, the moon pitted him and so brought him to the moon and made him his helper. The
moon saw everything that went on. Most of his helpers were people who drowned.
People who drown have no way of letting their families know they would not be
coming back. They were lost forever. The man in the moon pitted them and made them
his helpers.

Iqallijuq: The man in the moon had them do his bidding.

Ujarak: There is a story about a man who used to get mad very easily and who beat his
wife often. The man was angry at his wife and beat her up frequently. Even when she
tried to leave him, he would follow her. At length, the wife could no longer tolerate this.
The man in the moon took pity on her. One day, when the people of the camp had
gathered for a feast, he went and got this woman who was constantly beaten.

Iqallijuq: She had gone some distance from the camp and crouched down on the
ground. She cried out, “Taqiq, piksuma ainngaa!” which means, “Taqiq, come and
get me.”
Ujaraq: Taqqiq had attempted to save her before when the woman was alone. He pitied her for the ill treatment she was experiencing. The first time he tried to save her she had been alone and she heard a loud noise outside. She listened and heard a knock on the outside of her dwelling. She wanted to go out and see who was knocking, but she was scared. The man who wanted her to go outside was not her husband. She was still afraid of her husband. The next time, she left her dwelling and was a short distance from the camp when she crouched down and put her parka hood down in front of her. She began to have thoughts about the moon coming to deliver her. Taqqiq had put these thoughts in her mind. Taqqiq had her come with him to the moon. Before they left Taqqiq explained everything as simply as he could. The place he lived in had several rooms like an ordinary dwelling, but it was divided into smaller sections. Different kinds of beings lived in different sections and each group was different from the other. Taqqiq also explained that she should not smile or even look at the people in the dwelling. Taqqiq explained everything to her in a simple way.

Iqallijuq: When the inua of the moon came to get her she could hear the swish of his qamutiik but she didn’t look up. Then she could hear the sound of the qamutiik stopping and the inua of the moon saying, “Whoa, Tiriattiaq, Siuqpaluk.” I have forgotten the name of the third dog. He commanded his dogs to stop. He told her that everything was ready for her to climb on the qamutiik. When she had seated herself on the qamutiik he said to her, “When the sound of the runners can no longer be heard, you are not to open your eyes until we can once more hear the sound of the runners.” She closed her eyes when they started moving. Soon she no longer heard the sound of the runners. She became very curious so she decided to open her eyes a little bit and she almost dropped one of her mitts. After a while she once again heard the swish of the runners on land and he told her she could open her eyes. When she opened her eyes, there were people playing outside. They started yelling, “Passersby! Passersby!” The people who were playing outside had tiny little ruffs on their parkas. These people were actually stars. Then they started travelling again. They passed by someone making a window. This person’s face would turn red and then turn white. It turned out that this was singuuri.

What is Singuuri?

Iqallijuq: He was a star. He was one of the many stars in the sky. They continued to travel and he once more called out the names of his dogs and they stopped. In those days they used to store their food on raised platforms. On the ikaaq, the food storage platform, there were large amounts of caribou, polar bear and walrus.

When they were about to enter the dwelling, he said to her, “Do not look towards the qariaq, the guest platform, because if you do you are going to burn.” As they were entering, she took great gasps of air because she was human and needed to breathe.
Although she had been cautioned not to look at the qariaq, she glanced at it out of the corner of her eye and immediately her eyelashes were singed from the intense heat. It turned out it was siqiniq, the sun.

When they had settled in, he told her they would be receiving a visitor. This visitor was going to have a big bag with an ulu inside. This bag was going to be thrown in the dwelling just before the visitor arrived. He told her that if she felt the need to laugh, she was to put her hands under the front flap of her parka in the shape of a polar bear and blow down the inside of her parka. Even if she had the need to laugh, she was not to laugh at all. Just as he had predicted, the big bag was thrown inside and the owner followed. Her tunniit, facial tattoos, were very thick and dark, although she herself was small. She started prancing about while making funny faces and she was singing.

Qaurajuakka ii, hi, hi, ii
My big, thick forehead tattoos ii, hi, hi, ii

Pangmajaa, jaa, pangmaajaa, jaa
Pangmajaa, jaa pangmaajaa, jaa

Aqpaqsu&arjuaqpuq ajja ululijarnaat
Ululijarnaat runs about

Qaurajuakka ii, hi, hi, ii
My big, thick forehead tattoos ii, hi, hi, ii

Tunirjuakka ii, hi, hi, ii
My big tattoos ii, hi, hi, ii

She was trying to make the woman smile so she could rip out her intestines if she succeeded in making her laugh. Whenever the woman felt like laughing, she fixed her hands as she had been instructed to, and blew on her parka. The comical yet scary person cried out, “Haa uqasuralik talik.” She tossed her large bag contained human intestines out the door and did not return.

There were two women sitting in the back of the dwelling with their knees up. One of them said, “Siurjuarumatunullu, ai imailirruguk,” which translates into modern Inuktitut as, “Because we could not stop from laughing, we lost our intestines.” Taqqiq had brought these two women to his home as well.

There was a caribou scapula that always remained near the qulliq. He told her to move it and look through the hole. When she looked down she saw dots on the ground which she was able to discern were people playing amaruujaq. She saw her husband
leaning against the iglu. Because he had been outside for a long time, the ruff of his parka was covered with frost. The inua of the moon told her to spit through the hole. Since she could hear the people down on the ground, she heard them say, “Aak, ulluriag ana&aqpuuq! Aak, a star has defecated!” when they saw her spit streaking through the air.

The woman stayed with him for some time and became pregnant with his child. Close to the time when the baby was to be born, he returned her to her husband. Before he did this he told her not to eat any meat that had been caught by humans, nor was she to fill her qulliq with blubber that had been caught by humans. He told her whenever her qulliq needed filling she was to tilt the qulliq. After she was back on earth, when she did this, her qulliq would fill with oil. When she made a cutting motion with her taqquti the qulliq would stop filling up. Whenever she was without meat, she would hear the sound of something falling outdoors and when she checked this, there would be either a caribou shoulder or rump there. Taqqiq kept her supplied with meat. He had told her not to eat of her husband’s or any other man’s catch nor to fill her qulliq with blubber until her child’s first birthday.

She started living with her husband when she was once more able to do so after her postpartum bleeding had stopped. Soon after, he began to beat her again because he was upset that she would not partake of the meat or blubber that he had provided. She tried to explain to him that were she to do so their son would die, but to no avail. Due to his excessive complaining she gave in to his demands and she and her son died shortly after. That’s all I have heard about the inua of the moon.

Was the inua of the moon a great hunter?

Ujarak: The man on the moon was the keeper of all animals.

Have you ever heard of someone going to the land of the dead while performing saka, or in an unikkaaqtuaq?

Iqallijuq: I have only heard one story about a person named Iqilaarjuk, who had been a great angakkuaq in the Tununiq area. He had two wives. One of his wives died giving birth. The woman who had died was considered to be tiringnaaq, which meant that whoever handled her body would have to follow pittailiniq. Because of this, they had not even put her pants back on when they went to put her in her grave. They buried her up on a hill close to the moon. People who had been murdered, people who died in childbirth, or people who drowned used to go up to the moon when they died. They used to rise up to the moon. Because Iqilaarjuk’s wife had died during childbirth, he used to go and visit her on the moon. After he had come back from visiting his wife on
the moon he said, “Let there be no tirigusungniq towards women who died giving birth. Take the time to put their pants back on before you bury them. My wife is fine now. She is happy, but because her pants weren’t put back on, she is without pants. Although her parka and socks are clean and new, she has no pants. If a woman dies giving birth she is not tiringnaqtuq. Put her pants back on. Seeing a woman wandering around without her pants is a sorry sight.” This is all I have heard about Iqilaarjuk.

_Since the ullurniuat, the “people of the day” are very happy, can you hear them playing and having fun?_

_Iqallijuq:_ Yes they are very happy. When we see the _aqarniiit_, the Northern Lights, they are playing _amaruuaq_ and they are running around and playing kickball. When they are playing kickball, they use a walrus head for a ball. When the walrus head is kicked and it lands, the tusks can become embedded.

_Ujarak:_ It is not just the skull that they play with. The tusks are attached.

_Do the ullurniuat live in a winter environment or a summer environment?_

_Iqallijuq:_ I have not heard if they live in a winter or a summer environment.

_Ujarak:_ We haven’t heard if they live in the summer or the winter but they always live in the day.

_Iqallijuq:_ They probably have both summer and winter.

_Ujarak:_ We are unable to see them in the summer, only when the dark comes.

_Iqallijuq:_ In the old days, when we were playing _amaruuaq_ and there were _aqarniiit_, we would whistle. When we did, the _aqarniiit_ would come closer. The more we whistled, the closer the _aqarniiit_ would come.

_Ujarak:_ When someone whistles when the Northern Lights are present, they will start moving faster and closer.

_Iqallijuq:_ Maybe they come to enjoy the fun.

_Ujarak:_ Maybe when they think they are being called, they move closer.
Since those going to Takannaaluk are called nakkaajut, what are those who visit the ullurmiut called?

Iqallijuq: Those people who visit the ullurmiut, the people of the day, are said to be ilimmaqtuq.

Ujarak: All those who travel through the air are said to ilimmaqtuqtuq.

Iqallijuq: There are two inuksuk that mark the spot where two angakkuk met while they were ilimmaqtuqtuq. They are located between Naujaat and Iglulik, just before Nagvaaq. One of the angakkuk that was ilimmaqtuqtuq was from the Kivalliq area and the other was from around Iglulik. They met in the air and came down to the ground and told each other what was happening in their respective areas. They then each made an inuksuk to commemorate this event. They decided that the inuksuk of the one who died first would fall. Whenever we would travel to the Kivalliq area we would pass by these two inuksuk. One is shorter than the other. Maybe this was the one that was built by the angakkuk who died first. One remained as it was, but the shorter one had crumbled a bit. After they had built the inuksuk, the angakkuq returned to their home communities.

Have you ever heard that if an inuksuk were to fall, the builder would die shortly after?

Ujarak: If an inuksuk fell over without anyone touching it at all, it was considered a sign that the owner had died, even if they had not yet heard of the death. If an inuksugaq were to fall over without being touched, people would think that the person who built it had died. This was especially so if the person who had built the inuksugaq had moved away. The inuksugaq did not fall because the person was going to die; it would fall after the person had died.

Nakkaaniq

Iqallijuq: Takannaaluk experienced times of hunger and therefore she made people suffer. She made people follow pittailiniq, especially those who were tiglikumik, those who would steal food they weren’t supposed to be eating. Maybe she did this because she wanted people to be good and follow the things they were supposed to. Takannaaluk would cause people to be without food, but she would also cause people to be successful hunters.

Nowadays we still have things we are not to do. We are told to follow new forms of pittailiniq. We are also told to follow new forms of piqujait. Because Takannaaluk wanted the people to follow pittailinit and piqujait, she would make it difficult for people to get her animals.
Was Takannaaluk different from women who lived on the land because she didn’t have hands?

Iqallijuq: It was only when Takanaaluk lost her hands that she couldn’t sew any longer.

Was she unable to have children because she didn’t have a husband?

Iqallijuq: Takannaaluk ended up being married to a qaqulluq, a fulmar. She had never accepted any proposals of marriage so she acquired the nickname Unigumasuittuq. At first humans came to marry her but she declined their proposals. Afterwards, animals came by, and she also refused them. An ugiuk came in human form and then a caribou came in human form, but she refused them both. The qaqulluq came in human form arriving on a qajaq and wearing very silvery sealskin clothing. He yelled, “Unigumasuittuq atirl;” which means “Unigumasuittuq, come down to the shore.” She said, “Mother, he wants you to come,” but her mother said, “You are the only Unigumasuittuq here.” She gathered her needles and got on board the qajaq, thus indicating that she had accepted him as a husband.

Her new husband remained in the qajaq. They were some distance out from land when they stopped at a piece of floating ice because he needed to urinate. When he got out of the qajaq it became evident that he had been sitting on his pin feathers to make himself appear taller. He looked at his new wife and said, “Do you see what I used to make myself taller?” Then he laughed, “Ia, a, a, a!” He then took off his goggles. His eyes were red and raw. He asked her, “Do you see my eyes? Ia, a, a, a!”

He took her home and had her as a wife. They lived together in harmony. He provided her with silver jar seal for food and clothing. Their tent was also made from this. Then her father arrived to take her back home, while her husband was out on his qajaq. All this time the qaqulluq had continued to keep his human form. When he returned home and discovered that his wife was gone, he was told that her father had taken her away. He changed back into a bird and took off after them. He caused the wind to start blowing, which put Unigumasuittuq’s father’s qajaq in peril, so he threw her overboard. After he had done this, she grabbed onto the gunwale and he started chopping off her fingers. Every time she would grab on, he would chop off her fingers until she was no longer able to hold on and sank to the bottom of the sea.

Have you ever seen or heard about an angakkuq going down to Takannaaluk while he was performing saka?

Iqallijuq: I have never seen it happen, but I have heard about angakkuit who went down to Takanaaluk. This was called nakkaajuq. This word is related to the term nakkaqteq.
which means to sink down. It was only the more powerful angakkuit who had the ability to do that. I have heard the story of Miqutui, who was Sapangaarjuk’s late father. Sapangaarjuk is from Sanirajaq.

Could you tell us about the time that Miqutui went down to Takannaluk?

Iqallijuq: Sometimes he would go down to visit a recently deceased relative to see how he was being treated. After he went down, he arrived at a place that was inhabited by many people. It was only when he got closer that someone saw him and said, “We are being visited by a pullaalik, a person who breathes air.” They all starting coming out of their tents without having to use the door. He visited with those he had wanted to check up on and then went to see Takannaaluk.

As he was entering her dwelling, he saw her dog at the entrance chewing on a bone. Takannaaluk told him the dog was not vicious and so he entered. Her father was up on the bed covered with his bear skin rug. There was a lot of movement underneath the rug and his hands would be visible from time to time. His hands were covered with hair. His hands started reaching towards the angakkuit when his daughter said, “Pullaalik, an air breather,” and he retracted his hand again. Takannaaluk has only one eye.

The hunters had been experiencing difficulty catching bearded seal and Miqutui asked her what was the cause of their hardship. It turned out that one of the women had miscarried and had thrown away the foetus to avoid having to follow pittailiniq, and part of the foetus had been eaten by dogs. Because Takannaaluk was worried that this wrongdoing would be repeated, she was preventing the bearded seal from being caught. It was Amakainnuk who had suffered the miscarriage but had not disclosed this as she did not want to observe pittailiniq. I heard this being talked about, but I don’t recall what was done to her.

Who exactly are the qimiujarmiut?

Iqallijuq: The qimiujarmiut are deceased people whose relatives had not observed the pittailiniq relating to death for the prescribed period of time. The qimiujarmiut were happy living where they were. Those that came out of the tent were happy to see visitors because they wanted their relatives to know how they were.
Do you remember anything else?

Iqallijuq: There was another time the angakkuq Miqutui did not nakkaajuq, but performed saka instead. I can’t remember what information he was trying to find out from Takannaaluk. I heard that he was on the floor wearing the mitts he would use to saka. He started asking questions of Takannaaluk. Before he would ask a question he would take a deep breath. He was standing up and bent forward until his head was almost on the floor. Then he bent backwards until he almost lost his balance. He would inhale and exhale deeply, while his feet remained motionless as if fixed to the ground. When he started to speak, the whole dwelling would shake and you could hear the sound of moving water. This is all that I know. I don’t know anything else. I’ve never heard what he said. I never saw this; I’m only telling you what I have heard.

Ujarak: Takannaaluk would tell the angakkuq what was causing the scarcity of animals. She wanted the person who was causing the scarcity to disclose the wrongdoing on his or her own. She would sometimes mention which meat was tiglikumiktatiajuq, which meat had been eaten when it wasn’t supposed to have been. She would get the angakkuq to say these things for her through his tuurnqait.

Iqallijuq: The angakkuq would ask Takannaaluk questions, but her answers would come through him as well.

Ujarak: We never actually saw these things happen. We only heard about them.

Iqallijuq: I have heard about Miqutui performing nakkaajuq from a person who once lived at the same camp as he did.

Did the person who was performing nakkaajuq go down head first?

Ujarak: In a case where the angakkuq is performing nakkaajuq, the angakkuq’s body remains there, and his tuurnqait goes down for him. He sent his tuurnqait down while his body remained on the bed.

Qilaujjarniq

Did the angakkuit saka to display their powers? If two angakkuuk were to saka at the same time, would they just be performing saka or were they competing with each other to see who was the more powerful?

Ujarak: Sometimes, angakkuit used to test each other to see who was more powerful. Examples of this were the angakkuuk Ivaluajuk and Inuksuk. They would use a drum
to qilaujjaq and someone else would dance. They used this to compete with each other but they weren’t performing sakaniq. They got so carried away with this it was as if they were unaware of what they were doing. Maybe their bodies had been entered by tuurngait that were moving them about. I don’t know if their bodies had been entered by tuurngait or by something else.

Iqallijuq: I think their names were Ivaluarjuk and Pavvat (Inuksuk). Pavvat was my great uncle but I don’t really know how he was related to my parents. The day after Ivaluarjuk used the drum he lost his mind. One of my relatives used to talk about her brother Ivaluarjuk. When Ivaluarjuk would drum he would get really caught up in it. The drum seemed to say, “Uluunngujaq, uluunngujaq, ainaa ainaa.” Ainaa is an expression you use when you are scared. When the drum started to say ainaa, the first Ivaluarjuk fell forward and died. The people in the qaggiq could clearly hear the drum saying ainaa. The woman who told me about this had a cousin whose name was Pavvat. He also carried the name of Ivaluarjuk. Pavaat and Ivaluarjuk would try to outdo each other. They would say whoever really carried the name would lose his mind first. Both of them lost their minds and it was said that their atiq had caused this. The one who was called Ivaluarjuk was the winner because he lost his mind first. Both of them were drumming people became scared because he was saying, “Ui, ui, ui, ui, ui.” He was spinning and going around the room. The people stopped him because they thought he was going to die. After they stopped him, he regained his senses. I have also heard my great aunt telling this story to her daughter. They were just drumming; they were not performing saka.

Kapijauniq

Have you ever heard of an angakkuq that was so powerful that he could be pierced with a harpoon while he was performing saka but didn’t die?

Ujarak: Sometimes the angakkuit would gather together to experiment with their powers. They would saka just for the sake of it, not because they had to. Some of them would stab themselves with knives or other objects. Miqutui and others would do this. They would pierce themselves with a knife. When they pulled the knife out there would be a hole in their parka and the knife would be dripping blood. They would plunge the knife in, to the hilt. When they pulled the knife out it was dripping with blood and they would lick the knife off until it was clean. They would do this as a competition to see who were the most powerful angakkuit. When one finished he would challenge another to do the same. The angakkuq who stabbed himself would slap himself and the wound would disappear without a scar. I have seen these competitions.
Where and when did this take place? Who participated in this? Why did they do it?

Ujarak: Miqutui and Qaumaut were there. Qingaq also participated. At that time we were living at Pingiqqalik. There were a lot of people who had gathered there at the time. Qingaq had an adopted father who was unable to walk. This was when he was still a young man, before he had a wife. He too was a great angakkuq. At that time we used to play sakkuujaq a lot. Since his father was unable to walk, we children were helping him try to pass the time. One evening, while we were playing, Qingaq shouted out. He was sitting on the bed. The place where his eye had been was spurting blood. When we saw this we became frightened. Here we had been playing sakkuujaq. Even though Qingaq was older than us, he had been playing with us. Then all of a sudden his eye was full of blood. He got down on the floor and bent over and we could hear him licking blood. When he lifted his head up again he was alright. Apparently, he had performed saka for a very short while.

Why would Miqutui stab himself?

