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## ***Anguaks* in Copper and Netsilik Inuit Spirituality**

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## Abstract

The composition of and dynamics underlying the use of *anguaks* are described in great detail. The discussion is largely confined to the Copper and Netsilik Inuit, although several other groups are touched on by way of comparison. The work consists firstly of a summary and interpretation of Rasmussen's (1931) chapter devoted to Netsilik *anguaks*. This material is then synthesized with material collected over the course of several participant-focused interviews conducted with seven Inuit elders from the community of Cambridge Bay.

For clarity of presentation, several factors have been distinctly considered: the material composition of *anguaks* derived from animals, *anguaks* relating to human beings, women's objects, and shamanic paraphernalia. Based on these findings, a sample of 15 artifacts from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation's collections are interpreted and discussed.

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## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background.....	1
1.1 Definition of an <i>Anguak</i> .....	2
1.2 Description of the Copper Inuit and their Cosmology.....	3
1.3 Outline of the Study.....	6
1.4 Research Objectives.....	8
1.5 Theoretical Perspectives.....	10
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY.....	13
2.0 Introduction.....	13
2.1 Literature Review.....	13
2.2 Identification of a Collection of <i>Anguaks</i> .....	23
2.3 Field Research.....	24
2.4 Analysis of the Findings.....	25
CHAPTER 3: MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	27
3.0 Introduction.....	27
3.1 Mammals.....	27
3.1.0 Caribou.....	27
3.1.1 Bear.....	29
3.1.2 Seal.....	31
3.1.3 Musk Ox.....	33
3.1.4 Ermine & Weasel.....	34
3.1.5 Hare.....	35
3.1.6 Wolf.....	36
3.1.7 Fox.....	37
3.1.8 Dog.....	38
3.2 Birds.....	41
3.2.0 Raven.....	41
3.2.1 Ptarmigan.....	42
3.2.2 Tern.....	42
3.2.3 Owl.....	43
3.2.4 Loon / Diver.....	43
3.2.5 Gull.....	46
3.3 Miscellaneous.....	46
3.3.0 Salmon.....	46
3.3.1 Insects.....	47
3.3.2 Plant Material.....	48
3.4 Discussion.....	49

CHAPTER 4: OBJECTS RELATING TO HUMANS.....	54
4.0 Introduction.....	54
4.1 <i>Anguaks</i> Associated with People and their Characteristics.....	54
4.1.0 <i>Anguaks</i> Derived from Human Products.....	54
4.1.1 <i>Anguaks</i> Associated with Age.....	56
4.1.2 <i>Anguaks</i> Associated with a Certain Proficiency.....	58
4.1.3 <i>Anguaks</i> Associated with a Family Member.....	59
4.1.4 <i>Anguaks</i> Associated with a Specific Activity.....	60
4.1.5 <i>Anguaks</i> Related to Women and their Activities.....	61
4.1.6 <i>Anguaks</i> Associated with Birth and Infancy.....	63
4.1.7 Discussion.....	65
4.2 Women's <i>Anguaks</i> and the Role of the Mother.....	71
4.2.0 Women's <i>Anguaks</i> .....	72
4.2.1 Mother as a Mediator between <i>Anguak</i> and Child.....	74
4.3 Shamanic Paraphernalia.....	76
4.3.0 The Shamanic Belt.....	77
4.3.1 Objects Associated with Shamanic Action.....	79
4.3.2 Discussion.....	80
4.4 Personal <i>Anguaks</i> .....	83
4.4.0 Matthew Nakashook's <i>Anguak</i> .....	83
4.4.1 Matthew Nakashook's Explanation of the Beetle.....	85
4.4.2 Mabel Angulalik's <i>Anguak</i> .....	86
4.4.3 Moses Koihok's <i>Anguak</i> .....	87
CHAPTER 5: CANADIAN MUSEUM OF CIVILIZATION CORPORATION COLLECTION.....	89
5.0 Introduction.....	89
5.1 Objects Composed of Various Animal Bones.....	90
5.1.0 Belt of Fox Bones (IV-D-371).....	90
5.1.1 Belt of Bird Bones (IV-D-1791).....	92
5.1.2 Fringes of Animal Bones (IV-D-1792, IV-D-1793).....	94
5.1.3 Discussion.....	96
5.2 Objects Incorporating Loon Bills and Ermine Skins.....	100
5.2.0 Woman's Coat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill (IV-D-944).....	100
5.2.1 Hat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill (IV-D-977).....	103
5.2.2 Pendant of Squirrel Skin (IV-D-1050).....	105
5.2.3 Ermine Skin with Loon Heads (IV-D-1293).....	107
5.2.4 Man's Coat with Ermine Skins (IV-D-1259).....	108
5.2.5 Jackets with Ermine Skins (39417).....	109
5.2.6 Discussion.....	110
5.3. Objects Composed of Teeth.....	116
5.3.0 Ornament for Woman's Coat (IV-D-1013).....	116
5.3.1 Bear Teeth (IV-D-1294 a-m).....	117
5.3.2 Hat of Bear Skin & Teeth (IV-D-1297).....	119
5.3.3 Bracelet of Dog Teeth (IV-D-1794).....	121
5.3.4 Discussion.....	122

5.4 Object Composed of Vertebrae.....	123
5.4.0 Bandolier of Bones (IV-D-306) .....	123
5.4.1 Discussion.....	126
5.5 Objects Composed of Plant Matter.....	129
5.5.0 Skin Stuffed with Moss (IV-D-1757, IV-D-1758).....	129
5.5.1 Discussion.....	130
 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION.....	 131
6.1 Considerations of the Spirit / Soul.....	131
6.2 Associative Considerations.....	132
6.3 Perception of the Functioning of <i>Anguaks</i> .....	134
6.4 The Role of the Mother.....	137
6.5 Age.....	138
6.6 The Shamanic Belt and Objects.....	139
6.7 Recapitulation of the Research Objectives.....	140
6.8 Problems with the Research.....	141
6.8.0 Linguistic Difficulties.....	141
6.8.1 Weaknesses in the Research.....	143
6.9 Suggestions for Further Research .....	144
 REFERENCES CITED.....	 146
 ARCHIVES.....	 150
 APPENDICES.....	 151
A. Questionnaire.....	151
B. Consent Form.....	153

## List of Figures

1. Map of Nunavut.....	4
2. Belt of Fox Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-371.....	90
3. Belt of Bird Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1791.....	92
4. Belt of Bird Bones (Detail), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1791.....	93
5. Fringes of Animal Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1792.....	94
6. Fringes of Animal Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1793.....	95
7. Woman's Coat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill. CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-944, Back View (Photograph Archive # S93-3566).....	100
8. Hat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-977 (Photograph Archive # 73-12783).....	103
9. Pendant of Squirrel Skin (Stomach), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1050.....	105
10. Pendant of Squirrel Skin (Back), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1050.....	106
11. Ermine Skin with Loon Heads, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1293.....	107
12. Man's Coat with Ermine Skin, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1259 (Photograph Archive # 85-7037).....	108
13. Jackets with Ermine Skins, CMCC Photograph Archive # 39417.....	109
14. Ornament for Woman's Coat, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1013.....	116
15. Bear Teeth, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1294 a-m.....	117
16. Hat of Bear Skin & Teeth (Front View), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1297.....	119
17. Hat of Bear Skin & Teeth (Back View), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1297.....	120
18. Bracelet of Dog Teeth, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1794.....	121
19. Bandolier of Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-306.....	123
20. Bandolier of Bones (Detail), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-306, Detail.....	125
21. Skin Stuffed with Moss, CMCC Acquisition #'s IV-D-1757 & IV-D-1758.....	129



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.0 Background

My interest in the Canadian North and the northern way of life was in part passed on to me by my parents. Both of them had worked for several years in the northern Quebec community of Schefferville, and I have fond memories of their anecdotes, hearing their stories and seeing pictures and slides of their time there and of the people they met. This interest was to remain somewhat dormant, only to flourish again during my employment at the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation (hereafter referred to as the CMCC) in Hull, Quebec. Having completed my Undergraduate Degree in Leisure Studies at the University of Ottawa in 1998, I worked for two years at the CMCC from 1998-2000. The museum boasts the largest collection of Inuit art and artifacts in the world, as well as a wealth of archival material dealing with both the traditional and contemporary Inuit ways of life. During my employment there, I was further exposed to Inuit culture through my involvement in two specific projects, the first of which being the *Inuit Outreach* scholastic program. This project was aimed at educating primary and secondary school students in the Ottawa/Hull area about the traditional and contemporary Inuit ways of life, as well as informing them about the implications of the inauguration of the Territory of Nunavut. The second project was the *Iqqaipaa* Inuit art exhibit which opened to the public on the inauguration day of Nunavut on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999. While reviewing the material to be presented in these projects, it was remarkable that despite the wealth of information relating to the material and social aspects of the Inuit, very little information or documentation seemed to be available regarding their religious or spiritual beliefs. I was particularly curious about certain objects fashioned by the Inuit from a wide variety of materials. These objects were often referred to by researchers and authors somewhat obliquely as ‘ornaments’, ‘charms’, ‘amulets’ and so forth. It was this lack of information that prompted me to pursue this line of research.

## **1.1 Definition of an *Anguak***

The objects that form the basis of this research will be hereafter referred to collectively as *anguaks*. An Inuinaktun term, *anguak* is a word that according to the elders of Cambridge Bay who were interviewed for this research simply means “an object with powers”. It will be used throughout this study to replace the outdated terms mentioned above. Due to their inaccuracy and inadequacy, contemporary researchers have largely abandoned these terms. Although these terms have been necessarily retained when quoting earlier authors, the reader should understand all of these terms to refer in fact to such objects. Terms such as ‘object’ and ‘item’ have been also used by earlier researchers to refer to *anguaks*. Given the animated nature of *anguaks*, some readers may disagree with the use of these terms. It must be understood that in the absence of English terms that accurately represent certain aspects of the Inuit cosmology, there is little option but to resort to these terms and that no disrespect or misrepresentation is intended. Furthermore, terms such as ‘power’, ‘ability’ and ‘quality’ will be used to describe the effects of an *anguak* on the wearer or locus of effect. Realizing that these terms are conceptually very broad, these terms should be taken to refer to the potential for dynamic and/or passive action contained in the objects.

This being said, an *anguak* was essentially an object that could be derived from practically any type of material that was to be found on the Inuit landscape. It could have consisted of an animal product such as a piece of caribou skin or seal bone, a naturally occurring element with unique properties such as a quartz crystal, or a complex and ornate object fashioned by human hands. Furthermore, although not within the scope of this study, the Inuit also incorporated modern items imported by southern researchers such as empty shell casings into *anguaks*. Usually worn as a pendant or attached to one’s coat or hood, these objects were generally carried everywhere with the individual. They each had a specific function that could range from making the wearer more attractive, to augmenting any number of physical attributes, to increasing one’s fortune on the hunt. In essence though, their collective function was to assist the individual in some way in his daily affairs and activities.

Documenting any aspect of the history of the transition of traditional Inuit culture and spirituality to a modern one could certainly be regarded as a challenging task for several reasons. Firstly, Inuit culture has experienced drastic changes in the past 150 years. This makes any element of their traditional lifestyle prior to these changes difficult to document. This is exacerbated by the fact that traditional Inuit cultures were without a written language prior to their contact with white settlers and missionaries, therefore the only existing records of traditional Inuit culture and spirituality must be pieced together *ex post facto* from fragments of oral history, mythology and artifacts. Although rarely used today, *anguaks* still form an important part of Inuit cultural history.

## **1.2 Description of the Copper Inuit and their Cosmology**

According to Stefansson's (1919: 33) classification, the Copper Inuit are the westernmost cultural group of what was considered as the Central Inuit. This situates them around the southern areas of Victoria Island and the Coppermine River area. Today the largest town within the confines of traditional Copper Inuit territory is Cambridge Bay, located on the southern shore of Victoria Island (see map on the following page). This is incidentally also where the field research component of this project was conducted. Following the seasonal patterns of their most important game animals, their chief sources of food were caribou in the summer and autumn, and seal in the winter. The Copper Inuit were thusly dubbed due to the fact that they were the only group to make use of the naturally occurring deposits of copper in the area. These malleable deposits were often fashioned into small items such as fish hooks, sewing needles, as well as arrow and harpoon heads (Damas 1984: 413).

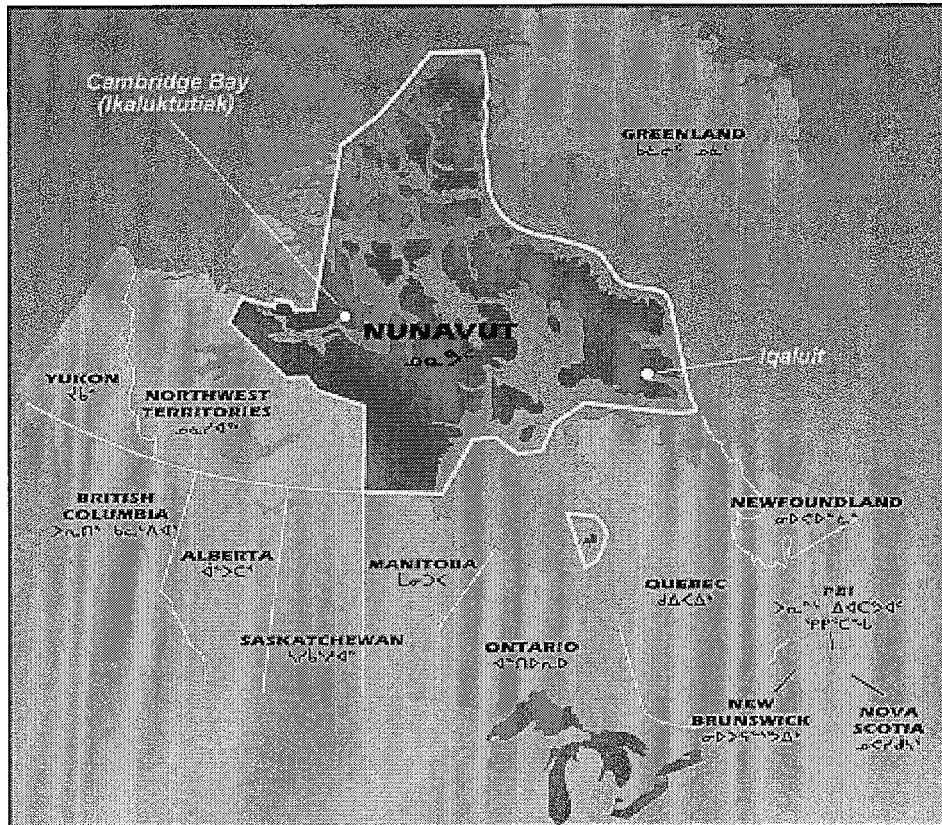


Figure 1: Map of Nunavut, courtesy of polamet.ca, 2003.

Prior to the 1900's the Copper Inuit "had been visited by a few European explorers, representing either the British Royal Navy or the Hudson's Bay Company, but to little obvious effect. After 1910, they were never without outside visitors" (Morrison & Germain 1995:7). This reasonably constant presence of white southern culture brought drastic changes to the traditionally nomadic, hunter/gatherer lifestyle patterns of the Copper Inuit. The urgency that underlies the study of these still-changing traditional cultural elements is that the further we move forward in time, the larger the gap between the researcher and the material to be researched becomes. Perhaps one of the most drastic and yet least understood changes that took place following the arrival of European explorers and missionaries to Inuit cultures in the Northwest Territories is the conversion of the Inuit from one religious system to another. However, the previous statement is only partially true. It is well known what religion the Inuit were converted to: "In Arctic Canada, Greenland, Labrador, and southern Alaska, large numbers of Inuit have converted to Christianity" (Miller 1998:4). As previously mentioned, it is when one

broaches the topic of what religion they were converted *from* that the researcher is faced with a somewhat daunting lack of information. It is well known that the Copper Inuit relied heavily on the shaman to act as an intermediary between the living and the spirit worlds (Damas 1984: 407), but many elements of their cosmology and spiritual beliefs have yet to be detailed. Although it is not necessarily within the scope of this study to describe this cosmology in its entirety, the intention is to elucidate the role that *anguaks* played in this traditional religion. As such, a brief and general description of Copper Inuit cosmology, and to a considerable extent that of their easterly neighbors the Netsilik Inuit, would be illustrative at this point in order to better understand how *anguaks* fit in to their spirituality. The Inuit landscape, while having been described by some past researchers in rather bleak terms, was apparently anything but that for the Inuit. Burch (1988: 1) explains it thusly:

The Eskimos believed that every thing is imbued with a soul, or energy source, which conveys to its shape the potential for action, and a disposition, which determines its attitude toward other phenomena...An outcrop is more than a rock because an animating force resides within it. When an Eskimo gazed out across the countryside, he did not see a static arrangement of land forms, as we would. He perceived a complex, exciting, and often frightening world of natural and supernatural phenomena in which even inert topographic features contained within them the potential for dynamic action.

Quite literally, every person, animal and object was believed to have a spirit or animating force that the Inuit called an *inua*. The translation of the term *inua* into an accurate corresponding English term is problematic at best, as the concept of the *inua* does not exactly correspond to our concept of a soul, but it was similar to it in that it certainly consisted of a spiritual energy of some kind. Jenness (1922: 177) explains that the *inua* could be further divided into two different spiritual components, the *nappan* and the *tarrak* upon the death of a man or animal: “The soul, *nappan*, apparently ceases to exist altogether, but the shade, *tarrak*, is believed to linger for a time round the place where the body was laid”. Regardless of the lack of clarity surrounding the terminology and our understanding of the Inuit spirit world, it was apparently the *inua* of an *anguak* that was responsible for the powers that were bestowed on the wearer. Birket-Smith (1959: 162-163) writes that

Significantly enough, the very word *inuk*, which...means person, is used in the possessive form *inua* (plural *inue*), ‘its owner’. The whole world is just living, as man is, and the *inue* are, indeed, thought of as possessing human shapes...The *inue* are manifestations of the vitality of nature herself; they are the result of man’s unconscious projection of himself into normal nature, but they are very different from the soul.

Although the last sentence of this statement is perhaps a little cryptic, it generally captures the essence of the *inua* as it pertains to *anguaks*: although not equivalent to a soul in our general understanding of the term, it can be taken to refer to a form of animating principal or resident spirit, an energy or entity that ‘owns’ the being or object it inhabits. Although terms such as ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ will be used in this study by both earlier authors and myself, the reader should take them to refer to the Inuit concept of the *inua*.

This aforementioned concept of ‘ownership’ has also been the source of some debate, as it consists of an English translation of an Inuit concept, and as per the maxim, there is always something lost in the translation. For example, Balikci (1970: 203) writes that “Amulet spirits clustered around each person like a ring of supernatural helpers. They were individually owned and aided only their owner”. Given statements such as these, one would be inclined to think that the *inua* of the object was at the owner’s beck and call. However, insofar as *anguaks* are concerned, there is little or no evidence to support this. The reader should understand therefore that although the term ‘owner’ will also be used in this study, it does not represent the strict ‘owner/owned’ relationship as our culture understands it.

### **1.3 Outline of the Study**

The first chapter of this study will be devoted to the **Methodology** followed over the course of the research. Within this chapter, a brief critical overview of the prominent research done in the field of Inuit Studies will be presented. This literature review is partially to elaborate on some of the work that has already been done, but also to situate the present study within the larger field of Inuit Studies, and to establish the general research perspectives it will adhere to. Much of the previous research done on various Inuit groups, either classical or contemporary, seems bent on applying cultural aspects

observed in one area universally throughout the Inuit world. It should be noted that what characterizes traditional Inuit societies and beliefs is not entirely uniform. The large land base and sparse population of the Canadian Arctic has led to a multiplicity of Inuit groups, each with their own unique sets of beliefs and customs. Although these groups do retain certain common characteristics, their traditions, societies and belief systems were and still are quite distinct. The rich variety of cultures, beliefs and traditions held by the various Inuit groups who inhabit Arctic Canada and the United States makes it difficult and myopic to generalize or to apply to them any one cultural aspect universally. Therefore, in the context of this research it was necessary to select a specific group or geographic area in which to study. The information used for the aforementioned CMCC *Inuit Outreach* program relied mostly on texts and information dealing with the Copper and Netsilik Inuit provided by Dr. David Morrison, Curator in Charge and Archaeologist of the Northwest Territories and Mackenzie Delta at the CMCC. Given that most of my knowledge of Inuit culture was therefore based on these specific areas, on the advice of my advisor Dr. Frédéric Laugrand of Université Laval (Quebec City), it was elected to narrow the scope of the project and to conduct the research among the Copper and Netsilik Inuit specifically. The term ‘Copper Inuit’ refers to the Inuit who inhabit the Victoria Island and Coppermine areas of Nunavut, and the term ‘Netsilik Inuit’ refers to the Inuit who inhabit the Queen Maud Gulf region immediately southeast of Victoria Island. These terms were part of the classificatory system developed by Stefansson (1919: 33). Although one could argue that Stefansson’s classification scheme of Inuit cultures is certainly artificial, it remains a useful heuristic tool, and his terms will be employed here for lack of more accurate ones. Although the Copper and Netsilik Inuit are the focus of the research, due to the aforementioned similarities between the various Inuit groups, information pertaining to other groups will be used, but such additions will be duly noted. Indeed, on the further advice of my co-advisor Dr. Jarich Oosten of Leiden University (Netherlands), it was decided to consider the findings contiguously with the research and information regarding the objects collected and documented by Rasmussen among the Copper Inuit’s immediate neighbors, the Netsilik Inuit. This analysis is presented in the **Material Considerations** chapter of this study.

