

Naluyuks of northern Labrador: Views from the printed page¹.

“When I was young I was told that they were like old spirits of like old Inuit people or something and that they used to come from the point and come across the harbor... everybody would be watching for them...”² Naluyuks are non-human beings, spirit figures, traversing both the spirit and human worlds of the Inuit of northern Labrador.



It is an inquisitional house-visitation with children held accountable for their behaviour. For adults, it is also a visit by non-human beings resonant with Inuit beliefs and is a reminder of another world-view with which to encounter and interpret the current social and physical world. On January 6 (twelfth night, old Christmas day or eve, Epiphany) a small group of men leave the community in daylight and return in the dark as naluyuks. The children of each household were questioned as to their behaviour over the past year and could be hit with sticks wielded by the naluyuks if they had not been 'good'; children were often required to sing Moravian hymns in Inuktitut, and were often given gifts by the naluyuks. The event terrifies children: the naluyuks were costumed as non-humans and portrayed as bogey-men who could take children away from the community and leave them in the woods, a fate of certain death. Once outside a house, processing from house-to-house, the naluyuks would be taunted by brave adolescents and give chase as stick-wielding protagonists engaging in violent behaviour with anyone 'caught'.

Accounts of naluyuk events noted in this paper originate from several communities in Labrador

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which engage in naluyuk night events. There is some variation between the coastal communities of Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik and Hebron, with the variations more of intensity than of content. However, the events in a community such as Happy Valley-Goose Bay, a non-coastal community, differ in form as well as intensity.

In Nain the naluyuks have a presence in the community throughout the Christmas season. On Advent (4th Sunday before Christmas, the beginning of Moravian Christmas observances) and on January 5, children hang stockings for gifts from the naluyuks. The naluyuks, who are not seen until naluyuk night, place gifts in the stockings after dark without the children seeing them. Small items placed in the stockings as gifts “were usually stolen or used. The objects that are stolen are taken from others who have no use of them, and given to a person who will make use of it”³. In contrast, one person identifying themselves as strongly of the Moravian faith noted that gifts received on Advent were from the Advent Santa and consisted of stocking stuffers and small toys⁴.



The 'stolen' gift is an interesting shadowing of elements of a culture: The Inuit value of sharing goods and resources within the community was also part of the activities practiced in contact with European explorers and traders when European items attractive or useful to the Inuit were 'stolen', a sharing of resources not tolerated by the Europeans.

Ben-Dor's⁵ description of the event from the early 1960s is not included in this paper because Ben-Dor's paper is more readily accessible than the accounts which are included here. The descriptions

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included here are first-hand accounts by community members and provide a lived sense of the events portrayed.

The following account of nalujuk night is from Hebron, a coastal community located in the far north of Labrador and which now is resettled. The events described below vary slightly from accounts in the other three northern Labrador communities.

“Most of the children were conditioned to be afraid of the 'Naluyuk' people. We used to be told that if we were bad boys or girls during the past year, we surely would get it from a 'Nalujuk'.

Sometime during the day, six or seven men would leave the village unnoticed by us. As it began to get dark, we would see them coming around the point, heading for the houses. They were dressed up in fur clothing and wore ugly looking face masks. Even their hands were covered with something furry that served as a mitt. Each one carried a weapon of some sort or another, such as a harpoon, whip, stick or a piece of chain. Each one had a large bag hanging in front with a string around his neck. If anyone happened to be out of doors when they arrived, they were chased until they ran into a house. Hardly anyone escaped without first getting a hard whack across the bottom with a whip or a stick. The 'Nalujuk' people went into every house. The older boys and men would gather outside and entice the 'Nalujuk' to chase them. Those being chased tried to run to any house which had not been paid a visit and the 'Nalujuks' would chase them into that house. When they entered a house they sought out the children and ask [sic] them or their parents if they had been good. If they had been bad during the year, they got a firm smack from one of them and were told not to be bad any more. They were commanded to always listen to and respect older people, especially mothers and fathers. Each child had to sing a song or recite a poem. If they refused to do so, they were given a smack and not left alone until they cried. If they sang a song or recited a poem, they were 'smart' and 'good' and thus received a reward. After the 'Nalujuk' had listened, they would reach into their bag and give out a handful of goodies, which could be anything from candies to prunes to home-made toys or clothing. Some of the parents prearranged with a 'Nalujuk' to give a certain child something extra good”⁶.

In Nain the outdoor activities are more intense:

“They're usually big and very scary and they'd have seal skin or caribou skin on them and you could never see their faces. They run really fast. They have weapons ... they have spears and sticks and things like that they have whips and chains.” When they are outside “they're spread out, there's usually a lot of them and they're spread out all over town. When I was younger up in Nain I could remember everybody, like, would be on the main road and there'd be groups of people running all over the place and another would be hiding behind trees or under the steps or behind houses and they'd all just come out of nowhere and surprise everybody and chase everybody and what they'd do is they like, they hit you... they pile everybody into one spot and then they go like around with their sticks, walking scary, and people would have to start singing songs in Inuktitut, and then if they liked it I guess

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they'd shake our hands and if they didn't then they'd hit us (laughs)”⁷.

When you are cornered “you're usually caught on someone else's step with a group of other people that they've rounded up or chased like a hunter after a bunch of caribou...”⁸. Songs are sung in Inuktitut because that is the language of the naluyuks⁹.



The foundation of the naluyuk event can be established through several avenues including the prehistoric presence of Arctic cultural groups in the eastern Arctic and Greenland, ethnographic accounts, and the over-arching presence of a set of beliefs centred on the sea-woman Sedna. Non-Arctic cultural influences are historic, arising from pursuit by Europeans of the whaling industry and the cod fishery in Labrador waters, the European search for the North West passage, the presence of Moravian missionaries, and contemporary political and economic realities.

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Prehistory¹⁰ and History¹¹

A brief look at the archaeological record of the Arctic gives a deeper understanding of the vibrancy and genius of the cultures which thrived in the Arctic, and a time depth to the cultural basis of the naluyuk night event. Historical records will establish the presence of several European nations in Labrador whose contact with the Inuit could have contributed various aspects and interpretations of the naluyuk event. Ethnographic accounts of Inuit mid-winter events establish the Inuit foundation for the naluyuk night event.