Ujarak: Miqutui would do this to show people how powerful an angakkuq he was. When he would start to saka he would be squatting on the floor. He would almost start to sing. He would do this for enjoyment. When he started to sing a bit because he was sakajuq, people would gather together to watch this. He would go out and come back holding a knife. It was a real knife he was holding. He would straighten his parka and push the knife in slowly. He would watch the knife go in until it reached the hilt. He held his parka down flat with the other hand. All the while, he would be saying, “Aaaaaaa.” Because he was sakajuq he was saying, “Aaaaaaa.” When he would pull it out, the knife would be dripping with blood and he would start licking it. He would lick the knife and when it was completely clean he would slap the wound, all the while saying, “Aaaaaaa.” Then he would stand up and pull up his parka for all to see, and there wouldn’t be a scar.

Did this take place in an iglu?

Ujarak: We were in an iglu. We were gathered in our igluvigaq at Pingiqqalik. People had gathered there to go walrus hunting. An iglu was used as the qaggiq. It was there that they would perform saka. Although it was an ordinary iglu it was quite large. This happened when I was quite young. This was in the days of the angakkuit. They would start urging each other to perform. Qaumaut was very much like Miqutui. He too would stab himself. I never saw my father Ava doing this.
There were harpoons that were used for walrus hunting, that had a special head and an aliq. They were out in the porch. Ava went down on the floor and started to saka. He lay down and started making the sound of a walrus. The harpoon which had been out on the porch came in and embedded itself into Ava through his buttocks. All the while he was making the sound of a walrus. Apparently, those who were outside had grabbed on to the aliq and were pulling on it. Ava was trying to climb up on the bed. When he stood up the head of the harpoon came out of his cheek near his nose. When the harpoon had embedded itself into Ava’s buttocks, it had gone in so far that it came out of his face. All the while he was saying, “uuk, uuk, uuk,” like a walrus. The aliq was still being pulled by people outdoors. Whenever Ava would move backwards, the harpoon head would become looser and would be dangling. He was bleeding profusely. When the people outside let go of the line, he fell to the floor, dead. After a while he started to breathe again. When he got up, he did not have a wound. Even when the people outside had come inside to see what was happening, the aliq was still being pulled by the tunnguit. That is what my father would do.

Where were you living at that time?
Ujarak: We were living at Pingiqqalik.

Did this happen on the same day that Miqutui had stabbed himself?
Ujarak: They did this one night. It was just one night that the angakkuit were doing this.

Who started this?
Ujarak: Miqutui was the most talkative. He started talking about doing this. This was during the evening when people had returned from hunting. They had gathered in one place to eat uujuq. In those days the men who had returned from hunting would gather together in one place to eat uujuq.

Who went next after Miqutui?
Ujarak: After Miqutui finished, then Qaumaut began. He was as powerful as Miqutui. It was Miqutui and Ivaluarjuk that came up with this idea, after people had requested them to saka to pass the time.

Were the other angakkuit able to do what Ava did?
Ujarak: When my father performed saka it wasn’t at the same time as the others had done this. Although he did this more than once, I have never known others to do that.
What did Ivaluarjuk do?

Ijarak: Ivaluarjuk was also able to pierce himself, but he did not do this at that time. It was only after we moved to Uqquat that he did this. He pierced himself with a double-bladed knife and a knife made from a saw blade at the same time.

When Qaumaut finishing performing, did Ava start performing saka?

Ujarak: No. It was only when everyone had finished performing saka that my father did this. There were numerous other angakkuit but they did not have the power to pierce themselves. At the time, we were at Pingiqqalik. The powerful angakkuit that were there were Miqutui, Ivaluarjuk, Iqipiriaq, Ittuksaarjuat and Ava. Ittuksaarjuat too was a powerful angakkuq. He could tupilattuq. He could stab a tuurngaq and make it bleed. I can’t remember if it was a male or female tuurngaq.
Cosmology, Shamanism and Ilisiiqsiniq, hexing

Introduction

This chapter presents data on three basic areas of shamanism: first, its cosmological foundations and the ongoing relations it maintains with the major entities of the cosmos; second, the defensive functions it fulfills to protect human communities from aggression by the spirits; and third, the abuses of power and self-seeking behaviour of some shamans.

Ujarak got to know Saïttuq during the times he spent in that man’s home community of Mittimatilak (Pond Inlet). Saïttuq became an invalid and could no longer hunt. Through spiritual effort, he acquired qaumaniq, clairvoyance, and progressively became a shaman. When he sang in his iglu, his power was so strong as to carry him off, seemingly into the cosmos. The ceiling of the iglu was like the heavens of the night sky. The floor of the iglu, the natiq, was like the pack ice on the sea. The platform where he slept, the igliq, was like the land. The entrance, the kataq, was like the moon. The ice windowpane of the iglu, the igalaq, was like the sun. The side larders of the iglu, the aki, where meat and food were kept, were like the hunting grounds of the sea. By using his shaman’s powers, Saïttuq could see far and wide wherever game animals were to be found. The iglu became for him a smaller-scale version of the world — a microcosm.

According to Inuit tradition, the outer world, silarjuaq, is peopled with human-looking spirits who control everything that makes up the land (hills and valleys, rivers, vegetation...), the sky (winds, heavenly bodies, fog...), or the sea (sea animals...). All of these spirits are endowed with consciousness, intelligence, and feelings. They can make themselves visible at will to humans. One of them plays an especially important role: Silaap inua, the spirit of the sky or the atmosphere, also known as Naarjuk, “big belly,” in the language of the tuurngait and the shamans. According to the oral tradition of the Central Arctic Inuit, Naarjuk is a young orphan child and his parents were a couple of dwarfs, inugarulligarjuat, who had the power to change size. He fled up into the sky to escape the Inuit who made fun of his gigantic infantile erections. In a certain way, he is the master of all that breathes, the master of the motions of the heavenly bodies, the master of the winds and the climate, the master of life because he gives breath, anirniq, to living beings, and the master of death because he takes it back. His presence is so widespread and his action so complex that he has withstood most analyses by anthropologists. Indeed, the term sila means many things all at once: the intelligence, the order implicit in the universe, the atmosphere, the world, the air, the outside....
To find similar concepts outside Inuit culture, we would probably have to go to the cosmologies of Asia and the Taoist philosophy of China, with their emphasis on the dichotomy of the sexes. Understandably, then, the elders we interviewed must have been hard put to give us a clear-cut definition of *sila*.

We do know this: for some Inuit groups, the wind comes out of holes in Naarjuk’s unlaced clothing. For other groups, this spirit is the source of stormy weather. To calm him down, a shaman has to whip him until he bleeds, or cut one of his tendons (South Baffin). For still other groups, the spirit is expressed through two prevailing winds: the southeasterly Nigiq and the northwesterly Uangnaq. One is male and the other is female, according to Ijituuq. The female wind spirit lives in an *iglu* from which the wind escapes through the holes that the heat of the oil lamp has made in the walls. A shaman then has to climb up into the sky and plug up the holes with snow.

*Sila* is related to another concept: *silaat*, the children of Sila. The *silaat* are a kind of lemming-coloured male caribou that are bigger than ordinary caribou and endowed with special powers. They are born from all-white eggs that emerge from the earth, *nunup manningit*. Also called *silaaksait*, the eggs are occasionally found on the tundra, lying on the soil. Another kind of *silaat*, but somewhat smaller, are the *pukit*. These too are born from eggs, *pukiksait*, that are all-white, though smaller in size. The eggs must never be picked up or damaged, or else a very thick fog will cover the entire region. Similarly, one must never kill a *silaaq* or a *pukiq*. Many stories are told about encounters by hunters with *silaat* or *pukit* or about *pukiksait* and *silaaksait* that dogs or children have broken.

As long as humans complied with the ritual prohibitions, the spirits of the cosmos were usually favourable to them. One category of spirits, however, the *tupilait*, were by nature dangerous and malevolent. Accounts differ on their origin. For some, they are souls of dead people who were unable to leave the earth. For others, they are spirits born out of heaps of waste, *nunarluit*, that are fond of abandoned *igluit*. They cause illnesses and are feared by the Inuit. Only shamans could see *tupilait*. They were the ones who would hunt these spirits down when their presence was discovered at campsites. *Tupilait* were human-like in appearance. According to Qimuksiraq, some had a tail and others had fur on their faces and bodies, like dogs. When attacking humans, the creature would suck their blood out and sometimes devour them. It had no skeleton but only a bag-like covering of skin, full of blood. Its skin was slippery and hard to grab. To overcome such an adversary, you had to pierce its skin with an object no longer in use, such as a broken snow-beater, ivory knife, or harpoon. And you always had to hold the object in your left hand. Once it was pierced, the *tupilaq* would literally burst apart and its blood would splatter everywhere. Shamans often hunted down these spirits in a group under the leadership of the most experienced shaman, who was helped by his *tuurnngaq*. 

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**Cosmology and Shamanism**
Another danger resulted from a shaman’s abuse of power. A shaman might use his powers to steal the *tarniq* of someone he disliked, or was jealous of, by secretly performing *ilisiirniq* with the assistance of his *tuurngag*. Some *tuurngait* thus became vicious through improper use. The victim might also succeed in blocking the evil *ilisiqquti*, or hex, which would then boomerang back against the sender and kill him. When a shaman was accused and convicted of this, the group could execute him. Abuse of power by a shaman could also take another form, that of demanding sexual favours from a close relative of the patient.

**The song of the angakkuq Saittuq**

*When you are outdoors the sky looks rounded like the shape of an iglu. What do you call this?*

**Ujarak:** An angakkuq who was performing *saka* was doing so so intensely that he was unaware that he was no longer inside. When he became aware that he was no longer inside, he began to sing. That angakkuq had become unable to walk and he started to *saka* to pass away the time. While he was doing so he started remembering the places where he used to hunt and he sang this song:

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*Igluli majja iijigivara silarjuarli sunauvva manna*

I look at the *iglu*. It turns out it’s the sky.

*Natirli majja iijigivara sikuliurjuarli sunauvva manna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa*

I look at the floor. It turns out it’s the sea ice, *ijaa*, *ja, jaa, jaa*

*Iglirli majja iijigivara nunarjuarli sunauvva manna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa*

I look at the bed. It turns out it’s the land *ijaa*, *ja, jaa, jaa*

*Katagli kanna iijigivara taqqirjuarli sunavva kanna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa*

I look at the entrance. It turns out it’s the moon *ijaa*, *ja, jaa, jaa*

*Igalaarlipikka iijigivara siqinirjuarli sunavva pingna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa*

I look at the window. It turns out it’s the sun *ijaa*, *ja, jaa, jaa*

*Igluli majja iijigivara silarjuali sunauvva manna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa*

I look at the *iglu*. It turns out it’s the sky *ijaa*, *ja, jaa, jaa*

*Akili majja iijigivara imarjuarli sunauvva manna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa*

I look at the *aki*. It turns out it’s the water *ijaa*, *ja, jaa, jaa*

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**Cosmology, Shamanism and Ilisiqsiniq, hexing**
Igluli majja ijjigivara silarjuali sunauvva manna, ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa
I look at the iglu. It turns out it’s the sky ijaa, ja, jaa, jaa.

Naarjuk
Have you ever heard of an angakkuq travelling somewhere to make the weather better?
Iqallijuq: I never heard of an angakkuq travelling, but they would be given an object if the weather had been bad for a long period of time so that they could improve the weather. They would saka without actually going anywhere.

How would they saka?
Iqallijuq: The angakkuq would perform saka in the usual manner. I have also heard that one of the winds was male and one was female. One was the northwest wind, Uangnaq and the other was the southeast wind, Nigiq. I have never heard what Kanangag the northeast wind or Akiningaq, the southwest wind were. When the wind was blowing constantly they would have to make repairs to the iglu. There was one woman whose iglu had become full of holes and she had her tuurngaq make the repairs for her. They would stop the wind by cutting the tendons of the wind.

Ijituuq: I have heard that blizzards come from the northwest. It is then that people got short of food. They would saka when the wind kept blowing. When they would saka, they would do this behind a blind whenever they became frustrated with the wind, because they were hungry and they were unable to go hunting. Through sakaniq the angakkuq would go and lace up the wind’s clothing. When they were doing this, the top of the blind would shake because as the angakkuq was lacing up the wind’s clothing, sometimes an eyelet would break and the wind would come through. They would lace the clothing with an ak&unaaq, a rope.

Iqallijuq: Sometimes when the eyelet would break, not only would the blind shake, there would be blowing snow inside the iglu.

Ujarak: You could feel it.

Ijituuq: You could see it and feel it. After the angakkuq had performed saka he would say, “Taima.” A day or two after this the weather would improve.

Ujarak: The clothing of the spirit of the air would be laced up. It seems that when the lacing comes undone, the wind begins to blow through.
Do you know which one it is that has its clothing laced up?

Ijituuq: It was Uangnaq, the northwest wind, whose clothing was laced up. I don’t remember who told me this.

Was Uangnaq, the northwest wind, male?

Ijituuq: Maybe this is so, that Uangnaq is male.

Iqallijuq: Uangnaq blizzards a lot and is stingy.

Ijituuq: Because he is male, when his clothing tears the wind starts blowing. The female is in her iglu. When there are holes in her iglu the wind starts blowing also, but that wind is not as cold.

Iqallijuq: Sometimes the wind starts blowing out from her katak, the entrance to the iglu. Sometimes it blows out through the walls when there are holes, while she remains inside. In the winter when it is blowing, it is not as cold as Uangnaq.

Ijituuq: the northwest wind, was male. When Uangnaq’s clothing tore apart, the weather became very windy. Nigiq remained in her iglu.

Ujarak: The angakkuit saw all this happen. When Nigiq’s iglu had holes in it, then the wind would blow. If it blew too long, then the angakkuit had to send his tuurnaq to repair it. Then the wind would stop.

Can you tell me about Naarjuk?

Iqallijuq: Naarjuk is all of Sila.

Was it Naarjuk whose tendons had to be cut?

Ijituuq: Each community has its own customs. It was the Uqqurmiut, the people of South Baffin, that said they had to cut the tendons of the wind.

Ujarak: It was the angakkuit from Kinngait, Pangniqtuuq, and Kangirtugaapik who did this. These Uqqurmiut were the ones who would cut the tendons of the wind. When the angakkuit talked of Naarjuk, they were referring to all of Sila.

Ijituuq: Agalakti had a pisiq about the wind. Agalakti was Qingaq’s adoptive father. I only heard part of it. It went like this:
When Nigiq displays his maleness over a period of time, Uangnaq ends up on a piece of ice which has broken away from the fast ice.

**Silaat, the children of Sila**

How are silaat related to Sila?

Iqallijuq: The *silaat* are placed on the earth as though they were laid by Sila. I came across an egg near Isiriaq while I was gathering heather. It was embedded in the earth and I brought it home. When Kalluk saw it she asked me where I had found it because it was after the season for eggs had passed. It was round like an owl’s egg and very white. I told her that while I was out gathering heather I found it embedded underneath the moss. She told me to put it back exactly where I found it because if I disturbed it, it would cause stormy weather. She told me it was going to become a *silaaq*.

There are occasionally caribou that are *silaaq*. They come from an earth egg. She said, “This is an earth egg. Take it back where you found it.” I told her I couldn’t remember exactly where I found it. She said it didn’t matter if it was in exactly the same place, as long as I put it back close to where I found it. I took it back and placed it in moss just as she had told me to, just in case the weather turned bad and it rained and rained. After I did that, the weather didn’t turn bad.

It has been written that Ava saw a *silaaq*. How is a *silaaq* related to Sila?

Ujarak: It isn’t born from a caribou. It just appears on the earth as an egg. It hatches like a bird’s egg. It was not born from a caribou. *Silaat* are larger than regular caribou. Although they look like caribou, because they have come into this world as an egg, they are called *silaat*.

What are silaat like?

Ujarak: The *silaaq* that my father saw was near Tasiujat. He was looking for caribou while he was out hunting. He found some grouped together and noticed one that was much larger than the rest. The size caught his attention. Its fur was like that of a lemming. That’s when he realized it was a *silaaq*. He wanted to shoot it, even though he knew he wasn’t supposed to. Because the land was flat, it was difficult to get close. He had to crawl to get close to it. Many of the caribou that surrounded it were males that had antlers. They went on the other side of a little esker. The *silaaq* was grazing with them. My father could only see the ears of the ordinary caribou but he could see the rump of the *silaaq*. 

Cosmology and Shamanism
He was trying to get even closer when one of the caribou saw him and they fled. He shot at it, but he missed as it was out of range. In those days the rifles didn’t shoot very far. Although the other caribou were galloping, the silaaq was only trotting. When it got to a marshy area, it left the others behind. When it was making the water splash in the marsh, my father couldn’t see the other caribou. Then it started to rain. Although the silaaq was only trotting, it left the others behind, even though they were galloping. When the silaaq was out of sight, my father tried chasing after it but he couldn’t find it because it was raining heavily. It hadn’t been raining until the silaaq entered the marsh and made the water splash. He couldn’t find it again.

Have the rest of you heard about silaat?

Kupaaq: I have heard about an egg that was very white. I haven’t heard more than that. Silaat come from eggs that are very white. They are said to be eggs of the earth.

Iqallijuq: What they say about them is very true.

Do these white eggs become silaat or do they become pukiq?

Ujarak: When you come across white eggs, the smaller ones will become pukiit and the larger ones will become silaat. The ones that become silaat are larger and not as white.

Do you think that nuna, and sila, and silaat are related to each other?

Ujarak: We don’t consider them to be related. Sila is just like a casing around the earth. It is as though the earth is inside Sila. Whereas, we Inuit consider silaat as just lying on the earth. They are not encased. They are exposed. The silaaq that my father saw was white. Although rabbits are white, they acquire beautiful grey fur in the summer. The silaaq that he saw had a bluish tinge, similar to the grey fur of a lemming. The one my father saw had fur like lemmings and rabbits. It did not have fur like a caribou. Another reason that they call them silaat is because their bluish tinge resembles Sila. They come from Sila, not from caribou.

Tupilanniq, fighting with a tupilaq

What are tupilait?

Iqallijuq: Tupilat were not used to ilisiiq people. Now that we have nurses and doctors we are told we have germs when things are unclean. I think that those little germs that cause sickness are tupilait.

Ujarak: They come out of places that are dirty, in the shape of humans and cause sickness.
Iqallijuq: They live in igluvigait, abandoned igluit. They would lurk in the camps. They were like germs and would attack. They would hide in places where dogs and people would defecate and urinate, which was just outside. In those days if an iglu became too dirty, they would abandon it and build another one. The tupilait would live in the abandoned igluit.

Kupaaq: When the iglu became too dirty it caused sickness.

Ijituuq: The longer the tupilait remained, the larger they grew.

Kupaaq: They weren’t used to ilisiq people.

Ijituuq: If the tupilait stayed a long time, people started to get sick.

Were they associated with death?

Ujarak: They were not associated with the dead. They lived only in the camp. When they became too numerous and people started becoming sick, the angakkuq would then be able to see them and start trying to kill them. It was only when people started becoming sick and became afraid of unseen things that the angakkuit started dealing with this. When the angakkuq would perform saka to get rid of them, they would have something to beat the tupilaq with in their left hand.

What would they be beating in the dirt?

Ujarak: It would be a worm with a human form that could only be seen by angakkuit. They would use an old tusk or a broken harpoon or an anautaq or a piece of antler as a knife. Those that were performing saka to kill the tupilaq would be on the floor. They would then go outdoors in the evening and search for it. When they saw it, they would surround the iglu and stealthily creep up on it. They would stab the tupilaq at the corner of the porch using their left hand. Whatever they were using, such as a tusk, would become covered in blood.

Iqallijuq: Some of the angakkuit would say “Haa!” when they killed a tupilaq.

Ujarak: Whatever they used to stab the tupilaq with would be dripping with blood. Tupilait can only be seen by angakkuit.

Have you ever seen one?

Ijituuq: Actually, I have seen a tupilaq.
What did it look like?
Ijituuq: I only got a glimpse of it. It was covered with hair. I was very close to it. I saw this *tupilaq* shortly after the Greenlanders arrived. When I alerted others to its presence, everyone started looking for it.

Did you notice what it looked like?
Ijituuq: It was standing in the porch just on the other side of the entrance. The door was slightly open. It was clearly visible. We went to my grandfather Angutimmarik’s place to tell them about it. Tukturjuk and his younger brother quickly prepared themselves. They wanted to go and see it, as they were both *angakkuq*.