The field research phase of this research was carried out in the autumn of 2001 in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. For this phase, a collection of objects had to be gathered and photographed for the purposes of the research. I was greatly assisted in this endeavor by two members of the CMCC staff: Judy Hall, Curator and Ethnologist; and Louis Campeau, then the CMCC Photo Archives Research Officer. They provided me with a small collection of artifacts and what little documentation was available for these objects in the CMCC archives. This collection is presented in its entirety in the **Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation Collection** chapter of this study. Ideal for the purposes of this project, the explanations of these objects were incomplete or rather vague, leaving many questions with regard to the material composition, history and function of the objects unanswered. It was with these questions in mind that the following research objectives were formulated:

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- 1) **To understand what *anguaks* consisted of in traditional Copper Inuit spirituality.**
  - What were they made of?
  - How were they made?
  - Who made them?
  - Who could use them?
  - How did one acquire them?
- 2) **To understand how and why power was ascribed to these objects.**
  - Was the material used important?
  - Was the history of the object important?
  - Was an association between the object and a particular event, person or activity important?
  - What purposes did these objects ultimately serve?
- 3) **To assess what place *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit oral culture.**
  - How much do the elders recall with regards to *anguaks*?
  - What importance do *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit spirituality?
  - What place do *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit oral memory and history?

Based on the review of relevant literature and the interviews conducted for this research, a chapter entitled **Relating to Humans and Their Activities** will be presented. This chapter will outline how certain objects related the wearer to another human being or to a certain activity conducted by humans. It should perhaps be noted that *anguaks*



were mostly worn by men, or at least the majority of the *anguaks* documented were worn by men. At the very least, the locus of effect of the *anguak* was usually a man or boy, as the majority of the objects worn by women actually targeted their male children. However, the *anguaks* worn by women actually represent some of the most interesting questions pertaining to this research. As such, women's *anguaks* will be treated separately in this chapter, but otherwise the bulk of the information refers to men. As such, in the interest of clarity, generalizations concerning *anguaks* will use the male gender. As a by-product of this research, sections of this chapter will be dedicated to shamanic paraphernalia as well the special role occupied by the mother to act as a mediator between an *anguak* and a child.

With the consent and assistance of the Hamlet Council, the field research phase of the project was conducted with several elders in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut during November and December of 2001. A full list of all the participants will be provided in the **Methodology** chapter of the study. The data was collected through interviews with the elders, with the assistance of several interpreters who will also be named in the **Methodology** chapter. Essentially, aside from questions pertaining to their own knowledge of and experiences with *anguaks*, the participants were also asked a variety of questions about the collection of CMCC artifacts. These discussions are summarized in the **Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation Collection** chapter of this study.

It must also be understood that the fluidity of personal interpretation regarding *anguaks* and the variety of cultures in which they were present has led to a widely disparate field of interpretation surrounding them. Some readers may be familiar with the notion that these objects seemingly had to be inherited or given to someone. As will be explained, among the Copper Inuit *anguaks* could be inherited, although these objects represent a slim minority. The bulk of the objects seem to have been associated with certain universally accepted material qualities, and a person could benefit from their power merely by wearing it on his person. In some sources, the shaman is cited as the person who was responsible for ascertaining the qualities of an object which he would then sell (Burch 1988: 10). In that this research refers primarily to the Copper Inuit, and

no such custom seemed to be observed, this point will not be dealt with in any great detail.

## **1.5 Theoretical Perspectives**

Research of this type is not without its barriers, not the least of which being the somewhat marked difficulty in overcoming the etic/emic dilemmas a researcher faces when studying and living in another culture, not to mention those that the community itself faces *vis a vis* the researcher. In the context of this research, this was felt most prominently along semantic and terminological lines. Aware of the fact that terms mentioned earlier like ‘amulet’, ‘fetish’ and so on are insufficient, vague and often imply a certain degree of ethnocentrism on the part of the researcher, a reasonably neutral or unbiased term had to be applied. At the very least, a more accurate term had to be found. Having initially adopted the term ‘objects of power’ to refer to these pieces, it was found that the interpreters and respondents disliked the term, and in retrospect, so do I. In most cases, the interpreters and I merely reverted to the term *anguak* and occasionally ‘amulet’, as in their understanding this term was more or less equivalent to the term *anguak*. The term *anguak* itself posed some difficulty in its translation, as it was explained to the author by several different people as respectively ‘an object with power’, ‘amulet’, ‘ornament’ or ‘decoration’. As touched on previously, the terms ‘object’ and ‘power’ are also not without their culture-specific interpretations. As will be clarified later in this study, the mere notion of an ‘object’ from our Western perspective becomes problematic when one considers that these pieces were either thought by the Inuit to be inhabited by a resident spirit, or to create a bond between the slain animal and the wearer. Furthermore, the term ‘power’ also creates some difficulty by virtue of its ambiguity in our own culture: does it refer to agency, energy, domination or any number of other possible interpretations of the concept? Questions such as these, although stimulating, are unfortunately not within the scope of this project, nor is it really crucial to the understanding of the pieces to define what these terms mean. Although an etymological and semantic discussion both of the Inuit and English terms applied herein would certainly have a place in this type of research, as such this study will not attempt to concretely define the terms mentioned above. Rather, it will merely state that an *anguak*

for the purposes of this study is considered to be an object that, by virtue of its connection with another person or animal, or through its perceived material properties, bestows on the wearer some ability or aims at augmenting or improving an already-present ability. This general definition can only be regarded as preliminary and provisional in that there are many exceptions to the rule, so to speak. However, it serves as platform upon which the principal arguments of this study will be built, and a departure point for an understanding of *anguaks*.

This being said, it is not a simple task to define the theoretical perspectives adhered to in this work. The Inuit conception of a nature was a social one based on elements of reciprocity and equality with nature. This form of symbolic ecology that the Inuit practiced has been generally referred to as animism by past researchers. Contrasting animism against totemism, Descola (1996:87-88) describes it thusly:

animism endows natural beings with human dispositions and social attributes. Animic systems are thus a symmetrical inversion of totemic classifications: they do not exploit the differential relations between natural species to confer a conceptual order on society, but rather use the elementary categories structuring social life to organize, in conceptual terms, the relations between human beings and natural species. In totemic systems non-humans are treated as signs, in animic systems they are treated as the term of a relation.

This explanation largely applies to the Inuit cosmology. In paraphrasing Durkheim, Descola (1996:83) goes on to say that

the idea of a supernatural order is necessarily derived from the idea of a natural order of things, the former being but a residual category for all those phenomena which appear incompatible with the rational working of the laws of the universe.

Rather than establish the rigid and opposed categories of nature/society that are present in our society, the Inuit perceived of humans and non-humans as being part of the same reciprocal and egalitarian continuum. Examples abound in literature of the Inuit providing the souls of slain animals with gifts or acts of reciprocity to ensure that the soul would be pleased. Animals were conceived of as having human characteristics, and Inuit mythology abounds with examples of natural beings transforming into humans and vice versa, intermarriage between humans and animals, animals living as humans in snowhouses, using human implements, and so on. *Anguaks* seemed to be a reflection of

these beliefs. These objects seemed to act as vessels to convey the characteristics of animals that were regarded as desirable, as well as those of humans.

Many previous researchers have been inclined to explain or describe *anguaks* using the theoretical perspective of animism, asserting that some form of spiritual energy animated the objects, enabling them to perform certain seemingly conscious actions. Other authors such as Weyer (1969: 307) have gone so far as to forward the theory of fetishism with regard to *anguaks*, defining this theory more specifically as “a phase of animism, specifically that phase which deals with spirits associated with inanimate objects, especially those spirits that have not been original tenants of the objects but have been induced into them”. However, in light of this and other research, these theories could only be regarded as incomplete if not largely inaccurate explanations at best. Others have theorized that *anguaks* served a functional purpose, mediating the members of society and nature through a “series of symbolic representations and actions increasing an individual’s feeling of security in a hostile environment” (Balikci 1970: 197). Although perhaps each containing a kernel of truth, these aforementioned theories are nonetheless insufficient explanations. As I hope to make clear over the course of this study, *anguaks* incorporated elements of the structure of Copper and Netsilik Inuit cosmology, and therefore Inuit society at large. Despite a certain degree of superficial fluidity with which meaning was assigned to *anguaks* on an individual level, *anguaks* as a whole reflected deeply-held beliefs about the relationship between the Inuit and the game they hunted, as well as man’s place and role in the natural world. Furthermore, *anguaks* are also reflective of functional aspects in that they were mediators between man and the natural world, man and animal, or man and kin. In many respects, they did seem to be regarded as a necessary and functional expedient of Inuit society. As such, the approach taken with regards to this research was almost by default largely a functional one. *Anguaks* will be treated as objects that reflect the reciprocal animistic structure of the Inuit ecology and cosmology.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methodology**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The following chapter will outline in detail the methodological phases of the research. The research can be divided into 4 distinct phases: 1) a review of literature relevant to the topic, 2) the identification of a collection of artifacts to be used as a basis to conduct interviews with the elders, 3) the field research phase wherein the actual interviews were conducted, and 4) the analysis of the findings. Each will be discussed individually.

#### **2.1 Literature Review**

Firstly, a detailed review of relevant literature with a specific emphasis on the use of religious and/or spiritual objects and their application to religious practices and rituals in traditional Inuit culture had to be conducted. As mentioned previously, the decision to make the Copper Inuit the focus of this study was based primarily on the author's involvement with the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation (hereafter referred to as the CMCC). The author was, more specifically, involved in several of the museum's projects based primarily on the Copper Inuit. As such, given that the somewhat limited knowledge and experience of the author was with the Copper Inuit almost exclusively, it was decided that they would be the focus of the study. The emphasis when assembling literature resources was therefore naturally on authors who had assembled a significant quantity and quality of research during their stays with the Copper and neighboring Netsilik Inuit, such as Jenness (1922, 1946) and Rasmussen (1931). Care had to be taken to selectively filter out certain authors such as Ray (1977, 1981a, 1981b) and Burch (1988) whose research was not necessarily specific to a particular group, often seemingly applying their findings to the entirety of Inuit cultures. As such, works were selected according to their geographic relevance, but also due to their anthropological and/or sociological merit.

The literature resources for this project were drawn primarily from the Université Laval general library as well as the university's GÉTIC (Groupe d'études inuit et circumpolaires) collections, with additional resources from the CMCC library and artifact archives. Several documents related to the author's involvement in the aforementioned CMCC programs were also used. A detailed list of these sources is provided in the **Primary** and **Secondary Bibliography** sections of this study. Generally speaking though, the literature review was compiled from texts dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as several other relevant contemporary works by authors such as Oosten & Laugrand (2002). The earlier works provided an excellent overview of several essential elements. Firstly, these sources have provided basic descriptions of the core religious beliefs of the Copper Inuit as well as other Inuit groups. Incorporated into this information was an overview of the cosmology and view of the 'natural' and 'supernatural' worlds of the Inuit. This knowledge is essential when approaching the subject of *anguaks*. Secondly, these works cited have provided essential descriptions, testimonies and photographs of various *anguaks* that had been observed, recorded or collected by various researchers. These more material aspects are also important in understanding how the Inuit relate to their material and spiritual worlds. The more contemporary sources offered updated insights into the research of the past, providing new perspectives on this information. Essentially though, all of these works were selected based on their references to either *anguaks* or their more traditional namesakes such as amulet, charm and so forth. Many works were also selected due to their explanations and descriptions of Inuit cosmology, religion and social life, once again insofar as these elements related to *anguaks* or vice versa.

It would appear that either by default or necessity, the study of the Inuit in the late 1800's and the early 1900's was conducted primarily on an ethnological and sociological basis with little regard for the anthropological, social or spiritual dynamics that motivated the customs that were observed by these early researchers. However, interest in these latter elements was to follow shortly thereafter. In the last two decades of the 1800's, Franz Boas (1883) was one of the first ethno-anthropologists to study a group that was then called the 'Central Eskimo'. This group roughly corresponded to what are now known as the Baffin Island Inuit and their immediate easterly neighbors with whom the

Copper Inuit share many common characteristics, the Netsilik Inuit, who inhabited the northern and western coastal areas of Hudson Bay. Despite his belief that ethnology and anthropology should include “studying a culture in all its aspects, including its religion, art, history, and language, as well as the physical characteristics of the people” (Microsoft Encarta 1998), he paid little attention to their spiritual processes in comparison with their material culture and social habits. His observations on the spiritual and religious ideas of the Inuit would, however, lay the foundations for later researchers. Boas (1883) did remark the preoccupation of the Inuit with the spirit world, noting their strict observation of a number of taboos, and that objects that our culture considers inanimate were not considered so by the Inuit. His informants told him that every object had a distinct and individual *inuua*, or owner. *Inuvas* were spirits which were the “invisible rulers” (Boas 1883: 591) of every single person or object. Although images were not made of the *inuvas* themselves, given that they inhabited every object these spirits could be easily carried and their abilities exploited in the form of an *anguak*.

Hoffman (1897) would take the observations Boas (1883) made one step further to study the role of the shaman in Inuit societies. Focusing his study on the Aleutian Inuit of southern Alaska, Hoffman (1897) denoted the belief systems followed by shamans and the populace in general as a form of animism. By definition, a shaman was a man or woman who had somehow been granted special powers by the denizens of the spirit world. As a result of this experience, the shaman could call upon the help of one or more of his individual spirit familiars. These familiars were almost exclusively associated with a particular animal, the polar bear being an often-represented example. Shamans would especially attempt to exercise their powers by clothing themselves in skins or other objects from the animal identified as their familiar. An example of this that Hoffman (1897: 918) found in the Aleut area was for shamans and ritual dancers to tie “peculiar tail-like appendages...to the belt...to represent tails of animals”. A shaman would also carry with him “his personal fetish, in which his power lies” (Hoffman 1897: 921), a small object in the form of a real or mythical animal to which he would pose questions and listen to for responses.

Jenness (1922, 1946) would carry Hoffman's (1897) remarks on Aleut spirituality and shamanism even further with the Copper Inuit. On these subjects Jenness (1922) noted that the Copper Inuit believed the shaman could channel the soul of his spirit helper into his own body in order to "change his form and take on that of the animal by which he is possessed, or [to] assume at least some of its characteristics" (Jenness 1922: 193). Jenness (1922) also noted that shamans would sometimes carve or construct objects in a human form. The shamans would sometimes stab these objects with a knife, which made Jenness (1922) question the possibility of a voodoo-like form of witchcraft in Copper Inuit culture. He concludes however by stating that the following: "my inquiries brought me very little information. I am not certain, therefore, whether the fetish served the purposes of legitimate magic or was used in connection with witchcraft" (Jenness 1922: 197).

Jenness (1922, 1946) remarked that *anguaks* often did not have to be carved or decorated to be functional; they could consist of a simple piece of bone or skin. He noticed the tendency of the Copper Inuit to incorporate pieces of this kind into articles of clothing. One of these tendencies was for men to have one or more ermine skins attached to the back of their jackets. Sewn onto the outside of the jackets, these skins were always arranged in a symmetrical pattern. As will be discussed later, Weyer (1969) would go on to study the actual symbolism of this tradition in more detail. Jenness (1922) did note that for the Copper Inuit, the age of the *anguak* affected its perceived power and value. Jenness (1922: 169) noted that for male Inuit children "Little charms are attached to its clothes; a bone from the fore-flipper of a rough seal on its shoulder, or the penis bone of the seal on its wrist, will make it a good sealer, while scraps of caribou skin on the other shoulder will make it a good caribou hunter". Given that a newborn Inuit child would spend most of the first 2-3 years of his life nestled in the hood of his mother's *amauti* or jacket, expectant mothers would sometimes sew *anguaks* onto their own clothing to be transferred onto the child's first set of clothing when he was ready to leave the *amauti*. This Jenness (1922) concluded would ensure that the amulet or charm had accrued an acceptable amount of power by the time the child was ready to exploit it.



As mentioned earlier, Weyer (1969) would expand on the findings of Jenness (1922) and Boas (1883), studying the significance behind certain charms such as the aforementioned ermine-skin *anguaks* attached to men's jackets. Weyer (1969) found that the purpose of this *anguak* was to protect against any superior force, be it physical or spiritual in nature. It was thought that the spirit of the ermine would awaken to "dash in unnoticed among the hostile party with such force as to drive right through the bodies of the enemies" (Weyer 1969: 312). Weyer (1969) confirmed Jenness' (1922) suspicions of witchcraft among the Copper Inuit, noting that any parings from a human or animal body were thought to contain a part of that being's soul. Therefore, hair and nail clippings were preserved or burned in the belief that these potential 'exuvial fetishes' were "a part of themselves, which may be used for the purposes of witchcraft" (Weyer 1969: 308). However, these objects more often had positive attributes, being used as talismans or as a way to transfer some of the vitality, skill or good fortune from one person to another.

Adding to Hoffman's (1897) findings, Weyer (1969) also found that even though Copper Inuit shamans practiced witchcraft using figures in a human shape, this type of object could also be used as a receptacle into which a shaman could invoke his spirit familiar in order to ask it questions or receive counsel. Amongst the Labrador Inuit, a shaman whose spirit familiar was being uncooperative would sometimes "strip[s] the doll of its clothing and shake[s] and beat[s] it into submission" (Weyer 1969: 313).

In his studies of the Netsilik Inuit, Balikci (1970) would expand on Boas' (1883) research. Similar to the Copper Inuit, Balikci (1970) found that the Netsilik believed in several different categories of spirits or souls: personal souls, name souls, ghosts of the deceased, and spirits that were to be found in *anguaks*. In essence, the material or appearance of an *anguak* seemed to have had little or no importance attached to its value: "The amulet received its supernatural power from the resident spirit exclusively and not because of any physical properties. Practically any small object could serve as an amulet" (Balikci 1970: 201). Adding also to Jenness' (1922) findings, Balikci (1970) found that Inuit *anguaks* were actually used as heirlooms, "getting more and more powerful as they were inherited by successive generations" (Balikci 1970: 202). *Anguaks* also seemed to be strictly personal property, having no benefits for any other individual

who might try to exploit them. As most *anguaks* had very specific functions and were only useful in particular situations, most Inuit owned many such objects. These would be sewed into their clothing or worn on a belt or sash to easily transport them from place to place as they traveled, and so the individual would be constantly under their influence and protection. The Netsilik Inuit belief was that “Amulet spirits clustered around each person like a ring of supernatural protectors and helpers” (Balicki 1970: 203).

Williamson (1974) points out that although the interpretation of the spirit world was the privilege and responsibility of the shaman, “everyone was to some extent an informed practitioner of the religious beliefs” (Williamson 1974: 26). He also indicates that these beliefs were perhaps much more immutably incorporated into the daily life of the individual than previous researchers had realized. Williamson (1974) is of the opinion that the observance of taboos and the use of ‘magic’ profoundly pervaded their everyday life. He states for example that “Every hunter approached his work in a religious frame of mind, using prayers, amulets, whispered messages and songs to the animals he was hunting” (Williamson 1974: 27). As will be discussed later, Kleivan & Sonne (1985) would address in greater detail the differences between laypersons and shamans with relation to *anguaks* and other such religious observances.

