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The Arctic. It is a world that Canadians collectively revere as iconic and ours. We love the idea of the Arctic. It is a place of the lonely Inuksuk pointing the way home, of free ranging polar bears and their cubs, of vast expanses of tundra, of frozen landscapes, of the midnight sun, and of the spectacular aurora borealis. We love the idea of the people of the North, the Inuit, a people who alone on the planet learned to harness this magnificent landscape. And yet few of us know much more about the Arctic and its people than what can be pictured on a postcard. This book will change that.

This is a book about highly educated Inuit women of tenacity and courage who share a moral imperative to make a difference in their Arctic communities. They bravely tell their own personal stories about becoming the educational leaders of Nunavut and they do so in order to create a bridge for other Inuit to follow. Their great hope, of which they are persistent and dedicated pursuers, is to create a unique and visionary education system that will revivify their culture and connect students in the Arctic with the rest of the world.

You may wish to brace yourself before you begin this book because as you read you may feel, as I did, a slight squeamishness, a sense of culpability in the hardship that the Canadian educational community of days gone by have inflicted on the Inuit. The writing style of raw honesty that pervades each chapter is not always a welcome window into the past or indeed the present. You may see what you prefer might be left out of sight, the better to maintain your national pride as a Canadian. You may also wonder at the coarse treatment and subtle, or not so subtle, paternalistic worldview imposed on a people far superior in knowledge, skills of survival, and respect of an unforgiving landscape, beautiful as it may be. But make no mistake; this is a scholarly work, a work that is destined to become a classic in studies of Nunavut and the educational system it is currently developing at an awe-inspiring pace, with tremendous trust and faith in its people.

Nunavut "our Land", the newest territory in Canada, came into political existence on April 1, 1999. It was 25 years in the making and had to be disengaged from the already existing North West Territories by plebiscite. The First Nations people of this area, the Inuit, are dispersed across a vast area and live now for the most part in small towns accessible by air or sea. There is a long, often bitter legacy connected to the establishment of various Nunavut communities that implicates the Canadian government, Christian churches, and commercial interests. This book tells us what has been lost, but the focus of this recounting is a tremendous optimism in the future of education. Hence the title of the book, "Siviumut" an Inuit term meaning *towards the future together*.

This edited compilation by educators from the University of Prince Edward Island, Fiona Walton and Darlene O'Leary is divided into nine chapters. Educational trailblazer of Nunavut or Nunavik (northern Quebec), who graduated from the Master of Education out of UPEI, wrote the chapters. Each chapter introduces the reader to specific Inuit words, words

that encapsulate cultural ideas, values and experiences, words that each author has chosen to represent a highly valued understanding in Inuit culture. Chapter One begins this theme with *Uqaujjuusiat* (p. 13) gifts of words or advice from elders. The words that are being gifted are not necessarily easy to hear because of the history that is related. However, this chapter relates the important role of Elders in Inuit culture. Carriers of wisdom, knowledge, and experience, Elders were also adept at social relations. This key aspect of Inuit culture demanded that everyone in the community feels accepted and has a place. *Iliranarniq*, a feeling of reverence (p. 16) was how people felt toward these keepers of the keys to life in the harsh Arctic. Elders commanded this feeling, with good reason. We are told it is because of this deeply ingrained cultural value that the Inuit themselves were welcoming and respectful to *Qallunaat*, non-Inuit authorities.

Western leaders, with an authoritative, paternalistic attitude that most Canadians will have no trouble imagining, set the tone of new relationships. How ironic that the cultural value that ensured successful survival in a harsh landscape should play a key role in the eventual breakdown of their culture. The author of this chapter is Naullaq Arnaquq, a woman who shares her story of becoming a teacher and eventually a Supervisor of Schools in Nunavut. With palpable joy, she recounts the successes of the first annual Inuit Educator's conference in 1990, the Siviumut Conference, an extravaganza of cultural food and activities conducted in Inuktitut, the Inuit language: "We had stepped forward without our *Qallunaat* colleagues and started to take ownership of our education system" (p. 20). From this event flowed the impetus to create a Department of Education with Elders as advisors and to begin working on a curriculum that clearly embraced an Inuit worldview.