Are you talking about Angutimmarik?
Ijituuq: No, Tukturjuk, his brother Makkik, and Uppaqtuuq went. Angutimmarik didn’t go with them. The oldest of them told me to come along. He told me not to be afraid. When we started entering the door was now closed. Even though Tukturjuk had told me that there was nothing to fear I quickly retreated. It turned out that I ended up having to go back with his younger brothers. I ran back to the house without my boots on. They looked for the *tupilaq* in the porch but they weren’t able to find it right away. We were at Aqaat’s place. Tukturjuk went into the porch and stayed there for quite a while. He came back in murmuring slightly. He said he felt he wasn’t going to be able to get the *tupilaq* without the help of *tuurngait*. He went out searching for it in the storage shed. When he came back he said that his *tarniq* had almost been removed. When he came back the sounds that he uttered were louder than before. This time the three of them went out. We could hear them outside in the storage shed and then in the porch. The noise increased and then we heard the sound of the door and the sound of footsteps as one of them came back in. How impressive he looked. When we saw him, his sleeves were pulled up and his hands were dripping blood.

Iqallijuq: It was that same Makkik whom I recall having difficulty killing a *tupilaq*, while we were at Salliq, down at Tuniqsiut. The original inhabitants of Salliq had all died. One of them had become a *tupilaq*. It had become a *nunarluk*, a bad clump of earth from the ground. That time it also took a long while for Makkik and his older brother, and Uppaqtuuq and Naujaaraq’s older brother Nuqallaq, and the one who didn’t look like an *angakkuq*, Kanguq, to kill the *tupilaq*. They had a lot of difficulty killing the *tupilaq*.

Ijituuq: Because the *tupilaq* had remained there for a long while, it had grown large.
Iqallijuq: The dirt it was covered with was its only clothing. It had some sort of head because they said they had strangled it. Makkik was still tuurngaqsimajuq, possessed by his tuurngaq. Maybe because he had had so much difficulty, he seemed preoccupied by his tuurngaq. He seemed to be talking and singing at the same time. He would periodically say, “ri ri ri ...” When the others came in, they said that they had had difficulty cornering the tupilaq but as usual Makkik got it. He certainly got it! There was a lot of blood that was dripping.

Ijituuq: When you were there, it was just as described.

Iqallijuq: The others were not tuurngaqsimajut, possessed by a tuurngaq, they were just assisting him. Probably Makkik was quite adept at killing tupilait.

Was the tupilaq a deceased person?

Iqallijuq: They said that it had been a deceased person from Salliq. I never heard who it had been. Many of the people in Salliq died one winter. Perhaps when the deceased person saw people, he despised their abilities and that’s why he became a tupilaq. That’s why the tupilaq ended up being killed.

Did that tupilaq look like a human being?

Iqallijuq: It wasn’t really human. It only took on the appearance of one because it wanted people to be sick and die. Maybe it’s because they don’t have any bones that they’re so full of blood.

Ujarak: Maybe they caused sickness because they were made of blood. Perhaps they transmitted sickness through their blood.

The tupilait, would they bleed when they were stabbed?

Iqallijuq: They bleed easily just like we do.

Ujarak: When they are stabbed they start bleeding profusely because they are dying.

Do they become blood, just like a miscarried foetus?

Iqallijuq: They just disappear. When they have been killed, they become nothing.

Ijituuq: They just disappear.

Cosmology and Shamanism
Kupaaq: The tupilaq’s blood would disappear; wherever there had been blood, it would disappear.

Wasn’t there any blood where it had been killed?

Iqallijuq: There was no blood at all. After Makkik killed the tupilaq, my cousin and I went to see the blood the next day, but it had disappeared.

Kupaaq: I heard about a time when there were people living at Avvajja. The remains of a dwelling by the lake were occupied by a tupilaq one time during the winter.

Were there many of them there?

Kupaaq: Maybe there was just one.

Was it hairy?

Kupaaq: It probably was hairy like the others. It probably grew out of the dirt in this dwelling. They say that Aatitaaq killed it.

Iqallijuq: Aatitaaq lived over here at one time, before moving to Mittimatalik.

The tupilaq didn’t die by itself?

Iqallijuq: You couldn’t see the tupilaq, but there was a person who was sick.

Ujarak: They would transmit sickness and that’s when people became ill.

Ijituuq: Maybe that’s what the nurses mean when they say that people have germs inside them.

Kupaaq: I wonder what they meant when they say the tupilaq that Aatitaaq killed had one arm up its sleeve.

Ijituuq: Maybe that was just the way it had been.

Iqallijuq: Aatitaaq said that the tupilaq had pulled its arm into its sleeve on its own.

Ujarak: Aatitaaq died not too long ago.
Angakkuuniq and Ilisiiqsiniq

Did the angakkuit blow air into people to remove the tarniq?

Ujarak: If someone was ill and this person had made the angakkuq angry or ashamed at one time or another, the angakkuq would try to blow his tarniq away so that he would die soon.

Iqallijuq: When an angakkuq wants someone’s tarniq to leave the body, this is called ilisiiqsiniq. The person who is hexed is ilisiiqtaujuq. The angakkuq is said to ilisiiqsijuq. Qalasiq, who was one of the first Roman Catholic converts, had the power to do this. When I was a child, I was out walking with Putuguq and Siluk’s daughter Misiraq. As we were walking behind Qalasiq’s tent, which had been pitched on even ground, Siluk’s daughter stumbled and was struck with a very bad stomach-ache. We took her home and they asked us what had happened. We told them we had been walking behind Qalasiq’s tent when she stumbled and became ill. Although we weren’t supposed to know the names of adults, Putuguq and I knew Qalasiq’s name. We were able to tell them this had happened behind Qalasiq’s tent and that she had ended up in a lot of pain.

We stayed with her for a while, but because she was in so much pain, Putuguq and I went home. We each told our mothers. I stayed with my aunt because my mother went over to Siluk’s. Later on, Putuguq and I were told not to go behind Qalasiq’s tent just in case we became ilisiiqtaujuq. We were told that Qalasiq had hexed Misiraq, and had blown at her tarniq so that she became ill. Another angakkuq had performed sakaniq and was able to get her tarniq to return. Although Qalasiq had been holding the tarniq, he hadn’t burst it. If he had blown it away or had burst it by rubbing it, the tarniq wouldn’t have been able to return and she would have died. We were told that because her tarniq had returned she was going to be alright and would get better.

When Qalasiq was confronted by the other angakkuq about this, he denied it at first, but later admitted it. Since her tarniq had returned, although she was sick, she didn’t die. Misiraq was older than my cousin and I. I have heard that my father Ittuliaq was hexed, but I don’t know who did this or why it was done to him. I don’t know anyone else who was hexed.

Ijituuq: I’ve heard of someone who was hexed by a man named Qattaaktuq. Qattaaktuq had starting to feel threatened by the abilities of the man he hexed.

Iqallijuq: Because the person was very able, Qattaaktuq hexed him.
How did he do this?

Ijituuq: I’m not quite sure what he did. It was during the spring that he hexed him, but it wasn’t till late fall when he became ill. He had been out on the floe edge with Ivalaaq’s father. Ivalaaq lived in Sanirajak. They hadn’t caught anything for a while. Then they caught two seals. They broke off a piece of ice to get over to the seals which were close by. The man who was hexed got the seal onto the floating ice and then he lost his mind. He stayed on the piece of ice and started drifting away. It was only after he had drifted a fair distance away that he regained his faculties. He decided to try swimming to the fast ice. He was attempting to climb out of the water when he died of hypothermia.

Ujarak: This happened because an angakkutq blew his tarniq away.

Did the person he was with do this?

Ijituuq: No, it was Qattaaktuq who had done this. The person he was with was Qaunuaq.

Ijituuq: He was hexed by Qattaaktuq. Qattaaktuq’s son Nuqallaq lived to become an adult but died prematurely. Qattaaktuq’s hexes boomeranged back at him and that’s why his son died.

Ijituuq: This happened at the point when his hunting skills were at their best, and his death would be felt the most by the family.

Did they ilisiiq people through sakaniq?

Ujarak: The angakkutq used their tuurngait to do this.

Iqallijjuq: They didn’t use sakaniq to do this.

Ijituuq: They would do this by focussing their mind on the person they wanted to hex.

Was it only an angakkutq who could ilisiiq others?

Ijituuq: Yes, only the angakkutq were able to do this. It was only the evil ones who would do so.
Iqallijuq: These angakkuit didn’t help other people and didn’t have compassion for them. They felt threatened by the abilities of others. If they felt threatened they would send their tuurnqaq to the person to make them ill or incapacitate them in some way. They would only ilisiq people using their tuurngait.

How would this tuurngaq try to kill people?

Iqallijuq: I'm not exactly sure how. The tuurngait would attack the tarniq slowly, over a period of time and make the person ill. The tuurngaq got the tarniq even though the angakkuq did not perform sakaniq. If the angakkuq rubbed the tarniq and burst it, the person would die.

Ijituq: Even if they stayed alive for a while, they would continue to deteriorate until they died.

Have you ever heard of an angakkuq slipping a pouch containing blood to the person that he wanted to ilisiq? Would he give something to the person with the pouch hidden inside?

Iqallijuq: I have heard of that happening to someone. There was one angakkuq who sent a pouch to an angakkuq from a different community. The angakkuq had no choice but to accept the gift. The angakkuq accepted the gift but sent the pouch back in a gift that he sent in return. The angakkuq who had originally sent the gift became ill, and although he confessed that he had attempted to hex his female relative, he died.

Have you heard what they used to ilisiq people with?

Iqallijuq: I haven’t heard what was used, but whatever it was, was not visible.

Ujarak: They sent their tuurngaq when they would ilisiq.

Is it true that the Nattilingmiut used to ilisiq people frequently?

Ijituq: My father said that someone from the Nattilik area attempted to ilisiq him but they weren’t successful. Because I was less experienced, and therefore softer, they had no difficulty with me.

Iqallijuq: I was said to be tough.
Ijituuq: I heard a story from the Nattilingmiut about someone who would *ilisiiq* people. Niksaaktuq was an adult when he lost some of his senses. He had hexed numerous people before he encountered a tough victim and lost some of his faculties.

Kupaaq: Did he use a duck as his means of *ilisiqsirniq*?

Ijituuq: After Niksaaktuq had lost his senses and shortly before he was going to die, he said that the duck bounced one egg, which was a real egg. The other egg was a rock. What he meant was that when he was hexing he had hexed a soft one and a hard one.

Ujarak: What he was using looked like a duck.

Ijituuq: It probably wasn’t a real duck.

Iqallijuq: No, it wasn’t a real duck. Anaqqaaq was related to Niksaaktuq. He was either his uncle or great-uncle.

Kupaaq: That must be the same Anaqqaaq that my son told me about. This was soon after he had left for school. He said that he had kicked Anaqqaaq’s dog and killed it. He said that while he was in class, a little piece of paper was floating in the air. It headed towards him, and he moved aside. Without even thinking about it, he said, “I’ve gotten out of the way of Anaqqaaq’s little *tuurngaq*.” Not that long after, Anaqqaaq died.

Iqallijuq: His Christian beliefs protected him and allowed him to see this barb in the form of a piece of paper, thus being able to avoid it.

Ujarak: If it had hit him he would have become ill instead.

**Footnote**

1 When the wind blows from the southeast it piles up the loose ice. When it starts to blow from the northwest that ice becomes so heavy that when you stand on it, the ice breaks off easily.
Student Essays on Cosmology and Shamanism
Part One of this book contains accounts by Inuit born in or around the 1930s. Part Two has accounts by elders who were born at the turn of the 20th century. Part Three is made up of essays by college-level students born in or around the 1970s. We have three generations of Inuit who have spoken or written about cosmology and shamanism. The students were asked to comment on what they had learned from Mariano Aupilaarjuk and Lucassie Nutaraaluk during their week of interviews with these two elders. The students also used material from their professor’s lectures and course readings, information found at the library, and their personal experience.

After I left, the students had a week to write their essays. Their success was due in no small part to the support and attentive support of my assistant Stéphane Kolb, a doctoral student in anthropology at Université Laval. My thanks go out to him.

I felt it important to include the essays in this book, even though they do not necessarily fit the format for publications in the humanities and social sciences. They are much more than essays. They are the accounts of a new generation of urban Inuit who have spent almost half their lives at school and are searching for their identity in a rapidly changing environment. In the days of these students’ grandparents, family elders would orally pass down Inuit culture at seasonal campsites. Today, these same students know that their culture is facing stiff competition from North American culture, which is being spread by school, television, and video games. They also know that their capital is home to several Christian denominations that are actively proselytizing among the Inuit and vying for their attention. Through these activities, the old Inuit value system has been strongly challenged and often even demonized.

Their own families have frequently been unable to answer their questions about their cultural past, so they have decided to go and look for the answers by themselves—in books and in post-secondary courses being developed at Nunavut Arctic College. These new course offerings have come about through a reawakening of interest in Inuit culture, language, and knowledge, particularly by younger Inuit.

The eleven students who wrote these essays truly reflect, through their varied origins, the diversity of Nunavut’s current population. One of them, Mathieu Boki, is a qallunaat, a French-speaking Canadian from the South who spent part of his childhood among the Inuit in Nunavik. Another is Aaju Peter, who is from Greenland. She speaks two Inuit dialects, plus Danish and English. Susan Enuaraq is from Kangiqsujuaq (Clyde River) in northeastern
Baffin Island. Johnny Kopak is originally from Daly Bay near Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet). Vera Arnatsiaq is from Iglulik. Many of the other students were from Panniqtuuq. All students seem to have felt the impact of the course. This was what emerged from interviews by Bernice Kootoo, from Iqaluit, on how the themes of the course later affected the students’ daily lives.

If we look at the subjects chosen for the essays, it seems that the invisible world of the spirits was the one that stirred up the most interest in the students. Through the school system, they had become accustomed to taking a purely rational approach to all problems in their surroundings and in their lives. This rational approach has admittedly helped modern-day Inuit build their own ethnic identity and gain, through negotiations, self-government and territorial compensation. The limits of this rationality, however, are being exposed by the profound social crisis now facing Nunavut, as we pointed out in the general introduction to this volume. The sciences of psychology and medicine have clearly failed to reduce alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, and the appallingly high rate of suicide among young people.

For the different Christian denominations, the world of the invisible can only be either Christian or demonic. There is no place for an Inuit invisible world. According to the Inuit elders, though, such an invisible world does exist. It has existed since time immemorial and they even say that one of the main duties of the shamans was to manage that world. One elder, a practising Christian, even suggests that it would be a good thing to reconcile Christianity and shamanism. He felt that fewer young people would commit suicide if shamans were available to get them to talk about their problems and help them find solutions. The students in the course were quick to pick up on this suggestion, seeing in it a challenge to be met by the new generation of Inuit—their own.
“Atira Aupilaarjuk makitajutiginasummarikpara atillattaara. Inuujuutiga.”
“My name is what keeps me upright. My name is what gives me life.”
(Aupilaarjuk, March 1998)

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Introduction

As far as Inuit can remember, names have been passed on from one generation to the next. This practice has kept the memory of our ancestors alive, which would have otherwise been forgotten.

Since all persons bearing the same name have the same source of life, spiritual and physical qualities are also inherited from those who in the distant past once bore the same name.
(Rasmussen 1931: 58-9)

We will attempt to explain how Inuit knew what to name a child and the role the name played in the child’s life. We will also talk about the shaman who could either save lives through giving their name or the name of their helping spirit, tuurngaq, or who could put a curse on someone’s name and condemn them to death.

Sila Malillugu: Following the cycle of the cosmos

Like the sun returning in the spring to give life to new birth, so is the passing on of the name, atig, the source of life for new generations, passed on since the first Inuit Uummaarniittuq and Aakulijjuusi, according to Inuit myths, appeared on Earth (Saladin
d’Anglure 1984). In Inuit mythology the sun, **siqiniq**, is the sister of the moon, **taqqiq**. The sister made a torch of her breast and chased her brother into the sky. She became the sun. The brother, whose torch went out, became the moon (Saladin d’Anglure 1984). She is the source of life, bringing with her new hope, new life. There is a traditional song that is sung when celebrating the return of the sun. This is one of the late Alianakuluk’s **pisiit** from Mittimatalik.

**Alianaittuqaqpuq inuunialirama**  
There is joy. I will be living

**ulluq suli tauva**  
The day is still there.

**Ajja jaa jaa ja ajja jaa jaa**  
**ajja jaa jaa ja**

**Akuttujuuk angutivuuk Akuttujuuk**  
The **Akuttujuuk** have caught up.

**ulluq suli tauva**  
The day is still there.

**ajja jaa jaa ja ajja jaa jaa jaa**  
**ajja jaa jaa ja**

**Quviasuliqpunga inuunialirama.**  
I am feeling happy. I will be living.

**ulluq suli tauva**  
The day is still there.

**ajja jaa jaa ja ajja jaa jaa jaa**  
**ajja jaa jaa ja**

**Akuttujuuk** are two stars that appear just before the sun returns after having been gone for months. These stars are Betelgeuse (Alpha Orionis) and Bellatrix (Gamma Orionis) (Saladin d’Anglure 1993).
When a child is born it is given a name. The name has been waiting for new life since it was left behind when the bearer of that name took her last breath to follow those who had gone before her. The shaman Ava from Iglulik had this to say when interviewed by Rasmussen in 1922 about death, reincarnation, and the origin of the cosmos (Northern Voices 1988).

The Soul

Among us, as I have already explained to you, all is bound up with the Earth we live on and our life here; and it would be even more incomprehensible, even more unreasonable, if, after a life short or long, of happy days or of suffering and misery, we were then to cease altogether from existence. What we have heard about the soul shows us that the life of men and beasts does not end with death. When at the end of life we draw our last breath, that is not the end. We awake to consciousness again, we come to life again, and all this is effected through the medium of the soul. Therefore it is, that we regard the soul as the greatest and most incomprehensible of all.

When a name was given to a newborn child, the mother would touch the child’s lips with a piece of meat and some water to please the soul of the person whose name was given to the child. The newborn child was named after a deceased relative or friend. It could have been the wish of the deceased to be named in order to stay with the family. When a deceased person comes to an expectant mother in a dream it is interpreted that he or she wishes the newborn to be named after him or her. (Saladin d’Anglure ibid p.92).

Nancy Kisa, one of the co-authors of this paper, had a dream of this nature. She heard that when a person died they wanted a child to be named after them. She used to hear people saying that if they dreamt about a dead person it was because that person wished the mother’s child to be named after them. According to the elders this has been going on for many generations.

The following is Nancy’s account of her dream.

When I was about seven months pregnant with my son, I dreamt about this elder whose name was Quaraq. He’d been dead for about five years. My best friend, who is Quaraq’s granddaughter, was also in my dream. In my dream my best friend and I were walking uptown in Pangnirtung. It was in the evening. As we were walking along, we were talking and I saw a man approaching from a distance.
He was coming closer. When we were going to pass by him I finally recognized him and I looked at my best friend. I asked her, “Did you see him?” And she asked, “Who?” Then I was thinking, “He died years ago.” I kept looking at my best friend but she didn’t see him. Quaraq was smiling at me and he was carrying a bag. I remembered he always carried a bag when he was going to church. He passed by us and I asked my best friend again if she saw anyone. She said, “No.” I didn’t want to tell her because she really respected him when he was alive. I decided to ask her again and she said she didn’t see anyone. We just continued walking. Then I woke up and I was really scared. I was thinking, “Why am I dreaming of a dead person?” I kept thinking about it. Then I talked to my older sister and told her my dream. She told me that happens when a dead person wants your child to be named after them. I felt better when she told me this and one of my son’s many names is Quaraq.