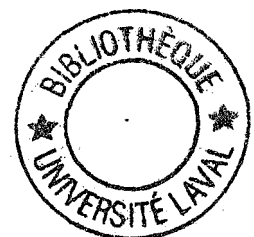
Using the burgeoning commercial Inuit art industry as a basis of comparison, Ray (1977, 1981a, 1981b) studied the artistic and spiritual aspects of Inuit carving. Attempting to establish a link between their spirituality and their artistic impulses, she found that “a large part of their religion and concept of art was derived from the need to pursue and capture the animals they used so imaginatively merely to survive” (Ray 1977: 5). However, as hunting was a man’s activity, this would seem to place the onus of lay spirituality on the men. The division of labor along gender lines in all Inuit cultures has been thoroughly documented, however little had been written on gender divisions insofar as spiritual matters are concerned. It had already been verified that women could become shamans by previous authors such as Hoffman (1897), however little had been said with regards to their non-shamanic religious roles. Given that carving in ivory, antler and wood was almost exclusively a man’s activity, non-shamanic women incorporated the lay faith into their daily activities in a number of ways. As mentioned earlier, Jenness (1922,

1946) had noticed that non-shamanic women would often sew *anguaks* onto their children's clothing. Focusing primarily on the Alaskan and Aleut Inuit, Ray (1977) noted that women would invest great time, effort and care into the fabrication of functional and aesthetically pleasing articles of clothing for herself and her family. Of great concern for the woman was the fabrication of clothing for formal or ceremonial occasions. Ray (1977: 30) notes that "the Eskimo woman...lavished her care and creativeness on apparel worn on ceremonial occasions as well as for personal display. New clothes were made for many ceremonies to please the spirits". Although articles of clothing do not fall into the technical category of *anguaks*, the fact that these items were often incorporated into articles of clothing certainly makes them noteworthy.

Further studies by Kleivan & Sonne (1985) examined the differences between lay and shamanic religious observances. They note that it was the responsibility of every Inuit to observe a multitude of taboos, make various reciprocal offerings to appease the spirits of the animals they had slaughtered and to preserve favorable relations with the souls of deceased ancestors. Although shamans were subject to many of the same taboos and observances, if he or another member of the community were believed to have transgressed a taboo which resulted in some form of misfortune, the deities or spirits in question "had to be pacified in rituals whose chief protagonist was usually the shaman" (Kleivan & Sonne 1985: 7). Outside of these duties, the shaman was seemingly also able to create *anguaks*, somehow investing them with power. Although, Kleivan & Sonne (1985: 9) do not describe the process of creation, they do state that the shaman did not own the *anguaks*, "He just made them on commission and received a due payment".

However, Burch (1988: 36) explains that the layperson was also entitled to identify his or her own *anguaks* through mere coincidence, without the assistance of a shaman:

If a man happened to have extraordinary seal-hunting success one day, and upon his return home found a gull feather in the bottom of his kayak, he might infer that the feather was the source of his good fortune. He would keep it in the kayak, carefully hidden and protected. If further experience confirmed his initial impression, the feather acquired the status of a charm.



Furthermore, the notion that a particular object or type of object may be invested with special powers could occur spontaneously to the layperson in a dream. Burch (1988) demonstrates that although shamans were regarded as intermediaries with the spirit world, due to a lack of clearly defined theology the individual was at liberty to make his own interpretations of the spiritual realm.

Largely however, up to this point many disappointing gaps were still extant in the field of Inuit Studies. Although much of the previous research had provided an excellent overview of Inuit traditions and spirituality, more profound investigation was still required to provide a better understanding of Inuit cosmology and spirituality. Contemporary authors have followed this trend of specification, narrowing their respective foci in order to acquire more richly detailed information regarding more specific aspects of *anguaks* and Inuit spirituality in general. Issenman & Rankin (1988) and Issenman (1997) are examples of this type of specification, having conducted research regarding traditional Inuit clothing. Of specific interest to this study is their detailed work on the symbolism of Inuit clothing, and the incorporation of *anguaks* into these articles of clothing. Although their work does not focus specifically on *anguaks*, it is nonetheless valuable in that it does address how and where certain objects were placed on articles of clothing in order to exert their effects.

Other authors such as Laugrand & Oosten (2002) have chosen to focus specifically on the role and significance of certain animals in daily Inuit life and cosmology. Although their work does not necessarily address the role of *anguaks* directly, such specification and elucidation on the role and perceived qualities of these animals does provide valuable insight insofar as these qualities were reflected in *anguaks* derived from them. This research also makes extensive use of Oosten's (1997) article entitled *Amulets, Shamanic Clothes and Paraphernalia in Inuit Culture*. This article consists in part of an interpretation and elaboration of Rasmussen's (1931) chapter entitled *Amulets*. This study relies heavily on this chapter as a basis of comparison for the information collected in interviews with the elders of Cambridge Bay. As such, Oosten's (1997) interpretation of Rasmussen's work proved very useful.

Another trend has been the focus on conducting research in close collaboration with Inuit elders. The memories and knowledge of the elders concerning traditional lifestyles and contemporary issues are a rich resource of details regarding these issues, and current research emphasizes the importance of these resources. The series entitled *Interviewing Inuit Elders*, published in collaboration with the Nunavut Arctic College has provided a wealth of directly transcribed interviews with elders from many different areas. These interviews have focused largely on traditional lifestyles, as well as the transitions the Inuit culture has had to face over the past several decades. A further development in this type of research has been the increasing involvement of younger Inuit as interviewers, thereby taking advantage of their more profound understanding of Inuit culture as a means of developing a more accurate and holistic interpretation of the specific topic they have chosen to study. The interviews that constituted the field research component of this study were in fact based largely on the interview style applied throughout the aforementioned series of books.

As the works cited in this essay demonstrate, there has been a substantial evolution in the field of Inuit studies, and contemporary research built on the findings of the past is increasing in quantity, refinement and detail. Insofar as the study of traditional religious/spiritual beliefs, cosmology and of course the role of *anguaks* and related paraphernalia is concerned, insufficient research was done. Understandably, early explorers and researchers such as Boas (1883) were primarily concerned with the collection of general ethnological and sociological data, as well as information pertaining to the material culture of the Inuit, and not so much with the religious or cosmological beliefs that motivated these practices. This is an unfortunate oversight as many of these threads are now lost or are gradually fading from the memories of the elders.

Over the course of the next several decades following Boas (1883), researchers such as Hoffman (1897) would use the data collected by early researchers for more specific aims, developing and elucidating models of animism upon which the Inuit supposedly constructed their faith system. While this explanation seemed to satisfy researchers at the time and well into the next century, this is of course a simplistic and erroneous interpretation of these beliefs. Throughout many early works, the reader

indeed finds many such simplistic interpretations and the use of a rather condescending tone on the part of the writers. One senses an effort on the part of the writers to force their findings to conform to our own cultural interpretations, terminology and concepts, which of course results in inaccurate data.

Jenness (1922, 1946) and Rasmussen (1931) were both very thorough in their documentation, however they were once again interested in other areas of the Inuit culture such as sociological and ethnological information. Rasmussen (1931) does provide a reasonably lengthy list of *anguaks*, devoting an entire chapter to these objects. The main body of this study relies heavily on this chapter as a basis of comparison for the research, but as will be noted Rasmussen devoted little time to the in-depth explanation of these objects, leaving the reader with only a cursory description of their effects on the wearer. This research attempts to fill in some of the blanks left by such research.

Studies done by further researchers such as Balikci (1970) would develop the material and conceptual beliefs behind Inuit religiosity, such as how amulets were worn and how they influenced their owner. However, once again the author neglects to delve far enough into the material, remaining superficial to the same extent as Rasmussen.

Researchers such as Ray (1977, 1981a, 1981b) would study the artistic impulse and gender divisions along spiritual lines. Although valuable insofar as the artistic expression of the Inuit is concerned, her research is nonetheless more for the general populace, and makes too many sweeping generalizations about Inuit culture as a whole. Kleivan & Sonne (1985) and Burch (1988) make the same mistakes in their study of the differences between lay and shamanic relations to the spiritual world. Although once again interesting insofar as shamanism and lay spirituality is concerned, cultural differences relating to these beliefs and practices are not addressed, and as such the work is largely too general.

Regardless of the inevitable research oversights, the authors mentioned above and many others have contributed greatly to the expansion of knowledge relating to the Inuit. This demonstrates a definite progress towards a more specific and in-depth understanding not only of the Copper Inuit culture itself, but also for the various social and material factors that made these societies what they are. The past century has seen a move from

the general ethno-sociological data collected by Boas (1883) to a more detailed and in-depth anthropological data collected by subsequent researchers. This line of thought is exemplified by some of the contemporary researchers cited in this work. This work places an emphasis on the memory and input of elders to provide a more detailed overview of Inuit culture.

## **2.2 Identification of a Collection of *Anguaks***

The next phase of the research was to actually identify and photograph a collection of artifacts to be researched and used as a basis upon which to conduct interviews with the elders. As such, a request was submitted to the CMCC for a list of artifacts originating from the Central Arctic, either having been identified as *anguaks* (or amulets, charms and so on), or had not yet been identified, but corresponding to certain general material criteria such as size, composition and how they were worn. Based on these search criteria, a collection of approximately 20 objects were produced. Several objects originating from Copper and Netsilik Inuit territory had already been photographed by the CMCC or formed part of their photographic archive, but the CMCC graciously allowed me to photograph the small collection of additional items that had originated in these areas. The majority of these objects had been collected from the Inuit of the community of Cambridge Bay, as well as the surrounding area. As Cambridge Bay is also one of the largest communities to be found in the traditional territory of the Copper Inuit, it was naturally selected as the host community in which the field research phase of the project would be conducted. The majority of these artifacts had yet to be identified by the researchers who had collected them or by the CMCC in subsequent years with regards to ownership, material composition, purpose or function. As such, the focus of the interviews now became dual: to gather information on *anguaks* in general, and to attempt to identify the CMCC artifacts that were produced as a result of this research. During this phase of the research, I was greatly assisted by the following staff members of the CMCC, to whom I would like to extend my gratitude for their patience and assistance:

- **Judy Hall:** Curator, Eastern Woodlands Ethnology, Research and Collections Branch, Canadian Ethnology Service.

- **Louis Campeau:** Photo Archive Research Officer, Research and Collections Branch, Library, Archives and Documentation Services.
- **Dr. Robert McGhee:** Curator, NWT (Franklin District) Archaeology, Research and Collections Branch, Archaeological Survey of Canada.

In addition to the artifacts and photo archive material needed for the project, these resource persons also provided additional suggestions for literature sources.

### **2.3 Field Research**

As previously mentioned, the fieldwork phase of the research took place in the community of Cambridge Bay from November 1<sup>st</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup> of 2001. Over this six-week period, a series of informal and open interviews were conducted with several elders in the community based on the CMCC's collection of artifacts. Although the interviews were fairly free-form, they were based loosely on a preliminary questionnaire which was developed prior to my arrival in Cambridge Bay. This questionnaire is included as **Appendix 1** of this study. The questionnaire was aimed at stimulating conversation regarding a variety of topics related to *anguaks*, such as material constitution, ownership, heredity, age and symbolism. Although meant to merely structure the interviews to a certain extent, this questionnaire also allowed for a variety of tangents to be discussed, and it should be understood that it acted merely as a tool to stimulate conversation. It also allowed for the elders consulted to contribute their own anecdotes and experiences with *anguaks*. Furthermore, it also allowed for the discussion of activities that often incorporated the use of *anguaks*, such as hunting and kayaking. Essentially though, each photographed item was shown to the elders, and conversation ensued based on their own experiences and familiarity with each object. The elders consulted for this project were the following:

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| - Luke Novoligak    | - Lena Evalik    |
| - Matthew Nakashook | - Moses Koihok   |
| - Frank Analok      | - Mackie Kaosoni |
| - Mabel Angulalik   |                  |

Due to the language barrier, several local interpreters/translators were also invited to participate in the project. They were the following:

- Joseph Suqslak
- Mary Avalak
- Martha Angulalik



Each interview was approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours in length. Some interviews were conducted individually and several elders were interviewed in pairs, depending on their individual availability. The schedule of interviews as they occurred was the following:

- Session 1 with Luke Novoligak & Matthew Nakashook: November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Joseph Suqslak
- Session 2 with Luke Novoligak & Matthew Nakashook: November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Joseph Suqslak
- Session 1 with Frank Analok & Mabel Angulalik: November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Joseph Suqslak
- Session 2 with Frank Analok & Mabel Angulalik: November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Joseph Suqslak
- Session with Lena Evalik: November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Mary Avalak
- Session 1 with Moses Koihok: November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Martha Angulalik
- Session 2 with Moses Koihok: November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Mary Avalak
- Session 2 with Moses Koihok: November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Mary Avalak
- Session with Mackie Kaosoni: December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001.  
Translator: Mary Avalak

As was previously mentioned, in addition to the discussions generated by the questionnaire, elders also added their own experiences with *anguaks*. These experiences have been incorporated into the various chapters of this study when relevant, but they have also been largely summarized in the *Personal Anguaks* section of the **Relating to Humans and their Activities** chapter of this study. The elders also spontaneously added their own stories on a variety of topics including traditional hunting methods and songs. Many of these tangents have also been incorporated into this study insofar as they relate to *anguaks*, but several topics that did not necessarily relate directly to *anguaks* have been omitted.

## **2.4 Analysis of the Findings**

Upon the completion of the field research phase of the project, the findings were reviewed and the relevant material extracted in close consultation with co-advisors to the

project Dr. Frédéric Laugrand (Université Laval, Quebec) and Dr. Jarich Oosten (University of Leiden, Netherlands). Extensive notes were first taken of the recorded interviews. This was done on an object-by-object basis, as this was generally the manner in which the discussions with the elders had unfolded.

Upon the suggestion of Dr. Oosten, it was decided that the information gathered from the elders concerning *anguaks* in general as well as the objects in the CMCC collection would be evaluated and analyzed comparatively with work done primarily by Rasmussen (1931). Given the abundance of objects provided by Rasmussen (1931) in his rather straightforward chapter on the Netsilik entitled *Amulets*, this research as a whole relies heavily on the work done by Rasmussen (1931), specifically with regards to the material considerations to be discussed in this study. As such, a second compilation of data took place in which the findings of Rasmussen (1931) were analyzed and divided into several subsections. These subsections largely resembled the final structure of this study, divided along lines such as material composition, shamanic objects, women's objects and so on. The findings from the interviews with the elders of Cambridge Bay were then subdivided along similar lines, and these two analyses were then synthesized.

Subsequent to this, several revisions of the material then followed, in which seemingly relevant material was retained, and irrelevant details were omitted. In reviewing the compiled data, an attempt was naturally made to identify any patterns that emerged or any similarities that may have existed between the findings collected and the work done by Rasmussen (1931) and other previous authors.

## Chapter 3

### Material Considerations

#### 3.0 Introduction

The information in this section relies primarily on Rasmussen's (1931: 267-277) chapter entitled *Amulets* contained in his work **The Netsilik Eskimos**, supported whenever possible by the findings of other researchers, and with the information collected during the interviews with the elders of Cambridge Bay conducted in the autumn of 2001. What follows is therefore a summary account of how the various materials available to the Inuit in the area were applied and their abilities exploited in the form of *anguaks*. For the sake of clarity, each animal will be dealt with separately and as distinctly as possible, although those readers familiar with the works of literature in question may have noted that very rarely do Rasmussen (1931) or the other authors specify the exact species animal being used. For example, rather than state whether a black bear or a polar bear was used, the authors merely use the genus term 'bear' to refer to the animal from which the object was derived. It is difficult to ascertain whether the authors in question considered these details to be superfluous, or whether they were themselves simply unable to extract these details from their informants.

The reader should be aware that the scheme of subdivision that follows is purely artificial, and does not reflect or represent any system of categorization on the part of the Inuit or the writer for that matter. As mentioned earlier, it has merely been applied to help structure the writing and to ensure the clarity and concision of the ideas put forth therein. It is not representative of any natural or artificial hierarchy or cosmology.

#### 3.1. Mammals

##### 3.1.0 Caribou

As previously stated by Oosten (1997: 118), many *anguaks* functioned under the auspices that an object derived from a certain animal "either conveyed some property attributed to that particular animal...or an increased capacity to kill that particular

animal”. In the sources researched for this study, a preponderance of objects derived from or having been associated with caribou seemingly fall into this category. However, the Inuit generally adhered to a pattern of *associative placement*, meaning that different parts of the caribou (and indeed of many other animals) could be associated with particular parts of the human body in order to evoke specific qualities in the wearer.

According to Oosten’s (1997: 118) work which consists primarily of an interpretation of Rasmussen’s work on *anguaks*, “The meaning of the amulets indicated the properties of the animals...caribous [were associated] with speed”. Although the findings of this research certainly do not contradict this statement, the majority of the objects researched that were derived from caribou were associated in some way with hunting the animal as opposed to any inherent qualities of the animal itself. Rasmussen (1931: 269-274) cites a number of objects employed by both men and boys to influence their success at hunting caribou. In the case of the former, this would influence their fortune on the hunt itself, and in the case of the latter it would either influence the development of their skills pertaining to hunting caribou, or would augment their future capacities on the hunt. Several objects falling into this category were also worn by women with the intention of influencing the hunting fortune of their male children, be they born or yet to be born. Objects derived specifically from caribou teeth, ears and skin seemed to be the preferred agents of this effect. Rasmussen (1931) states that the front teeth of a caribou attached to a strip of caribou skin worn by Tuitssuaq were used to “bring luck when hunting” (270), and the “amulet boy” Tertaq wore two teeth from the upper and lower jaws of a caribou (272) for the same purpose.

Rasmussen (1931) notes several instances where caribou ears were also employed as *anguaks* to influence one’s fortune on the hunt. Tuitssuaq again apparently employed a caribou ear to make him “a lucky caribou hunter” (270), and Tertaq had no less than twelve caribou ears sewn over the back and shoulders of his coat to procure “luck in hunting” (272).

Although Rasmussen (1931) makes note of very few cases other than Tuitssuaq’s object mentioned above where caribou skin or fur was applied as an *anguak*, Cambridge Bay elder Moses Koihok (2001) spoke at great length in an interview about an object he

wore as a child which consisted of a sash of depilated caribou skin. Upon this sash were sewn strips of caribou throat skin with the characteristic white fur still attached. Among the attributes of this object were that it would, through some unknown mechanism, help draw the caribou to him. Koihok (2001) also stated that it would help to make him look like a caribou so that other caribou would think he was one of them, and that it would generally make him a good hunter.

Caribou tended to be associated with several other characteristics, notably that although not swift in the water, they were reputedly strong and sure swimmers. This was reflected in several items derived from caribou snout or muzzle skin documented by Rasmussen (1931). Perhaps due to the association of the nose with breathing or the fact that the snout would protrude from the water as the animal was swimming, Tertaq (272) and indeed men in general were known to wear caribou snouts attached to their clothing in order to make a man “just as sure in his kayak as a caribou swimming in the water” (274).

### **3.1.1 Bear**

Polar, brown and grizzly bears were animals that, like caribou, figured heavily in the Inuit cosmology and economy, and as such, many powerful *anguaks* were derived from their products. Many of the amulets derived from bears exemplify Oosten’s (1997: 118) statement that “Feet and teeth of animals were often used as amulets. They probably conveyed the speed and the strength of the animal from which it originated”. Oosten (1997: 118) goes on to state that insofar as *anguaks* were concerned “bears were associated with strength”. Among the men’s objects detailed in Rasmussen’s (1931) research that reflected this inherent quality of strength were necklaces of bear teeth that were to bring the wearer “strength and endurance” (274), and in a slight variation Tertaq’s scarf of bearded seal skin to which was attached seven bear teeth, thought to give him the qualities of “health and strength” (272). It is perhaps worth noting that insofar as bears were concerned, teeth also seemed capable of conveying other qualities perhaps indirectly linked to its strength, such as the bear teeth *anguaks* worn by Itqiliq that were to “make one frightful” (Rasmussen 1931: 269). Regardless, the strength of a bear could also be passed on to the wearer through various other materials. Rasmussen

(1931: 271) makes mention of Tugaq sporting a piece of bear paw sinew on his left arm that would grant him strength. Rasmussen (1931: 273) also cites this type of object as being fairly common amongst men in general. The head skin of a bear was also a material that could communicate the animal's strength to the wearer. Rasmussen (1931: 118) makes note of Tertaq wearing a dog harness about his torso upon which was attached the head skin of a bear, an object that was to grant him strength. Rasmussen (1931: 45) also makes mention that "a piece of skin from the head of a black bear, sewn on to the back of the inner coat, gives strength".