Chapter Two, *Overcoming Intergenerational Trauma*, gives the reader a deep insight into the trials of becoming an Inuk, an Inuit person, in a culture in transition. As a child, the author, Monica Ittusardjua, lived in a family that valued a traditional lifestyle. However, like most of her generation, she was eventually sent to residential school. The author is brutally honest about the effect of alcohol on her own family and those around her. This story is a window into the day to day life of someone who was born into a traditional Inuit lifestyle of living off the land, and through her own formative years watched as everyone around her, including herself, is rent asunder through a combination of extreme change and trauma: "Now I know that the resistance in me was against colonization and that I was struggling to keep what little 'Inuk-ness' was left after 11 years of residential school" (p. 41).

Chapters Three and Four continue the insight into becoming an Inuk despite contemporary realities of the Arctic. *The Impact of Relocation* by Saa Pitsiulak and *Arctic Cotton* by Maggie Kuniliusie pull no punches. Pitsiulak recounts her experiences of change and the devastating impact of gambling, alcohol, and drugs on Inuit society. She is now an adult educator at Nunavut Arctic College and tells us "Inuit will never return to those nomadic ways" (p. 54), but "this new journey should be chosen with hope" (p. 55). Hopefulness despite devastating change is also a focus of Maggie Kuniliusie's, a teacher in Apex, just outside of Iqaluit. She delights in the design of a different kind of education than she herself was raised in, one that embraces what it means to be an Inuk, claiming cultural value of the Inuit and also reaching out to learn about the world. She recognizes the complexity of moving between two cultures. "I have succeeded to live between two cultures and between two worlds. My identity as an Inuk woman is stratified" (p. 70).

Chapter Five, *Piniqasarniq* by Maggie Putulik is focused on the Inuit value of practicing in order to achieve. Reminiscences of traditional life move into reflections of contemporary school life for Inuit children. She introduces the idea of *inunnguiniq* (p. 82) an Inuit understanding of oneself, even one's weaknesses, in order to realize personal potential. Putulik

reviews eight Inuit principles laid out by the Department of Education that must be infused throughout the curriculum, *Qaujimagatuqangit*: serving; consensus decision making; skills and knowledge acquisition; being resourceful to solve problems; collaborative relationships and working together for a common practice; environmental stewardship; living in harmony with others; and building positive spirit. She concludes, “Even when a child faces many disadvantages it is possible to become skilled and capable through piniqasarniq, continual practice” (p. 86).

Chapter Six, teaches us how to learn through *Tunnganarniq*. The author, Nunia Anoe, tells us that the root word *tunnga*, means to be firmly grounded (p. 89). The word itself means “to be approachable, hospitable, humble, kind, generous, honest and respectful” (p. 89). The author notes that during her research she appreciated the patterns of infusing education with the core value of human relationships, an experience shared by other indigenous communities such as the Navajo of the United States and the Maori people of New Zealand (p. 92). In each case ideas similar to *tunnganarniq* have been put in place with long standing positive results. Finally she shares some of the practices in her own school that led to positive change and concludes by telling us that the common goal of caring for one another led to dramatic improvement in student behaviour and learning.

Chapter Seven is by Jeela Palluq-Cloutier and is focused on the learning and teaching of Inuktitut. Raised in a traditional family who demanded attention to the subtleties of the spoken word, this is a woman who is passionate about her mother tongue. As a linguist and a teacher she is devoted to building a standardized version of Inuktitut, “Inuktuk” derived from the main dialectal groups across Nunavut and Nunavik. A standardized version of Inuktitut is a priority determined by the National Strategy on Inuit Education (p. 114). Palluq-Cloutier includes discussion of the challenges of meeting this demand. Faced with the need for generating new words, especially regarding technology, she has reached back to a historical past and revived old words to account for new meanings. For example, “internet” has been translated as *ikiaqqivik* (p.112), a word that indicated an out-of- body-experience by Shamans of old. She also relates the importance of kinship titles and the ancient practice of naming new children after deceased relatives. These titles are a sign of great affection and special relationships. Palluq-Cloutier shows that a standardized version of Inuktitut is a necessity for learning and teaching across the Arctic.