My son has many elders’ names. He is also named after my illukuluk, Kullu. I am named after Saullu who was my grandmother. Kullu’s fingers were bent at the joints. When my son was born his pinky fingers were bent. I asked the nurse why his pinky fingers were bent. She told me that they would be straight when he got bigger but his pinky fingers are still bent. My cousin, who is Kullu’s granddaughter, visited me. She hadn’t seen my son since he was born. As she was holding my son I showed her my son’s pinky fingers. She told me right away that Kullu’s fingers had been bent at the joints. I finally realized why my son’s pinky fingers were bent. My cousin knew right away that my son was named after my illukuluk, Kullu. She respects my son as if he is Kullu, through the way she talks to him and how she treats him. My cousin said that she feels comfortable when she’s with my son.

Boys and girls are named after a person, indiscriminate of the sex of the deceased. If the primary name, atillaringa, came from the opposite gender, then very often the child was raised in that gender until the age of puberty when they would then be raised according to their biological gender (Saladin d’Anglure, 1977a). A boy whose atillaringa was a woman was dressed like a girl, had long braided hair, learned the chores and duties of a woman and was socialized as a girl (Saladin d’Anglure 1984). Aupilaarjuk, an elder from Rankin Inlet, said that even though his atillaringa was a woman, he was not raised as one but instead had a tattoo on his right thumb to show that he was named after a
woman. Likewise, when a girl was named after a man, she was dressed like a boy, ate with a knife, went hunting with the father, et cetera. Uqsuralik, an elder from Kinngait, raised one of her daughters this way and said that her daughter believed she was a boy until the age of puberty when the parents began raising her as a woman (Child Rearing Practices Course, Inuit Studies Program, February 1998). Uqsuralik said that this daughter ended up being better at sewing than her sisters who were raised as girls. Iqallijuq, an elder from Iglulik, had a son who had four names, two of them from men, two of them from women. The boy was dressed one day as a boy, the next day as a girl (Saladin d’Anglure 1984). Raising children whose primary names are from people of the opposite gender is still practised today.

Some children became ill from the name they had been given and in that case the child would be given another name (Saladin d’Anglure 1998). Aupilaarjuk’s brother was named after his mother’s father, Qimirluk, but became really ill from the name. The shaman, Uqpigalik, known to the Inuit as Alakannuaq, gave him the name of his helping spirit, Kakiarniut, and he got better. His other brother is also named after another great shaman, Kuugjuaq. Another way of lengthening a child’s life was for an elder to give a piece of his or her clothing to the child so that clothes could be made for it. This was called annuraaqatigi and would help protect the child from sickness or death. Aupilaarjuk and his wife Tulimaaq had children who kept dying before they reached the age of one. Arnaujaq, an old woman from Naujaat, gave them a piece of her clothing so that the mother could sew clothes for the baby. Aupilaarjuk said, “She loved us dearly and wanted the baby to live. Annuraarimmauk inuuvuq, because she gave him a piece of her clothing he is still alive today. This is a strength of the Inuit,” says Aupilaarjuk.

Iqallijuq was given the name Savviuqtalik at birth. But because the name was making her sick, her father Ittuliaq, who was a shaman, gave her the name of his helping spirit, Iqallijuq, the creator in the myths of the char (Saladin d’Anglure, 1977a). Iqallijuq omitted to name her child after her father’s uncle Ivalu, who wanted this child to be named after him, and the child got sick. After they started calling him Ivalu he got better (Saladin d’Anglure, 1977a).

Sometimes, when a person became a shaman, their namesake became their helping spirit. This was the case of the shaman Ava whose first helping spirit was his namesake, Ava, a little shore spirit (Northern Voices, 1988:123). Some elders name a child after themselves, sauniq, my bone, thereby lengthening their own and the child’s life. Lucassie Nutaraaluk has a grandchild named after him whom he refers to as his sauniq.

In cases where the newborn child would be left to die from exposure or from starvation, the child was not given a name and therefore was not considered a person (Oosten, 1977), except in very rare cases such as the girl named Pallaq who was left to die even after receiving her name (Van de Velde 1984:431).
Special Names: *Aqausiq, anguqturausiit, tuq&urausiit*

“We were not allowed to call the elders or the adults by their real names. We only called them by their nicknames or through our *tuq&urausiq,*” said Susan Enuaraq. There is a saying, “A dear child has many names,” and indeed an *aqausiq* is a name given to a child because of the love that the family holds for it. Although people would know a person’s name, they referred to each other either by a nickname, *anguqturauntinga,* or *aqautinga,* or by using the kinship term, *tuq&urautinga.* Aupilaarjuk was called Anguti&&uarjuk because he was the first son and his family loved him dearly. His father, however, called him by his true name Aupilaaq, short for Aupilaarjuk. He says Aupilaarjuk is his name, *atillattaq,* the one that keeps him upright. When we asked about Tulimaaq’s relatives, she referred to them by their *aqausiq,* nicknames, otherwise known as *atirusiq.* Arnaqtaasaq was her mother, whose *atiq,* real name was Nappaaqtuq. Her mother’s father was Surusiqtuq, but his *atillattaq* was Kukigaq. Tulimaaq was called Arnallakaaq, dainty little girl. That was her *aqausiq,* a name that was given to her because of the love that her relatives had for her. *Tuq&urausiq* is the term used to call a person by the relationship you have with them through their name. Everyone in Susan’s family who is named after Palluq, her Inuktitut name, thus call Susan’s father *nukaq,* because through that name he is their younger brother. Lucassie Nutaraaluk named one of his grandsons after his late wife. He calls him *aippaapik,* dear spouse, and this is his song to him:

**Pillariapiiga pia piiga aippallariapiiga**
Really my own. My real spouse

**Aipparulumminik qiutunitsaruluk**
Cries more easily than her own spouse

**Qiatunitsaruluk. Aakuluk.**
Cries more easily. Love you.

He has this song for his other grandchild who is named after him The song is called *sauniq.*

**Saunik saunik sauniapiruluk.**
Namesake namesake, dear dear namesake.

**Pisikkaaparuluk aippaapimminik.**
Very skilled more than the other.
Pisitaunitsaruluk saunik.
Much more skilled namesake.

Saunik saunittuparuluk.
Namesake, very much a namesake.

Aqausiiit are names and songs to express your love for children, and those names stay with them even when they become adults. Aupilaarjuk says that names are very much respected, “Atiit pinmarialutitaluaurntam.” Even though adults would know each other’s names, they called each other by their kinship terms, tuq&urausiit or anguqturausiit, or by their aqausiiit, nicknames.

The shaman’s curse on the descendants of Enuaraq
A shaman could take revenge through the name, as in the case of Susan’s ancestors. Enuaraq, Susan’s grandfather, was cursed by a shaman, who told him that he would lose descendants to the sea. Enuaraq and Killaq had six sons and two daughters. Four of the sons died in or around the sea. One of the oldest sons, Palluq, and his brother Paniluk, drowned when they slid into the water. A younger brother who was named after Palluq also died in the water. One of the sisters, Uqaallak, named her son after her first brother Palluq. He was one of the eight hunters who drowned in Iqaluit three years ago on their way back from a walrus hunt. Juusi, the younger brother of the first Palluq, but who is older than the younger brother Palluq, had a daughter named Palluq, who is also called Susan. All four people were named after the oldest Palluq, who called Susan’s father Juusi nukaq, younger brother. Susan, who is one of our classmates, has a son named Levi Juupi Palluq. She would like to protect her son against the curse that has been put on his name. According to the elders, she can be given some clothing from an elder from which she can make him clothes. This will protect him, as was the case with Aupilaarjuk’s son. She can also teach him to help elders because the elders are said to have a lot of power. They show their gratitude to those who have helped them by giving them a long life (Lucassie Nutaraaluk, 1998, and Emile Imaruittuq, 1998).

The tuurngaq of a shaman who became accustomed to killing
Although names are given to pass on the strength and skills of the deceased to a child, some names carry with them less desirable qualities.

Since all persons bearing the same name have the same source of life, spiritual and physical qualities are also inherited from those who in the far distant past once bore the same name. (Rasmussen, 1931:58-9)
Aupilaarjuk talked about how a shaman could misuse their power and kill by using one of their *tuurnqaq*. A shaman who did this broke the law of the Inuit. There was also a danger that the *tuurnqaq* could turn on the sender and kill them, their family, or their descendants. Aupilaarjuk mentioned Kukigaq, the grandfather of his wife, Tulimaaq. Kukigaq was named after one of his ancestors who liked fighting. His ancestor was a shaman who had killed using his powers. The younger Kukigaq, the grandfather of Tulimaaq, was also a shaman. He also killed someone using shamanism, and the *tuurnqaq* returned and was killing Kukigaq’s descendants. This *tuurnqaq* got accustomed to killing. It had come back to kill the descendants of Kukigaq. His daughter Nappaatq bore many children but only two survived, Tulimaaq and her brother. Aupilaarjuk and Tulimaaq’s first-born son was adopted by the grandmother but died. They lost eight children before they reached the age of one. Aupilaarjuk said this was because of the crime that Kukigaq committed. “My wife’s grandfather broke an Inuit law and these were the consequences,” said Aupilaarjuk. When they once again had a son, an old woman, Arnaujaq, who had great love for them, gave them a piece of her clothing so they could make clothes for the baby, *annuraaqati*. She did this to save him, and he still lives today.

**The continuing life cycle**

During the time we were interviewing the elders about shamanism and name-giving, many people passed away. It has been a sad few weeks for the families of Tikisaq, Suvinai, Joanasie, Tommy, Carlie, Ellie, Nutaulaaq, little Leah, Pitsiulaaq and Fred Coman. Although we have buried their bodies they will still be with us through the lives of the newborn babies who will carry their names. The families of those who have recently passed away will rejoice at having their loved ones again amongst them. This is the Inuit life cycle. Indeed, the sun will come back and give birth to new life.

**Conclusion**

The *atiq*, the name, keeps a person alive. *Atituaqit*, traditional names, were passed on from one generation to the next, and through the names the skills and abilities were passed on. Elders and shamans had the ability to save a child’s life by giving it a name, but the shaman also held the power to condemn a name or the descendants of the bearer of the name. Our names are our heritage. They were given to us to keep our identity and strength as Inuit. *Atituaqit* are part of our heritage and culture.
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Tuurngait

Introduction

For this essay, Mariano Aupilaarjuk and Lucassie Nutaraaluk were interviewed. Mariano is originally from the Nattilik area but he now lives in Rankin Inlet. Lucassie is originally from Cape Dorset in South Baffin but now lives in Iqaluit. In this essay I will try to document how people became shamans and how they got their tuurngait or apiqsait.

Tuurngait

During my interviews I learned that Aupilaarjuk witnessed shamanism in his early life. Nutaraaluk only heard of shamanism second-hand. Before he was born his father had been a shaman but he had given it up when Nutaraaluk was born. That was one difference between them. The other is they are from different areas. Because of regional variations, some of their information was similar and some different.

In the beginning of our interviews the two elders told us how people used to become shamans. Nutaraaluk, who is from South Baffin, said that the angakkuit would turn a person into an angakkuq by saying things to him or her while at the same time bumping heads with them. That is how they would become shamans.

Balikci, an anthropologist who did research in the Central Arctic, mentioned that particular people were chosen to become shamans. If it was a child, they would always be watching out for signs. If there was a child who was chosen to become a shaman, an experienced shaman would start training him and an iglu would be made for him. A tuurngaq would be given to the child by the older shaman. At first the child wouldn’t really know how to control it but this was learned over time. (Balikci 1970)

Aupilaarjuk, originally from the Nattilik area, said the shamans had to pick their own tuurngaq, but the shamans had to examine the tuurngaq first to see if it was good or evil. For example, if a tuurngaq came on its own and wanted to belong to a certain shaman, the shaman had to be careful not to accept it right away. He shouldn’t make a decision right away because if he made the wrong decision he could put himself in danger. The tuurngaq could have been owned by another shaman and could have been used for murder and it could kill again. The shaman had to see if it was a good or evil tuurngaq because it could outsmart the shaman by pretending to be good.

A shaman had to be wise and not ask a tuurngaq to murder for him, because if it did not succeed it could come back and destroy him or put his family in danger. Nutaraaluk said that he had heard a story from his stepmother and his father where a shaman had tried to take another shaman’s qaumanig, light, by sending his tuurngaq to try and take
the qaumaniq from the other using a qattaq, a bucket. He didn’t know the other shaman knew what was happening. The other shaman’s tuurnqaq pushed the tuurnqaq that was trying to take the qaumaniq. Luckily, the tuurnqaq didn’t fall when it was pushed. If the tuurnqaq had fallen the shaman who owned the tuurnqaq would have died. After Nutaraaluk told this story, Aupilaarjuk agreed with him and said that it was dangerous for a shaman to try to take away another shaman’s qaumaniq. Aupilaarjuk said shamanism had both good and bad aspects to it. Both Aupilaarjuk and Nutaraaluk said that if an angakkuq tried to kill another angakkuq using his tuurnqaq, the tuurnqaq might turn on him and retaliate against him. The angakkait were told to use their tuurnqaq only to help the sick. Then their powers would be strengthened.

According to Balikci, there was a difference between a tuurnqaq and an apiqsaq. An apiqsaq was weaker than a tuurnqaq. The apiqsaq was only used in the qilaniq ritual performed by a shaman (Balikci, ibid).

Aupilaarjuk said they have different strengths and weaknesses but he didn’t state which ones were stronger or weaker. Shamans can use anything as a tuurnqaq. It could be a rock, a lemming, a weasel, seaweed, et cetera. Shamans can make these into their tuurnqaq.

According to Aupilaarjuk some tuurnqaits are good. He told us a story about his sister-in-law who had never believed in the Inuit piqquisiit, the customs one had to follow. Even though she was told to follow the piqquisiit, she decided to test them. Men, especially shamans, should not have intercourse with women who are menstruating. Aupilaarjuk’s father was the one who had shaped his future when he was born. His father told him he could never wear women’s clothing and that women could not wear his clothing as long as his father was alive. Aupilaarjuk’s sister-in-law put on Aupilaarjuk’s kamikpak to see if it were true. From that moment on, his sister-in-law’s life began to decline.

I learned quite a bit about shamanism during our interviews. I used to think shamans could only saka when they needed to get meat during hard times. I now know that shamans can be good. They were encouraged to be good shamans. I used to be scared just hearing the word shaman but now I have an understanding and respect for it. The first time I heard about tuurnqaq and apiqsait was in class; I had never heard much about them before. I had thought tuurnqaq were monsters. I was really amazed to hear that all Inuit have qaumaniq. Before religion was introduced I think Inuit had a hard life. For example, if a shaman got jealous of a man he could kill him with his tuurnqaq.
According to Balikci, there was a female shaman who lost her husband. She liked a young man but the young man didn’t like her back, maybe because of her age. So she sent her tuurngaq to kill him. The people from the camp knew she had killed the young man because she was smiling, so they shot her and her sons with arrows from behind. In another case a male shaman wanted this woman and he sent his tuurngaq to kill her husband. When the man died, the woman did not want the shaman so she later married someone else (Balikci 1970).

Aupilaarjuk told us that a tuurngaq could arrive at a place before a shaman did. Some time ago my former husband had a nervous breakdown. At the time, I was at the women’s shelter in Iqaluit. He was in Pangnirtung. The fire alarm in town went off and two of his friends who were firefighters looked to see where the fire was. The health centre looked as if it was on fire. When the firefighters arrived at the health centre, there was no fire at all but they found my husband unable to move. We felt that something evil had arrived at the health centre before my spouse did.

Aupilaarjuk mentioned that a shaman could be in danger if his tuurngaq bounced back at him. There was someone who had had an isumanirluk, a bad thought, about my spouse. My spouse couldn’t go out at all anymore because he was so afraid of him. When I went to the shelter because I couldn’t take it anymore, my spouse had a nervous breakdown and was sent to the Baffin Regional Hospital in Iqaluit. While he was there, the man he was afraid of died without reason. He had been perfectly healthy. He hadn’t been sick at all. I thought this had something to do with my spouse. About six months later my spouse killed himself. I thought I was to blame, but during these interviews I saw that there were other reasons he had killed himself. Little by little as I put the pieces together, I thought this had something to do with shamanism.

I found the interviews really interesting, and I’m glad I met Aupilaarjuk and his wife. There is both a good side and a bad side to shamanism. I do not want shamanism to come back because if the wrong person practised it, it could do a lot of damage. Even though Aupilaarjuk said there have been more suicides since shamanism was wiped out by religion, and revitalizing shamanism might help in the healing process and help to limit suicide, I personally wouldn’t want it to come back.

References

Interviews

Tuurngait:
An Integral Part of Shamanism
Susan Enuaraq

Irinaliut, incantations, have always played an important role in shamanism. Aupilaarjuk described the first irinaliut he learned from his mother. It came from the first Inuit, who were both men. One of them became pregnant. This irinaliut was created by the spouse of the man who was pregnant. As the pregnant man had a penis there seemed no place for the baby to come out. So the man said,

Inuumuna usua una paatuluni nirutuluni paa, paa.
This person’s penis, let it have a wide opening, a door, a door.

Through this irinaluit, the man’s penis turned into a vagina and the child was born. It seems that for our people, there have always been some “mystical or supernatural” powers.

Most of the information for this paper was taken from interview sessions with two elders, Mariano Aupilaarjuk and Lucassie Nutaraaluk. Aupilaarjuk now lives in Rankin Inlet but he is originally from the Nattilik region. Nutaraaluk now lives in Iqaluit but he grew up in the Cape Dorset area. Aupilaarjuk is very knowledgeable on this subject through first-hand experience and through the knowledge passed down to him by his parents. Nutaraaluk gained his knowledge of it from his father, Alariaq, and from his stepmother, Aliguk. Alariaq and Aliguk had both been angakkuit.

Before the missionaries arrived, in the Inuit world shamanism was practiced by shamans, or as they are called in Inuktuit, angakkuit. According to Schneider, who was a Catholic missionary in Nunavik, an angakkuit (s.) is a “sorcerer, shaman” (1985:28).

While we were growing up we always knew that angakkuit had existed. What we did not know as children, though, was whether they had ceased to exist or if there were still some. When I was growing up I had been told that there were still angakkuit and that there would always be angakkuit. Nutaraaluk said that he was also told that there would always be angakkuit.

The missionaries had a negative impact on this integral part of our ancestors’ lives. The impact that Christianity had on shamanism was so negative that people thought it was something to be ashamed of, to fear, and to abhor. Although many people will say that it is something that no longer exists, they will generally still fear being thought of in a bad way by an angakkuit. While I was a child, my peers taunted me about how my grandfather had been an angakkuit. I use the word “taunted,” as it was one of the biggest insults one could receive while we were growing up.
While I was interpreting for a psychiatric team in Clyde River a few years ago, there was a man who said that another man had had bad thoughts about him, isumanirluk, which affected his wife’s health. Isumanirluk, can be translated as either a bad thought, or as an angakkiaq, putting a curse on someone. The translation does not convey how, just by thought, there could be an action against someone. This action is probably one of the most feared aspects of shamanism.

Taamusi Qumaq, the author of the Nunavik Inuktitut dictionary, wrote the following about the word tuurngaq (1991:241):

Tuurngaq: A legend. It is not certain if these things really existed. However, we believe the elders when they say that some shamans were controlled by tuurngait while God controlled others. Before Christianity, God helped the Inuit when someone was sick by healing them. It had to be through God, as an ordinary person would not have the power without His help. Some of the shamans had power from Satan who gave them the ability to kill others [Author’s translation from the original Inuktitut].

Schneider defined a tuurngaq as:

(1) a benevolent spirit, a kind of protecting genie or guardian angel, more or less powerful or wise, that a shaman consults by means of incantations to avoid illness, to heal, or to succeed when hunting. From this was made (2) the devil, fallen angel (1985:431).

According to Franz Boas (1888), the tuurngait were the invisible rulers of every object, and were the most remarkable beings next to Sedna.