Interviews with Cambridge Bay elders Frank Analok and Mabel Angulalik (2001) support the assertion that bears were associated with strength, and they clarified that all bears were strong but polar bears were regarded as particularly powerful. Although these statements refer partially to the notion of physical power, bears were regarded as particularly powerful beings in the spiritual sphere as well. According to Balikci's (1970: 200) work on the Netsilik Inuit

Three particular animals were distinguished by the power of their souls; seal, caribou, and bear...Particularly dangerous in this respect were bear souls. Numerous instances of shamanistic behavior indicate a special association between evil shamans and bear souls.

The reader should not understand this to mean that the bear was regarded as an inherently evil creature; on the contrary, as mentioned above it had many beneficial qualities. However, Analok & Angulalik (2001) do state that due to their inherent power, bear spirits were often shaman familiars. Analok (2001) states that as a boy he was afraid of the people he knew to be shamans, and as mentioned before, since bear teeth would make a person frightful in appearance, this perhaps indicates a connection between this property and the public perception of shamans.

According to Analok & Angulalik (2001) bears were naturally very good seal hunters. Rasmussen (1931) indeed had found that several *anguaks* derived from bears conveyed their natural and admirable talents for seal hunting. For example, Tugaq wore several belts composed of bear teeth from his own kills as well as those of his uncle's kills, all of which were to "give him skill as a sealer and hunter" (271), demonstrating yet another quality that teeth could convey to the wearer other than those mentioned earlier.

Teeth, however, were evidently not the only types of *anguak* derived from bears that could transmit the qualities of a skillful seal hunter. Rasmussen (1931: 271) describes a compound object also worn by Tugaq that included a piece of bear tongue. This object, composed also of seal snouts and a piece of harpoon line, had the purpose of making Tugaq a clever seal hunter.

Several objects derived from bears did influence the wearer's capacity to find, hunt and/or kill the animal. Rasmussen (1931: 270-271) states that Tuitssuaq wore a tuft of bear hair with the intention of making him a lucky bear hunter. A very interesting item worn by some men for which his informants provided Rasmussen (1931: 273) with a more detailed analysis than many other items was the genitals of a female bear. Sewn along the waistband at the back of a man's trousers, this item would make him a lucky bear hunter as "he will always be on the path of bears; for just as the genitals of the she-bear are the certain way along which its urine will go, the young man will be sure to go there where bears come".

### **3.1.2 Seal**

True to Oosten's (1997: 118) statement that *anguaks* derived from a certain type of animal often increased one's proclivity to kill that type of animal, the majority of objects obtained from seals were intended to increase one's luck on the seal hunt. This was certainly true of objects derived from seal teeth and jaws. Rasmussen (1931: 269) notes that Pilarqaq wore an undisclosed number of seal teeth sewn onto the hood band of his inner coat that were for "luck-bringing when sealing". A woman could also wear these objects in lieu of her husband or son to improve their luck or skill in seal hunting. An example of this would be the seal jaw Utsunapik wore attached to her *amaut* for her son (Rasmussen 1931: 274) which was to give him luck in sealing. An interesting variation on this theme was that Quvliq hung several lower jawbones from seals her husband exclusively had killed beside her lamp in order to give her son luck when hunting (Rasmussen 1931: 275). It is unfortunate however that Rasmussen (1931) does not provide any further information about this item, as the symbolism does not necessarily relate Quvliq's son exclusively to the animal. It could just as well relate her husband to her son through these objects, the lamp to her son, a combination of these

elements or none of them at all. Not wishing to be facetious, the reality is that the relative fluidity with which meaning was attached to these objects, compounded by the dearth of detailed information pertaining to them as is contained in classical or contemporary resources, makes it very difficult to come to any definitive conclusions about these objects.

Seal snouts were equally capable vessels with which transmit luck or talent in sealing to a person, and Rasmussen (1931) provides several examples: Aquissoq wore a seal snout on an *anguak* belt tied around the waist of his coat to “bring lucky sealing” (270); Tertaq wore seven seal snouts sewn into the left sleeve of his inner jacket to bring him “luck when sealing” (272); and several seal snouts were also attached to the left sleeve of Tugaq’s jacket to “make him clever at sealing” (271). While all of these examples share the common goal of assisting the wearer to acquire more seals, the reader may notice Rasmussen’s use of terms and phrases such as ‘luck’, ‘skill’, ‘to make him clever at...’ and so forth. This brings up contentious questions regarding the meaning of these words.

Although similar to the case of the bear in which the specific species of animal is rarely mentioned, Rasmussen (1931: 272) does make specific note that Tertaq had the head skin of a bearded seal attached to a dog harness he wore about his torso to give him endurance. Whether this is a particular trait of the bearded seal or seals in general remains in question, as Tertaq apparently also wore a head skin of an unspecified species of seal to give him “luck in breathing-hole hunting” (Rasmussen 1931: 272). A variety of seal bones also seemed to be applied to this end. The woman Nalungiaq wore several tailbones from a seal to help make her son “lucky when sealing” (Rasmussen 1931: 274). If a child was yet too young to go seal hunting, his skill and/or luck as a hunter could, however, still be developed in the meantime through the application of *anguaks*. Rasmussen (1931: 46) provides an example of this in the following passage:

For a boy a toy is made out of the metacarpal bones of a seal, a thong being run through them; these the boy throws about outside. If the bones have been taken from a seal caught by a good hunter they will give the boy luck when sealing in later life.



As will be discussed in the following chapter however, it is not known whether the dominant factor contributing to the effects of *anguaks* such as these was the material used (i.e. seal bones) or the person from whom the object was received (i.e. the good seal hunter).

One quality that also seemed to be associated with the seal in general was strength, more specifically in the arms and shoulders. True to the aforementioned tendency of associative placement (the placement of *anguaks* in such a manner to associate relevant animal limbs or appendages to their equivalent human counterpart), if one wanted strong arms, one would apply to oneself an object specifically derived from the fore-flippers of the seal, the appendage of the animal that would correspond to the arms of a person.

Rasmussen (1931) notes that Tertaq wore a claw from the fore-flipper of a seal to give him “strength in the arm” (272), and that Quvliq also wore several seal claws sewn to the armholes of her coat to give her son strong arms (275). The claws of the seal were not the only method of transmitting this reputed strength, however. Quvliq also wore a sinew from a seal fore flipper sewn to the upper arm of her inner coat to give her son strong arms (Rasmussen 1931: 275). It is interesting to note that Quvliq wore this sinew in such a specific place, perhaps indicating that associative placement also functioned when the mother wore an object in lieu of the person for whom the effect was intended.

### **3.1.3 Musk Ox**

Another animal that seemed to be associated with virtues of physical strength was the musk ox. Among the objects and texts researched for this study, however, the musk ox enjoyed much less frequent representation than other animals. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that as opposed to the bear which seemed to represent physical strength in a general sense, the musk ox’s strength was conveyed to the wearer along more specific lines: the musk ox seemed to be associated particularly with strong shoulders. Similar to the bear and caribou, sinew seemed to be a preferred vessel of this characteristic. For example, Rasmussen (1931: 271) states that on Tugaq’s coat “just above the armhole of both right and left sleeves are sewn in the sinews of the lower jaw of a musk ox” and that this was to “give good shoulders”.

A piece of musk ox horn could also communicate the desired effect to the wearer. Rasmussen (1931: 274) goes on to explain that men were seen to wear a piece of “ornamented musk ox horn sewn on to the shoulders” to give the individual strength. Unfortunately, he does not explain in any detail what is meant by the term ‘ornamented’, nor whether this ornamentation was essential to the functioning of this type of item. Presumably however, due to the fact that this aspect is not elaborated upon, one can safely assume that strength was more likely an inherent quality of the animal transmitted to the wearer by the horn itself.

### **3.1.4 Ermine & Weasel**

Ermines and weasels enjoyed frequent representation in the form of *anguaks*, and were associated with various qualities that would benefit the wearer. Aside from one mention of boys wearing ermine skins fastened to their caps to make them “clever at catching ermines” (Rasmussen 1931: 49), most of the qualities of the ermine were associated with the dexterity, agility, speed and endurance of the creature. Rasmussen (1931: 270) makes mention of Pilarqaq wearing an ermine skin sewn to the back of his inner coat that was to make him a good runner. Although the term ‘good runner’ is rather ambiguous in that it does not specify whether this refers to speed, sure-footedness or endurance, other objects derived from ermine and weasel were more specific in their effects. Rasmussen (1931: 272) makes further mention of an ermine skin fastened to the back of Tulorialik’s inner coat which served “to make him fleet of foot”. Rasmussen (1931: 45) states that ermine skins are “Among the more important amulets...because they make one light of foot” and that men generally wore ermine skins attached to their clothing or hoods because the skin was “that which makes one run quickly”. According to Cambridge Bay elders Matthew Nakashook and Luke Novoligak (2001), one would attach an ermine skin to their jacket “as a precaution”. When questioned further about this statement, they elaborated that someone who wore an ermine skin attached to his or her jacket was “thinking about their future” and ensuring their safety in that the qualities of the ermine skin were always at their disposal should they encounter a dangerous situation that required them.

Speed, agility, dexterity and endurance were some of the prime requisites for a singer and dancer, as well as for a drummer. As such, one of the most common applications of the ermine or weasel skin was on the dance outfit. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) both assert that the ermine was light-footed, and would therefore transmit this quality to the wearer. A dancer who wore an ermine skin on his or her outfit would be granted agility and lightness. Analok & Angulalik (2001) concur with these statements, agreeing that a dancer would make use of ermine skins, but that due to the physical qualities that are required for the task, a drummer could equally benefit from the effects the ermine could bestow. They state that the drum is a fairly heavy instrument, and that wielding it for extended periods of time requires a fair amount of endurance and dexterity.

Moses Koihok (2001) mentions that apart from the physical benefits a wearer could hope to assume in wearing the skin of an ermine or weasel, these animals were also known for their voices, and singers as such would sometimes wear their skins with the hopes of improving their own performances.

### **3.1.5 Hare**

*Anguaks* derived from hares seemed to relate qualities of a pleasing or appropriate appearance to the wearer. Rasmussen (1931: 270) makes reference to an *anguak* in the form of a hare's ear that was worn by Tuitssuaq. This object was meant to make him "a proper man, with a grave and stern appearance". Rasmussen (1931: 275-276) also makes mention of an *anguak* worn by the girl Qaqortingneq for the benefit of her future son. This *anguak*, in the form of a hare's head was to give him a "short and handsome nose like a hare".

Aside from these references to appearance, the seemingly intuitive link established in our culture between the ears of a hare and hearing was only mentioned once by Rasmussen (1931), and the topic of hares and/or rabbits was never mentioned once by the elders interviewed in Cambridge Bay (2001). Rasmussen (1931: 274) does however make mention that one woman wore an unspecified number of hare ears in order to give her son keen hearing.

### **3.1.6 Wolf**

Objects derived from wolves seemed almost universally to relate to the wearer the reputedly keen hunting skills of the animal. Indeed, Analok & Angulalik (2001) confirm that wolves are excellent hunters, and that objects derived from bones, teeth or other products of this animal would assist an aspiring hunter in his endeavors. Rasmussen asserts that wolf bones in general “make men clever hunters” (1931: 45). Bones were not however the only purveyors of these properties, as Rasmussen (1931: 272) also notes that Tertaq availed himself of an object made of wolf hair sewn into a piece of seal skin, which was intended to make him “good at chasing caribou down to the crossing places”. The significance of the combination of these two materials is unfortunately not elaborated upon.

One object whose function was not directly related to hunting (although one could argue that the associated skill might be indirectly related, as it would be a necessary talent for a wolf to be a successful hunter) was that worn by Kusaq. This man wore a single metatarsal bone of a wolf intended to “make him a good runner” (Rasmussen 1931: 270).

The wolf also seemed to have some protective powers. Boas (1904: 143-144) writes the following:

When a woman is with child, she shall wear the teeth of the wolf as amulets. She shall attach them to the back of her inner shirt, and after the child is born she shall place them on the edge of the hood to prevent harm from coming to the child’s soul...Care must be taken that the tooth shall not be lost because it keeps the soul from danger.

Although it is not exactly clear how or why the wolf was such a valued protector of a child’s soul, it is perhaps linked to the animal’s hunting abilities. Perhaps if a living wolf was a great predator of living things, the spirit of a wolf as embodied in an *anguak* derived from this animal would be a great predator of malevolent spirits wishing to cause harm to the child. This is conjecture however, as no information on the subject could be found.

### 3.1.7 Fox

Much like the wolf, the fox was also a reputedly good hunter, and several of the items researched naturally reflected this talent. An example of such an item would be the tooth of a fox that Tertaq wore sewn on to the hood of his jacket, an object that was to give him “luck in hunting” (Rasmussen 1931: 271). However, the fox was also associated with physical qualities such as agility, endurance and stealth. Indeed, most of the objects in Rasmussen’s collection that were derived from foxes consisted of its feet and/or foot bones, and communicated the aforementioned qualities of the animal to the wearer. One item in particular, a fox’s foot also worn by Tertaq that he may “get up to his prey unseen” (Rasmussen 1931: 272) seems to apply the qualities of stealth and agility to a practical quotidian event such as hunting. Another example of this application of a specific talent to an activity such as hunting would be the custom of boys to have a fox’s footpad attached to their *kamik*. This object was to ensure that the boy who wears it “will not easily fall through thin ice when as an adult later on he has to catch seal from dangerous ice” (Rasmussen 1931: 274). Although the qualities of the fox were only summarily addressed during the interviews, Mabel Angulalik (2001) provided a very clear description of the stealth and ferocity of the fox when she arrived at an evening interview session wielding a large stick. When asked why she was carrying the stick, she responded that it was defend herself “from the foxes that [had] been seen around the town” (Angulalik, 2001), explaining that they had the tendency to dart out unseen from a hiding place to attack people.

Several of the objects derived from foxes straightforwardly aided the wearer in walking or running, talents for which the animal was well known. Examples of this are the belts of fox metatarsal bones worn by several men, which Rasmussen (1931: 273) states were to make the wearer a “fast runner of great endurance”. The woman Utsunapik also wore a single metatarsal bone of a fox, but the effect of making one a good runner was directed at her son (Rasmussen 1931: 274).

The penis of a fox also constituted an *anguak* in several cases. According to Rasmussen (1931: 272), Tertaq wore a fox penis on his coat to ensure that as he was hunting seals “he will not miss a seal blowing at its breathing hole”. Rasmussen (1931:

276) goes on to state that a fox penis was often fastened to the front flap of a pregnant woman's coat to ensure that "the child she will bear will be a boy". That it was often considered more desirable from a practical point of view for a woman to give birth to a son is well attested-to, and several objects such as the fox penis were aimed at increasing one's chances of producing a male. It is doubtless that there is some important symbolism involved in this and many other *anguaks*, and it is unfortunate that previous researchers showed comparatively little concern for such things. In retrospect, it would have been very illustrative if these symbolic elements had been more extensively documented.

### **3.1.8 Dog**

Not typically being a game animal or a food source except in the direst of circumstances, the researched *anguaks* produced from or associated with dogs did not reflect any notion of hunting this or any other animal. This is perhaps peculiar given the role of the dog in seal breathing-hole hunting, but neither Rasmussen (1931) nor the elders of Cambridge Bay made any mention of this aspect. Rather, perhaps due to their ferocity and constant squabbles, the only domesticated animal in Inuit life had a reputation for conflict. According to Oosten (1997: 118) "dogs [were associated] with fighting", and although few items derived from or associated with dogs were studied, they were in fact exclusively devoted to physical or spiritual combat. For example, Tertaq wore a single dog's tooth attached to his inner coat to "make him good at hitting when fighting" (Rasmussen 1931: 272). Tertaq also wore an old dog harness about his torso in the same manner as a dog would wear it. This object would "make him strong when fighting" (Rasmussen 1931: 272). It is interesting to note that this object, although not actually derived from the products of a dog, was still able to transmit the properties identified with the animal, perhaps merely due to its having been associated with it. This question of power by association is dealt with in greater detail throughout the following chapter devoted to *anguaks* derived from or associated with humans.

In his list of objects that he denotes as being "Among the more important amulets" generally worn by the Inuit, Rasmussen (1931: 45) mentions one particularly interesting item. This item, consisting simply of the bones of a dog "have the effect that,

if one is murdered by men, revenge will be taken by the soul of the dog” (Rasmussen 1931: 45). Once again, it is regrettable that Rasmussen (1931) does not digress into an explanation of this item, the dynamics through which a dog soul would exact revenge on a murderer and why it would be inclined to do so. It is interesting to note, however, that this object constitutes Rasmussen’s only mention of a clearly identified animal soul acting presumably as an individual and distinct spiritual entity via an *anguak*. Very rarely is it specifically indicated that an actual spiritual entity is functioning through the object. More often, researchers have only noted the effects of the object for its wearer, and not the avenues through which it was thought to function.

However, Laugrand & Oosten (2002) may provide certain insights into the aforementioned aspects of the animal. They state that

The dog in Inuit society has a peculiar feature that distinguishes it from other animals. It is a part of human society. It has a name (*atiq*) by which it can be addressed and to which it responds. In that perspective each dog has a social identity (Laugrand & Oosten, 2002: 91).

The dog not only occupied a specifically defined role within the context of Inuit civilization, but it also treads a thin line between the realms of the living and of the spirits:

On one side the dog is often represented as the first ancestor of human beings, on the other as the guardian of the realm of the dead. Those who enter the world of the dead have to get past the dog that is guarding the entrance. Thus, the dog is at the beginning and at the end of human life (Laugrand & Oosten, 2002: 91).

It is perhaps to its ability to straddle these two realms that, as Laugrand & Oosten (2002: 96) explain, the dog was often considered a harbinger, able to forewarn the Inuit of anything from the roaming of evil spirits to the approach of bad weather:

Dogs constituted an ambiguous category as sexual partners and food for human beings, and an intermediate category with respect to the outside world. They protected the community from dangers from human enemies as well as dangerous spirits. Freuchen (1935: 181 f.) reports that “As in Greenland, the Canadian Eskimo dogs yap when anything unusual approaches, a circumstance which is often taken by the Eskimo to mean that they can see mountain spirits or other ghosts, as the dogs often give a warning at the approach of things which men are unable to see”, and that when dogs are seized by unexplainable panic it is “put down to supernatural causes, visible only to dogs and shamans.” Rasmussen gives similar

information for the Copper Inuit: “If a house is visited by evil spirits and the dogs start to bark, which is always a sure sign of the presence of spirits, they put two pieces of wick-moss up against the window, and all the people gather in the threatened house to exorcise the spirits” (Rasmussen 1932: 36).

George Agiaq Kappianaq from Iglulik recalls: “Sometimes we would know from our dogs who would be spooked if they smelled wolves. It is *tuurngangajuq*, being spooked by a *tuurngaq*. That is when the dogs are aware of a *tuurngaq* being close by, they are spooked” (Oosten & Laugrand 2001)

As such, given the special place of the dog in Inuit society as well as in the framework of human/spirit relations, it is possible that the *anguaks* mentioned earlier were somehow related to these aspects of the animal. However, in the absence of further information about the objects themselves, this is admittedly conjecture, but it is almost without question that these very unique characteristics would somehow be represented in *anguak* form, and it is regrettable that so few items derived from dogs are mentioned in the literature resources.

Another product derived from dogs which merits note is saliva. According to Rasmussen (1931: 49), dog saliva had curative and/or medicinal purposes: “The saliva of a dog is good for certain ailments, especially those of a long duration. The saliva must be swallowed”. In the following chapter, the use of human saliva will be briefly touched upon. It is interesting to note that in this case, the dog saliva had to be swallowed to grant its curative effects, whereas human saliva could also be rubbed over the afflicted area to be effective.

Another interesting point regarding dogs, although not related to objects derived from the animal itself, is that as the only animal domesticated by the Inuit, they could also wear *anguaks*. Laugrand & Oosten (2002: 92) state that

People took great care to bring up puppies in such a way that they would become useful members of society. To enhance the qualities and capabilities of dogs, amulets could be used. Rasmussen (1931: 149) reports that among the Netsilingmiut a seal tooth around the neck gives a dog a powerful bite when fighting. “The big sinew at the front of the foreleg of a caribou [...] round the neck of a pup [...] gives strength and health.” Rasmussen (1932: 49) relates for the Copper Inuit: “The small snails one finds in the country are hung round the necks of dogs as amulets. A dog with an amulet of this kind will notice at once when bad weather is approaching; it will become restless and warn its master.



This clearly demonstrates the special place that dogs had in Inuit society. That the dog could also wear *anguaks* opens up another possibility for future research. Little information about such objects is known, so whether or not these objects followed the same dynamics as *anguaks* for humans is uncertain.