Once the ice-sheets from the last major glaciation period in North America receded an Arctic environment developed very similar to that in existence today. The retreat of the glaciers allowed for the establishment of ecological zones which encouraged people living in more southern areas to begin moving north into the fringes of the Arctic zones.

The year-round habitation of the Canadian Arctic occurred within a relatively short span of time when compared with other areas of habitation across the globe. Initial settlement of Labrador dates back approximately 8,000 years when people were occupying the tundra coast of Labrador, hunting walrus and burying their dead beneath mounds of boulders with rituals as complex as any known to have been used elsewhere in the world at the time. As early as 7000 years ago, before the Paleo-Eskimo moved onto the Labrador coast, the region was occupied by people of an Indian tradition called the Maritime Archaic Tradition. About 4000 years ago in northern Labrador the Paleo-Eskimo migrants coming from farther north encountered coastal Indian inhabitants of the area and the two groups shared the area for the next 2000 years.

Approximately 5,000 years ago the North American Arctic tundra began to be occupied on a year-round rather than seasonal basis. Archaeological material dating from 5,000 – 4,500 BP shows the rapid movement of people from Alaska in the west, across the Canadian Arctic archipelago and into northern Greenland. This astounding appearance of a uniform culture was unique to anything found in the area previously. Their tool assemblage¹² was highly distinctive reflecting a cultural resemblance with Siberian peoples who occupied regions from Lake Baikal to Chukotka. “With sophisticated clothing, together with the harpoons, lances and fish-spears that allowed them to exploit most Arctic resources, and the small tents that provided portable shelters from the worst of Arctic weather, these people had everything they needed to travel and hunt on tundra and sea ice”¹³. Despite having been named Paleo-Eskimos or Old Eskimos they are not likely the direct ancestors of contemporary Eskimos or Inuit. The Inuit, a later group who moved across the Arctic also from

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the west, recognized these Paleo-Eskimos as a distinctive group when they encountered them in Arctic Canada. Inuit oral history records them as “a tribe of large, strong and inoffensive strangers” they called 'Tunit'. The Tunit had occupied Arctic North America from the Bering Strait in the west to eastern Greenland coasts and south to Newfoundland.

Later Tunit peoples were known archaeologically as the Dorset culture. From 500BC to 1500AD the Dorset people hunted walrus and seal, used the oil for fuel and light, and created striking minute sculptures using the fine technology of their Tunit ancestors. “The art of the Dorset people is so varied and intricate that it allows a glimpse of the spirit-world known to these ancient hunters, a world resembling in many ways that of other northern shamanic peoples, yet unique to this society that developed in the relative isolation of Arctic North America over a period of almost five millennia”¹⁴.

During the last centuries of their existence, 1000-1500AD, the Tunit or Dorset encountered the Greenlandic Norse. The Norse brought trade goods on their voyages of exploration as well as disease which the native peoples were biologically unable to withstand. During 1200-1300AD the Inuit came from the west, possibly attracted by the Norse European trade goods including metal. These Inuit were whale-hunters from Alaska and entrepreneurs engaged in a growing iron trade across the Bering Strait. These people had dog-sleds and umiaks, the Mongol recurved bows, and a tradition of intercommunity warfare. Unlike the Norse farmers from Greenland who had little interest in acquiring Tunit (Dorset) land, the Inuit viewed the territory as valuable and drove the Tunit out.

The Norse arrived in Iceland and Greenland about 900AD. By 1000AD voyages further west brought the Norse to Helluland (Baffin Island), Markland (Labrador) and Vinland (Gulf of St. Lawrence) as well as to L'Anse aux Meadows (Newfoundland). Further exploration into northern Greenland put the Norse into contact with aboriginal people, probably the Dorset, and may have occasioned a trading relationship centred on walrus ivory. Several decades later the Norse encountered the Inuit, a potentially more dangerous people than the Dorset. By the mid-1500s Greenland was occupied by the Inuit, but by the early 1700s the Norwegians had renewed interest in Greenland sending missionaries to attend to the Inuit inhabitants. During this time period various European nations were engaged in whaling enterprises and were pursuing the cod-fishery along the Labrador coast and in waters surrounding Newfoundland.

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From the mid-1700s the continuous European presence in northern Labrador affected the Inuit and Innu peoples. The Moravians, a German Protestant sect, were given sizable land-grants in northern Labrador by the British to set up missions and contain the Inuit who were troublesome to the pursuit of the cod fishery. The subsequent Christianisation of the Inuit significantly altered the Inuit world-view and nomadic hunting-gathering life-style and established the Moravians as the predominant religious group on the coast. Newfoundland fishers pursued the Labrador cod fishery during the 1800s on a seasonal basis. The Basque were present in southern Labrador from 1550 to the early 1800s pursuing a highly lucrative whaling industry. The French, engaged in the fur trade and colonization of New France in the 1600s, were also engaged in the cod-fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. The search for the North West Passage through Arctic Canada occupied European nations from the 1600s onward. From first contact the benefits of trade for both parties, Inuit and Europeans, was recognized and trading relationships were accompanied by sharing of cultural elements.

Origins

There are several possible sources of the naluyuk event. The brief look at the archaeological record above establishes the duration and continuity of highly specialized human habitation in the Arctic from 8000BP. The arrival of Europeans approximately 1000BP and their continued presence gives the parameters of the enquiry into the origins of the naluyuk event. Ben-Dor¹⁵ offers three possible origins: The Moravian missionaries introduced Christian stories of Epiphany and Christmas, and may have introduced north European mumming traditions as well; Newfoundland-settlers may have introduced a version of mumming; and 'the Eskimo themselves'. Ben-Dor's suggested origins ignore the realities of cultural contact and blending – that an Inuit based cultural event, coinciding with mid-winter events of European origin, could have taken on elements of the European events and that the Europeans have placed an interpretation onto the naluyuk events to benefit their religious and economic interests in the area. Origins are a complicated arena for discussion and rarely straight-forward.