Aupilaarjuk said that a tuurngaq would approach a prospective shaman. It could be in any form and was the base of the shaman’s power. During another course session with him in the summer of 1997, he said that he did not like to refer to the helping spirits as tuurngait. Instead he preferred to use the term apiqsaq. However, throughout the course we used the term tuurngaq so I, too, will use this term in this paper. Once a tuurngaq had approached, a person had to be very careful not to accept it immediately. Aupilaarjuk stated time and time again that you had to investigate a tuurngaq. One had to seek the advice of an elder or a parent. One did not know right away if the particular tuurngaq making the approach was an evil one or not. Aupilaarjuk stated many times that there was a good aspect to shamanism, but there was also a bad aspect to it. This bad aspect was caused by angakkuit who used their tuurngaq to take away the tarniq, the soul of a person. I use the term tarniq because the murdering of a person through a
A shamanistic act was referred to as *ilisiiqsiniq*. According to Aupilaarjuk, although there are good aspects about a *tuurngait*, they are not capable of feeling love for a person, as they are not human.

Nutaraaluk told us that he knew that his son was killed by an *angakkuaq* through this method. He said that it was evident, as his eyes were open even though he was dead. Apparently, those that had been killed by this method die with their eyes open. Aupilaarjuk and his wife Tulimaaq nodded as Nutaraaluk said that. They agreed that this still happens. They both have lost children to the powers of an *angakkuaq*.

Many things could be used as a *tuurngag*. Aupilaarjuk's father told him a story where one shaman was trying to see what powers another shaman named Ijituuq had. He said that Ijituuq, the one that was being investigated, woke up his wife and said, "Qagviqtailijaujuqaliqquq. There is someone whose explorations into my powers will now be blocked." In a little while there was a knock on the door of his iglu. It was the wife of the *angakkuaq* who had been exploring Ijituuq's powers. She said that her husband was not able to get up and asked for help from Ijituuq. Ijituuq gave her a tent pole to give to the other *angakkuaq* to help him get back up. When the other *angakkuaq* recounted what had happened to him, he said he had seen a being with cheeks made from seal hips. He had difficulty dealing with this one but there was another one whose fingertips were on fire and that was the one that had incapacitated him. It turns out that those two beings were the other *angakkuaq*’s *tuurngait* that had retaliated against him after Ijituuq had blocked them.

Aupilaarjuk and Nutaraaluk both stated that the people who were asking for the services of an *angakkuaq* would have to give something to the *angakkuaq*, even if it were very small, as a gift. Aupilaarjuk went further and said that the gift was given with the hopes of pleasing the *tuurngait*. If they were pleased, then they would be more willing to help. Emile Imaruittuq told a story in the summer of 1997, while in Iqaluit, about a woman that was asked to cut the *nukik*, the tendons of the weather spirit. Once the woman, who was an *angakkuaq*, cut them, she asked for the first seal that was caught after the weather calmed down. During our course, Bernard Saladin d’Anglure told our class that the spirit was a child and it tended to act like one. Aupilaarjuk told us the spirit’s name is *Naarjuk*.

Bernard Saladin d’Anglure compiled information on some of the *tuurngait* that were used by *angakkuit* in the Iglulik region. Of particular interest to me was the *angakkuaq* Uvanuk, who, according to Saladin d’Anglure, received her shamanistic powers without human intervention. The reason that this interests me, is because I believe she must have been a very powerful shaman. According to Aupilaarjuk those that receive a *tuurn gaq* on their own could be very powerful. He said that one had to be very careful about that.
In 1888, Franz Boas wrote about the *tuurngait* that he had learnt about. These were, “...those in the shape of men, of stones, and of bears.” He stated that the bears were the most powerful ones. I, too, have heard that bears were very powerful if you had one as your *tuurngaq*.

Aupilaarjuk stated that the *tuurngaq* would not initiate anything that the *angakkuq* did not command it to. However, there is the danger of it “bouncing” back and if it did so it would have a negative impact on the one commanding it. An example of this would be if an *angakkuq* tried to use a *tuurngaq* to kill someone and did not succeed, then the *tuurngaq* could go back to the *angakkuq* and kill him, or kill those that were dear to the *angakkuq*. Aupilaarjuk stated that there was a time that he could have become an *angakkuq*. However, his father told him not to become one because he had a short temper. There was a possibility that he would not live long if he was an *angakkuq*, because the *tuurngaq* might bounce back and retaliate. According to Imaruittuq, society did not penalize a retaliator, because if the person had not done something wrong in the first place, then there would have been no need for the retaliation.

Nutaraaluk’s father, Alariaq, received his powers through an elderly female *angakkuq* named Tunukallak. Nutaraaluk said it was out of gratitude that she gave Alariaq powers, as he would fetch ice water for her and empty out her urine pot. According to Nutaraaluk, Alariaq was hesitant to become an *angakkuq*. Tunukallak wanted to give him powers so that he would not be overpowered by anyone. We are not sure if Alariaq received a *tuurngaq* from her. However, Nutaraaluk told us that it was just through her words that she made Alariaq into an *angakkuq*.

Obviously, without a *tuurngaq*, one could not be an *angakkuq*. There were questions posed to Aupilaarjuk concerning the possibility of gaining a *tuurngaq* outside of the conventional method of receiving one from another *angakkuq*. He replied that it was possible, but this could be dangerous. Those that were able to gain a *tuurngaq* by themselves were in danger, because the *tuurngaq* could become so powerful that it could bounce back at them.

When Nutaraaluk was born, the muscles around his mid-section had been severely damaged. His father was still a practising *angakkuq* at that time. He told us how his parents converted to Christianity after his miraculous recovery. Apparently, his parents had seen, through him, that there was a protector and a savior. His parents never hesitated to talk about shamanism. Aupilaarjuk believes that if there were *angakkuit* today they could help reduce the suicide rate in Nunavut. This is why these elders were very open about talking about shamanism. This is very rare.

I have just outlined some the dangers associated with shamanism. I mention the dangers because we all know the positive aspects of shamanism. The *angakkuit* were able to help people when they were sick, when the game was not plentiful, and when the weather had been bad for a long time they were able to improve it. Aupilaarjuk believes that if there were *angakkuit* today they could help reduce the suicide rate in

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**Cosmology and Shamanism**
Nunavut, and they could provide guidance for the future government of Nunavut. One topic that was not discussed in the two weeks was *tirigusiit*, taboos, which are no longer being observed. There are probably still people that follow some of them, but they are now closer to superstitions than anything else. As a woman especially, I would not want to follow the restrictions that my grandparents had to. For example, not being able to eat certain things after childbirth, or having to give birth in a small isolated birthing hut alone. Perhaps the majority of the dangers facing society back then were the result of people not following *tirigusiit*. Perhaps the bad things happening today in Inuit society are also a result of these rules being broken all the time.

I think that shamanism could make a comeback but it would have to be completely different from the shamanism our grandparents grew up with. We would have to be very careful. Inuit society today is very turbulent; we have seen many evil things happen to our generation and to our children. In fact, I have said many times, if I were an *angakkuaq* I would *isumanirluk*, have bad thoughts about a lot of people, especially pedophiles. I don’t know if I would have enough control over my emotions to be an *angakkuaq*. There seems to be a trend with younger people wanting shamanism to make a comeback. We are often resentful of the missionaries for their role in the almost complete obliteration of shamanism, but we have to remember that not only the missionaries were at fault, we Inuit also played a part in this.

Aupilaarjuk stated many times that if shamanism were to be rejuvenated, then the *angakkuit* would have to be very strong both physically and mentally. He also said that it would have to be partnered with Christianity so that it was a good form of shamanism. There is a danger of people wanting shamanistic powers for their own selfish reasons. As much as I would like to see shamanism come back, I think that we would have to be very careful. Every society has one thing in common and that is the fight against evil. This always has existed and always will exist and we always hope that good will prevail. One can hope that if shamanism does make a comeback, this would be the case.

**References**

**Interviews**


Inuit Relationships with
Tuurngait and Tarriassuit
Johnny Kopak, Myna Ishulutak, Vera Arnatsiaq

In this essay we will discuss such spirits as the *ijirait*, the *tarriassuit*, and the shaman’s helping spirits the *tuurngait*, which were also called *apiqsaat*. There has not been much research done on this subject.

**Tarriassuit and Ijirait**

Many dictionaries define a spirit as an entity, a being without a body, a soul that can be physical, or any being that does not have a body and mind. People who have experienced spirits have said that the soul of the spirit either told them to think of a matter or an event, or told them to do something so outrageous it would not be believable.

When a prospective shaman wanted to get a helping spirit, they would wander out onto the tundra. They did nothing but think about getting a helping spirit. In Knud Rasmussen’s research in the early 1920s, Rasmussen stated,

> The shaman-to-be would go to the extreme. (Rasmussen: 1931)

He or she would be close to death or even die for a few days. Then the helping spirit or spirits would come in dreams. The person who wanted to become a shaman would wander about, without rest, sleep, or any food for days on end. The would-be-shaman would rest in a sitting position and had to sleep in this position for some time. When the would-be-shaman had done all this, there were a number of taboos they had to follow, such as not sleeping with their spouse, not sleeping in hunting clothes, and eating as little as possible. After they had followed these steps, life could return to normal. That was one way to get a helping spirit.

In a CBC interview in 1992, Naujarlaq from Clyde River said that he had once lived amongst the *tarriassuit*. The *tarriassuit* are called *ijirait* in the Keewatin region. Naujarlaq said these people lived in large mountains. He said, “These spirits are from a big lake on top of a big mountain in Clyde River.” Naujarlaq went on to say, “We Inuit have a fog all around us, so that we cannot see the *tarriassuit*.” He said that although we cannot see them because we have a fog around us, the *tarriassuit* can see us humans. They own cars, snowmobiles, trucks, and vans, and they go out hunting just like Inuit do when we
need to get some food for our table. They go shopping at the same stores as we do. People can be in the store with a tarrissuk and not even know it, because they are invisible.

If you have never killed an ijiraq, they will be friendly towards you. They will not be scary or mean to you. When they hunt, the trail disappears like it had snow drifting in the back of it. They can turn into animals, like caribou, but their antlers are different than that of a real caribou. An ijiraq that has turned into a caribou will have antlers that are much closer to each other than a real caribou. If you did not distinguish between the two different caribou you could end up killing a being that you would not have wanted to kill. If someone killed an ijiraq caribou by accident, the rest of the ijirait would try to kill that person for a long time, similar to when a friend or a relative was killed and their relatives wanted to take revenge.

There was one case where a young hunter killed an ijiraq. The Inuit elders told the young hunter not to go hunting alone and not to go to certain places as the ijirait would try to kill him and make it look like an accident. There was one case where a hunter died in a very shallow river. In other cases, a hunter would be persuaded to jump into a lake that was too deep and the man could not get back. When a hunter goes hunting he has to be very careful not to shoot an ijaraq caribou. He needs to make sure to look at the antlers to determine that it is not a spirit, as the Inuit have a strong taboo about this. Naujarlaq said that some people have the ability to see ijirait. He said, “When human beings do not have faith in God they can see the ijirait.”

There is hardly any information about these tarrissuit, the shadow people, but they have been seen by hunters, who are out on the land, alone. They say that the shadow people are very dark, darker than a shadow in the bright afternoon summer sun, even darker than the midnight winter darkness. If you saw one through a dark window you could easily think it was the shadow of a person you were looking at.

**Apiqsait and Tuurngait: The shaman’s helping spirits**

The tuurngait, which are also called apiqsait, are the shaman’s helping spirits. They can be animals or the spirits of people from around the world. A shaman could have a helping spirit who was a famous person somewhere in the world, and the helping spirit would not even know it. The apiqsait could be any kind of animal: a lemming, an owl, a raven, a polarbear, or a caribou. It could even be a dead person. It could be an angel, the man from the moon, or his sister, the sun. It could even be a plant, but plants were rarely used as helping spirits. The helping spirit could even be a very beautiful white woman. Some helping spirits could be ones that were evil as well.

The elders couldn’t say how many tuurngait there were because the shamans didn’t talk about this. The reason why they didn’t talk about this was they were afraid to lose
their tuurngait if they spoke about them. There were two different kinds of tuurngait, ones that were good and ones that were evil. Shamans had to be very wise in order to control their tuurngait.

**Marriage Between Inuit and Non-Humans**

There were some Inuit who had non-humans, such as a tarrissuit, tuurngait and ijirait, as spouses. Some say you should never get involved with a non-human as a partner because it is dangerous, but others say that it is not dangerous, it is just like having a normal life but being in a different world.

**Tarrissuit**

Naujarlaq said that the tarrissuit are just like real Inuit, even though some Inuit cannot see them. When Naujarlaq was in contact with the tarrissuit, he himself had a tarrissuit daughter from his tarrissuit girlfriend. In real life, Naujarlaq has a daughter who looks identical to his tarrissuit daughter but his tarrissuit daughter is older. The last day that Naujarlaq saw them he was home in Clyde River. He was visited by his tarrissuit wife-to-be and her brother. They told him that they were there to pick him up. He was told to bring his former clothing. Then they went to the tarrissuit world by car. He saw Inuit, but they didn’t even seem to see the car as it was passing by. When they got to the church, the tarrissuit were waiting for them. When they walked up the aisle, they all shook his and her hands for joy because they were getting married. He also saw the preacher holding a Bible. When Naujarlaq and his tarrissuit girlfriend got up to the altar, he was told to put his arm in a big bucket of water that was actually full of alcohol. The minute he took his arm out, it dried instantly. His wife-to-be was also told to do the same. Then Naujarlaq and his tarrissuit bride were pronounced man and wife and the preacher told Naujarlaq to kiss the bride. They hugged and kissed. They all sang songs of praise. After that, Naujarlaq was told that he and his bride had become one and that he would never see the tarrissuit again as long as he lived.

From this strange experience with the tarrissuit, he learned that they think they are really Inuit. They are not scary. They do not try to scare people. They can see what Inuit see and they have churches just like us. But the strangest thing for Naujarlaq was how the tarrissuit could marry humans and have children.

**Tuurngait**

From interviews with Mariano Aupilaarjuk from Rankin Inlet and Lucassie Nutaraaluk from Iqaluit, we learned that tuurngait could contact Inuit during their sleep or when they were alone. Aupilaarjuk said the tuurngait could have sexual intercourse with an Inuk and the person could feel the invisible tuurngait in their body. When a person
notices something strange like this, they are to tell a relative about what happened right away. Otherwise, the *tuurngaaq* might come back to the person, and it could keep going on and on until sooner or later, they would become husband and wife. If the person wanted to get rid of the *tuurngaaq*, they would have a hard time because somehow the *tuurngaaq* would have taken control over the person. For example, the person would become too embarrassed to talk about their relationship with the *tuurngaaq* and would be unable to get rid of it by telling a relative about what had been happening to them with the *tuurngaaq*. If the person talked about it, the *tuurngaaq* would not come back because it would be too embarrassed. Nutaraaluk said it was dangerous having a *tuurngaaq* as a husband or wife because this kind of relationship would shorten your life. Aupilaarjuk said that people do not ask the *tuurngaaq* into their lives. The *tuurngaaq* itself finds people to play with or to have as a husband or wife. This knowledge was passed on to him by his father and he has passed it on to his children, grandchildren and other people. We need to know this information because this could still happen today. This has really happened to some people. People have been told not to have a *tuurngaaq* as a husband or wife. People are told to have human beings for husbands and wives.

We think this is all true, because in our world very strange things have happened. People who have relationships with *tuurngait* shorten their lives. Perhaps the *tuurngaaq* shortens a person’s life so the person will die earlier. Then the *tuurngaaq* can steal his or her soul and continue their relationship.

The information we learned about Inuit having spouses with *tarriassuit* and *tuurngait* was very interesting. The *tarriassuit* are not dangerous. They are similar to Inuit and live a Christian life. On the other hand, marriages to *tuurngait* are dangerous because the *tuurngait* are hard to get rid of and tend to control a person’s life if they don’t tell anyone about this. A person will shorten their life if they have a relationship with a *tuurngaaq*.

**References**

**Interviews**

Aupilaarjuk, Mariano; Cosmology Course, Language and Culture Program, Nunavut Arctic College, Iqaluit, 1998

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The Spiritual Intervention of the Shaman in the Inuit World

Kim Kangok, Mathieu Boki, Jeannie Shaimaiyuk

If I cannot manage in spite of all these precautions, and suffer want or sickness, I must seek help from the shaman whose mission it is to be the protectors of mankind against all the hidden forces and dangers of life.

(Qaqortingneq quoted in Rasmussen: 1931, p. 22)

Before the arrival of the first Europeans, the everyday life of the Inuit was organized around the quest for food and materials necessary to their survival. Although this hunting civilization had adapted itself to its harsh environment through marvelous innovations, the Inuit lived a hard life constantly over-shadowed by the spectre of death.

The Arctic could be an unforgiving environment; animals were often scattered over large distances or followed migration patterns that led them out of reach of the hunters several months of the year. Severe cold, scary sunless nights, and other difficult climatic circumstances could also seriously threaten human life. Such conditions could have made traditional life very frustrating, often unyielding, and always worrisome. Nonetheless, the Inuit had to depend heavily on nature, a nature they didn’t always understand, to provide them with all the needed life-sustaining materials.

Nature, or sila, is unpredictable. Its spirit, personified by a child in Inuit belief, always changed its mind. Furthermore, all the other inhabitants of the tundra and the cosmos, the ijinaat, the tuurngait and a myriad of other strange creatures, interacted daily and affected the life of the Inuit.

All the unanswered questions Inuit had concerning their surroundings, the weather, the stars, the actions of diverse mythological beings or the lack of game, had to be explained. This was the role of the shaman, one of the central figures in traditional Inuit society. He played the role of doctor, and occasionally sanctioned the law, but most of all, he was the intermediary between the material world and the supernatural one.

This essay will describe when the shamans were asked to practice their powers and how they performed them. Information was gathered through interviews conducted in March, 1998, with two Inuit elders, Mariano Aupilaarjuk and Lucassie Nutaraaluk, respectively from Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. Unfortunately, after decades of Christianity, a lot of knowledge in this area has been lost, and what our informants could not provide was completed through bibliographical research.
The Role of the Shaman

The harshness of their environment, combined with a very rich system of beliefs, brought the Inuit, especially the Natsilingmiut, to create and obey a very large number of taboos and restrictions regarding the hunting of animals and the cycles in a person’s life (Balikci: 1970, p. 426). This was done in order to ensure harmony with the world, with the animals, and with the other non-human beings that shared the tundra with the Inuit. Everything had an inua, a spirit. If everything were in harmony, a group would not be exposed to suffering.

In the event a misfortune was experienced by a group, people believed this was caused by a breach of one of the taboos that the Inuit imposed upon themselves. The shaman was usually the one called upon to find the cause and eventually the remedy. The shaman, through his knowledge and association with a tuurnngaq, knew how to deal with evil spirits, and therefore, he could counteract their actions or influences.

Balikci categorized the shamans’ interventions into four types. The shamans would act to try and resolve “environmental threats endangering the group, individual or group crisis, interpersonal relations, and finally, they worked at maintaining their prestige.” (Balikci: ibid, p. 229) The role of the shaman within the group was very important indeed and touched many aspects of every day Inuit life. But how exactly was this done?

Authors have suggested that the shamans only performed occasionally, but the broad spectrum of things a shaman could do (from curing people to childrearing to finding lost objects) forces us to wonder how often the angakkuq actually did perform.

Once the shaman had been asked for help by a member of the group, the problem-solving ritual could begin. The kind of ceremony the shamans performed depended upon a given situation. They could range from the simple to the very complicated and dangerous. Lucassie Nutaraaluk recalled how his father used to control an unfavourable wind by cutting it with a knife. These actions would be performed outside, and as the shaman fought with the spirit of the wind he would tell it to stop.

The ceremonies performed to deal with a sick person were somewhat more complicated. As shamans received gifts for their services, the more dangerous the work, the better the gift would have to be:

The angakkuq must be paid at once for curing a sick person, and receives a pretty large fee for services of this kind. (Boas: 1964, p. 184)

Note, though, that Aupilaarjuk stressed the fact that angakkuit could receive anything, even the smallest presents. Sexual favours could also be asked in exchange for a service, as a fee, or as a counter-offensive for an evil deed. But, according to Aupilaarjuk, this was the angakkuq’s desire, not that of his tuurnngaq, so this was usually refused.
When the shamans officiated, the group, or at least part of it, would be present at the ceremony. This is explained by the fact that the Inuit, in order to survive, formed a very closely knit organization. If one member of the group were affected by something, if he lost his ability to produce, everyone would be affected. Those present would also often help the shaman, and participate in forgiving a person who had broken a taboo.