## **3.2 Birds**

### **3.2.0 Raven**

Similar to the associations involving the mammals mentioned above, bird amulets apparently conveyed the qualities of the birds to the hunter...The raven was the creator of light and therefore seems to have been regarded as a master of light, of being seen and not seen” (Oosten 1997: 118).

Although Oosten (1997) makes this statement in reference to Inuit culture in general, the findings relating to objects derived from the raven support this statement insofar as the Copper Inuit were concerned as well. Indeed, objects consisting of raven skin seemed to be able to transmit qualities of invisibility or stealth. An *anguak* consisting of a raven skin fastened under his chin was intended to ensure that Tertaq would “come unseen upon the caribou at the caribou at the crossing places” (Rasmussen 1931: 271). Rasmussen (1931: 271) also makes mention of a very similar object worn by Nanaoq consisting of a raven skin and head that was to make him “invisible to the caribou at the crossing places”.

Due to the scavenging nature of the raven, he seemed to be something of an opportunist insofar as food was concerned, and several items reflected this aspect of the animal’s nature. According to Rasmussen (1931: 276), “the raven has the peculiarity that it will always be present where a kill is made”. As such, the woman Kagtarssuk also wore an object for her adoptive son Unaq, consisting of two raven’s heads that were also intended to procure him “good hunting shares” (Rasmussen 1931: 275). In an interesting variation on this theme, the girl Qaqortingneq wore an object consisting of a raven’s head, claw and stomach for the benefit of her future sons. However, the son himself is not cited as the locus of effect of this object, which is somewhat irregular even considering the practice of mothers acting as an intermediary by wearing objects in lieu and for the benefit of their children. This object was meant to influence the fortune of his

hunting companions, the end goal being to ensure that the son would “get many hunting shares when he does not make a kill himself” (Rasmussen 1931: 276). Given the well-known and elaborate processes of communal and partnership food-sharing among the Inuit, it is once again unfortunate that Rasmussen did not probe further into the details of this object. It would be intriguing to explore the relationship between a mother, her son and his hunting companions in light of this object.

### **3.2.1 Ptarmigan**

The ptarmigan seemed to be almost exclusively associated with the physical qualities required for running, such as speed and endurance. As such, the most common *anguak* derived from the ptarmigan consisted of its feet, although the head of the bird was also often incorporated into the object. For example, one of the amulets worn by the woman Utsunapik for her son was a set of ptarmigan feet to “make him a good runner” (Rasmussen 1931: 274). Objects worn by the girl Qaqortingneq for the benefit of her future sons included the head and foot of a ptarmigan which would “impart the properties of the ptarmigan: fast and enduring as a runner” (Rasmussen 1931: 275). Another girl wore a ptarmigan’s head and feet to ensure that her future sons would be fast runners (Rasmussen 1931: 276).

### **3.2.2 Tern**

The tern, likely due to its marine diet, was associated with keen fishing skills. Although not frequently represented in the research Rasmussen did, and not at all addressed by the elders of Cambridge Bay, several objects obtained from the tern merit note. Among these were two objects consisting of tern heads, both of which were to grant the wearer fortune of some sort when fishing for salmon. According to Rasmussen (1931: 269-270), Pilarqaq wore a head of a tern sewn to the back of the neck of his inner coat to make him “a clever salmon fisher”, and Tertaq also applied a similar object consisting once again of a tern’s head in order that he may be a “good salmon fisher” (Rasmussen 1931: 272). Once again, however, there arises the difficulty of divining precisely what is meant by the terms ‘clever’, ‘good’, ‘lucky’, and so forth.

Objects involving the tern, however, seemed to be able to impart fortune to the wearer in all forms of hunting in general. Tertaq also sported the foot of a tern sewn to his hood to give him “luck in hunting” (Rasmussen 1931: 271). It is perhaps worth noting that Rasmussen (1931) mentions that the foot of an arctic gull and the tooth of a young fox accompanied the tern foot. Unfortunately, he does not explain whether this was in fact a compound object, the relevance of the combination thereof, or whether the three objects separately provided similar boons to the wearer.

### **3.2.3 Owl**

The owl was associated with strong fists, and perhaps not surprisingly, the claws and/or feet of this animal were the preferred means of transferring this virtue to the wearer. Although not mentioned explicitly by the elders of Cambridge Bay, Rasmussen makes several mentions of objects derived from the owl, all of which were composed of claws and/or feet, and all of which were to provide the wearer or the intended locus of effect with strong fists. For example, he mentions that Naujaq wore a belt about his waist composed of owl claws to give him “strong fists” (Rasmussen 1931: 270).

The other two objects were however worn by women, once again in lieu of their sons or future sons. Rasmussen (1931: 276) provides two examples of this, one consisting of several owl claws attached to a belt worn by a girl for the benefit of her future son, intended to “give him strong fists, which never let go once they have taken hold”. Another object was an entire owl foot worn by Utsugpaglak for her son, an object which “gives strong fists” (Rasmussen 1931:275).

### **3.2.4 Loon / Diver**

The various types of loon (referred to primarily as ‘diver’ by Rasmussen) such as the great northern and red-throated enjoyed frequent representation, equally as *anguaks*, in the literature and in the objects discussed with the elders of Cambridge Bay. The loon seemed to be a fairly versatile and multitalented bird, and the variety of *anguaks* composed of the loon reflected these many talents. Almost as numerous as its appearances as *anguaks* were the perceived benefits that an *anguak* composed of a loon could provide for its wearer. However, due to its nature as an aquatic bird, one of the

most frequent applications of the loon and its products (at least in the literature) was as a kayak *anguak*. Rasmussen (1931: 276) states in general terms that products of both the red-throated and the great northern loon could be applied for this purpose, including them simply in a list he calls “Special kayak amulets”. However, several items are explained in greater detail, one of which being the skin of a red-throated diver sewn to the back of Nanaoq’s coat which was to make him “a fast kayak man” (Rasmussen 1931: 271). Tertaq also wore the feet of a red-throated diver for exactly the same purpose (Rasmussen 1931: 272). The little girl Qaqortingneq also applied the foot of a red-throated diver for the benefit of her future son: the foot would ensure that he would be a “clever kayak man who does not easily capsize” (Rasmussen 1931: 275-276).

However, the products of the loon were not exclusively kayak *anguaks*, indeed being applied for several other purposes, an example of which being various hunting and fishing activities. The head and feet of a red-throated diver were also worn by Nanaoq to bring him “luck when breathing-hole hunting” (Rasmussen 1931: 271). Rasmussen (1931: 271-272) also describes a fairly complex object worn by Tertaq consisting of the “head of a red-throated diver with its stomach hanging to it and with white fringing of caribou skin, worn over the shoulders [which would bring him] luck when fishing for salmon”. This description hearkens very much to an object contained in the collection that was discussed with the elders of Cambridge Bay, and although they could shed little light on the object, perhaps Rasmussen’s (1931) description does (please refer to the description of the object entitled *Ermine Skin with Loon Heads (IV-D-1293)* in the **Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation Collection** chapter of this study). Furthermore, Nalungiaq wore an amulet belt for the benefit of her son, to which was attached both the head and feet of a red-throated diver. This object was to ensure that he would be “lucky when sealing” (Rasmussen 1931: 274). The fact that the head and feet of the loon could be used equally for kayaking, fishing and seal hunting *anguaks* clearly demonstrates the versatility with which the various products of the loon (and indeed many other animals for that matter) and the meanings attributed to them by the wearer, could be applied.

The loon was further associated, both in legend and as an *anguak*, with the qualities of physical and spiritual vision. According to Issenman (1997: 204-205),

The loon is associated with vision, both for the layperson and the shaman. In a recurring Inuit legend, the loon restores eyesight to a blind child. There is no faster water bird, and whoever wears a loonskin amulet will acquire the loon's speed as well as vision.

These benefits at least to physical vision are echoed in Jenness' (1922: 172) work, where many Inuit carried loon bills to ward off a typical affliction, snow blindness: "The bill of the yellow-billed loon (*Gavia adamsi*) will help to ward off snow blindness, so in spring some of the natives wear them on their shoulders or carry them in their hands".

The loon was also representative of qualities of health and long life. Rasmussen (1931: 45) states that "the skin of the great northern diver, which gives strong life" was often applied as an *anguak*, and that the perception of the loon was that it was a bird that "hangs on to life very tenaciously". In this case, the reader is provided with a reasonable explanation as to why the object is thought to possess its particular abilities. However, in another example provided by Rasmussen (1931: 45), he states that the skin of a red-throated diver promotes "health and long life...especially if one has been wiped clean with one of these at birth". This case however raises questions as to whether the resident power of the object is a result of its association with the loon, or was rather the result of its contact with the bodily fluids of the mother or the child. Oosten (1997: 112) states that "the sweat of the mother [was] a substance which played a significant part in Inuit rituals", and indeed the same can be said for amniotic fluid, as evinced by the numerous *anguaks* derived from skins used to wipe the child at birth. This element will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Although not mentioned at all by Rasmussen, several elders of Cambridge Bay asserted that a further talent of the loon was its voice. Analok & Angulalik (2001) stated that the loon was a good singer, elaborating that the bird had a loud, strong and pleasant voice. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) confirm this statement that the loon was indeed a good singer, adding that a person who wore the products of a loon would be a good singer as well. As such, products of the loon, most often its head and/or bill were often featured on dance costumes.

### **3.2.5 Gull**

The gull, similar to the tern, seemed to be almost exclusively associated with fishing. Once again, likely due its diet, this skill was often associated specifically with salmon fishing. As it was not featured in any of the items forming part of the CMCC collection discussed with the elders of Cambridge Bay, the gull was not discussed in interviews. However, Rasmussen (1931) mentions it a number of times. Once again, the head and/or feet of this bird seemed to be the preferred means with which to communicate its talents to the wearer. Nanaoq for example wore the head of a gull sewn on to the back of his inner coat to “bring luck in salmon fishing” (Rasmussen 1931: 271), and Tertaq wore a gull’s bill sewn slightly above the right wristband of his coat also in order to bring him “luck when salmon fishing” (Rasmussen 1931: 273). Offering a slight variation of this theme reminiscent of the loon skin *anguak* mentioned above, Rasmussen (1931: 45) also states that a child will become a clever fisherman if he wears a gull skin attached to his clothing, “especially if at birth one has been wiped clean with one of these skins”.

The gull could apparently also be associated with hunting in general, and as mentioned previously Tertaq illustrated this by wearing the foot of a gull along with the foot of a tern and a fox tooth sewn on to his hood in order to bring him “luck when hunting” (Rasmussen 1931: 271).

## **3.3. Miscellaneous**

### **3.3.0 Salmon**

As the topic of fish insofar as they relate to *anguaks* was never broached with the elders of Cambridge Bay, the only references involving fish come from Rasmussen (1931). The only fish that is mentioned with any real prominence in his work is the salmon (which, given the area, most likely corresponds more specifically to the salmon-trout, better known as char) however these mentions do merit note. In all of these mentions, the *anguak* consisted of the skin of the salmon, however this object fulfilled different needs for the wearer or user. Furthermore, this was one of the few objects that did not need to be physically in contact with the person in order to grant its effects to

him. Rasmussen (1931: 270) mentions that Satlaqe kept a salmon skin preserved in his toolbox, and that this object would bring him “luck when fishing for salmon”, regardless of whether or not it was on his person. Stating that this was a fairly common *anguak* amongst men, Rasmussen (1931: 274) posits that “the skin of a salmon, which has merely to be preserved, and need not be worn on the person...makes a clever salmon fisher”.

The skin of a salmon also constituted one of the only mentions of an *anguak* worn by a woman for her own benefit, as opposed to the benefit of her family. This object, once again consisting of “the stitch-like patterns of a salmon skin” (Rasmussen 1931: 276) sewn to one or both sleeves of her inner coat would “give fine, strong stitches” (Rasmussen 1931: 276) as she made or repaired clothing for her family.

### **3.3.1 Insects**

Demonstrating that practically every object in the Inuit environment served a purpose, both materialistically and/or in the realm of *anguaks*, several items that do not fall into the categories above still merit note. Some of these were insects such as the beetle, which was also exploited for its innate abilities. Although perhaps diminutive in size, insects such as the beetle nonetheless enjoyed an important place in Inuit cosmology. Not only present as *anguaks*, the appearance and qualities of insects such as the caterpillar, maggot and centipede were attributed to certain *tuurngaq* (Laugrand et al. 2000: 136-188). The beetle was apparently associated with resilience and fortitude, especially about the head and face. Rasmussen states that boys would sometimes employ water beetles as *anguaks*, having them sewn into the bands of their hoods. This insect, fastened so it would sit directly over the temples of the wearer would provide him with “strong temples and powerful eye sockets” (Rasmussen 1931: 274). Although Rasmussen does not elaborate upon why this would be a particularly useful virtue to have, perhaps interviews with Cambridge Bay elder Matthew Nakashook (2001) shed some light on this. According to him, the beetle is hard and strong, and very difficult to crush. Therefore, despite the fact that this was a fairly painful procedure, as a child he and the other boys used to crush beetles into their temples in order to strengthen them and make them resistant to blows in the case of a fight or more specifically a duel.

Bees seemed to embody at least some of the same characteristics as the beetle, and hence fulfilled similar roles when incorporated into an *anguak*. Rasmussen (1931: 275) states that Quvliq wore a skin headband for her son, into which several bees were sewn to give him “a strong head, especially in fisticuffs.” Also included in Rasmussen’s (1931: 45) list of the more important *anguaks* are bees sewn into the armholes of men’s jackets. These *anguaks* would give the wearer “hard blows when boxing and great ability to stand hard blows” (Rasmussen 1931: 45). The fact that the bee is associated with hard blows as opposed to the beetle, which is solely associated with resistance to these blows, is perhaps due to the natural defenses and the more aggressive nature of the former. However one can only speculate as Rasmussen provides no further explanation for this, and the role of insects as they relate to *anguaks* is largely unexplored.

Other creatures, such as spiders and caterpillars seemed to be associated with the virtues of manual dexterity and craftsmanship. Rasmussen (1931: 270) states that Naujaq carried a spider with him, sometimes stroking it between his fingers to augment the effect, which was to make him “a good craftsman.” Once again, it would have been very illustrative had Rasmussen delved further into the reasoning behind the objects, but unfortunately, an explanation was either not sought or not provided. Mabel Angulalik (2001) however was able to provide an explanation for an *anguak* she was given as a child. This object consisted of a caterpillar sewn up into a small skin pouch and attached to the wristband of her coat. Angulalik (2001) stated that “the caterpillar was a beautiful and colorful creature, and so this object would make her a clever seamstress who could make beautiful clothes”. Based on this association with the appearance or qualities of an insect and its abilities as an *anguak*, perhaps the complex articulation of the legs of a spider is what gave Naujaq’s *anguak* its abilities.

### **3.3.2 Plant Material**

A final item that merits note is lamp moss, which Rasmussen (1931: 271) states was worn by Tertaq. Sewn up in a piece of skin and fastened to his hood, this object was thought to bring him health. Oosten’s (1997: 118) explanation of this object is that it “probably related to the well-attested association between the lamp and the soul”.



### **3.4 Discussion**

Generally speaking, perhaps the most obvious trend observed in this chapter was that *anguaks* tended to be associated with the qualities of the animal from which they were derived. Furthermore of course, each animal was associated with certain abilities or characteristics that were conveyed to the owner via a piece of that animal. As such, the author is in accord with Oosten's (1997: 118) interpretation that the "meaning of the amulets indicated the properties of the animals", but given the perspective of this research, it would perhaps have to be inverted to read 'the properties of the animals indicated the meaning of the amulets'. Most of these associations are fairly intuitive even from the perspective of North American culture: caribou are associated with speed, bears and musk ox with strength, dogs with fighting, seabirds with fishing and seafaring, and so forth. Of course, the field of interpretation seems to have been left fairly open to the individual. Williamson (1974: 26) phrases it thusly: "everyone was to some extent an informed practitioner of the religious beliefs". As such, although each individual was seemingly allowed great latitude in assigning meaning to his or her own *anguaks*, at the very least some general trends can be outlined as above. Although attempts were made to explore some of the characteristics of the animals with the elders of Cambridge Bay, the CMCC collection was somewhat limited in scope and mainly consisted of animals such as the ermine and loon whose attributes insofar as *anguaks* are concerned have already been amply researched. As such, very little new data was produced regarding animal characteristics.

Several other very important elements and problematic concepts emerge from this chapter, the first of which is largely conceptual and semantic. As was mentioned several times above, previous authors have often used terms such as 'luck' and 'fortune' to describe the effects that many of the objects mentioned would have on the wearer. It is likely that these terms represent a linguistic or conceptual misconstruction on the part of these authors. Given the Inuit concept of the natural world which differs from our North American concept in that the rigid division between man and animal is simply not present (or at least not to anywhere near the same degree), the application of the aforementioned terms make little sense. A prevalent notion among many Inuit groups was that the animal

had willingly given itself to the hunter to be slaughtered as part of a continuing relationship. Jenness (1922: 178) states the that

Whenever a caribou is killed scraps of its liver and kidney (and sometimes of its other intestinal organs as well) are thrown to them as an offering...So too when a seal is killed a small piece of blubber is left for the shades on the ice.

In the footnotes for this passage he explains: "One native, however, said that it pleased the seal so that others would allow themselves to be caught". Numerous sources also attest to a number of complex taboos and ritual injunctions imposed on individuals and communities following the slaying of many kinds of animals, all aimed at ensuring that proper respect had been paid to the animal's soul. Balikci (1970: 201) explains that

Death taboos for dealing with animal souls were the main strategy by which hunting animals became a safe activity. It was thought that the soul of a killed seal for which all death taboos had been properly observed would be greatly pleased by the received attention and would reincarnate in another seal body with the intention of letting itself be killed again by the same hunter. In this sense a careful hunter continuously hunted the same animal. The death taboo about seals not only prevented the soul of a seal from turning crooked by helping it reincarnate, but also insured continuous successful hunting.

Given these descriptions of a clearly reciprocal and indeed symbiotic relationship between the hunter and the animal, the concepts of luck or fortune, which in our understanding of the terms imply a certain randomness or serendipity, do not seem to be accurate. To elaborate, Rasmussen makes mention elsewhere of objects that would attract game of various kinds to the wearer. Indeed, as was previously mentioned, Moses Koihok (2001) spoke about a sash of strips of caribou skin that were, in the words of interpreter Mary Avalak, "to draw the caribou to him". The question as to whether the object made him more attractive to caribou or whether it accomplished the inverse, making the caribou more prone to be attracted to him, remains by and large unanswered. It is perhaps possible that objects derived from and pertaining to the hunting of a particular animal may have been simply geared towards pleasing the animal in order to make it more inclined to give itself to be killed by the hunter, but this author considers it unlikely that luck was a factor.

It is true that several objects were quoted as making one a 'skillful' or 'clever' hunter, but these terms also raise several questions. The traditional hunting practices of the Inuit certainly required a great deal of skill, and it is not unreasonable to assume that previous authors were correct in stating that many *anguaks* were actually aimed at increasing a person's physical talents for the activity. What is questionable in this case however is how the skill of the hunter interrelated with the inclination of the animal towards being caught. The term 'skill' would imply that the *anguak* is directly affecting the talents and/or abilities of the hunter (as opposed to 'fortune' which would imply that the object is affecting something exterior to the wearer), but great emphasis was placed on appeasing the spirit of the slain animal to ensure that it would offer itself to the hunter. No doubt the activity consisted of a combination of these two elements, but it is difficult to ascertain which was the more crucial of the two, or to what degree both came into play during a hunt.

As was mentioned previously in the segment pertaining to foxes, although the symbolism functioning for some of the objects was explored at least in a cursory manner, given that the explanation of *anguaks* was not a priority for most earlier researchers, many objects that would merit a more in-depth analysis were not paid due attention. Earlier researchers such as Rasmussen (1931) and to a lesser extent Jenness (1922, 1946) were content with documenting merely the effects of the objects, and not the mechanisms or symbolism through which they were thought to bestow their effects on the wearer. A pertinent example of this is the fox penis worn by a pregnant mother mentioned in the segment of this chapter devoted to the animal. One could perhaps assume that the symbolism behind a pregnant woman attaching male genitalia to her jacket to encourage the child to be male is fairly evident. However, one is also forced to ask whether this was a quality of male genitalia in general or whether the fox was particularly associated with 'maleness', and hence the use of his genitalia was specifically prescribed for this purpose. Furthermore, it is also unclear as to whom the effect is directed. An object such as this could be exerting an effect on the mother, increasing her propensity to give birth to a son or it could just as likely be affecting the unborn child, encouraging it as it were to become a boy.