European Origins

The historical presence of Europeans in the Arctic suggests a European and/or Newfoundland origin for the naluyuk event. The basic common traits within the European-based events and naluyuk events of house visitation by disguised figures in the mid-winter season and with the naluyuk figure regarded as heathen suggests European influence in a post-contact situation¹⁶ particularly through

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the Moravians.

The question of whether European fishers introduced the mumming tradition encounters several problems including: European fishers were on the Labrador coast during the summer months, few resided in northern Labrador during the mid-winter season; there was no common language as the fishers spoke Basque, English, French and Irish Gaelic whereas the Inuit spoke Inuktitut and German which they learned from Moravian missionaries; the Moravians kept strict control of their mission settlements and lands, allowing Christian Inuit little contact with non-Christian Inuit or other Europeans; the Moravians discouraged trading between the Inuit and traders in southern Labrador and the Gulf of St. Lawrence; if there were Europeans on the coast who knew mumming events it is unlikely they would have pursued mumming as they were not in communities of which they were members, hence their reasons for mumming would have been severely diminished, and they may not have felt safe or welcome in the homes of the Inuit or Moravians; and given the Moravian disregard for Inuit traditions, mumming activities which dove-tailed on several levels with naluyuks were likely unwelcome.

The Moravians are a more likely source than the fishers given their familiarity with the Inuit language and their sustained religious and economic presence among the Labrador Inuit. Originating in Germany, they would have been familiar with mid-winter events and could have introduced elements of those events to the Inuit mid-winter events. There were several German traditions having to do with Epiphany Night rituals¹⁷ including: Berchetenlaufen, a ritual where several young masked men run through their community with whips and cowbells in order to drive evil spirits away with their erratic behaviour; and Berchte, which employed a 'masked female bogey' who frightened children. Contemporary events occurring in northern European communities provide a vivid picture of what the Moravians may have been familiar with in a tamer format¹⁸.

Epiphany, as the Christian story of pagans discovering the truths of Christianity, has various elements that coincide with naluyuk events including the arrival in the mid-winter of three wise men from the east bearing gifts and carrying staffs. The naluyuks arrive singly, in pairs or small groups across the sea-ice¹⁹ (which is east of the land edge in Labrador), the sea is the home of Sedna (a sea woman figure central to Inuit mythology), the naluyuks are associated with bringing gifts for the children and carrying sticks. Naluyuk night, a mid-winter event, may have become focussed on January 6 in order to coincide with the end of Moravian Christian observances and to dove-tail with Epiphany, a time of celebration sanctioned by the Moravians in their mission-

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oriented communities. It may also have been a logical time to express the dualities within Inuit culture expressed by the naluyuks – renewal of life, return to the sustainability of a traditional hunting-gathering economy from an economy based around Moravian religious observances, the realities of feast and famine characteristic of hunting/gathering societies, and the independence of Inuit camps in contrast with the dependence in mission communities upon Moravian control of world-view and cultural constraints.

Ethnographic records, Inuit origins

Ethnographic evidence supporting Inuit origins are discussed at length by Richling²⁰. He relies on material from a number of authors including Franz Boas, C.F. Hall, Kaj Birket-Smith, and Frank Speck whom I will not reference individually but do recognize their valuable body of material. The cultural base and connections of the Inuit across the Canadian Arctic and Greenland is supported by archaeological evidence as noted above. Masking traditions found among the indigenous Labrador people have an aboriginal origin²¹ despite the apparent adoption of the traditions from European sources. The pan-Inuit belief in Sedna²² is the basis for the shared mid-winter observances among Inuit groups.

It is the ethnographic material linking the Labrador Inuit to western Greenland and adjacent eastern Arctic regions which displays connections between naluyuks and pre-contact ritual survivals²³. In research undertaken in eastern Baffin Island in 1888 clear connections appear referring to a belief in Naliajoq or Nuliajuk, a female sea spirit. In pan-Inuit mythology she is known as Sedna, a protector of sea mammals and a mother-creator figure. As the primary force in controlling availability of sea mammals, Naliajuk played a central role in a mid-winter ritual complex by which the Inuit intended to assure a sufficient supply of sea mammals through appeasement of Naliajuk. Vagaries of sea life available for hunting were attributed to Naliajuk which caused her to simultaneously be revered and despised for her control over Inuit survival. 'The spirit may be seen as the embodiment of central, opposing themes in indigenous culture against which the idea of renewal is made explicit... the life-death dualism... a conflict between feast and famine, abundance and scarcity'. This research further recorded rituals which marked the fall to winter changing of the seasons and, by implication, 'the annual renewal of life'. This ritual complex included a visitation by two disguised figures who were servants of Sedna and were involved in appeasement of the sea spirit and observance of the solstice. Within a performance context these spirit figures were assaulted, mutilated, and left for dead by the Inuit. The spirit figures then returned to life and were confronted by their attackers demanding 'knowledge of the future'. The masked figures responded in murmurs, thereby allowing individual

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interpretation by their attackers.

There is a 1916 ethnographic report on the Labrador Inuit which does not mention naluyuk-like traditions nor masking traditions. However, a 1935 report did note a ritual similar to that of the naluyuk but not identified as such - the event occurred around Christmas time and involved a masked person going house-to-house engendering fear among adults and children as well as providing a source of entertainment²⁴.

The life renewal theme is present in virtually all the rituals noted by Richling²⁵: solstice or rekindling rites were recorded by C.F. Hall on eastern Baffin Island and Lucien Turner in Ungava Bay (northern Labrador peninsula) where masked figures entered houses, extinguished and rekindled the light (oil lamp) thereby suggesting a belief in the renewal of the sun at that time of the year; Kaj Birket-Smith recorded Twelfth-night customs in Greenland with possible aboriginal origins called *mittartut*, a house visitation by disguised figures (spirit-beings) using garbled speech and carrying large phalluses, with a version which involved two disguised figures engaging in a fight in which one is killed and then resurrected by a third figure; Ernest Hawkes described a Labrador sculping or skinning dance in which a seal is skinned and then runs away, thereby assuring the continuing supply of seal skins²⁶.