Expelling sickness was, along with locating game, one of the shaman’s principal roles. As this type of problem was always caused by evil spirits angered by a breach of taboo, it was necessary for the angakkuq to enter the world of the spirits to question or combat them.

The shaman and the participants would gather together and the session would begin. In winter this would be in the qaqqiq. The shaman usually removed his outer jacket, and crouched in the back of the iglu covered in caribou skin, as the qulliit were extinguished (Balikci: ibid, p. 226). The angakkuq would then call upon his spiritual helpers to help him solve the problem at hand. For relatively small illnesses, blowing “wind” on the affected part either with his mouth or through his anus could suffice. Questioning of the patient was often done in order to receive confessions concerning the breaking of a rule. In these cases the whole group chanted that the affected person should be forgiven.

The shaman’s tuurngaq could also be asked the reason for a sickness. This practice of qilaniq, which was demonstrated to us by Aupilaarjuk, consisted in lifting the patient’s or relative’s covered head with the aid of a long thong. As the shaman lifted and lowered the head, he questioned his tuurngaq about the reason for the patient’s condition and what the cure was. If there were a negative answer the head was easy to lift. A positive answer increased the weight of the head to a point where it was impossible for the shaman to lift it (Balikci: ibid, p. 226).

Sometimes the angakkuq had epic battles with spirits that were the source of illness. One of these is described by Balikci:

The shaman was covered by a caribou skin, in the back of the unlit iglu. He then called his protective spirit which spoke rapidly through his mouth, using secret, shamanistic vocabulary. As the shaman was in his trance, the tupilait left the sick person’s body and went out of the iglu. The shaman had these brought back in by his own spiritual helpers while the rest of the camp shouted for them to come back. Once the tupilait were back inside, the shaman attacked them with a snow knife and killed as many as he could. His successful fight was proven by traces of the evil spirit’s blood on his hands. (Balikci: ibid, p. 226-227)
Spiritual Journeys

Other ceremonies were even more elaborate, and even more dangerous. The shamans had to go to a supernatural world to consult or seduce a spirit. According to Aupilaarjuk, the \textit{angakkuit} could \textit{ilimmangaqtuqtut}, fly, to any camp, to make sure everything was all right in the other camp. These difficult journeys demanded that the \textit{angakkuit} enter a deep trance. They were usually performed by the most skilled \textit{angakkuit} in a particular area. Boas collected some information on such practices:

\begin{quote}
(Their) hands are tied up and a thong (is) fastened around their knees and neck. Then they begin invoking their \textit{tuurnqaq}, and all of a sudden their body lies motionless while the soul flies to any place they wish to visit. After returning, the thongs are found untied, though they had been fastened firmly with knots. (Boas: \textit{ibid}, p. 186)
\end{quote}

This also describes very well the practice of \textit{pavunnugaqtuq}, or the act of a “celestial ascension to the moon.” Shamans could go see \textit{taqqiup invia}, the moon’s spirit. The perspective given from a point high above permitted them to see everything that was happening down on earth and, if need be, detect wrongdoers, who would have a little tell-tale cloud around them.

Nutaraaluk said his father Alariaq, a great shaman, went to visit Sedna [also known as Nuliahuk or Takannaaluk], the mother of the human races and the sea animals. Aided by his seaweed and krill \textit{tuurngait} helpers, he could make the journey into the sea. It was sometimes necessary to comb her hair, in order to obtain certain favours, like asking her to let the seals be caught at the \textit{agluit}.

Another reason the \textit{angakkuit} would go to the world under the sea would be to recover lost objects. As Balikci points out, some tools like ice chisels, harpoons or needles were crucial to survival and the loss of them could create a crisis calling for the shaman’s help (Balikci: \textit{ibid}, p. 227). Often these fell into the seal breathing holes. Shamans could recover them by “jumping” through the \textit{aglu} to get them, or by “fishing” for them using a leather thong, aided by his helping \textit{tuurnqaq}.

These feats of travelling to other worlds brought considerable prestige to the \textit{angakkuit} who performed them, for they often had to face dangerous spirits such as Ululijarnat, a female spirit who tried to make Inuit laugh in order to rip out their intestines. This is one of the reasons why the \textit{angakkuit} were bound while they were performing. If a bad \textit{tuurnqaq} took possession of the shaman’s body, this would help keep the \textit{tuurnqaq} from endangering the rest of the participants.

There is no doubt that part of the shaman’s performances were used to maintain his status or reputation within his group. Nutaraaluk reported to us that his father used to imitate the movement and sounds of a walrus and let himself be harpooned by the
hunters of his camp. He added that his mother never found traces of the wounds. (Boas collected information from a shaman who had this done to him on the island of Uttusivvik in the summer of 1887. Perhaps it was Alariaq.) Nutaraaluk did not mention the reasons for this practice, but it seemed to have been used by a few shamans to help the group find game. The shamans either had themselves harpooned by others, impaled themselves with a harpoon, or were shot at with guns, but always emerged unharmed.

These illusions seemed to be very convincing. The witnesses could see the torn clothing and even the shamans bleeding during the process. The artist Zebedee Enoogoo from Arctic Bay illustrated this with a picture of an *angakkuaq* with a harpoon head through his body which came out just under his eyes.

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**Ipiqtalik**


I have heard this because I had a step-father who was an old man. He was an *angakkuaq*. I do not know about these things because I do not practise shamanism. I have only heard about some things, but I don’t practise them. This is a thing of the past. I have not even seen it. I have made an image of how I think this was done, for it is something I have suddenly remembered. Ipiqtalik is the term for when an *angakkuaq* was harpooned. During the winter or any other time, the *angakkuaq* would saka, and would be harpooned with a harpoon head for walrus hunting. The harpoon head would come out after piercing him under the eye. He would not die because he was an *angakkuaq*. This *angakkuaq* who was an *ipiqtalik*...
would go out alone. Many people would be inside holding the harpoon line and they would be pulling very hard. When he would start pulling them they would do their utmost to prevent him from doing so, but when they could no longer hold him they would let go of the rope. The angakkuq would go from house to house to be seen and to show what his powers allowed him to do. Then he would go back to his iglu, all the while making the sounds of a walrus. As he was entering he would throw the harpoon inwards and it would be covered with blood. It would stick in the side of the iglu. As he was coming in the harpoon head was dangling from his face. You could tell he was using all his strength. He paused briefly at the door. He would be pulled out again from the inside by his unseen spirits. When the rope slackened the blood started pouring out of the harpoon wound, but he wouldn’t die. He wouldn’t even have a scar. He was a very powerful angakkuq. My step-father used to tell this story. He would say that he wasn’t actually harpooned and that his tuurngait stopped the harpoon and broke the rope and made it seem as though he was harpooned. As he was human if he had really been harpooned he would have died. This is all that I know, even though there is much more. Thank you. Zebedee Enogoo

At that time men used to be angakkuit and they used to be harpooned and this is what it means (see above).
He explained what his shaman stepfather used to do:

When they harpoon him, the harpoon head ends up just under his eye. The harpoon goes right through him but he will not die because he is a shaman.

The shaman goes outside alone with a lot of people in the iglu holding onto the rope from the harpoon. With all their strength they pull. They try hard to make him tell where the walruses are. They give up and let go. He wants Inuit to believe in shamanism because nothing is impossible with the help of the spirits.

He goes in and out of the iglu where there are Inuit. Chanting like a walrus, he spits water and blood like a sea animal dying. As he is coming into the iglu he throws the harpoon into the iglu. When the blood freezes it will stick to the wall. It is human blood. Every time he goes in they can see the harpoon head stuck just under his eye. It is slightly turned to the side. And you can tell he is using all his strength. He pauses briefly at the door. He is being pulled outside again by his spirits. And when the rope slackens the blood starts pouring through the harpoon wound.

When this is over he is going to look as if nothing happened. Oh how incredible! Nothing is impossible for shamans! My stepfather used to tell this story. He was wounded but he was not scarred afterward. His spirits break the rope; they make sure the harpoon enters just under the skin. It seemed like the harpoon would enter in just the right way because if he was to be harpooned for real he would die. I forget the rest of the story. There is much more. Thank you. (Blodgett: 1986, p. 480)

**Inuit Feasts and Celebrations**

Inuit had many festivities and feasts. These were closely related to the time of year and to religious beliefs. The shamans played a pivotal role in these. In South Baffin Island, these celebrations revolved around the hunting of the fall caribou, the coming of winter darkness and the emergence of baby seals in the spring.

Evil spirits, the *tupilait*, could come into the camps during those festivals, knocking on the dwellings and menacing their inhabitants with sickness and death. It was the shaman’s role to keep them at bay. As the festivities went on, the shamans would chant using strange unnatural sounds.
The tivajuuq festival, which was held in spring, marked the renewal of life. Gift-giving and contests were accompanied by spouse exchanges encouraged by the shamans. The angakkuit would also create grotesque demonstrations intended to make people laugh. Two shamans, one dressed as a woman and the other wearing a huge penis, would chase each other as the participants tried not to burst out laughing (Saladin d’Anglure: 1993).

During these gatherings there were also dangerous symbolic hunts and the killing of evil spirits. These were usually performed by the most skilled shamans and helped guarantee good hunting and living conditions for the rest of the year. The shamans would enter into a series of convulsions in front of the group until the imagined evil spirit “appeared” amongst them. The shaman, his helping spirits and the hunters, would then stab it to death with their weapons. This spiritual hunt could go on for a long time, as some evil spirits proved agile. But in the end, one of the participants would deliver the fatal blow. The evil spirit, being dead, could no longer keep the hunters’ weapons from killing real animals (Boas: 1964, p. 199).

Conclusion
The shaman epitomized the coming together of all the antagonisms of the cosmos. He often performed shamanism using his left hand. He could, on certain occasions, cross-dress as a woman. He visited the spirits of the other worlds. Angakkuit were responsible for the return of harmony between men, and their material and spiritual worlds. To do this, the shaman brought all these different elements together.

In a darkened iglu, a world within a world was created. A symbolic, glistening celestial dome over them, a floor cold and flat, like the iced-over sea, the sleeping platform representing mountains, the spherical glow of the qulliq’s flame like the moon’s illumination in winter. In this world, the Inuit would be joined by the good spirits and by the tupilait, and by the animals of the sea and by the animals of the land. Nature was also there: they could hear the wind, the ice cracking and the thunder roaring; they could feel the snow storms and be blinded by fog (Balikci: 1964, p. 237). All the forces of the universe passed through the shaman, who, with his special powers of communication, passed them on to his audience. Once the mood was set, the shaman could obtain help from the spirits and reestablish a harmonious relationship between the different constituents of the world. Their powers and their ceremonies gave explanation to the world; they helped the Inuit understand their life and situations that, without their intervention, would have remained an uncomfortable mystery.

Shamans were not just simple showmen with a keen sense of communication. They acquired special powers, after suffering at a young age and receiving qaumaniiq, that permitted them to understand their world and their peers who lived in it. With this ability, they could genuinely help their community, acting as mediators and

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psychologists. Inspired by their dreams and their visions they could heal the sick through special ceremonies, and they could foresee the future and have premonitions, with the help of their *tuurngait*.

As Aupilaarjuk does, many people now hope that the *angakkuit* will come back. There are many problems facing Inuit society that as of yet have no solutions. Maybe, maybe with a shaman...

**References**

**Interviews**


Introduction

I interviewed eight of my classmates about how they felt about the course on shamanism. I asked them if they had had nightmares, whether they had experienced anything out of the ordinary, and about what they had learned. The idea to do an essay on the thoughts of my classmates came to me after my classmates and I started talking about how we felt about the course. We felt like we were being watched; we had trouble sleeping at nights because of our nightmares and fears. Some of us had been seeing things that were not there. I don’t know if our imaginations were working overtime, or if we really did see things. For myself, I had been feeling like someone had been watching me late at night, as if something was going to come out of the dark and grab me. Last night, while I was transcribing, I kept thinking that I saw something moving out of the corner of my eye but there was nothing. When I felt that I was just about to see something, can you believe the power actually went off?

Nightmares

Some of the students had nightmares after interviewing the elders about shamanism, such as dead people coming to them in their dreams and talking to them, or at other times not saying anything at all. One of the students said that this meant that the dead person wanted their name to live on and a child should be named after this person. Another student said, after one of the suicides that happened recently, she had a nightmare. Perhaps it wasn’t really a nightmare but she felt scared and she said that she had a weird feeling about the man in her dream. He did not say anything to her but this dream really upset her. It stayed with her and she could not just shrug it off. Maybe talking about the afterlife might have triggered her into thinking about this certain person that had taken his own life.

One of the students seemed to think that he had been having nightmares and weird dreams because the elders were so good at telling us stories that they brought us into another world, plunging us into a virtual world of imagination, sort of like watching a movie. He dreamt about what they were talking about because they were so good at telling stories. This particular student said he had never dreamt of flying before, but for the first time in his life he dreamt of flying during the course. He said that it was because the elders were so good at telling stories that they made him dream of flying.

Another student had a nightmare in which her daughter was crying. She was coming out of her room and she sensed that her house was on fire. A couple of days later, she heard an elder telling the class that whenever he had a dream where his house
was on fire, one of his children would die. This really scared her, but it comforted her to
know that people have different ways of interpreting dreams and that this dream did
not necessarily mean the same as it did in the elder’s case.

**Strong Feelings**

Most of us felt like someone was watching us. It was probably because we didn’t
understand much about shamanism, and we were taking what we learned about
wizards and witches and mixing it up with shamanism. When we didn’t understand
something we were usually afraid of it. Most of us hadn’t heard much about
shamanism. We blamed shamans or **tuurngait** for causing all these feelings and
nightmares. It was natural to feel scared and we blamed this fear on shamans.

One of our classmates read a story on shamanism before she went to bed, and
during the night she woke up and felt strange. She noticed her son was sleeping on the
bed, which he usually didn’t do. She noticed her door was open a crack and she felt as
if something was looking at her. She said she felt like there was something around her
and her children protecting her. She says her skin was numb, probably from whatever
was protecting her. She asked her son if he remembered going on the bed but he said he
did not remember doing this.

Another student noticed that on the first day of our interviews with the elders the
weather outside seemed foggy. There was a fog on the ground but when you looked at
the sky, it was clear. She really noticed this and wanted to share this with us.

Another student noticed that when we were talking about shamanism she felt like
her back muscles were tight. These muscles seemed to loosen up after we stopped
interviewing the elders. I asked her if she thought this was caused from feeling nervous
talking about shamanism. She said she felt comfortable talking about shamanism and
didn’t think her back problem was related to the course.

**Fear**

Most of us felt afraid because we didn’t understand very much about shamanism. We
thought that the shamans’ **tuurngait** would get us if we asked certain questions, so some
of us were scared to ask questions in the beginning. But as the course went on, we
realized that we shouldn’t fear shamanism, and that it wasn’t all bad.

One of the students thought that there would be fewer suicides today if there were
shamans around because the shamans heal people. You wouldn’t be able to keep
anything from a shaman, so therefore he could heal you of your pain. Most of us
couldn’t sleep at night because of our fears. We felt that we would see something. This
was because we created our own monsters in our heads. As the course went along, we
began to understand more and fear less about shamanism.
Conclusion

When the course started I was afraid just to hear the word “shamanism.” This was because we were taught that shamanism was evil. When the missionaries came, they told us to stop believing in shamanism and to think that practising shamanism was the devil’s work. But this was not so and people are starting to realize this. Shamanism was used to heal people and to help the community. It solved a lot of problems that today have become big issues, like suicide, marital problems and divorce. Some think shamanism should be brought back for this reason. Others think it shouldn’t be brought back because it may be abused and used to hurt others. I think these people don’t want it back because they are afraid of it as they don’t understand it very well. I am glad I took this course and hope others will learn about shamanism.

Transcripts of interviews with classmates

Vera Arnatsiaq

Since the course started have you noticed or experienced strange things?

After we talked about stillborn babies, I had a dream about a dead person. I called my grandmother the next day and asked her what the dream meant. She said the man in the dream wanted to have his name carried on by a baby. He wanted to live on through his name. That’s what she said. I have been thinking a lot about this. My cousin had a baby boy this morning. When we were asking questions, my back was tight. After the interviews were over my back was fine.

When we were asking questions, you said your back was tight. Was this because you were nervous or do you think it had anything to do with shamanism?

I was not nervous at all. I think it was because there were so many of us. It is hard to say.

But were you nervous while you asked questions? Was your body tight then?

No.

Have you had nightmares since the course started or have you felt anything different?

I only had one dream since the course started. It was about a dead man who was hungry. That was the only dream I had.
When we started the course, was it hard for you to talk about shamanism with the elders?
No. It wasn’t too hard because I knew what I wanted to ask.

Did your views on shamanism change after talking with the elders?
I didn’t know much about shamanism before. My thoughts haven’t changed all that much, but I understand a lot more than I did before the course started. I still have a lot of questions though.

When they were talking about having relationships with animals, was that hard for you to imagine?
Yes! How could they do that!

Was it hard for you to imagine invisible people?
Very much so. I still can’t picture that.

Myna Ishulutak
Have you noticed anything strange since the course started?
Yes, I have had nightmares where I would wake up and couldn’t move. I have also had trouble sleeping and I have been scared lately.

Can you tell me more about that?
After hearing about ijirait I wanted one for a friend. But the day after I got scared, so I no longer wanted an ijiraq as a friend.

What were your dreams like?
I don’t remember my dreams. I just remember having a nightmare where I couldn’t move.

Were you the one who said you felt like you were being watched?
I didn’t feel like somebody was watching me, but I felt like something was going to come into my room.

Cosmology and Shamanism
Do you think that this feeling had anything to do with shamanism, the subject we were studying?
Yes, because I think that when we are doing something that is intense we start to have trouble sleeping. I think it’s true that the *ijirait* exist.

**Kim Kangok**

*Have you noticed anything strange since the course started?*
No, I have not.

*Have you had any dreams?*
I have dreams but I always forget them when I wake up.

*Has anything strange happened to you?*
No, it’s just that I can’t sleep. It’s because I live in this building. People are always walking back and forth in the hallway so I can’t sleep.

*So your lack of sleep had nothing to do with the course?*
(Shakes her head.)

*Was it hard for you to talk about shamanism? Was it hard to imagine talking animals and invisible people called *ijirait*?*
No, it wasn’t hard. I wanted to know more.

*When they said animals used to talk, was it hard for you to picture that?*
I’d like to see that. I can’t imagine that.

*What were your thoughts about shamanism before the course started?*
The same as they are now. I think it was a kind of religion that was helpful to the camp.

*Have your views on this subject changed since the course started?*
No, they haven’t.
Julia Saimaiyuq

Since the course started, have you experienced anything strange or have you felt scared?

At first I wasn’t scared. I started feeling scared all of a sudden at the residence. I can’t be alone at home anymore. I didn’t use to have nightmares. Last night I had a nightmare, after reading a book about shamanism before I went to sleep. I woke up during the night, around 2 a.m. I felt like someone was watching me. My door was open a crack, and I could feel something around me. My skin was numb. I felt my son and I almost kicked him. He usually sleeps on the floor but that night he was on my bed. I think he was scared too. I was trying to fall asleep because I didn’t want to see anything. When I woke up later I was a little shaky, but not as scared. I asked my son after breakfast if he remembered going onto the bed, but he said he didn’t. I was dreaming about my former husband. I was really sorry about the way he used to be. I was thinking about what he did. I was starting to get scared but I tried not to think about it. I avoided thinking about this and prayed a lot. I didn’t have nightmares until last night.

Did you feel something that wasn’t there?
Yes, I felt as if something was watching us.

Was it only you it was watching?
Yes. My legs were numb.

Was it like something protecting you?
I prayed last night before I went to bed because I was so scared. When I woke up I was still scared. I was wondering what was happening to us. I kept my baby very close to me. I never had a nightmare like that before.