The role of the mother as a mediator between a child and an *anguak* also merits further research. An example cited above is the lower jawbones from seals her husband had killed that Quvliq hung beside her lamp in order to give her son luck when hunting (Rasmussen 1931: 275). It is unfortunate that Rasmussen does not provide any further information about this item, as the symbolism does not necessarily relate Quvliq's son exclusively to the animal. It could just as well relate her husband to her son through these objects, the lamp to her son, a combination of these elements or none of them at all.

Another important element that is presented in this chapter is that of the placement of the object on the body of the wearer. Rasmussen (1931: 269) states that

if the effect [of an *anguak*] is to come, it is also necessary as a rule that the amulet be placed outside certain places on the wearer's body or on the thing it is desired to protect or convey power to.

Although many *anguaks* were placed about the body on areas that they were thought to affect, this was by no means a rule. It is surprising that Rasmussen (1931) would make such a universal statement when a number of the objects he then goes on to describe obviously do not conform to this supposed rule. There are of course many objects that bestow upon the wearer general qualities such as health, vigor, old age and so on, which presumably do not have a specific locus of effect upon the wearer, and thus did not have to be placed on a specific area of the body. But for example, Pilarqaq's ermine skin *anguak*, which was to make him a good runner was "sewn to the back of the inner coat" (Rasmussen 1931: 270), and examples abound of such ermine skins being sewn to the front of hoods to make one a swift runner (273). Presumably, an *anguak* associated with running would be placed on one's legs, and thus these objects do not conform to the rule. Perhaps due to the impracticality of having objects attached to one's trousers the rule was simply waived in these cases, but it seems that a great deal of *anguaks* merely needed to be in physical contact with the locus of their effect in order to exert their abilities. Mabel Angulalik (2001) was given an *anguak* as a child that consisted of a caterpillar sewn up into a small skin pouch that was then attached to a bracelet. This *anguak* was intended to make her a seamstress who made beautiful clothes. Assuming that the placement of the object near her hands was a deliberate attempt to situate the *anguak* near its bodily locus of effect, she was asked whether this was the case. She responded that it was not, it in

fact did not matter where about the body the *anguak* was placed, its effect would be felt regardless of where it was situated.

It would seem however that certain *anguaks* did not even need to be in physical contact with their locus of effect to be actively influencing him or her. As stated earlier, Rasmussen mentions (1931: 274) that *anguaks* such as a salmon skin that makes one a clever salmon fisherman “has only to be preserved, and need not be worn on the person” in order to be effective. Rasmussen specifically highlights this object as not needing to be in direct contact with the ‘wearer’ in order to exert its effect, but it is not known why this object in particular does not conform to the norm. Other objects that do not seem to conform to this rule are the *anguaks* worn by mothers in lieu of their children. Although this custom will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, mothers often wore *anguaks* but did not benefit from the powers of the object themselves. Rather, the abilities of the object were somehow channeled to a child (most often a boy) via their mother. Evidently therefore, the person who wished to take advantage of their effect did not need to be in direct physical contact with them. Once again however, although this practice has been repeatedly documented, certain questions have yet to be answered. It may very well be that given the Inuit cosmology and perception of the bond between mother and child and other familial relations, the objects in question may have been considered to be virtually in direct physical contact with the locus of effect by virtue of it being in actual physical contact with the mother.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Objects Relating to Humans**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

It is apparent that the characteristics of animals were not the only things that *anguaks* could convey to the wearer. A substantial portion of the objects explored in the literature seemed to convey the qualities of a previous human owner or the qualities of another human that had been in contact or associated with the object. As in the previous chapter, it should be noted that the classificatory system applied herein is purely artificial, and although loosely based on the factors upon which previous authors or their informants placed an emphasis, it has been applied merely as a way to structure the findings. In many cases, the information provided in the literature, once again stemming primarily from the work of Rasmussen (1931) has proved too scant to provide a satisfactory explanation of the objects in question. Nonetheless, given the available information, an attempt has been made to present the findings in what seems to the author to be the most reasonable fashion.

#### **4.1 Anguaks Associated with People and their Characteristics**

##### **4.1.0 Anguaks Derived from Human Products**

The first group of *anguaks* is fairly clear in terms of derivation. These objects consisted of derivations from the human body, the majority of which being hair. Jenness (1922: 172-173) does however cite one man who, after having his thumb torn off by a brown bear, carried the severed digit in a small pouch suspended around his neck. Although the *anguak* was clearly thought to be of use to the wearer, Jenness was however unable to confirm “whether it was intended to give him good luck in general, or to ward off some specific danger or sickness” (Jenness 1922: 173).

The above object being fairly unique however, practically all of this type of *anguak* worn by individuals in the groups studied by Rasmussen (1931) consisted

uniquely of hair trimmed from another individual, most often from an old man or woman. According to Weyer (1969: 307),

Even though the soul is believed to quit the body at death it is thought that some measure of spiritual essence remains inherent in the corpse. Hence, any portion of a body, living or dead, may by its very nature be a fetish.

Although one could certainly criticize Weyer's antiquated terminology (i.e. 'fetish'), his interpretation of the phenomenon seems reasonable and concurrent with the findings of other researchers. Rasmussen (1931: 46) states that "Some boys must always wear their hair long; if it is cut, their life spirit is also cut over". This further echoes the notion that some form or quantity of a person's spiritual energy is contained in hair.

Nonetheless, hair could bestow upon the wearer several different qualities, and given that most of the objects were derived from an aged person, most of these qualities were seemingly characteristic of an aged individual. Referring to several such objects worn by Tertaq, Oosten's (1997: 118) interpretation states that they provided him with qualities such as "long life, strength, protection against headaches, and a sure arm...These amulets all seemed to ascertain the transference of qualities of old men to the young boy". Rasmussen (1931: 271) states that Tertaq wore two items consisting of the hair of an old man (presumably two different men, although this is never made explicit by the researcher), both of which were sewn into his hood where it would sit over his temples. One of these items was to provide him with long life, the other with strength. Indeed, Rasmussen (1931: 273) cites this type of object as one of the more common ones applied by men in general, stating that "an old man's hair sewn into the hood [would give] long life".

Rasmussen (1931: 273) goes on to state that human hair in general (meaning that no personal characteristics were assigned to the donor by the author) sewn to the left shoulder "screens from sickness and gives old age". Similarly, he also mentions that Quvliq wore hair sewn to her inner coat for her son to "screen him from headache" (Rasmussen 1931: 275). Once again, in neither case does he specify whether the qualities to be transmitted to the wearer are endemic to the individual from whom they are derived or a material quality of hair itself.

Regardless, hair also seemed to be associated with vigor and physical hardiness. Rasmussen (1931: 49) states that a lock of hair from an old man or woman would give the wearer vigor when attached “Near the part of the chest that moves when breathing”. He also states that Utsugpaglak wore the hair of an old woman attached to her shoulders for her son, as this “makes him vigorous” (Rasmussen 1931: 274).

It also merits note that vigor could also be transmitted to a recipient through another human product, namely saliva. According to Rasmussen (1931: 49) “Young men and women must now and then swallow the spittle of an old man or woman. This will give them vigor”. In much the same way as dog saliva was used as described in the previous chapter, human saliva also had other curative properties. It was an effective treatment for certain ailments, specifically for stomach troubles, and would be “either swallowed or rubbed over the troublesome spot” (Rasmussen 1931: 49).

#### **4.1.1 Anguaks Associated with Age**

Given the emphasis that some authors or their informants have placed on the age of an object, some *anguaks* seemed to have acquired their abilities due to this factor rather than their material nature. The notion that age played a very important role in the perceived power and therefore value of an *anguak* has been well attested to. However, the concept of age seemed to function along two different axes, and an attempt has been made to treat each of these two axes as distinctly as possible. Some objects seemed to have acquired potency due to their age, and some objects seemed to be efficacious from having been associated with or bestowed by an aged person to a new recipient or wearer. It should be noted that these notions are, however, not necessary made explicit in the literature upon which the following two sections are based. Rather, they are implicated by the various authors based on the fact that they observed and recorded an emphasis being placed on two distinct notions of age when describing some of the *anguaks* they studied.

As mentioned before, the fact that the age of an object affected its perceived value in terms of power has been well documented. As Balikci (1970: 202) states, “amulets did not lose their power with time. On the contrary, amulets increased in strength as they grew older, getting more and more powerful as they were inherited by successive



generations". Rasmussen's (1931) findings would seem to support this, as he notes several objects whose power could only be explained as a function of their age as opposed to any other intrinsic or extrinsic qualities. One example of this was "a piece of a very old ice pick of horn, used for straightening up breathing holes" (Rasmussen 1931: 275) worn by Unaq for her son. This object would bring him luck when sealing. Although it is of course still possible that a natural connection was made between this object (which is used during a seal hunt) and seal hunting, the fact that Rasmussen (1931) specifically emphasizes the age of the object leads this author to the conclusion that this was a crucial factor. This is compounded by the fact that there were no examples of newly-made functional objects being used as *anguaks*, perhaps indicating that an object had to have a history of association with a person or activity in order to be effective. More information would be required regarding this however. It would have been illustrative had Rasmussen (1931) noted to whom the object had previously belonged, whether this person was a good seal hunter and other such details regarding the history of the object.

Another excellent example of an object deriving power from its age was a skin bag worn by Qimeq:

[It] has life-giving power; she does not know what is in the bag; it has belonged to one of her dead relatives, Sorfvaluk, who died before Qimeq was born; the characteristic feature about this is that even an object the nature of which is not known can have effective powers if only it is sufficiently old (Rasmussen 1931: 275).

This is a particularly interesting item, one for which the age of the item is apparently the dominant source of power rather than an intrinsic quality of the material(s) used in its fabrication. Although the original owner of the object is known, the emphasis is clearly on the age of the object as opposed to an association with Sorfvaluk, its previous owner. Insofar as it was not always necessary for the wearer to know what the intended effect of the object was for it to function, this piece is also reminiscent of an *anguak* that Matthew Nakashook (2001) wore as a young child. Although he did not place an emphasis on the age of the object, he explained that his mother had sewed a small skin pouch onto the right shoulder of his jacket with a strict warning for him not to look at the contents inside.

In this case, however, Nakashook (2001) did not even know what function the *anguak* was supposed to serve.

As previously stated, not only did the age of an object have a bearing on its power, but it would seem that the age of the original owner of an object could also play a role in the power and ability attributed to it. Rasmussen (1931: 272) notes that Tertaq had sewn to the wristband of his coat “the band of the inner coat of an old man” in order to give him a sure arm. He also wore on his person “an old man’s brow band [that] saves him from pains in the head” (Rasmussen 1931: 272). Furthermore, he wore the “tooth of a bear killed by an old man [to give him] health, strength and old age” (Rasmussen 1931: 272). In these cases, it is once again regrettable that Rasmussen (1931) did not collect more data on these objects, as a number of questions remain unanswered.

#### **4.1.2 Anguaks Associated with a Certain Proficiency**

The general consensus among researchers seems to be that previously owned items were capable of bestowing the luck, talent or skill of an original owner to a new recipient. For example, in Oosten’s (1997: 111) analysis of Rasmussen’s work he states that “Some implements such as harpoonheads might be obtained from old men who could no longer hunt, and the hunting luck of these previous owners would be transferred to the new possessor”, and it indeed seems to be the case that objects such as these came from old men specifically, which raises the obvious question as to whether the age of the previous owner could have also contributed to the qualities and power of these objects. However, given that it is seemingly the ‘hunting luck’ as opposed to the age of the original owner upon which Rasmussen (1931) and later Oosten (1997) place the emphasis, one can assume that this was the dominant factor contributing to the qualities of the object. Either way, some previously owned *anguaks* came to be associated with a particular talent or proficiency of the original owner. In referring to Tugaq’s impressive collection of *anguaks*, Rasmussen (1931: 271) states that “some of them are from close relations who have excelled by their skill”. In these cases, it would seem that these objects became vessels for the transmission of these abilities to a new owner. Indeed, Rasmussen (1931: 46) provides an example of such an item:

For a boy a toy is made out of the metacarpal bones of a seal, a thong being run through them; these the boy throws about outside. If the bones have been taken from a seal caught by a good hunter they will give the boy luck when sealing in later life.

As was mentioned previously in the section devoted to qualities associated with the seal, this particular object raises the question of the source from which the object derived its power (working under the assumption, of course, that the power of the objects can be conceived as having a definite source). The association of seal bones with seal hunting is a fairly straightforward one, and this connection was possibly an important contributor to the qualities of the object. However, Rasmussen (1931) clearly indicates that the boy would become a good sealer only if the man who caught the seal was himself a good hunter, disclosing the possibility that the talents of the original owner were somehow invested in the object and thence passed on to the new owner. This dynamic certainly seems to be what many researchers have found to be the case. Once again, it could be a combination of the above factors.

Rasmussen (1931) makes note of an object worn by Pilarqaq that consisted of a small bone implement used to clean the inside of a kayak. This object had “belonged to a deceased kayak man famous for his fast rowing, and will now give its new owner the same skill” (1931: 270). However, would the object have been considered powerful had the original possessor still been alive? This question adds another interesting and little researched element into the study of the *anguak*.

#### **4.1.3 Anguaks Associated with a Family Member**

Many items in Rasmussen’s (1931) work seemed to derive their power due to their connection with another member of the wearer’s immediate or extended family. That is to say at least that Rasmussen (1931) or the informants placed an unusual emphasis on the fact that the object had originated from another family member. Tugaq sported several examples of these items: “an amulet belt, decorated with the teeth of musk oxen and bears from the animals killed by his uncle [and] another amulet belt that has belonged to his father” (Rasmussen 1931: 271), all of which made him a skillful sealer and hunter.

Tertaq also wore several items with a familial connection, two of which were lines used to drag seals that had “belonged to his father and elder brother” (Rasmussen 1931: 271). Sewn to the hood of his coat, these would bring him luck when sealing. He also wore attached to his sleeve a piece of leg skin from a caribou that had been killed by his father. This object “makes him a fast runner” (Rasmussen 1931: 272).

Much like regular *anguaks*, mothers could also wear objects originating from another family member in lieu of their children. Utsugpaglak wore seal snouts on her coat from her son-in-law’s kills so that her biological son would be “a good seal hunter” (Rasmussen 1931:275). It is interesting to note in this case that if the object did indeed retain a connection to her son-in-law, this object then supercedes the biological order to which the other familial *anguaks* follow by having an influence on her son. This in itself is an interesting illustration of the Inuit concept of family and kinship ties.

Quvliq had hung by her lamp several lower seal jaws, all from her husbands kills, which were to “give [her son] luck when sealing” (Rasmussen 1931: 275). These examples also present a unique and intriguing dynamic. If the theory that these objects established a connection between family members is correct, this would be illustrative of a fairly complex structure of association mediated somehow by the mother/wife and the *anguak* in question.

#### **4.1.4 Anguaks Associated with a Specific Activity**

Certain *anguaks* also seemed to be associated with specific activities and, although many had been previously owned or used as a functional object prior to being retired into *anguak* status, the authors somewhat obliquely imply that they acquired their power by virtue of having been involved in these activities. Birket-Smith (1959: 161) provides an example of such an item, a piece of an ice-scoop used for cleaning out sealing holes that had belonged to a now-dead hunter. This object would give the wearer luck in sealing. Rasmussen (1931: 269) describes a similar object belonging to Itqiliq who wore on his chest “the wooden rim of a skin scoop that has belonged to a man now dead [that] brings luck when hunting caribou with a kayak”. Both of these *anguaks* seem to have a clear association with the activity for which their previous owner functionally used them, but the question remains as to whether the fact that the previous owner is now

dead played a role in the power of the object. Another object recorded by Rasmussen (1931: 272) that also incorporated these elements of original function and having been possessed by a now-dead individual was a harpoon head worn by Tertaq. This object had apparently been found at a gravesite, and was to give him lucky sealing. Although Rasmussen (1931) does not go into any further detail regarding this object, tampering with gravesites seems to have been a rare and generally unacceptable activity, so it is fairly certain that this origin played a role in its abilities.

Rasmussen (1931) makes two very clear and similar references to functional objects-turned-*anguaks* related to their original purpose, one of which was worn by the recipient of the effect himself (Tugaq, 271), and the other was worn by a boy's mother for his benefit (Quvliq, 275). These objects were both old bowstrings worn across the shoulders like scarves, and were both intended to make the recipients of the effects good bowmen. Another object worn by Tugaq was a piece of a harpoon line intended to make him clever at sealing (Rasmussen 1931: 271). In the absence of any other information regarding these objects, it can be reasonably assumed that these objects may have acquired their status as *anguaks* due to having previously been functionally used in the activities to which they were associated.

#### **4.1.5 Anguaks Related to Women and their Activities**

The practice of women wearing *anguaks* attached to their clothing during their pregnancies that would then be transferred to their child's clothing for their benefit once they are born is well documented. Jenness (1946: 49) writes the following:

Every mother who carried a baby sewed to her coat some object that she conceived would make the child a skillful hunter or an efficient housewife when it grew up; she then transferred it to the child's clothing as soon as it was old enough to run about.

Oosten (1997: 112), elaborating on the processes through which this association was thought to function, explains further:

The relations between an animal and a child was mediated by the mother. She wore the amulet before it was transferred to the child...a mother may also have transferred some part of herself to the amulet which was essential to make it effective.

The toggle used to fasten either a woman's trouser or *amaut* thong seemed to be associated with health and life-giving force, and tended to be a fairly common *anguak* following the descriptions above. It is perhaps interesting to note that although it was a functional object used by a woman, it was in every case cited as an *anguak* for a man or boy. Instances of mothers wearing items in lieu of their daughters is peculiarly absent from the research. Nonetheless, Rasmussen (1931: 276) makes several mentions of these items, one of which was apparently frequently worn by women with infant sons, consisting of a

raven's claw or piece of hard wood used as a toggle on the amaut strap. When the boy grows up he will use this strap as a belt, and the raven's claw or the piece of wood as a belt buckle; this will give him a strong life.

In other cases, various objects could be attached to the *amaut* thong to be used as *anguaks* by the child later in life:

A young woman carrying a child in her amaut always has a belt round her waist to keep the amaut tight into her body. On this belt she must hang various objects, for instance the head of a great northern diver or other bird, the beak or head-skin of a crane, bones of various birds. These things she must keep for her son to come (Rasmussen 1931: 46).

In these cases, it is no doubt that the association with the mother rather than the material nature of the objects is the crucial factor contributing to their power. However, it is interesting to note that in the first case Rasmussen (1931) specifies that the object is worn by women with 'infant sons'. This implies, of course, that the child has already been born and does not specify whether the prospective mother wore the object during her pregnancy. Either way, due to the placement of the object about the woman's waist and reproductive organs, it would be reasonable to theorize that the object had perhaps come to be associated with the processes of gestation, birth and life, and would thus pass on these attributes to the wearer.

Rasmussen (1931: 269) mentions two other *anguaks* derived from *amaut*-thong toggles of various materials, one of which was worn by Itqiliq and consisted of "the bone of an old woman's amaut thong [which] brings health". It was apparently fairly common, Rasmussen (1931: 274) says, for men to wear these toggles "sewn to one side of the inner

coat [to protect] from illness”, although he does not specify the material from which they were derived. Presumably then, the material nature of the object was not the dominant factor contributing to its effects, but rather the association with the woman. In these two cases however, the women are specified as being old, which could also have been a contributing factor.

It would seem that the general and specific qualities of a woman could be transferred to another person, woman or man, via certain objects. To elaborate, the woman’s ability to sew for example could be transferred to a man via the application of an object related to the activity. Rasmussen (1931: 271) states that “at the right sleeve band [of Tugaq’s coat] is a skin thimble [that] makes him able to sew”. Similar to the case of the men’s objects mentioned earlier, however, this object could have gained its potency simply due to its association with a specific activity, rather than being associated exclusively with a characteristic property of womanhood. In this case however, the activity of seamstressing was of course associated exclusively with womanhood, so the distinction would be very difficult to make.