Here is a published account from 1915 by Morten Porsild of an event in West Greenland:

“I doubt whether masks are really unknown in West Greenland. Here it is customary on Twelfth-night for children and young people to run about from house to house in strange grotesque disguises: skins with the hair outside, women in men's clothing, sometimes with large phallus-like appendages attached. They perform odd dances, must not talk, but only produce indistinct or inarticulate sounds... Usually they wear grotesque masks made of skin; on one occasion I saw one elaborately carved in wood. These masks do not at all resemble European shrove-tide masks which, though known to most of them, they have no desire to use for this purpose, but they far more closely resemble masks from Alaska. I have not been able to obtain any information as to the age of the custom; it is merely said to be “very old” (quoted in Heijnen)²⁷.

There were various ways in which Inuit people could disguise themselves besides the use of wooden masks, which Heijnen supports noting the use of 'thongs, pins and soot from lamps' to distort the face and the creative use of other materials in the construction of masks²⁸.

The similarities between the Porsild description of a masking event and events known as naluyuk

night which occurred in Labrador are worth noting. Here is a first-hand account of naluyuks by Boas Obed²⁹:

“In Hebron, when I was small, the nalujuks used to come on Nalujuk's Night, January 6th. Real jannies they were, wearing seal skin and caribou skin clothing and face masks. Some had swords, some had sticks and they had real guns, too. They used to even come inside the church, and me sitting in the front with the rest of the kids. They used to have a lot of goodies, candies, clothing and much more. You were told to sing a song or a hymn before you got your present from them. They used to have real big bags in front and on their backs. I think the *nalujuks* used to get the things to give away from the local store.

Some of the *nalujuks* wore *amautiks*, and they'd tell the children that if any of them were bad in the past year, they'd carry them in their hood and take them away, faraway somewhere. One time old Abel Atsatata was staying with Markus Lidd and two *nalujuks* came in and told him to sing, and he started to sing. He was only trembling, and he was making too many mistakes. One of the *nalujuks* had a real gun, a .44. He cocked the trigger, ready to go off. Abel went into hiding under the table, and the *nalujuk* really made it look like he was really going to shoot him, even though he didn't have real bullets. Abel went hiding under the table and I was sitting on top of the table. Abel was some scared!

Our parents used to let the *nalujuks* in the house and tell them that we never listened to them, and our parents would tell the *nalujuks* to take us away.

When my wife was a child, some *nalujuks* came to her house by breaking the door in half with a sword. And one time when my wife was small and the other kids' parents told them to go out and light candles outside, so they went and lit up the candles. All of a sudden, they saw two *nalujuks* and they started running to the house. They used to fall down, and when they got to the porch, they were so many of them that they couldn't get the door opened. The *nalujuks* couldn't get in the house either. The kids were all crying too. One *nalujuk* had a real scary face and the other one was limping, had one of his legs all bandaged up in canvas. They were some scared that time.

When I was small we used to find things in our stockings on Nalujuk Day [Old Christmas Day, January 6], anything from candies to homemade toys. But when I became a teenager I used to smoke on the sly. Then one Nalujuk Day, I found old pipe tobacco ashes, not new either, old ashes I found. I didn't like what I found one bit, even though I found some toys and candies along with the ashes. We were very happy though that time. Later on we never found anything more, maybe because I peeked at the *nalujuks* when they were filling our stockings during the night, because after that I never found anything anymore. Some bad, nothing in your stocking on Nalujuk morning.”

The associations with contemporary Christmas celebrations are apparent, but several of the characteristic behaviours are Inuit based, notably the skin costumes, the singing of songs under duress in Inuktitut, the threats to take children away, and the frightening behaviour inside and outside a building including the presence of a gun. Earlier accounts have a more structured relationship between children and nalujuks – the nalujuks are frightening figures taking an accounting of the behaviour of the children during the past year, requiring the singing of hymns and are the purveyors of reward and punishment.

Interpretations of Naluyuk Night

Dichotomies.

Richling³⁰ addresses the complexities of the relationship between the Inuit and the Moravian missionaries. As the Inuit/Moravian relationship developed the naluyuk tradition maintained the theme of renewal. There was a change in form to a “ritualized dramatization of the inherent conflicts in post-contact Inuit existence. Unlike the aboriginal customs, however, the major focus of the symbolic oppositions expressed in the nalujuk ritual is neither Sedna nor the passage of natural seasons as denoted by the solstice. Rather, the referent is the mission system, and especially the commitment that the Inuit have made to the ecological and sociocultural constraints imposed by that system. What has occurred is the substitution of the Sedna-solstice referent by a new field of signification developed out of the post-contact setting.” This shift in meaning occurred as the Moravians increasingly required the Inuit to focus their lives upon the mission settlements – it was the intent of the Moravians to control the Inuit through Christianisation and economic dependence upon the missions. The Inuit were enjoined to give up their nomadic lifestyle, to disrupt their self-sufficient hunting-gathering adaptation to their physical environment for a semi-sedentary lifestyle which made them increasingly dependent upon the missions for survival. By requiring the Inuit to take part in the lengthy Christmas round of religious observances followed shortly by Easter observances, the Moravians were removing the people from their subsistence activities for a prolonged period of time, making them increasingly dependent upon relief supplies and/or shop credit within mission stores³¹.

Epiphany Day marked the end of the Moravian religious Christmas observances and marked the return of the Inuit to their subsistence activities. It was a time of confrontation and contention between differing sets of values and realities, Christian/pagan, new life/old life; the naluyuk were the embodiment of the resulting anxiety in the same way Sedna (Naliajoq) had been the embodiment of 'parallel conflicts in the pre-contact setting'. The inquisition of the young confirms the commitment to the new Moravian life following which the naluyuk figures fade into the night. The gifts given to the children are an attestation of the renewed commitment to Christianity and “more fundamentally, to the dominance of the mission system and its attendant moral and social order. The ritual complex thus illustrates a predominant renewal motif that is based on sub-thematic oppositions like those found in the Sedna and solstice rites, but reflects the dominance of the mission context. These oppositions include, most notably, Christian-heathen, mission Inuit-camp Inuit, light-dark, feast-famine”³².