Chapter Eight is a hard-hitting look at young male identity. This chapter is written by Becky Tootoo, a High School Principal who like Principals everywhere has a deep understanding of the damage that young males can cause themselves, their families, and their communities when they feel alienated or lost. Tootoo relates qualitative research focused on several successful young males to determine the factors that have led to their strong socialization, confidence, and sense of self. We learn of *pilimmaksarniq*, a traditional term that applies to becoming a full human being. For young males it means being taught “a set of values and beliefs that emphasize endurance, coping, and survival through practices that are learned and acquired in real life experiences” (p. 133). We also learn of *inunnguiniq*, a “foundation of obedience and respect, and a desire to do things right” (p.134). She laments that a “cultural dislocation is taking place” (p.138) and states that relationships with Elders are vital to restoring young male identity.

Finally, in Chapter Nine we hear from another administrator, this time, the Director for Primary Schools, Mary Joanne Kauki. If you have ever been an administrator, you will feel her pain. The trials and tribulations of an educational leader with strong hopes and a clear vision of what must be accomplished are thwarted by pettiness between staff, misunderstanding between Inuit and non-Inuit, deficits in manpower and qualifications, tardiness or absenteeism, and a

whole set of behaviours and activities that would give any administrator a migraine. Kauki also gives a succinct rundown on the systemic, unethical practices that she has encountered which are anathema to developing a rich education system anywhere. These include “bullying, favouritism, nepotism, cronyism and silencing” (p. 148). However, her experiences of collaboration and successes with moving her vision forward are a testament to her resiliency and faith in education. Her story is an inspiration to all those educators and administrators across Canada who doubtless can relate to her.

It is evident from the contributions of the various authors that education in Nunavut is forging its own road toward a future that is still at this point, a vision, a work in progress. Most of the scholarship cited throughout the work is detailed on colonization, decolonization, and critical theory which has lent a scholarly language to the re telling of Inuit history and indeed suffering and loss. There are no illusions here. Devastating statistics of dropout rates and loss of native language prove that these educators have a long road ahead of them (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013). Yet, reading of their experiences of education, I am reminded of the touching Canadian classic by Gabrielle Roy (1977), *Children of my Heart* on the one hand and the 1963 CBC Massey Lectures by Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* on the other.

What is lacking in this compilation is a discussion of some of the tough political decisions that are as yet undetermined because of a lack of agreement within the Inuit community. For instance, the uses of syllabics versus the Latin alphabet, or resistance to a standardized version of Inuktitut continue to plague some quarters of the education community.

It is fitting that the Inuit, who like so many First Nations, lost their children through the imposition of western ideas of education manifested to our great shame in residential schools, have now come full circle to embrace education as a means to finding themselves once again. Education is being recognized today in the Arctic as a tripartite path, a way back home, a conduit to the rest of Canada, and a bridge to the world. It is incumbent upon us as Canadians to support and celebrate the ambitious, hopeful educational plan the Inuit have created for themselves. Perhaps in this way, we as Canadians might in some small way restore our own tarnished past.

This book should be required reading for scholars of indigenous education, especially in Canada, but also around the world. This book gives the reader tremendous insight into the Inuit past, but more importantly it outlines some of the steps which have led to the proprietorship of education that the Inuit have strongly made claim to. Their on-going efforts, the triumphs and the missteps both, should be studied, evaluated, and reported on for the benefit of indigenous people everywhere who wish to reclaim their own history, develop their own education plan, adopt their own best practices, and tap into *Sivumut*, towards the future together.

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