#### **4.1.6 Anguaks Associated with Birth and Infancy**

Although some of the objects mentioned above were associated with pregnancy, another group of *anguaks* seemed to acquire their power through their association with the birth and infancy of the child itself. Perhaps the best attested to were the skins used to wipe the fluids from a newborn child. Referring to the Netsilik Inuit, Balikci (1970: 221) writes that upon birth “The infant was then wiped with a special skin that would later be considered a powerful amulet”, however he does not digress into any detail as to what this ‘special skin’ consisted of, nor when, how or to whom this *anguak* would be applied. Rasmussen’s (1931) work however helps to answer these questions. He writes that these skins were most often “the forehead skin of a caribou or the skin of a great northern diver, gull or long-tailed duck” (Rasmussen 1931: 40). In the same volume, he later explains what effects each of these skins may have on a wearer: a mother wore the caribou head skin used to wipe her son off so that he may have “luck when caribou hunting” (275); a newborn boy who had been wiped with a red-throated diver would have “health and long life” (45); and a gull skin used for the same purpose would make boys

“clever fishermen” (45). Rasmussen (1931: 271) also cites one such skin worn by Tugaq as being “a kayak amulet...to protect him when he goes to sea”, although he does not specify what type of skin it is. Given that several birds were identified with kayaking skills and a caribou muzzle skin was also associated with safety at sea, it is difficult to ascertain what precisely it could be.

The power ascribed to these *anguaks* could issue from a number of sources, and a number of plausible theories have been put forth. Oosten (1997: 112) states that

The life-force was related to the breath, the warmth, and the vitality of the body, but all excretions and emanations of the body such as smell, sweat, warmth, excrements, blood, urine, etc. were potent substances and had to be treated with extreme care.

It would stand to reason that the amniotic fluid and blood associated with birth were particularly potent substances, and the skin absorbing such a fluid would endow it with certain life-giving powers which the child would then be able to benefit from by wearing the object. And although most authors referring to such objects seem to place an emphasis on the transfer of the fluid to the skin and thence to the child, it would seem, however, that another dynamic is possible. Rasmussen (1931), as mentioned above, clearly states that a child wiped with a caribou skin would become a good caribou hunter, if wiped with the skin of a loon he would have long life and health, and if wiped with a gull skin he would become a clever fisherman. These qualities the reader will have recognized from the segments in the previous chapter devoted to these animals as characteristics habitually attributed to them. As such, another possibility is that as the child was being wiped with these skins, the attributes of the animal from which they were derived were somehow also being transferred to the child.

Still more items consisted of pieces of the first garments the child had worn as an infant. The custom of preserving the first garment worn by a child seemed to be fairly common amongst most Inuit cultures. In reference to the ‘Central Eskimo’, Boas (1883: 592) states that “A small part of the first gown worn by a child is considered a powerful amulet and is preserved for this reason”. He later provides more details on these items. Following a shamanic séance where several *angakoqs* drive the deity Sedna and the other spirits assailing the village away,



a great festival for young and old is celebrated in honor of the event. But they must still be careful, for the wounded Sedna is greatly enraged and will seize any one whom she can find out of his hut; so on this day they all wear protecting amulets...on the tops of their hoods. Parts of the first garment which they wore after birth are used for this purpose.

Unfortunately, Boas (1883) does not explain how or why these objects were thought to work, nor what their association with Sedna entailed.

According to Rasmussen (1931: 40),

The first garment [of a child] is never thrown away, but is kept by the parents until the child is grown up. They have an idea that the life and vigour of the child are in some remarkable manner associated with this first covering.

Although this statement refers to garments in general, he later goes on to provide several examples of specific items of clothing. Utsugpaglak wore “the first small, short skin socks the boy had” (Rasmussen 1931: 275) attached to her inner coat to give health to her son. Furthermore, she also had attached to the coat the first cap her son had worn as an infant to bring him luck when hunting. Although the first example connects the child with the quality of vigor as per Rasmussen’s statement, it is unclear how the cap provides the child with luck on the hunt.

#### **4.1.7 Discussion**

The topics addressed above present some unique problems. In that many of the objects described above seem to simultaneously incorporate elements from several of the themes covered in this chapter, it should be repeated that the classificatory system used was a provisional necessity in structuring the data, and should not be regarded as an attempt to impose an ‘objective’ system of classification on the data. That being said, several very important elements were brought to light in this chapter, and several questions were also presented. Of course, the most obvious departure from the objects discussed previously is that these objects, despite the fact that they were derived from animal products (with the exception of course of the objects derived from human products), they seemingly related the wearer to another human and not to an animal. However, it is not surprising that human products were equally capable of being applied as *anguaks* when one takes into account the Inuit belief that man and animal are all part

of the same material and spiritual continuum, which of course differs markedly in comparison to our North American perception that often insists on separating these categories.

Regarding the section devoted to objects derived from human hair and other human products, several questions remain unanswered. Primarily, the notion of a divisible spirit is presented, as it would seem that some portion of a person's spirit is contained in hair trimmings and other products of the human body. This notion may also explain why the above-mentioned individual retained his severed thumb. The gesture may have been to preserve the quantity of his spirit that was contained in the severed digit. Although the concept of a divisible spirit in Inuit thought has been attested to in the form of the *nappan* and *tarrak* of a person (see Jenness 1922: 177), this concept as an extension into *anguaks* had been little explored. Rasmussen (1931) states that some boys would wear their hair long as cutting it would reduce their spirit, an action that seemingly could generate undisclosed negative consequences for the individual in question. And yet many people seemed to take advantage of *anguaks* composed of another human's hair with no reported negative consequences for the person from whom it was trimmed. But some form or portion of the soul was apparently contained in hair or other parts of the body. This brings up several questions: what form or quantity of a soul could be conceived to dwell in each part of a human body? How does this dynamic compare to animal souls as they relate to *anguaks*? Presumably, the hair was taken from the individual with his consent, so it remains unclear why trimming hair from an individual would be viewed as negative in some cases and neutral (or at least non-threatening) for other individuals. More research would need to be done regarding the soul or spirit of a being and how it related to *anguaks*, in part or in whole.

Several objects derived from human hair were also associated with age in that they were trimmed from an old individual. These cases bring up a salient concern which remains unanswered in Rasmussen's (1931) work: insofar as the attributes conveyed by hair are concerned, it remains unclear whether they were materially inherent of hair itself, a factor of the source being aged or reflective of the qualities of the person from whom it originated. If they are material qualities of hair itself, it is not clear why that is so.

Caribou, for example, are swift and the association with material derived from the animal intended to make the wearer a fast runner is fairly simple. Perhaps given that hair visibly grows, it is certainly not unreasonable that it would be associated with growth or healthy and vigorous qualities, but the authors never explicitly establish such a link.

The age of an object certainly had an effect on its perceived power, both for human hair *anguaks* and objects fashioned from animal and/or 'natural' products. As mentioned earlier, the factor of age seemed to be two-tiered: certain objects seemed to have been powerful by virtue of their age, and still others seemed to have acquired their abilities by virtue of their association with an old person. Old age in a person unquestionably was a thing to be respected as is evinced by the respect that was traditionally shown to Inuit elders. Old age also seemed to have been associated with certain physical qualities such as health and vigor, for if someone had attained old age it was obviously for these reasons. However, it is difficult to ascertain for some objects mentioned above whether the power of the *anguak* was derived from the age of the object or the age of the donor.

Another possibility addressed above is that each *anguak* derived from hair or previously owned by an individual was specifically associated with the particular qualities of the person from whom it was derived. For example, it would seem unreasonable and unlikely given the findings to date for a person to fashion and wear an *anguak* composed of hair from a person who was feeble or chronically ill, or of an object that had been previously owned by such a person. These would certainly be regarded as unwanted characteristics that could possibly be transmitted to the wearer through the object. As such, although it is likely that hair for example was probably associated with certain qualities, they were probably not independent or indomitable to the material itself, in that the objects derived from hair were most likely also associated with the personal qualities of the individual upon whom it grew. Similarly, in the cases of items that had been owned by other individuals, it is likely that these objects were perceived as being associated partially with the activity for which they were used, and partially with the characteristics of the previous owner. In the cases of Tertaq's wristband and brow-band, these could merely represent cases of associative placement with regards to another

human being as opposed to an animal. Furthermore, Rasmussen (1931) neglects to mention the material from which these objects were fashioned, a factor that could also provide a possible explanation of their functions. In brief, as was previously alluded to, the attribution of power to these *anguaks* was most likely a fluid combination of the elements mentioned above and others, but as many earlier researchers such as Rasmussen (1931) did not focus their energies on *anguaks*, it is difficult if not impossible to verify these notions.

Several *anguaks* mentioned above also seem to have had multiple powers and/or multiple contributors to their abilities. The bear tooth that was given to Tertaq by an old man presents an example of this interesting quandary. It reputedly gave him the characteristics of health, strength and old age. As was stated in the section devoted to bears, the characteristics of health and strength were endemic to this animal, and as was evinced by the explanations of objects derived from human hair, they seem to have been endemic to the aged person as well. However, nowhere is it mentioned that bears are associated with old age (however, due to the fluidity with which meaning was commonly attached to *anguaks*, this is entirely possible). What remains in question, therefore, is the following: what were the sources of power for these items of potentially ‘compound effect’, and how did these sources interrelate? Several possible scenarios, none of which can be reasonably resolved, emerge:

- 1) the three characteristics of health, strength and old age were derived from the bear, and therefore its association with the old man is superfluous
- 2) the three aforementioned characteristics derived from the old man, and therefore its material nature is superfluous
- 3) the bear and the old man both contributed one of several possible combinations of qualities to the object

If the third scenario were indeed the case (as it most likely is), this would open up the possibility of multiple influences contributing to a single object. Although many items in Rasmussen’s (1931) research and other sources of a uniform material nature are cited as simultaneously embodying several seemingly different qualities, the possibility of this ‘compound contribution’ has not been dealt with explicitly and would merit further research. However, a possible explanation for this phenomenon is that given that the

characteristics of health, strength and old age are qualities that are not entirely unrelated even from our North American perspective, the supposition that these represent separate and distinct qualities from an Inuit perspective could very well simply be erroneous. In our culture's myths for example, physical strength is a personal quality that is often considered to be associated with courage. The case among the Inuit, and more specifically with the object in question may be that health, strength and old age are simply considered to be facets of the same quality, rather than individual qualities in and of themselves. An interesting possibility for future research may be to explore the Inuit perceptions of personal qualities, both physical and otherwise.

To conceive of *anguaks* as having a defined source of power is problematic, however many respondents in Rasmussen's (1931) research were able to identify why certain of their *anguaks* had the abilities they did, and from whence these abilities were derived. This leads to the conclusion that explanations for the sources of power (although it should be noted that the terms 'source' and 'power' are used for lack of better terms in that they are concepts that are North American and do not necessarily accurately correspond to Inuit conceptions of like terms) for many objects were available. In the example of a boy playing with seal bones from an animal captured by a reputedly good seal hunter, given the general trends in Inuit thought contributing to the attribution of power to *anguaks*, it would make little sense for a boy to play with, say, caribou bones to improve his seal hunting, nor to conjecture that playing with seal bones from an animal captured by a bad hunter would produce the desired affect. It would have been illustrative had earlier researchers questioned or were able to extract from their respondents whether the important factor in a case such as this was the association of seal bones with the animal, or whether it was the association with the good hunter that was important. Once again, the lack of detailed information relating to these objects makes it difficult to reach a conclusion.

Several of the *anguaks* mentioned above were identified as having been previously associated with someone who had since passed on. Although one could be inclined to assume that the talents of the original owner had simply been passed on the new owner through the object, the fact that the original owner was deceased (and hence

an active denizen and agent of the spirit world) could also have affected the dynamics of the object. This is, of course, mere conjecture, but the extent to which the Inuit conceived of the spirit world as being able to intrude upon the world of the living makes it not unreasonable to assume that this may have had an effect on the object. This role of the deceased in relation to their objects that have been passed on to family members has not been well researched, and presents another interesting facet of *anguaks* to be explored.

Many *anguaks* mentioned above also establish a link between one family member and another. Tugaq wore objects that had been owned by his father and his uncle, while Tertaq wore objects that had been owned by his father and by his older brother. Although this trend of *anguaks* or the materials used to fabricate them being given by family members is evinced in a number of cases, traditional Inuit concepts of family and kinship structures as they relate to *anguaks* has not been well researched. While many of the objects maintain and fulfill the functions of other similar items fabricated from the same material components (i.e. caribou skin from an animal killed by Tertaq's father still makes him a fast runner), the familial connection embodied by the object doubtlessly played a role in the perceived ability and value of the object. The question, however, is how was this association perceived? Did the father somehow instill some of his spirit into the object, perhaps reinforcing or even augmenting its effect? The dynamics of power and kinship in cases such as these would be interesting to research in the future.

Further complicating this kinship dynamic as it relates to the proximity of family members are the cases of objects from animals killed by an uncle and a brother. It is unclear whether these individuals were esteemed hunters, thereby passing on this attribute to the new wearer, or whether their familial connection to the intended wearer played a role in the perceived power of the object. It would be interesting to elaborate on the perceptions of the Inuit family as members of what we consider to be an extended family (such as uncles, etc.) were also able to contribute objects to a wearer.

Without question however the most prominent example of an *anguak* being present in a form of familial communication was the custom of mothers wearing objects for their children, both prior to and after they had been born. Of note here were the seal

snouts worn by Utsugpaglak for her son (Rasmussen 1931:275). These objects were from her son-in-law's kills, thereby meaning that the relationship of son-in-law to mother to child may have had the same gravity as the father to mother to child relationship noted earlier. Another example if this is the collection of seal jaws from her husbands' kills that Quvliog had hung by her lamp (Rasmussen 1931: 275). In this case, the objects may establish a link between the father and child via the mother, but once again it is unknown whether the father was a talented seal hunter passing on his attributes through the objects via the mother, or whether the mere fact of an establishment of a relationship to the parent(s) was the crucial factor. This item is also interesting in that it brings the lamp with its aforementioned connection to life and the soul into play. Unfortunately, Rasmussen (1931) does not mention whether the lamp played an important part in the functioning and perception of this item.

These notions of familial connections through an *anguak* also bring up further questions. It is unknown whether the mother was acting as a proxy wearer for her child, or whether she was considered the wearer and owner of the object, bending its abilities to the assistance of her son. Perhaps a minor detail, but some of the dynamics of these relationships could prove very fruitful and illustrative for future researchers. Given the fairly common Inuit practice of adoption, it would be interesting to probe into whether or not *anguaks* could be worn by adoptive mothers for adoptive sons, whether biological mothers could wear *anguaks* for their biological sons even though they had been effectively adopted by another family, whether material contributed by a stepfather for an *anguak* would have the same importance as material contributed by a biological father, and so on.

#### **4.2 Women's *Anguaks* and the Role of the Mother**

As the reader may have noticed in the previous sections, an overwhelming majority of the objects worn by women were not in fact for their own benefit, but for the benefit of their children. As Jenness (1946: 49) writes,

Women occasionally strung a row of small bones or of caribou incisor teeth across the fronts of their coats, but other appendages to the clothing were not so much ornaments as charms. Every mother who carried a baby sewed to her coat some

object that she conceived would make the child a skillful hunter or an efficient housewife when it was old enough to run about.

The reader may also have noticed that the majority of these *anguaks* were specifically for male children. Indeed, there is a remarkable dearth of information regarding women wearing *anguaks* for their own benefit, or at least a dearth of objects themselves. In this section, a description of what few women's *anguaks* existed or were documented will be provided, followed by an elaboration of the previously mentioned practice of women wearing objects in lieu of their children.

#### **4.2.0 Women's Anguaks**

Most of the objects worn by women for their own benefit (meaning that the locus of effect was the woman, and the object intended to augment or bestow a particular talent on the woman) were related to what was arguably their most important domestic task, seamstressing. For example, Rasmussen (1931: 276) states that an object worn by a little girl consisting of "the stitch-like patterns of a salmon skin [would] give fine, strong stitches". In quoting Rasmussen's work, Weyer (1969: 311) elaborates that "One of the few amulets worn by women on their own account is a strip from the skin of a salmon, with the scales along the lateral line; this is supposed to give fine, strong stitches in all needlework". Given that these objects are not elaborated upon any further, it is difficult to deduce whether the skins of other fish could be used for the same purpose, or whether the salmon itself is specifically associated with clever seamstressing. Given the descriptions of the objects however, it is possible that this *anguak* derived its power due to the resemblance between the pattern of scales along the lateral line and actual stitching rather than an inherent quality of the salmon itself.

Although the symbolism is not clear and Rasmussen (1931) does not provide any further details about the object, a piece of caribou muzzle skin could also convey the qualities of good seamstressing. The object, worn by a little girl was "sewn on to her inner coat either on both sleeves or only on one [and this] makes her a quick and clever seamstress" (Rasmussen 1931: 276). Given the information available, it is difficult to ascertain what the association between caribou muzzle skin and stitching would be, but



that fact that Rasmussen specifies that it was worn on one or both sleeves could indicate that for this *anguak* there is a factor of associative placement at work.

Yet another object seemed to be able to transmit the qualities of good seamstressing, but this intriguing object may represent a fairly complex and subtle framework of kinship and/or familial relations. Rasmussen (1931: 46) writes the following: “If it is desired that a little girl should become a clever seamstress, her first little piece of sewing must be fastened to the sleeve of the person who first took her when she was born”. Here the symbolic association between a piece of sewing and a continued proclivity for seamstressing is evident. However, due to the lack of information regarding this object, it is difficult to come to any further conclusions. This is unfortunate, as this object is fairly unique. Although the locus of effect of the *anguak* is the child in question, it is the only *anguak* found in the literature that was given to an adult by a child. It is not mentioned whether this apparent inversion of the much better documented and previously described practice of adults presenting children with *anguaks* was a form of reciprocation to the individual for her assistance at the birth of the child, but this is one possibility. If the adult who first took her was a biological or extended relation of the child, this may be a case, although inverted, of this mediation via a family member. If the person was not a relative, this creates a potentially new and little-researched mediative dynamic. As was previously described, the powers of an *anguak* could be mediated through the mother both from and to a number of sources drawn from her immediate and extended family. In this case, it is unknown whether the mother played a mediative role or whether this constitutes a direct transaction between the girl and the person who first touched her. Also, given the rituals, taboos and injunctions involved with the birthing process in Inuit culture, these are also factors that may have contributed to the perception of this *anguak*.

Another group of objects, although included in this section, is slightly more difficult to categorize. These objects could and were often worn by any woman of or prior to childbearing age, be she a prepubescent girl, an expectant mother or a woman hoping for children in the future. Regardless of the situation, these objects were intended to produce a male child. The question arises, however, as to whether the locus of effect

of the object was the mother-to-be or the unborn (and indeed in some cases un-*conceived*) child. Hence, it is difficult to determine whether this should be considered a woman's *anguak* or whether it should be interpreted as a situation of mother-for-child mediation. Regardless, the symbolism behind these objects is equally mysterious. As was previously mentioned in the section devoted to the animal, a fox penis was worn by one pregnant woman to ensure that her child would be a boy. The question was also already addressed as to whether this quality of 'maleness' was inherent of the animal, or whether it was an association to male genitalia that would produce the desired effect. Rasmussen (1931: 276, italics added) also provides another example of such an object, stating that they are especially intended to be worn by young girls:

A *quksaunaq* (small fish that darts about in salt water among the stones of the beach it is very quick and, when one tries to seize it, it winds round one's hand); it is worn sewn on to the inner coat and its effect is that the girl will one day be the mother of a son.

Given that Rasmussen (1931) did not provide the English name for the type of fish in question (although given the location and description, the term *quksaunaq* may refer to an alewife or sculpin), it is difficult to explore the potential symbolism linking the animal to the qualities of maleness. Regardless, Rasmussen (1931: 276) cites one more object that a woman could employ to ensure the birth of a male child, and this consisted of a swan's beak. Due to the fact that this is the only mention of an *anguak* fabricated from the products of a swan, it is equally difficult to assign any meaning to this object.

#### **4.2.1 Mother as a Mediator between *Anguak* and Child**

Perhaps due to the almost universally acknowledged or perceived bond between mother and child, an Inuit mother seemed to be able to act as a conduit or mediator between an *anguak* and her child who was to be the locus of the effect of the object. This means that an Inuit mother could wear the *anguak* instead of her child, and yet the child would receive the effects while the mother would not. Evidently, some special sort of bond must have been perceived to exist between mother and child that contributed to this practice, as there are few or no examples of women wearing objects in lieu of their husbands or other relatives. Although this raises interesting questions regarding the perceived family structure and spiritual or physical kinship ties, they are unfortunately

not within the scope of this research. Regardless, the effects passed on by these *anguaks* generally corresponded to the effects of *anguaks* worn by the intended locus of effect described in the previous sections dealing with the material aspects of such objects. To avoid redundancy, this section will therefore deal less with the objects themselves (as many have already been cited in previous sections) and more with the logistics of this custom.