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Marker of change and a warning for the future.

In the past naluyuk night was an event which marked the end of the Moravian Christmas observances and the beginning of the Inuit return to their hunting-gathering life-style and culture. Naluyuk night is an indicator of major change in the lives of the Inuit – from dependency upon Moravian missions for goods and resources and Christian mythology to a return to self-sufficiency within the Inuit hunting-gathering economy and worldview. The cultural mixing and inherent confrontation is evident in an event in which Moravian hymns are sung in Inuktitut by children at the demand of naluyuks. It is the insertion of Christian elements into an Inuit tradition addressing the power of a major personage in Inuit mythology, Sedna the sea-woman.

The oppositions of dependency/self-sufficiency, life/death apparent in the ethnographic material noted above was applied to an event which occurred in Nain in 1998. An article appeared in *The Telegram* in January 1998³³ using a naluyuk analogy in discussing a tragic occurrence. The community of Nain was experiencing a shortage of wood and the coast guard ice-breaker, the *Sir Humphrey Gilbert*, was dispatched to make a delivery of wood. By the time the 'Gilbert' arrived the community had resolved the problem and the arrival of the boat was unexpected. There was worry expressed in the community about the consequences of opening up the ice in the harbour. Three days later a community member died on the harbour ice when his snowmobile hit a chunk of ice and flipped over.

An analogy was drawn between the Gilbert's unexpected arrival and the naluyuks - "So what is the *Sir Humphrey Gilbert*? Perhaps it's a nalujuk come to confront the Inuit at a time when their world is once again changing. The Labrador Inuit are on the verge of self-sufficiency. Perhaps the Gilbert came to speed them on their way by reminding them of the cost of dependency." Further to this idea of change, the naluyuk can also be used within a current political context: "But maybe the Gilbert wasn't a nalujuk at all. Maybe the icebreaker's trip to Nain – and the trip's tragic consequences – is a warning about the fruits of good intentions. There are others in the region who want to use icebreakers to clear channels to the coast. Unless the cost is remembered, this use of the Gilbert could give those people hope and support. Maybe the nalujuk should be visiting government offices in St. John's and corporate boardrooms in Sudbury, Ont." This *Telegram* article makes use of a current understanding of the naluyuks within a larger frame of dependency and self-sufficiency – the current and past situations of the Inuit coincide. The nalujuks were a marker between dependency and self-sufficiency, just as the Gilbert was a marker between dependency upon delivered provisions from the government and the self-sufficiency of providing their own

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provisions. The naluyuk comes from the past, from past knowledge, as a warning for what the future can bring. The Gilbert is the past, the old dependency way of doing things as against the coming reality/hope of non-dependence – a warning of what continuing dependency can cost. Dependency/non-dependency, past/future, old/new, survival/non-survival, life/death: the contemporary naluyuk still carries the dichotomies apparent in the ethnographic material.

“When the nalujuk come into town they tease and threaten whoever they find. They hit you with whatever they have in their hands until you sing and then they give you candy and let you go. You run away laughing and turn back to watch the fun – and maybe get caught again.” “If the Sir Humphrey Gilbert was a nalujuk, it lacked the proper sense of fun; at least, it lacked the modern sense of fun now expected from a nalujuk”³⁴

Naluyuks speak to change in individual lives and to change in larger cultural and societal frames. The naluyuks are spirit entities and do not endeavour to alter the existing economic, political and social circumstances of the Inuit within the Moravian mission system. The appearance of naluyuks marks the transition from Moravian controlled mission life to traditional Inuit life on the land, from Moravian Christmas observances and world-view to Inuit traditional economy and worldview. Not only does the appearance of the naluyuks mark a change for the Inuit as a group - it also marks a change for individuals from mission celebrations to everyday life, which in contemporary circumstances does not necessarily mean a return to a hunting-gathering lifestyle for the majority of the people. There is a sense of everything going back to 'normal', to the usual, once Christmas celebrations are over: “The next day the trees and decorations were taken down and life once more returned to normal. The people went back to hunting, working, dancing and some went back to drinking or whatever they chose to do”³⁵. The return to 'normal' is a return to the individual regaining control over their life – Christmas celebrations are a time under the auspices and control of the Moravian church, Naluyuk night is the recognized transitional zone between activities controlled by the church and activities controlled by individuals. A regaining of control over one's individual life would provide a release from anxiety centring on that particular time of year.

Connecting two worlds.

While the nalujuks can be understood as the apex of the conflict between dependence and independence, the event also contains elements which in contemporary circumstances connect the two worlds, Inuit and Moravian. They reinforce Moravian Christianity by addressing children directly rather than adults, with the expressed approval of the Inuit adults, and by having children sing Moravian hymns and carols in Inuktitut, not Inuit songs or popular songs.

In contrast with the human mummies where the tradition of mumming potentially provides a platform for collective social action in opposition to the economic, political and social policies and activities of the governing authorities, the spirit naluyuk figures function as a means of transitioning from one cultural frame to another (mission life to Inuit life on the land). They engage mission life by making children accountable for their behaviour within mission life through naluyuk night when children are required to sing non-Inuit songs in Inuktitut and are given a gift in approval of their behaviour. Naluyuks support the indoctrination of children into Moravian community life at the same time as they provide visual and conceptual elements from Inuit life. More importantly, naluyuks recognize Moravians from within the context of an Inuit world-view at the same time as they mark the Inuit return to their hunting-gathering worldview and subsistence activities.

Hostility and social control.

The naluyuk event is an institutionalized way for releasing hostility and a mechanism of social control. The “naluyuks” are in the most obvious position to take advantage of their veiled identity and express their repressed hostility without inviting a belated reprisal. The observers may, and do, express their hostile feelings through the “naluyuks”. This factor explains in part the anxiety and apprehension manifested by adolescents and adults. The persistent harassment of some individuals and the mixed reaction of the observers who shift their support from “naluyuk” to victim and back again, are factual points which support this argument. The crowd is likely to turn the “naluyuks” wrath on those persons who are a public nuisance’³⁶.