You said that since the course started you have felt scared?
Myna and I were joking about how we wanted invisible people as friends. We got all excited. Last night, while I was brushing my teeth, I didn’t look in the mirror because I was afraid I’d see something.

What were your thoughts on shamanism before and after the course? Have they changed at all?
I learned a lot. I used to think that all they did was chant. I didn’t know they could do other things. I also didn’t know they had *tuurngait*, or that they could have more than
one of them. I learned that an angakkuq shouldn’t look at other people’s inner light, and that they couldn’t be with a woman who had her period, because that would weaken them. I’ve learned about apiqsait and tuurngait. Aupilaarjuk said that a shaman had to look at the tuurngait to see if they were evil or not. He wasn’t to take them right away because if he did take them without thinking, they may be evil while they pretended to be good. I have learned quite a bit. Aupilaarjuk also said he noticed when there were shamans, there were less suicides happening because they helped people. Today, people no longer want shamans because they think they are evil. They think they are working with Satan when they aren’t. Since shamanism is no longer practised there are more suicides. That happened about the same time religion was introduced.

**Do you think we should be scared of shamanism?**

Shamans always had to be wise. They also had to be humble. If a shaman showed off too much, he would have a short life.

**When they were talking about dogs having wives for humans, was that hard for you to imagine?**

Aupilaarjuk had never heard of that. Lucassie also never heard of dogs having human partners. The only story that he heard about where a woman had a dog for a husband was in the story of Sedna. Each community had its own version of this story. I hate to picture a human and a dog stuck together!

**Do you believe there are really tarriassuit out there?**

Yes, I do. I have heard Naujarlaq talk about his life with the tarriassuit on both radio and television.

**Mathieu Boki**

**Have you noticed anything strange or experienced anything strange since the course started?**

Shamanism is a hard subject to deal with and the concepts are not easy to absorb. The language was really difficult and the imaginary world that the elders were talking about was not something we have been taught to believe. I found myself plunged into a totally new universe. That affected me, especially when I went to bed at night. I thought about what we talked about during the daytime and that led me to have strange dreams. I’m not a guy who dreams very much, but during those interview sessions, I had very
strange dreams. We were talking about flying and for the first time in my life I dreamt that I flew. That was pretty special. I think my dreams were affected by the subject we were talking about.

I’ve read about *ijirait* and *tuurngait* before but this was the first time that we were actually talking about them with the elders. The elders were so good at explaining and telling us stories about these beings that I could actually see them and believed that they existed. I guess when you start believing in something, you think about it a lot. It’s like when you see a really sad movie. You can start crying and you can even dream about it. The elders still had the capability of plunging us into this virtual world, this virtual reality. I really got into this and it affected me in my sleep.

It’s sad that a lot of knowledge has been lost. At the same time the knowledge we are learning is wonderful even though it affected my sleep. I haven’t been hunting since then but every time I look out the window and I see all the mountains it makes me really want to go hunting. When I think about nature, about the mountains and the land, I always see something special. I can’t wait to go hunting, I won’t see nature the way I did before. Now, I really believe everything has a spirit and that you have to respect everything around you. After these interviews I really believe that. I might look at a caribou more carefully just to make sure there is not something special about it. The course really made me believe in the magic of nature. The course made me realize we’re not alone. It made me realize the importance of the animals. This is especially true for me as a qallunaat. We have to be rational, and so rigid. After talking to those elders it made me loosen up a bit.

The course was really enjoyable. Sometimes it was scary. It was always magical. It’s another world. It’s another dimension. I found the information about the talking animals really interesting. We can find those in cartoons. You have talking bears and talking frogs and all that. Because of the way we grow up we lose the imagination that we had when we were children, which is very sad. Our culture really destroys our imagination. I mean when you listen to children talking it’s just awesome! I mean they talk to everything. As we grow up we’re taught not to talk to things because they won’t respond to you. The elders through the interviews made us realize that we should have more open minds like when we were children. That’s how I would like to end this session.

**Susan Enuaraq**

*Before the course started what were your thoughts on shamanism?*

When I was growing up people were always saying that my grandfather, who I called ataata, was an *angakkuaq*. This always used to bother me. I got really defensive about it. They made it sound really bad, like it was something I had to be ashamed about because
he was going to Satan. When I was a child, I used to think shamanism was very bad, but as I grew up and realized the value of shamanism, I started respecting it more. If my grandfather had been a shaman today, I would have been very proud. Shamanism was a very big part of our culture that was almost completely erased by missionaries saying it was evil. I am concerned though, about the negative ways shamanism could be used if it were brought back. For example, the elders have said you have to be careful because there's good and bad parts about shamanism. If shamanism were to be revitalized I think that we would have to be concerned about the evil aspects of shamanism.

I want to tell you a story. When I was in Victoria, British Columbia, I was exposed to a movement which involved the allait going back to their roots, praying to the Creator. I didn't believe in any of this but now that I think back on it I no longer think of this as being silly. It's what people are feeling that is important. They used to sing this prayer I couldn't make any sense of because it didn't have any words. They were saying, “Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho.” This was while someone was beating on a drum. I thought this was stupid, but it wasn't. These people were maintaining their culture.

Since the course started have you had nightmares?
I've had nightmares. One of them really shocked me. In it my daughter was crying, I was coming out of my room and I had the sense that the house was on fire. It really scared me. When we were in class a couple of days later, Aupilaarjuk was talking about dreams he had had. He said that whenever he dreamt his house was on fire, one of his children would die. I got really scared. I hope that's not going to happen. We've been told many times that people have different ways of interpreting things. For example, there was an elder in Clyde River whose ears would ring whenever the weather was going to get bad.

Did you say his ears would ring?
Yes, when his ears would ring that meant that there was going to be bad weather. Before the last two suicides, I felt something in my ear, there was something ringing. It was not exactly ringing it was like when you're getting off the airplane and your ears pop. That's what I felt before the last two suicides.

Did you feel this before the suicides?
A day or two before. I don't know if it's coincidence. But when Aupilaarjuk told the class his dream about his house burning, I think my heart skipped a beat. I had shivers all over because it seemed to be the same as my dream. I almost fell over when he
explained what his dream meant. I mentioned this to him. I said, “When you told us about your dreams, I was very shocked.” I told him that and he said there’s some of us that have the ability to predict things.

Other than dreaming, have you noticed anything strange, or anything out of the ordinary, since we talked about shamanism?

Not really, but the first day we were going to talk about it with Aupljarjuk, I noticed it seemed very foggy. Not quite foggy, but there was a lot of white. When you looked at the sky it was clear. It was just very low level fog and it was like that for quite a while. It almost seemed like we were having a blizzard. I don’t know if this had anything to do with it. Do you remember that day?

That’s when I asked if there was a blizzard warning.

Yeah.

When we talked about ijirait, and Sedna having a dog for a husband, was it hard for you to imagine those things, like an animal talking or invisible people?

Not really. I believe in tarriassuit. I don’t know about ijirait because I’ve never really heard much about them. But I do believe in tarriassuit. I also believe that animals can talk. When I was growing up, I was always told that animals could talk a long time ago. They could talk just like humans. I didn’t find it strange that Sedna had a dog for a husband because in Inuit stories all sorts of things could turn into human-form, such as the ijirait, which could turn into humans or into caribou. So, for someone to laugh at this and say, “No way,” it’s kind of like telling an Inuk that you’re stupid. So, whether I find it strange or not, I believe that people believe this and I believe this too. I think that’s all we really have to think about it. We never question where Adam came from in the Bible. We never have second thoughts about God making Adam from the ground and turning him into a man. Then he took one of Adam’s ribs and made Eve. In the Inuit version of the Creation story, there were two men, one of whom got pregnant and turned into a female. Why should we laugh about this when we don’t laugh about Adam and Eve?

Have you learned anything about shamanism? Did you fear shamanism before the course?

I never really feared shamanism because I believe I have a protector, whether it’s God or it’s my ancestors. I told an elder from Iqaluit that we’re working on shamanism and she said, “Ajaai.” I won’t tell you her name on tape, but she said “Ajaai.” I think there
are a lot of people who are scared of shamanism. If you haven’t done anything wrong, or even if you have done something wrong but you tell about it right away, there is nothing to fear about shamanism. That’s how I feel.

People seem to be afraid to talk about shamanism or even hear about it. That’s because, my mother, my grandfather, even my great-grandfather, were told that it was evil. Inuit knew there was evil before the missionaries; they knew there were shamans who had bad tuuungait and others who had little qaumaniit. They knew there were evil shamans but also knew that some of them were good. When the missionaries said that all shamans were evil and were going to go to Satanasi, I can see why people were scared to talk about shamanism. Many people try not to believe in shamanism anymore, but they are still afraid of being under someone’s power. I think we tend to make fun of things we are a bit scared of. For me personally, I don’t believe that someone will try and do something against me.

Nancy Kisa

Have you had nightmares since we started talking about shamanism?

I keep having them but I can’t remember most of them. I remember before one of the recent suicides I had a dream. I remember seeing two couples but we didn’t really talk. I had a weird feeling of foreboding about them. I had no idea why I was scared of them and I didn’t say anything.

When I was transcribing alone and my son was sleeping, my whole body became itchy. I got scared so I stopped transcribing. I waited for Matt to come home so I could finish my work. All evening I was itchy everywhere. It was really uncomfortable. I was thinking about bad things like people committing suicide and about other things that made me unhappy. I had another dream, where my cousin, my friend and I, were talking to this man. I was curious as to who we were talking to so I asked him his name. He seemed scared so he put his arms up to his face as if to protect himself. I kept asking him what his name was. When I started asking his name he stopped talking to us, as if he was shy. After that I don’t really remember what happened in the dream. I remember I had a dream after our first day of interviews where Matt was with someone else. I saw the girl he was with and I felt very uncomfortable.

Do you feel the nightmares are related to the course?

They were not very noticeable before the course on shamanism started, but I’ve been noticing strange things and having nightmares since.
Do you feel scared to be alone now?

Yes. I feel scared when I’m alone. I feel like someone is watching me or that I’m going to see something bad. For instance, when I was in the washroom. I was thinking that a tuurngaaq was watching me, and was going to pop out of the corner. I didn’t have thoughts like that before. My cousin was staying with me, and when I came out of the washroom she said a guy was coming out at the same time as I was and he seemed to be wearing a helmet. Also when I was washing the floors in the hallway, I heard the doorbell. I’m pretty sure it was the doorbell, but when I checked there was no one there. I have had weird feelings, and I don’t want to be alone either. Whenever Matt would try and fall asleep, I would talk to him to keep him awake so I could fall asleep before him.

Were you scared to talk about shamanism? Were you scared of this subject?

I wasn’t really scared. I was really interested in it. My mom and my uncle told me one of my great-great-grandmothers was a shaman. They don’t talk about her much because they don’t know much about her. Knowing that Inuit don’t like talking about shamanism I thought this course was a good chance to hear about it. I was happy about that. I wasn’t scared after the interviews at first. If you start feeling scared you start to expect something to happen. When you have nightmares and strange things are happening, you hope they will stop.

Have you learned anything that really stands out from the course?

Yes. I knew a bit about qaumaniq but not about tarniq. I learned that female shamans had more power than men. I asked Aupilaarjuk if a female shaman was stronger if she didn’t tell anybody about her powers. He told me if she did not tell anyone that she was a shaman, that gave her more power. He also said when the shamans would go to the moon by sled they would have polar bears pulling them, and when they were in the water krills would pull them.

When we were talking about tarriassuit and when we were talking about Sedna and her husband who was a dog, was it hard for you to picture that?

Yes. I still haven’t really understood the whole story yet. I’m starting to understand it slowly. Shamanism has been looked at as something completely bad, but I don’t think it’s like that. I think there’s a good side. To this day, I think there are still shamans who are hiding their powers because so many people don’t want to hear about shamanism.
anymore. That’s what I think. I know one person who has noticed things after hearing Aupilaarjuk talking about shamanism. I think there are shamans out there still. I also learned that shamans could have all kinds of tuurngait, even seaweed. A bear tuurngag was one of the strongest ones to have.

*Aupilaarjuk said women were stronger because they had menstrual periods. Did you hear him say that?*
No, I didn’t hear him say that. I remember Bernard saying that.

*It must have been Bernard rather than Aupilaarjuk who said that. Aupilaarjuk didn’t answer some of the questions.*

Aupilaarjuk’s wife’s grandfather used his tuurngag to kill someone, and Aupilaarjuk and his wife’s children died because the one who was killed by the tuurngag retaliated. Sometimes this skips a generation. Aupilaarjuk had eight children, but only one survived. This child survived because an elder gave him a piece of her clothing. This is called anuraaqati, one that shares clothing.

*Do you think this was like giving them another life?*
Yes. If the elders were grateful for something someone did for them, the life of the one that helped the elder was lengthened.

**Aaju Peter**

*Were you afraid or scared to talk about shamanism when the course started?*
No. I was very interested.

*What were your thoughts about shamanism before the course started?*
My thoughts were very limited. I realize now how much I have learned about shamanism since taking this course.

*Have you experienced anything strange or have you had nightmares since the course started?*
I didn’t experience anything strange, but I had a nightmare one night. That was it.
Do you want to tell us about your dream?
I think I ate too much before I went to bed. I kept seeing this person coming towards me who was very scary. I could sense something scary about him. After I woke up, I woke up my boyfriend. I didn’t want him to go back to sleep after that, but I slept well.

When we talked about ijjirait, or talking animals and animals having relationships with humans, was it hard for you to imagine that?
No. It was not hard for me to imagine that. I think it was very possible, especially when Inuit had a closer relationship with the land. When I look out there, on the land, after this course, I see it with different eyes. It has its own history. When I look out, I think that all these ijjirait and tarriassuit, were looking at me but I wasn’t seeing them. The other reason why I believe what the elders were talking about was I have seen caribou silaat, albino caribou, that were born from earth eggs. I have seen them myself. I have tried to catch one. I didn’t believe in them at first, but after I heard hunters talk about them, and I’ve seen them myself, so I know they are there.

Have you learned quite a bit about shamanism from this course?
I learned many positive things about shamanism. I also learned a lot about names, because my topic was about names. I have a lot more respect for the naming practices and the idea of the soul living on through the name. I think the name is not just a name, but that it has a soul of its own. Maybe many of today’s problems are related to the fact that we don’t pay attention to a person’s name as much as we used to in the old days.

Did you fear talking about shamanism?
Not at all. I have no fear at all about shamanism. My father was supposed to be a shaman at birth but because of Christianity this didn’t happen. I have no fear about shamanism and no fear of spirits. I learned from the elders and from the material that had been collected about shamanism by anthropologists. I’m very thankful that the anthropologists took the time to collect all this information, people like Rasmussen and Bernard Saladin d’Anglure, and many other people who have collected Inuit history. Otherwise much of this information would have been lost. It has helped us remember many things. I would like to be one of those people who collects stories and ideas, especially about shamanism.
Is there anything you would like to add about what you have learned from the course?

Having the elders meet about shamanism was a really good idea. I think the good things about shamanism should be rejuvenated.

When the elders were talking about bringing back shamanism, how did you feel about this?

I see two sides to it. If a person were evil they could kill someone, but on the other hand if the person was well educated in this area and went on a long apprenticeship like the shamans used to do, I think this could have many positive aspects. I think fewer people would commit suicide. People would not have as many problems because they would understand more about what was bothering them. The shaman would heal them as part of an on-going process. I wouldn’t mind seeing shamanism return as long as it was done with care.
Aagjuk
A female being who lives on the moon who tries to make an angakkuq laugh so she can cut out his insides. Also the name of two stars, Aagjuuk [Iglulik] and Ululijarnat.

Aaniniaqtuq
A patient healed by an angakkuq.

Aarluk
A killer whale.

Aarnguaq (Aarnuat pl.)
An amulet used to protect the wearer against something.

Agliqtuq
A prescribed period where one had to abstain from doing things – for example, after a death [Nattilik] tirigusuktuq, pitalijuq.

Aglu
A seal breathing hole.

Ainnaa!
An expression of fear.

Aippaapik
A dear spouse.

Ak&ak
A grizzly bear.

Ak&unaaq
A rope, usually made out of bearded seal hide.

Akinngaq
Southwest wind.

Aliq
A harpoon line that is longer and thicker than a regular harpoon line.

Allait
The term for the Dene and other First Nations Peoples.

Amaruuaq
A game of chasing called “being like wolves” (similar to British Bulldog) played by people of all ages. Young men liked it because it gave them the excuse to chase the girl they were interested in. Young girls liked it because they got to see who was interested in them. Old women liked it because it gave them the chance to run around. Young children liked it because they got to see whom they could outrun.

Amitturmiut
People who live near a narrow body of water. Usually refers to people who are from the Iglulik area.

Anaq
Feces.

Anautaq
A snow beater.

Angak
Maternal uncle, mother’s brothers and male cousins.
Angakkuq
A shaman.

Angakkuutsianngittuq
An evil angakuq; an angakakkuq without much power.

Angirraqtuq
A person who had died and come back to life.

Angmaaq
A flint used to light fires.

Angmaaqtutuq
Children’s pants with openings between their legs so they can urinate without taking their clothes off.

Anguqtrusiaq
The name a person is called by [Kivalliq].

Angutagaluarnunga
“This one’s a boy though.”

Angutiqatiannuq
Two people whose fathers are brothers or cousins who really like each other.

Anirniq
Breath, spirit of life.

Anngarjuaq
The child of a male cousin or brothers of a female.

Annuraaqati
A ritual exchange of a piece of clothing. Those who had exchanged the clothing would address each other as annuraaqati.

Aqiqaq (Aqiqaq pl.)
The helping spirit of a qilajuq, and for the Nattilik, the helping spirit of an angakuq. See also tuurneq.

Apsiq (Apsiq pl.)
[Nattilik] A being that only has a head and legs. They usually travel in family groups and become noisier as they get closer. They are said to live in the rocks that oil lamps were placed on in the iglu, if the rocks were not thrown out of the iglu when it was permanently vacated. They are considered dangerous as they can create fires in igluit.

Aqasituq
The act of singing songs or using words to show love to a child.

Aqausiq (Aqausiq pl.)
Loving songs or words, used with children. Each child has his or her own. Different people may have a different aqausiq for the same child. Anyone may pick up a mother’s or grandmother’s aqausiq for a particular child. Some aqausiq form a person’s identity and are treated as though they are that person’s name.

Aqsianniit
The Northern Lights; the Aurora Borealis; the ullurmiut, the people of the day, who play kickball with a walrus head in the sky.

Arnarulunga
“Yuck! It’s a girl.”

Atiq
A name.
Atiqaqati
The term used to address someone with the same name [South Baffin].

Atirusiq
A nickname [Nattilik]; a person’s surname [modern usage].

Atituqait
Traditional names passed from one generation to the next.

Atqarniq
See nakkaaniq.

Atungaujait
The leaves of the mountain avens.

Ava
A tiny shore spirit.

Avataq (Atavait pl.)
A sealskin float.

Igguaqtuq
To eat the meat off a caribou leg without damaging the sinew.

Iglu (Igluit pl.)
Snow house. Also any dwelling.

Igluvigaq (Igluvigait pl.)
[Archaic] An iglu that was no longer occupied. [Modern usage] Used to denote an iglu.

Igutsaup siggungit
A sea creature that looks like a bee’s stinger.

Ijiqqat
See ijiraq.

Ijiraq (Ijirait or ijiqqat pl.)
Human-like beings who show themselves as caribou. They are considered to be people that have died.

Ikaaq
Food storage platform.

Ikajuqi
The helping spirit of a shaman. See also tuurngaq, apiqsaq.

Ikiaqqiniq
Shamanic flight to the middle of the sky, between the celestial vault and the earthly ground. See also pavungaarniq.

Ikpati
The sleeve of a garment.

Ilimmaqturniq
A spiritual journey through the air by an angakkuq [anggatajuq dialectal variant].

Iliqqusiq
See piqqusiq.

Ilisiiq
A hex.

Ilisiiquqi
A hex. See ilisiiq and ilisirniaq.

Ilisiiksijuq
A person who puts a hex on someone else.