The mummies and janneys also function as a means of releasing hostility and as a mechanism of social control. And, by maintaining their humanity, they can be agents both as individual human beings and as groups, of economic, political and social change. The power to initiate change in the social sphere lies within them as human beings. The mumming tradition is a means for gaining entry to all the homes in a community and through the vehicle of the Mummies' Play speak on broader issues of economic, political and social import, but also speak about the behaviour of individual community members. The identity-guessing game has taken the serious business of maintaining anonymity while engaging in collective social action into the framework of a game, an entertainment. Within the Inuit world-view, change in the physical world could be accomplished through shamanic travel from the world of humans to another world with non-human beings. The sea-woman mythology required that Sedna be appeased by the Inuit shamans entering her world and combing out her hair which was tangled because of the taboo violations by humans. When

Lynn Lunde, *Naluyuks of northern Labrador: Views from the printed page*, Mummies Unconvention, Gloucester, 2013.

appeased by the shamans Sedna would release the sea animals she had penned and the animals would return to the physical world as game animals for the Inuit hunters.

Each tradition expresses resistance to their respective governing authority but do so in differing ways: within the Inuit world-view Sedna could be appeased with the resultant return of the sea animals, and later the naluyuks can be understood as an expression of post-contact conflict of cultures between the Inuit and Europeans, particularly the Moravian missionaries; mumming events can be understood as a form of resistance based in class and ethnicity expressed as Irish vs. English, Catholic vs. Protestant, fisherman vs. mercantile establishment.

As a mechanism of social control, Richling agrees with Ben-Dor that naluyuk events are a means of keeping the young in-hand through the depiction of the naluyuk as an inquisitor and bogey figure³⁷. A remembrance for a time period probably prior to 1950 noted: “Our parents used to let the nalujuks in the house and tell them that we never listened to them, and our parents would tell the nalujuks to take us away”³⁸. An article from 1978 notes that - “Most of the children were conditioned to be afraid of the 'Nalujuk' people. We used to be told that if we were bad boys or girls during the past year, we surely would get it from a 'Nalujuk’”³⁹. By 2008, the change from a fearful event to a more fun event was pronounced - “When you do sing to them, they give you some treats. It's a very, very fun time and children just love Jan.6”⁴⁰. There is also the singling out by the naluyuks of particular adults to be dealt with harshly by the naluyuks with the support of on-lookers.

Reduction of anxiety.

The events can also act as a means of decreasing anxiety: Ben-Dor⁴¹ notes that persons most recently converted to Christianity felt the greatest anxiety at this point in the year compared with persons who had been converted for a greater period of time. Richling suggests the anxiety is due to the:

“inherent conflict between pre- and post-contact cultures as symbolized by the appearance of the masked nalujut at the close of the Christmas season. Resolution of this conflict is achieved through the various behavioural components of the Epiphany Night ritual that give expression to the renewal of commitment to the mission. The nalujuk thus emerges as a contextually transformed Sedna, a figure demanding people's fear and respect of his power to create tensions between clearly distinct social realities”⁴².

An addendum to Richling's observations is provided by McCarthy⁴³ in a 2008 newspaper article:

“The Nallayut celebrations have been happening for centuries in Labrador but they were originally begun as part of the conversion process of the Moravian church for the Inuit people. The “festival of the heathens” was what Nallayut was called by the Moravians. Nallayuts would dress up in disguise and unbelievers would be punished with a whip or a stick.

Once a more fearful event, the celebration has become a happier occasion and one aimed more towards children. It is generally a community event where everyone gathers at a home or community centre and awaits the Nallayuts arrival.”

McCarthy's rendering suggests the Moravians incorporated a long-standing Inuit event into their domain and turned it to their purposes: elements of the Inuit belief system being turned against the Inuit when the Moravians co-opted the naluyuks in the punishment of unbelievers in Christianity. Any lingering anxiety of the heathen/Christian dichotomy is resolved by the community gathering to await and welcome the arrival of the naluyuks, now a much diluted Inuit non-human figure under the constraints of Christians rather than Sedna.

Johansen⁴⁴ adds to the Inuit Moravian connections in the naluyuk entity.

“But what is a nalujuk: In Inuktitut the word means “heathen.” So, we have a Moravian church celebration that's interrupted by a horde of heathens who pour into town to harass the Christians. How did this custom come about? Maybe the nalujuk sprang from the imaginations of the early Moravian missionaries who needed to warn their new converts away from their old pagan ways. Or maybe the nalujuk were precisely what they seem: Inuit who still followed the old customs who come to confront the new Christians in the middle of the most important Christian ceremony.”

Liminal spaces, both social and geographical, are arenas for anxiety. Periods and locations of change are problematic as processes and outcomes become unpredictable. This sense of everything going back to 'normal', to the usual, once Christmas celebrations were over (as noted earlier in this paper): “The next day the trees and decorations were taken down and life once more returned to normal. The people went back to hunting, working, dancing and some went back to drinking or whatever they chose to do”⁴⁵. The return to 'normal' is also a return to a state where individuals regain control over their own lives – Christmas celebrations are a time under the auspices and control of the Moravian church, Naluyuk night is the recognized transitional zone (the liminal period) between activities controlled by the church and activities controlled by individuals. A regaining of control, a regaining of the known, would provide a release from anxiety cantering on that particular time of year.

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Embodiment of Inuit Values.

The naluyuks as Inuit figures represent the desired characteristics of a strong Inuit human. “The traditions of the Inuit people live in this evening. Nallijuks are Inuit people who are stern, yet rewarding, healthy, strong and behave as though they are living the way their ancestors did in the past”⁴⁶. The clothing worn by the naluyuks visually distinguishes them from the other people running about on the streets, and it signifies them as being different in the sense of being from another world. “The traditional Inuit clothing is really important to our culture, especially nowadays where it is very hard to find someone who could actually still make seal skin coats and boots, or caribou hide coats”⁴⁷. The sticks or weapons carried by naluyuks are items which are at hand now as they were in the past, items that are also tools including sticks which could be thrown as spears and whips used to direct teams of sled dogs. The layering of the physical world of tools and clothing with oral history and beliefs of the Inuit make a powerful association between the naluyuks and the Inuit.

Conclusion

Among the Inuit there is a geographically widespread and longstanding belief in a sea-woman who controls sea mammals, hence controls the sustainability of Inuit communities, and communicates with humans through Inuit shamans and non-human figures. This power is manifested in events with elements similar to those found in Epiphany events. Contemporary versions of naluyuks, because of the unrelenting presence of the Moravian missions, may have a Christian interpretive overlay which belies the origins of the events. The Inuit cultural meanings, functions, and ethnographic historic presence of naluyuk events support the Inuit as the source of the naluyuk events, with an overlay gloss of Christian mythology.

To circle back to where this discussion began, naluyuks are not mummies or janneys⁴⁸ stemming from northern European traditions but rather they are of Inuit origin. The Inuit origins give naluyuks culturally distinct meanings for the events. The apparently shared characteristics including house visitation, masking and disguising, and time of year, are ritual threads shared with many peoples of the world. The apparently shared interpretations with Christianity including arrival from the east, the bearing of gifts, carrying a stick, appearance in mid-winter, are not shared through meaning but through misapplied interpretation of the events. Once the origins are understood then contemporary cultural meanings can begin to address historic influences which have affected the contemporary manifestation. The naluyuk are of Inuit origins with various other possible cultural influences and interpretations arising from other cultural groups political,

economic and religious needs.

Further ethnographic research needs to be undertaken in northern Labrador communities. Through enquiries into the elements, origins and meaning of naluyuk events within the communities in which they occur, I suggest that it will become apparent that naluyuks are of the Inuit culture and peoples notwithstanding the concerted efforts of the Moravian church to dilute, if not eliminate, Inuit beliefs and world-view to accommodate Moravians beliefs, and contemporary Canadian politics and worldview.

¹This paper is titled 'views from the printed page' as I have not personally engaged in ethnographic research in Labrador for the material discussed in this paper. I have relied upon numerous written sources for descriptions of the actual events. The purpose of this paper is to heighten awareness of a mid-winter masking/disguising event which occurs in northern Labrador Canada within the Inuit community.

²Andersen, April. "The Nallijuk." Unpublished student paper submitted for Folklore 1150, Labrador Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2005. P1-22. Print.

³Andersen, April. "The Nallijuk." Unpublished student paper submitted for Folklore 1150, Labrador Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2005. P1-22. Print.

⁴Edmunds, Sharon. "Christmas in Makkovik". www.hvgb.net/~sedna/christmasmakkovik.html. Web. 28 Oct 2014.

⁵Ben-Dor, Shmuel. "The 'Naluyuks' of Northern Labrador: A Mechanism of Social Control". *Christmas Mimming in Newfoundland: Essays in Anthropology Folklore, and History*. Ed. Herbert Halpert, G.M. Story. Toronto: published by University of Toronto Press for Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1969. P119-127. Print.

⁶Author unknown. "Christmas Time in Northern Labrador". *Inuktitut Winter 1978*: 18-26. Print. This article was reprinted in *Christmas in the Big Igloo: True Tales from the Canadian Arctic* attributing authorship to Sam Metcalfe. Ed. Ken Harper. Yellowknife, N.W.T.: Outcrop, the Northern Publishers, 1983. P20-23. Print.

⁷Andersen, April. "The Nallijuk." Unpublished student paper submitted for Folklore 1150, Labrador Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2005. P1-22. Print. Interview with Ashley Edmunds, collected by April Andersen.

⁸Andersen, April. "The Nallijuk." Unpublished student paper submitted for Folklore 1150, Labrador Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2005. P1-22. Print. Interview with Nicole Dicker, collected by April Andersen.

⁹Andersen, April. "The Nallijuk." Unpublished student paper submitted for Folklore 1150, Labrador Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2005. P1-22. Print.

¹⁰Information on the Arctic archaeological record is derived from three works by the noted Arctic archaeologist Robert McGhee: *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd, 2004. Print. This immensely readable book is a concise view of the archaeological record within the framework of human lived experience. *Ancient People of the Arctic*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996. Print. *Canadian Arctic Prehistory*. Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1990. Print.

¹¹Information on the historic material can be acquired from numerous sources. The work of John C. Kennedy is very readable and are the documents I referenced: *People of the Bays and Headlands: Anthropological History and the Fate of Communities in the Unknown Labrador*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. Print. "Northern Labrador: An Ethnohistorical Account". *The White Arctic: Anthropological Essays on Tutelage and Ethnicity*. Ed. Robert Paine. St. John's: ISER (Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland), 1977. P264-305. Print.

¹²McGhee, Robert. *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd, 2004. Print. As an example of the quality of technology employed in the Arctic - "... tiny stone tools chipped skilfully from brilliantly coloured flints; minute needles honed from bird bone, their drilled eyes almost microscopic; harpoon heads carved from antler or ivory, with a hole to which the hunter attached a line to retrieve his prey from the sea; bone or ivory lances edged with razor-sharp flint blades". p45.

¹³McGhee, Robert. *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd, 2004. p45. Print.

¹⁴McGhee, Robert. *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd, 2004. P52-53. Print.

¹⁵Ben-Dor, Shmuel. *Makkovik: Eskimos and Settlers in a Labrador Community: A Contrastive Study in Adaptation*. St. John's: ISER (Institute of Social and Economic Research), Memorial University of Newfoundland. 1966. P125.

Print.