Ilisiiktajuq
A person who is hexed.
Ilisiirmiq
A hex.

Ilungiqsurniq
Experiencing a deep emotion.

Imnarmiut
Term used for a form that is from the ocean, in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait (see also mamaitturnmiut).

Imngirmiq (Imngirniiit pl.)
A song.

Ingniqsiujuk
Lighting a fire.

Inugarulligaq (Inugarulligait pl.)
Small human-like beings said to have lived near the shore. If you looked at them from their feet up they would look very large. They are very strong. They suffocate people with their groins [Aivilik] inugarulligaarjukuluk [Nattilik] inugarulligannuuaajuullik.

Inugarulligarjuaq
A kind of dwarf, having the power to adjust its size to that of its opponents: for example, becoming a giant when having to fight with a giant.

Inukpasugjuq
[Nattilik] Inukpaq. A race of giant beings. [inukpasujuk dialectal variant].

Inuksuk (Inuksuit pl.)
A stone structure with many functions, such as serving as a beacon for travellers. It was also used when hunting caribou.

Inurajaq (Inurajait pl.)
Invisible beings that have footprints. They can be seen by dogs.

Inuruqsimajuq (Inuruqsimajuit pl.)
An animal that takes on a human form.

Inuulitsiniq
[South Baffin] A healing performed through a shaman.

Inuunnittut
Non-human beings.

Inuviniq (Inuviniit pl.)
A deceased person. If you lose something and can’t find it, it is said that it is the inuviniit who have taken it.

Ipiqtalik
Collective ritual conducted by the angakkuq during which he is harpooned like a walrus by his assistants, and pulled out by them in order to induce the walrus to let the hunters approach them.

Iqqaq
Term used for land in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait.

Iquti
A type of seaweed.

Irinaliut
An incantation.
Isarutalik
Term used for a man in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait.

Isumanirluk
A bad thought about another person; an angakkuk putting a hex on someone.

Itijjuat
According to an unikkaaqtauq, a young female orphan was the originator of the first healing. She used a sea-urchin shell and the wind of her body; blowing her breath or her fart in the direction of the suffering patient.

Kajjutarjuk
A being that only has a head and legs (see also apsag).

Kajurjuq
See singuuri.

Kalirrangiit
The sound that a qamutik makes going through the snow when it’s being pulled by dogs.

Kamiik
A pair of sealskin boots.

Kamikpak
Socks worn in between socks and kamiik. They were worn with the fur on the outside.

Kanajuq
A sculpin.

Kanannqaq
The northeast wind.

Kangi
Ventilation hole in the roof of an iglu.

Kangiralluk
Ventilation hole in an iglu.

Kanngunaqtuq
Something shameful, or something that causes embarrassment.

Kapijauniq
Collective ritual conducted by the angakkuk during which he stabs himself in order to induce the game to offer itself to the hunters.

Kigjugaq
[Nattilik and Aivilik] A tattoo mark between the eyes worn by someone who had killed a human being or an ijaraq. It would act as a defence and a protection.

Kiiguti
A term used by the tuurngait and the angakkuit to address someone with the same name [Nattilik and Iglulik].

Kilu
The rear section of an iglu or any traditional dwelling.

Kinngaq
A hill.

Kukkukiaq
A word which is whistled after touching a human bone, to prevent one from harm.

Glossary
Lumaajuuuq
An old woman pulled by a beluga, said to be the leader of the narwhals. [The complete story of Lumaajuuuq can be found in Volume 1 of this series.]

Maligaaq
Accepted guidelines for doing things that need to be done. Today the word is often used as a translation for Canadian law.

Mamaitturmiiut
Term used for a form that is from the ocean, in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait (see also imnarmiut).

Maniguuitjuuq
To put oneself at someone else’s mercy.

Manijaujuuq
Allowing oneself to be put in a situation.

Maniq
Moss used as a wick to light a qulliq.

Manuaqtuutut
A piece of caribou skin placed at the front of the clothing of children to prevent the wind from coming through.

Mik&iaqatinga
A term used by the angakkuit and the tuurngait to address someone born from the same mother. A shaman’s helper would call brothers mik&iaqatigiik. The meaning is “Someone sharing the same umbilical cord.”

Miqquugaaq
Bushy parts of the tundra where there is a lot of willow, brush and grass. Ijrailit are said to make their homes in these areas.

Naalaktut
The audience assisting in a sakaniq or qilaniq ritual.

Naammaluannngittuq
Someone who was bad.

Naarjuk
The name of silaup inua, the spirit of the weather.

Nakkaaniq
A spiritual journey to Sedna by an angakkuaq [Nattilik] atqarniq.

Nakkaqtuq
To sink down.

Nalluiniiq
A celebration.

Nangiaqtuq
Fear of falling.

Nangittuq
To have a relapse of a sickness.

Naniruaq
Holding a light for someone after it was lit.

Nanuq
A polar bear.

Nanurluk
A giant polar bear that lives in the ocean and is said to be bigger than large ships. An appreciated spirit-helper of the angakkuaq.

Natsiq
A ring seal.
Nattilingmiut
People who live at a lake that has seals. Usually refers to people that live in the northeast area of the Qitirmiut.

Nigiq
Southeast wind; controlled by a female spirit.

Niliqtuq
To fart.

Nukaq
Younger brother of a male or younger sister of a female.

Nukik
A tendon.

Nuliajuk
[Nattilik] Sedna [South Baffin], Takannaaluk [Iglulik]. Spiritual being who lives in the sea. The angakkuit would go to visit her when game was scarce.

Nuliaksalik (Nuliaksaliit pl.)
A man who has a non-human as a wife [Nunavik and South Baffin].

Nunaliqarviviniq
Old camps.

Nunarluq (Nunarluit pl.)
Evil spirit born from dirt and waste. See tupilait.

Nuvaaq&iq
The name of a tuurnqaq that lives in the ocean; the spirit of jelly fish. Also nuviquiq.

Paallimiut
People who live at a lake where a river starts. Usually refers to people from the Arviat area.

Pangniq
A bull caribou.

Pavunngaarniq
A spiritual journey to the moon by an angakkuq.

Pijariurniq
Rituals connected with spiritual events or with individual first performances.

Piqqusiq (Piqqusiit pl. [South Baffin])
Custom, manner, habit [Iglulik] iliqusiq.

Piqujaq (Piqujait pl.)
Acceptable behaviour, or required ways of doing things.

Pisiq (Pisiit pl.)
Traditional songs. Term now also used for hymns.

Pisuktut
Land animals.

Pittailiniq
Refraining from doing something that was forbidden. Breaking a pittailiniq would result in serious consequences to the individual or to the camp.

Piusiq (Piusiit pl.)
The way things are done.

Glossary
Pukiksaq (Pukiksait pl.)
A completely white earth-egg. Smaller than the silaaksaq.

Pukiq (Pukiit pl.)
A giant female albino caribou (smaller than the silaq).

Pullaalik
A person who breathes air; a term used by deceased people for those who are still alive. Term also used by the tuurngait.

Pullaq
A bubble. Also term used by the angakkait and the tuurngait for the soul.

Puqq
Term used for mother in the language of the angakkait and of the tuurngait. Literally “pouch.”

Qaggiq
Large iglu used when people gathered together; feast-house.

Qajaq
A one-person boat.

Qajuq
Broth.

Qallunaaq (Qallunaat pl.)
A white person.

Qalugiujaq (Qalugiujait pl.)
A gift that was made to a shaman, which he attached to his belt.

Qammaq
[South Baffin] qarmaq [North Baffin] A sod house; also a snowhouse with the top covered by a tent.

Qamutiiik
Dogsled.

Qanak
The wooden spar holding up the tent.

Qangatajuq
See iliimmaqtuniq.

Qaulluq
A fulmar.

Qcanin
A supplementary bed platform; a supplementary snowroom opening on to the main snowhouse; bedroom of an apartment.

Qaumaniq
The light of an angakkuq; the capacity of an angakkuq to see what is hidden.

Qaurajuaq
Big thick forehead tattoos.

Qilaq
A medium tied by a rope, and used for the ritual qitaniq. It could be the head or the leg of a human being, a piece of clothing or a stone.
Qilaniq
A ritual to find out the cause of what was bothering someone. It could be used by both angakkuit and non-angakkuit. When the person’s head or leg or an object became heavy, the cause of the problem was identified.

Qilaujjarniq
Drumming accompanied by people singing pisiit.

Qilauti
A drum.

Qimiujarmiut
Deceased people who live in an undersea world. This world is situated farther than Takannaaluk’s house, where the souls of those who had not observed the pittaliniq relating to death would stay for a year.

Qinnngarniq
A shouted prayer used to help those stricken by illness, or used to locate wildlife or to improve the weather. It was also used when people were in a dangerous situation.

Quaksaq
Term used for a foetus and stepchild in the language of the angakkuit and tuurngait.

Quaq
Term used for a child in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait.

Quinnaktuq
Squeamish.

Qujana arnaugaluarluni Qiturngialaarningmaat
“Even though she is a girl, she will be producing offspring.”

Quulliq
The traditional seal-oil lamp.

Quurvik
A toilet.

Sakajjutiit
The songs of a shaman. Also sakausiit.

Sakaniq
A shamanistic ritual where the shaman’s tuurngaq or helping spirit enters him. It is used for healing and to escape hunger and misfortune.

Sakuut
A scraper.

Saniliaq
Term used for a wife in the language of the angakkuit and tuurngait.

Sauniapik
A dear namesake.

Siggajjijuq
Disliking a person because of their abilities; envy.

Siiksik
A ground squirrel.

Silaaqsaq (Silaaqsaq pl.)
A completely white earth-egg.

Silaaq (Silaat pl.)
An animal hatched from an earth-egg. If it has the colour of a lemming, it will become a giant male caribou. It is supposed to be a child of Sila, and born from a silaaqsaq.
Singuuri
The big dog that lives on the moon. Also the name of a star. [Nattilik] kajurjuq (Aldebaran).

Siqiniq maliillugu
To follow the path of the sun. Also iërurranut.

Siqiniq
The sun.

Taaqtumiittut
Being in darkness.

Taaqtuq (Taaqtuit pl.)
Those who had eaten human flesh and refused to confess.

Taarniq
Darkness.

Taqqiup inua
The spirit of the moon.

Taqquti
A wick trimmer for a qulliq, seal oil lamp.

Tarniq
The soul. Also described as a bubble. It is not made of blood or bone.

Tarriassuk (Tarriassuit pl. [Baffin])
Invisible human-like beings that sometimes make themselves visible to people. Also known as the shadow people. [Kinngait] iijiraq.

Tau
Term used for an Inuk in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait.

Tau&rusiq
Term used for a white person in the language of the angakkuit and the tuurngait.

Tauva
“There it goes.”

Tigliktuq
To steal something other than food.

Tiglikumiktuq
To steal meat or something that can be consumed; to have sex with a person with whom you are not supposed to.

Tirigusuktuq
Refraiming from doing something that is forbidden; or being obliged to do certain things.

Tirigusuusiq
An injunction imposed on a person, which one has to follow.

Tiringnaqtuq
Something or someone who is the cause for an injunction to be imposed on a person.

Tiriijainiq
When an angakkuq tries to look into the life of another angakkuq when the other angakkuq is unaware he is doing so.

Tivaajuq
See tivaaniq.

Tivaaniq
Ritual feast to mark the return of the sun. Also tivaajuq.

Tivajjuq
See tivaaniq.
Tuksirauti
A Christian prayer.

Tulliliqtajuq
When someone is completely covered up, except for the head.

Tumi (Tumiit pl.)
Footprint.

Tumitaittuq
Place without footprints where it is easy to have contact with spirits.

Tunijjuti
A gift that is given to a tuurngaq through an angakkuq to enhance its power so that the task at hand will be completed successfully.

Tunniq
A facial tattoo.

Tunnittuarjuk
A being that only has a head and legs (see also apsaq).

Tupilanniq
The killing of an evil spirit by an angakkuq. There is be an enormous amount of blood when the tupilaq is killed. The angakkuq’s hands become covered in blood while he is killing a tupilaq which cannot be seen by ordinary people. This blood can only be washed off by human urine.

Tupilaq
An evil spirit under human form, only visible to the angakktuit. It is like a pouch full of blood. For some people it is an evil tuurngaq, for others it is the unsatisfied soul of a deceased person. It is also called nunarlik [Iglulik].

Tupilattaujuq
When an angakkuq uses a tuurngaq to try to kill a human being.

Tupilattuq
When a shaman kills a tupilaq, an evil tuurngaq.

Tuq&urausiq
The way two people address each other by a kinship term; a term for their relationship through their names, or an invented term. Also tuqsurausiq, tuqturausiq.

Tusujuq
Envious.

Tuunnginiq

Tuurngaq (Tuurngait pl.)
A shaman’s helping spirit.

Tuurngaqsimajuq
Possessed by a tuurngaq.

Uangnaq
Northwest wind; controlled by a male spirit.

Uiksalik (Uiksaliit pl.)
A woman who has a non-human as a husband [Nunavik and South Baffin].

Uimmaktuq
Being disoriented [Nattilik].

Ujurumiaq
A mirage, a heat wave. [North Baffin] ujumiriak.
Ukuaq
A female married into the family, called as such by her parents-in-law and their brothers and sisters, as well as by her sisters-in-law and their female cousins.

Ullit
A place where walrus bask. Also uglit.

Ullurmiut
“The people of the day.” This refers to people who have died and gone up to the sky. They become aqsarniit at night when they are playing kickball. They are very happy.

Ululijarnat
See aagjuk.

Unikaaq tuaq (Unikaaq tuaq, pl.)
A story passed from generation to generation.

Uqqurmiut
People who live east of where you are located.

Uujuq
Any kind of boiled meat.
Annotated Bibliography of Cited Publications and Recommended Further Reading

BALIKÇI, Asen


(This anthropologist conducted much fieldwork among the Inuit of Pelly Bay in 1959-60. With the help of an excellent interpreter, Bob Williamson, he was lucky enough to meet there with Father Van De Velde, who provided him with invaluable assistance. The article on shamanism is the only recent study on the more combative forms of Inuit shamanism.)

BLODGETT, Jean

(The Inuit drawings in this exceptional catalogue were made for a travelling exhibition organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario. Collected in North Baffin in 1964 by Terry Ryan, many of these pencil drawings depict traditional beliefs and shamanistic rituals. Several of them, redrawn in ink, have been reproduced in some chapters of the present book. The comments next to the drawings were written in syllabics and translated into English. We have revised this translation. We wish to thank J. Blodgett, whose interest in art and shamanism is well-known, for having made such documents available.)

BOAS, Franz

1964 The Central Eskimo [1888]. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press.
The author can be said to have initiated Inuit ethnography in Canada’s Arctic. After a year-long stay in South Baffin, he obtained the assistance of Reverend Peck and the whaling captains Mutch and Comer, who collected a wealth of data for him on cosmology and shamanism.


(Very interesting account by an elder from Clyde River about his marital relationship with an invisible spirit, from among the Tarriasuit, before and after he converted to Christianity. Televised feature story from the mid-1990s and broadcast in Inuktitut by CBC Iqaluit. I myself conducted research with Naujarlaq Tasugat in 1998.)

KEMP, William

(A good general introduction to the traditional culture of the Inuit of South and East Baffin.)

LAUGRAND, Frédéric; Jarich Oosten, François Trudel

(A major publication containing an impressive list of tuurngait collected by the first Anglican missionaries to Baffin Island in the late 19th century. F. Laugrand recently found these unpublished documents at the General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada. They are a major contribution to our knowledge of Inuit shamanism. The book also features many drawings of tuurngait by K. Rasmussen’s informants, which were published in the reports of the Fifth Thule Expedition. A long and useful introduction rounds out the volume.)

MACDONALD, John
1998 The Arctic Sky; Inuit Astronomy, Star Lore and Legend, Royal Ontario Museum/Nunavut Research Institute, Toronto.

(A very precious book on Inuit cosmology, based on extensive interviews with Iglulik Inuit elders with the help of the author.)
MARY-ROUSSELIÈRE, Guy

(A good general introduction to the traditional Inuit culture of the Iglulingmiut, Aivilingmiut, and Tununirmiut, by a very good ethnographer of the region who spoke Inuktitut fluently.)

MATHIASSEN, Therkel


(Reference works by a member of the Fifth Thule Expedition who witnessed intense shamanistic activity on Southampton Island [Salliq] in 1922-23.)

M’GHEE, Robert

(Reference work for Arctic Inuit prehistory.)

MERKUR, Daniel


(The author is a specialist in religious studies who offers a new interpretation, tinged with psychology, of Inuit shamanism and cosmology. The second book is an ambitious undertaking based on an extensive compilation of texts from the entire Inuit culture area. It ignores, however, many works published over the last twenty years in languages other than English. The author does not seem to speak the Inuit language, nor has he conducted

References
long periods of fieldwork among the Inuit. His compilation is nonetheless a valuable tool for anyone interested in Inuit cosmology and shamanism.)

OLSEN, Jacob

(An essential reference work written in Inuktut [Greenlandic] and published before all of the other ethnological reports of the Fifth Thule Expedition. Olsen recounts a shaman’s healing ritual, which he personally witnessed and recorded.)

OOSTEN, Jarich

(The author makes an interesting critical analysis of Mathiassen’s diary, but he seems to be unfamiliar with Jacob Olsen’s book, published in Greenlandic in 1927, and Mathiassen’s account of the expedition, published in 1945.)

OOSTEN, Jarich and Cornélius Remie

(Using field data gathered by C. Rémié from Pelly Bay, the authors interpret infanticide in the families of shamans as a sacrifice to the spirits, in exchange for game animals. This interpretation is borrowed from Roberte Hamayon, a specialist in Siberian shamanism. It is, to say the least, subject to controversy in the case of the Inuit.)

OOSTEN, Jarich and Frédéric Laugrand, eds.

(This book contains the accounts of two elders, one of whom, Victor Tungilik, was initiated into shamanism. These accounts were collected during a course organized for the Inuit Studies program of Nunavut Arctic College, in 1999. Tungilik was both a shaman and a Christian for some time, like his father, before he abandoned shamanism.)

**Cosmology and Shamanism**
PETRONI, Penny
1989 *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English.* University of Toronto Press.

(A compilation of extracts from the most important classic works about the Inuit of Canada.)

QUMAQ, Tamusi
1991 *Inuit Uqausillaringit, Ulirnaisiguitit.* Avataq Cultural Institute, Inukjuaq and Montreal; Association Inuksiutiit, Quebec.

(The first Inuit dictionary published in Inuktitut by a Nunavik elder.)

RASMUSSEN, Knud


(These reports are still the most detailed and extensive monographs available in English on Inuit shamanism in Canada’s Arctic.)

SALADIN D’ANGLURE, Bernard


1993 “The Shaman’s Share, or Inuit Sexual Communism in the Canadian Central Arctic.” *Anthropologica* XXXV, 59-183.


(An interesting Inuktitut account of Igqallijuq's memories of life within the womb, and a few of my written works, translated into English, on Inuit cosmology and shamanism, based on interviews with Nunavik and Nunavut elders from the 1960s to the 1980s.)

SCHNEIDER, Lucien  

(One of the major Inuktitut-English dictionaries. It was compiled in the 1960s and updated in the 1980s by a field linguist and O.M.I. missionary.)

THÉRIEN, François  
1978 Recherches sur le chamanisme dans la région d'Iglulik. Manuscript, GETIC, l'Université Laval.

(An English translation of eleven interviews about shamanism, recorded in Inuktitut in Iglulik with the same elders as the ones who contributed to Part II of the present book. At the time, Thérien was a doctoral student at l’Université Laval, under my supervision, and he had in his possession the data that I had collected in this village since 1971. The interviews will hopefully be published soon.)

VAN DE VELDE, Frans  

(A short article by a leading Inuit ethnographer who helped many anthropologists in their fieldwork.)

WEYER, Edward  

(A major classic on the Inuit. The best compilation of Inuit cosmology and shamanism from Greenland to Siberia. An indispensable tool for anyone looking through the literature; many references.)

Cosmology and Shamanism