- ¹⁶Richling, Barnett. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting". *The Power of Symbols: Masks and Masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print.
- ¹⁷Richling, Barnett. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting". *The Power of Symbols: Masks and Masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print.
- ¹⁸There are numerous videos on the internet which provide a view of contemporary events. Search you tube for Krampus: Oberlienzer Krampusse, Krampus und Nikolaus Bad Gastein, Nikolaus und Krampus in Wagrain, krampustrailer haiming 2010 are only a few of the pieces ranging from house-visitation to large outdoor spectacles.
- ¹⁹"My parents always told me stories of how the Nalujuk's [sic] would come off the Eastern sea ice." Barbour, Janelle. "Nalujuk's Night". Unpublished student paper submitted for Folklore 1150, Labrador Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2006. P1-11. Print.
- ²⁰Richling, Barnett. "Images of the 'Heathen' in northern Labrador." *Etudes Inuit/Unuit Studies* Vol. 4, No. 1-2, 1980: p233-242. Print. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting." *The Power of Symbols: masks and masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine and Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print. The second of these papers is an insightful examination of acculturation viewed through the circumstances of the Inuit and the naluyuk tradition of northern Labrador.
- ²¹Speck, Frank. "Labrador Eskimo Mask and Clown." *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1935: 159-173. Print.
- ²²Sedna, the sea woman, is a pivotal figure within Inuit mythology. Her story, and its many variations, accounts for the presence of sea mammals upon which Inuit survival depends. There is a substantial literature addressing the Sedna stories. Several of the recent works include: *Inuit Women: Their Powerful Spirit in a Century of Change* by Janet Mancini Billson and Kyra Mancini, 2007; there are numerous references to Sedna in the *Encyclopaedia of the Arctic* ed Mark Nuttall, 2005; *Faces of the Goddess* by Lotte Motz, 1997 gives a comprehensive list of the variant forms of the Sedna stories in Appendix A – The Sedna Tales, p189-195; and *The Sea Woman: Sedna in Inuit Shamanism and Art in the Eastern Arctic* by Frederic Laugrand and Jarich Oosten, 2008.
- The book by Laugrand and Oosten is beautifully illustrated with numerous coloured photographs of Inuit carvings of Sedna and other beings. An understanding of Sedna mythology lies within the Inuit culture - "...the notion of goddess does not apply to Inuit beliefs and practices. Neither does that of Mother Nature. The notion of nature may be an important value in Western culture, but it obscures an adequate understanding of the Inuit world. That world is not governed by nature or even by natural laws. It is inhabited by ambiguous and ambivalent nonhuman beings, and Inuit can only survive by respecting the animals and other nonhuman beings that inhabit their world. Even though the rules of the past (the *pittailiniit*) have been replaced by rules of Christian conduct and Canadian law, Inuit are still very much aware of the need to respect those nonhuman beings in the world." p133.
- ²³Richling, Barnett. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting". *The Power of Symbols: Masks and Masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print.
- ²⁴Richling, Barnett. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting". *The Power of Symbols: Masks and Masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print.
- ²⁵Richling, Barnett. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting". *The Power of Symbols: Masks and Masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print.
- ²⁶For an in-depth examination of each of the rituals noted, please refer to Richling 1980 and 1983 as well as the individual documents by the authors referenced in his paper.
- ²⁷Porsild, Morten. *Studies on the Material Culture of the Eskimo in West Greenland*. Arbejder fra Den Danske Arktiske Station paa Disko, nr.7. Kobenhavn. 1915. p248. Quoted by: Heijnen, Adrienne. "Masks and Mummie Traditions in Greenland: A Survey." *Masks and Mummie in the Nordic Area*. Ed. Terry Gunnell. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien for svensk folkkultur, 2007. p449-484. Print.
- ²⁸Heijnen, Adrienne. "Masks and Mummie Traditions in Greenland: A Survey." *Masks and Mummie in the Nordic Area*. Ed. Terry Gunnell. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien for svensk folkkultur, 2007. P460-462. Print.
- ²⁹Obed, Boas. Quoted from: Fitzhugh, Lynne D. *The Labradorians: Voices from the Land of Cain*. St. John's: Breakwater, 1999. P212-213. Print. This book provides a concise readable account of the Moravians and Inuit on the Labrador in chapters 5(Torngat) and 6(The Moravian Coast). The short analysis at the beginning of Ch.5 is based on the much longer works of Carol Brice-Bennett *Two Opinions: Inuit and Moravian Missionaries in Labrador, 1804-1860* and Inge Kleivan *The Eskimos of Northeast Labrador: A History of Eskimo-white relations, 1771-1955*. Each chapter in the book includes numerous relevant narratives from *Them Days*.
- Them Days* magazine is a valuable resource for Labrador oral history data. "Them Days is a quarterly oral history magazine based in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. Material is gathered from Labradorians past and

present by the editor, temporary staffs people like summer students or special project assistants, and volunteer contributors themselves. Them Days does not pay for written contributions or for interviews; contributions are voluntary." "The Magazine". *Them Days*. www.themdays.com Accessed: 11 Nov. 2013. Web. To date there is no online access to the magazine articles.

- ³⁰Richling, Barnett. "Labrador Nalujuk: The Transformation of an Aboriginal Ritual Complex in a Post-Contact Setting". *The Power of Symbols: Masks and Masquerade in the Americas*. Ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. P21-29. Print.
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- ³³Johansen, Michael. "Good Intentions Gone Bad". *The Telegram* 11 Jan. 1998: 14. Web. Eureka.cc. 12 Nov. 2013.
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- ³⁶Ben-Dor, Shmuel. *Makkovik: Eskimos and Settlers in a Labrador Community: a contrastive study in adaptation*. St. John's: ISER (Institute of Social and Economic Research), 1966. Print.
- ³⁷Numerous oral history accounts note the use as a means of verbal control by creating fear in children. For an academic discussion of the subject see - Widdowson, J.D.A. *If you don't be good: verbal social control in Newfoundland*. St. John's: ISER (Institute of Social and Economic Research), 1977. Print. Ben-Dor, Shmuel. *Makkovik: Eskimos and Settlers in a Labrador Community: A Contrastive Study in Adaptation*. St. John's: ISER (Institute of Social and Economic Research), 1966. Print.
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- ⁴⁸Lunde, Lynn. "Mummers Janneys Naluyuks: 'one of these is not alike' ". 2013. Web. www.mastermummers.org/unconvention.