As has been previously alluded to, not only could a mother wear an *anguak* for her infant, adolescent or adult children, but she could also wear them to assist her unborn and even unconceived children. There was most likely a temporal aspect to this notion. Apparently, the longer the *anguak* had been effective, the more powerful it was perceived to be. Balikci (1970: 202) writes that “amulets did not lose their power with time. On the contrary, amulets increased in strength as they grew older, getting more and more powerful as they were inherited by successive generations”. As such, it was desirable that the mother should put in motion the effects of an *anguak* as early as possible in the life of the child (and indeed even prior to his birth and/or conception) so that the child could benefit from its effects. This immediately raises several questions. Obviously, an unborn or infant son would not be capable of hunting caribou for some years to come, and yet the woman Nik provides a common example of this premeditative use of *anguaks* in that she “wore a short flap of deerskin on her own belt to make the baby a good hunter in after years” (Jenness 1922: 169). Therefore, was the effect of the *anguak* a cumulative factor of how much time the locus of effect had been under its influence? Did *anguaks* such as these help promote physical attributes such as strength, dexterity or accuracy that the child would require to hunt in the future? In the cases of *anguaks* affecting children who were not even yet conceived, is it possible that given the proximity of the spirit world to the world of the living in Inuit belief, the *anguak* somehow affected the spirit of the unborn child? Given the Inuit belief that a child was in fact a reincarnation of a departed ancestor, did the premeditative *anguak* exhibit an effect on that still-living person or, as the case may be, departed spirit? By wearing an object prior to the conception of a child, was the future mother acting as a ‘storehouse’ for the power of the *anguak* which would then be passed on to her child after its birth? Unfortunately, the answers to these questions are not within the scope of this research. Obviously, the

dynamics of this practice, no matter how well attested to, have yet to be explained in satisfactory detail, but the various questions it raises leave many possible avenues for future research.

This practice also seemingly contradicts the policy of the ‘ownership’ of *anguaks*. Balikci (1970: 202) exemplifies this apparently glaring discrepancy:

Amulets were given to boys and girls by their mothers and were considered strictly personal property. Only the owner could benefit from their supernatural power...Women did not wear their amulets for their own benefit, but to help the children they would bear

In this sense, even with the consent and knowledge of the owner, an *anguak* could not be traded or lent to another person. Even if an *anguak* were to be stolen from its ‘owner’, the thief would technically be unable to benefit from the effects of the object, effectively rendering it null and void insofar as the thief was concerned. Due to this notion of non-transferability, it is first of all curious that *anguaks* could be inherited at all, and secondly that a mother could wear an object in lieu of the ‘real owner’ or intended locus of effect, namely her child. Furthermore, with very few exceptions, *anguaks* were required to be in direct physical contact with the recipient of its effects in order to function. Why then would a mother be able to act as a proxy wearer in lieu of her child? In response, it is true that the inheritance of an *anguak* tended to be exclusively along familial lines. This coupled with the aforementioned bond between mother and child may have superseded the non-transferability of an *anguak*. Regrettably, no solutions to these conundrums are forthcoming. As explained earlier, to even state that the wearer of an *anguak* was the ‘owner’ of the object seems antinomial to the perception of the relationship between the two. However, previous researchers such as Balikci (1970) may have simply applied this term for lack of a more accurate designation.

### **4.3 Shamanic Paraphernalia**

Thus far, little has been said about shamanism and the *anguaks* employed by them, but the paraphernalia typically distinguishing a shaman from the laity does merit note. According to Jenness (1922: 191) shamans, or *angatkut* (although different authors use a variety of spellings for the word), were

The mediators and intercessors between the living Eskimos and the supernatural world of shades and spirits...A shaman's powers are due to the control he presumably exercises over certain spirits, which are either the spirits (the shades?) of certain animals or the shades of the Eskimo dead.

It is interesting to note that as evinced by Jenness' (1922) somewhat doubtful wording and the placement of the word 'shades' in brackets in the preceding quotation, there was and to a large extent still is a degree of ambiguity surrounding the terminology and perception of the role and abilities of the shaman. Nonetheless, a precise understanding of the shaman is not critical to analyze their use of *anguaks*. Shamans did themselves make use of a variety of objects much like the laity, although these objects often had much different effects and took different forms than a 'typical' *anguak*.

#### **4.3.0 The Shamanic Belt**

Perhaps the most distinctive object employed by the *angakok* (singular form of *angatkut*) was the shamanic belt or sash (the two terms 'belt' and 'sash' will be used interchangeably herein). According to Issenman (1988: 90) in fact, "In Canada, the shaman usually wore the same clothing as other Inuit; a belt or headband was the only distinguishing feature". This statement seems to hold true for the Copper Inuit and belts were mentioned several times in literature sources and by the elders of Cambridge Bay. Frank Analok (2001) stated that when he saw a person wearing a belt or sash he knew that person was a shaman, and that he then became afraid of that person. These belts or sashes were most often composed of a strip or braid of skin upon which were sewn a variety of items, each of which had been given to the *angakok* by the members of the community. The action of an individual giving the object to the shaman was apparently a crucial factor contributing to the power of the shamanic belt. According to Oosten's (1997: 111) interpretation of the phenomenon,

The notion that magical objects had to be given in order to retain or acquire their efficacy played a central part in the beliefs and customs concerning the shamanic belt. Many objects were attached to this belt and each of them had to be given. Each object derived its power from the intention of the gift.

It should perhaps be noted at this point that belts upon which were sewn a variety of *anguaks* were not exclusive to the shaman. In fact, Balikci (1970: 202-202) states that

“Most amulets were attached to the owner’s coat to protect him wherever he traveled. Special belts were also worn outside the coat with numerous amulets hanging from it”. However, what seemed to differentiate the shamanic belt from the laic belt was the notion of the gift mentioned by Oosten above.

Oosten (1997: 117) states that there was a similarity between the children whose coats were laden with *anguaks* and the shamanic belt. Apparently the children “did not wear those amulets for their benefit only, but also for the well being of the community as a whole (cf. also the shamanic belt, which should be composed of gifts of all the inhabitants of a village)”. Birket-Smith (1959: 171, brackets added) provides an explanation of how the community as a whole (or at least the individuals who had contributed gifts to the belt) benefited from the shamanic belt:

Only among the Central tribes will they (the shamans) fasten strips of caribou skin and small bone carvings of human figures, harpoons, knives, etc., to their belts. All these are gifts, ‘for presents give strength’, and the donors are confident that the spirit helpers will recognize them by their gifts and therefore will never do them any harm.

Several authors have provided details of the objects that were typically attached to the shamanic belt. Numerous references cite that one of the most common of these objects consisted of miniature representations of a variety of tools. Most commonly represented were snow knives, flensing knives, snow beaters and so on. Although these objects could be worn by the laity, the *angatkut* made particular use of them. These objects were all seemingly aimed at protecting the wearer from the attacks of harmful spirits. Rasmussen (1931: 268 inset) provides a photograph of a belt that had belonged to the shaman Unaleq which consists of a string of nearly 30 such model knives, stating that “The many models of flensing knives and snow knives, carved in horn, are to protect him against evil spirits”. Similar knives are also featured on the CMCC archive object catalogued as IV-D-1791 (see the section on CMCC artifacts for further details), and other examples of similar objects abound. Other objects that were commonly attached to such belts were the strips of caribou skin mentioned earlier by Birket-Smith (1959). Rasmussen (1931: 270) also makes mention of a belt worn by the shaman Pujuaq upon which were sewn “A bone figure representing his helping spirit Alagkarjuaq: gives him visions and inspiration;

a small sprit whip: protects him from evil spirits; fringing of white caribou skin: brings luck when sealing”. Belts such as these composed of strips of caribou skin are reminiscent of a belt described by Moses Koihok (2001) that he apparently wore as a child.

The laity as well as the shaman could equally wear many of the objects noted above, either attached to a belt or sash, or to one’s jacket. Pilarqaq for example wore “two...miniature snow beaters, sewn to the inner coat at the height of the shoulder blades: protects him against evil spirits (Rasmussen 1931: 270), and Aquissoq wore an amulet belt about his waist upon which was sewn a variety of items, two of which were miniature whips, “which are especially intended for spirits; if one is pursued by a to’nraq, one lashes the whip in his direction” (270). It should be noted here that the term ‘to’nraq’ is one of many spellings for what Laugrand, Oosten & Trudel (2000: 42, brackets added) refer to as *tuurngaq*, “the most common word used to refer to the helping spirit of an *angakkuq* (another spelling for the word referring to a shaman)”. *Tuurngaq* were entities that could take many forms and could be identified with literally any animal or natural phenomenon. Some whose help had been enlisted by the shaman (or in some cases the inverse) were generally beneficial to the populace at large, but others who were not associated with a shaman or who were associated with an evil one could be bent on causing harm to a person. They are explained as follows:

spirits that never had a normal life like human beings, though they are semi-human in their form...The shamans often assert that they cause them bodily harm, and sometimes claim to have killed one...The natives say that the shades of the dead, *inyuin tarrait*, often become spirits, *tornrait*, and in fact malignant shades that work the Eskimos harm are often called by this name...Spirits, *tornrait*, are liable to be encountered everywhere. They are especially dangerous in solitary places, and to natives wandering alone in the dark (Jenness 1922: 186).

As such, proper defenses such as the wearing of miniature whips, snow knives and beaters were often employed to that end.

#### **4.3.1 Objects Associated with Shamans and Shamanic Action**

Much like the *anguaks* that had been previously owned by a good hunter or someone associated with a particular talent, objects that had been previously owned by

shamans could also be recycled into *anguaks* for other people, and likely due to their having been associated with a shaman, these objects were most often aimed at procuring the powers and abilities of the shaman for the new wearer. Tertaq apparently wore attached to his jacket the “stump of a flensing knife that has belonged to the shaman Iksivalitaq [that] gives him ability as a shaman” (Rasmussen 1931: 272). In an interesting variation, the woman Utsugpaglak who was herself a shaman wore a shamanic belt for her son that is described as “consisting of strips of caribou skin [and] will give him ability as a shaman” (Rasmussen 1931: 274-275).

Still another type of object that was associated with shamanism and subsequently had come to be considered an *anguak* was an object that had undergone a transformation of some kind at the hands of a shaman during a séance or similar activity. Unaq and Tertaq both provide examples of this: Unaq wore “Caribou hair which in the mouth of a shaman has been turned into a piece of caribou fat, worn sewn into the coat [that makes him] clever at shamanizing” (Rasmussen 1931: 270). Tertaq also wore caribou hair that had been turned into caribou fat by a shaman, but this object by contrast would bring him “health and old age (1931: 272).

#### **4.3.2 Discussion**

One of the first questions that is raised and not well responded to in the literature is how each of the individual objects that contributed to the shamanic belt, and the shamanic belt as a whole were perceived, both by the shaman and by the laity. It may perhaps seem like a minor point, but it is not clear whether each object attached to the belt was considered a specific *anguak* with its own individual effect or function in and of itself or whether the belt as a whole was considered the *anguak*. Given that the authors in question did not describe each object attached to the belt, but that several belts worn by the laity were mentioned and many of the individual objects were described as having a distinct function in and of themselves, one could perhaps assume that it was the collective rather than the individual function of the objects that was the empowering impetus behind the shamanic belt. However, these aspects that could prove very illustrative are never specifically touched upon in the literature.



In reality, it is not entirely clear whether the shamanic belt can be conceived of as a proper *anguak* in that it does not seem to adhere to the same pretenses as many of the other objects described in this study. That it was intended to have a protective effect is certain, but in this case the recipient of the benefit was not obliged to wear the object. In lieu of the previous discussion about objects that did not have to be worn by the recipient in order for him to receive its effects, this does not initially seem to be out of the ordinary. Although, the trend in wearing *anguaks* by proxy seemed to be by and large restricted to within family and kinship structures, a trend the shamanic belt does not seem to adhere to. At the very least, this aspect does depart from the standard laity *anguak*. However, whereas the majority of the *anguaks* analyzed in this study seem to have functioned under the auspices of a spirit entity of some form inherent in the object itself, this dynamic is never made explicitly clear in relation to the shamanic belt. Rather, the shamanic belt as made clear above had the purpose of forestalling the evil designs of the denizens of the spirit world who were bent on wreaking havoc or harming someone in the world of the living. In this sense, the shamanic belt departs from the standard functions of the laity *anguaks* in that very few of these objects had the warding effect noted in the shamanic belt. Most of the laity objects made the wearer or the intended locus of effect the beneficiary of a certain talent or augmentation in an already present ability. What is noted here therefore seems to be an inversion in the so-called ‘flow of power’ of these objects: the *anguak* typically enlists the aid of a spirit entity while the shamanic belt repulses them. It must be stated that this is mere conjecture based on the information provided by earlier researchers, but one that would require further research.

What is furthermore unclear is the role of the shaman in relation to the belt, and why individuals of the laity were required to give the shaman objects such as were mentioned above in order to be protected. Although the shaman can certainly be considered a protector of the community and mediator between it and the spirit world, little information has been gathered regarding how the shamanic belt was used as a vehicle for this protective role. If each individual object given to the shaman were an *anguak* with a protective effect, then it would be more reasonable for the laity to wear the objects themselves. This further supports the notion that the objects given were not necessarily considered *anguaks* in and of themselves.

Also brought up in this section is the question of the gift. As Oosten (1997) and Birket-Smith (1959) attest to, the act or notion of giving an object or the gift itself was crucial to the abilities of the shamanic belt. However, despite their seemingly valid interpretation of the phenomenon, the dynamics behind this concept are little understood. As Oosten (1997: 111) states, the objects derived their power from the “intention of the gift”, but little is understood how this intention functioned in relation to the belt. Does this mean that the effects or efficacy of the object were dependent on the intentions of the giver towards the shaman? Does this mean that the intention of the shaman in using the object was the relevant factor? Did the gifts represent a solicitation of the shamans’ protective services? Is the gift itself a protective device, or was the gesture a symbolic one, ensuring that by their display of generosity towards the shaman the spirits would not be angered towards that person? Were the objects intended to protect the shaman who would then act as a bastion of defense between the spirits and the rest of the community? Birket-Smith (1959: 171) states that the objects gave strength, but he does not specify to whom this strength is bestowed, nor what specifically the term ‘strength’ refers to, be it physical, spiritual or otherwise. Presumably it gives the shaman some form of strength or assistance of some kind to protect the giver from the actions of the spirit world. The dynamics of this interaction between giver, shaman and spirit world are not well detailed or elaborated upon. However, Birket-Smith (1959: 171) specifically states that it is to protect the giver from the actions of the “spirit helpers”. Does this mean that the spirit helpers of the specific shaman would otherwise cause harm to people who did not present the shaman with a gift?

#### **4.4 Personal *Anguaks***

Over the course of the discussions with the elders of Cambridge Bay, several items other than the ones forming the CMCC collection and the pieces mentioned in the literature were discussed. These items consisted of *anguaks* that the elders had had themselves as children, and although they could remember little about them, several interesting details were gleaned from the conversations.

##### **4.4.0 Matthew Nakashook's *Anguak***

Nakashook's (2001) *anguak* consisted of a small pouch of caribou skin that his mother had sewn to the shoulder of coat when he was about five years old. Nakashook (2001) said that "this pouch was about three inches long and three inches wide...it was not decorated". Inside the pouch his mother had apparently sewn an object of some kind, but he never knew what it was: "One day I saw my mother sitting on the sleeping platform sewing something, but I was not interested, so I did not notice what she was making" (Nakashook 2001). Later on that day, she called him over to her whereupon she sewed this small pouch to the right shoulder of his jacket with the strict admonition that he should never peer into the contents of the pouch. At this point, Nakashook (2001) states that "although I was very curious to know what was in the pouch, my mother would not tell me, and in those days children did not disobey their parents, so I never looked into the pouch". Attaching the pouch with only a single sinew thread, Nakashook's mother had told him that the object was eventually meant to fall off. He was told that should he notice this when it happened, he was to leave it where it had fallen and not to pick it up or to reattach it to his jacket. As it happened, Nakashook eventually lost interest in the object and did not notice exactly when it had fallen off, although he states that "after about a year I looked down at my shoulder and noticed the pouch was missing" (Nakashook 2001). His mother had never told him what the object was, what it was meant to do, or why he would not be allowed to know what was in the pouch. Oosten (1997: 117) cites an example of a child wearing *anguak* in order to hasten a sickness of some kind away from the community. Wondering whether this *anguak* perhaps had a similar purpose, Nakashook (2001) was asked whether he could recall any personal or communal circumstances such as illness or a celebration at the time that may

have led to his mother attaching these objects to his jacket, but he remembers no obvious reason for her doing so. He was also asked if he noticed any change in himself or his abilities upon having the object attached to him, but he responded that he noticed nothing.

Due to the lack of information that Nakashook's mother had passed on to him regarding this object, it is difficult to come to any conclusions. The object, true to one of the common tendencies that have been outlined so far in this research, was made and given to him by his mother. However, the contents of the pouch and the power or ability it was meant to bestow on the wearer remain mysteries. What is perhaps remarkable about this object is the fact that it was meant to fall off and be lost. Without knowing what the effects of the object were however, it is difficult to conclude whether or not he would retain the abilities that the object was meant to bestow to him upon its falling off. Although several *anguaks* have already been mentioned that did not have to be in direct physical contact with the locus of effect in order to exert their influence, it would seem that the owner of these objects at least had to have them as part of his possessions or to know where it was. As has already been mentioned, Rasmussen (1931: 270, 274) mentions that men kept dried salmon skins in their toolboxes in order to bring them good luck in fishing. By comparison, Nakashook's *anguak* was meant to be lost at some point.

The only object that seemed to be even remotely similar to Nakashook's *anguak* was a small skin bag worn by the woman Qimeq (Rasmussen 1931: 275). Although she did not know the contents of the bag, according to Rasmussen this object

has life giving power...it has belonged to one of her dead relatives, Sorfvaluk, who died before Qimeq was born; the characteristic feature about this is that even an object the nature of which is not known can have effective powers if only it is sufficiently old.

Although the pouch that formed part of Nakashook's *anguak* was newly made, the contents were unknown, and hence these contents may have had a similar purpose as the one mentioned by Rasmussen (1931). However, Rasmussen (1931) does not mention that Qimeq's object was meant to fall off. Furthermore, as evinced by the data reviewed for this research, given the value that seems to have been generally ascribed to objects that had belonged to ancestors it is doubtful that Nakashook's mother would have sewn up such an important object into a pouch that was destined to be lost. Due to the fact that

the object, identified as being old, had been retained, we can only assume that it was not meant to fall off like Nakashook's *anguak*. This is of course working under the assumption that it was indeed the contents of the bag that were crucial components of the *anguak*. Although this is almost certainly the case, this cannot be verified.

#### **4.4.1 Matthew Nakashook's Explanation of the Beetle**

Although perhaps not an *anguak* in the sense that has been typically used in this research, this tradition which Nakashook recounted does fulfill several characteristics of an *anguak*, and therefore merits note. According to Nakashook (2001), "as a child me and the other boys used to crush a kind of beetle against our temples to make them stronger". Although he could not remember the name of the beetle in particular, he recalled that the insect was very resilient and difficult to crush. Hence, by crushing it against their temples, this would in turn make their temples stronger when engaged in duels. Nakashook (2001) adds that "I have never been in a duel with fists, so I can't tell you if it worked". These duels, although competitive, were not considered as fights however. Rather, they were much like dances in that the atmosphere was generally friendly. In his work entitled *The Central Eskimo*, Boas (1883: 609) provides a description of these duels:

If a stranger unknown to the inhabitants of a settlement arrives on a visit he is welcomed by the celebration of a great feast. Among the southeastern tribes the natives arrange themselves in a row, one man standing in front of it. The stranger approaches slowly, his arms folded and his head inclined towards the right side. Then the native strikes him with all his strength on the right cheek and in his turn inclines his head awaiting the stranger's blow...thus they continue until one of the combatants is vanquished.

Although there was no mention of physically crushing them into ones temples to strengthen them, several examples of insects were applied to this end or to give one strong fists specifically in the advent of one of these duels have already been mentioned in the literature. And although Nakashook did not carry an object with him *per se*, the custom he describes still has definite similarities to the other insect used as *anguaks* for the same purposes: Rasmussen (1931: 274) states that a water beetle "sewn on to a boy's hood band opposite the eyes and temples [would give him] strong temples and powerful eye sockets". Quvliq apparently also wore an *anguak* for her son that consisted of "a

bee and its young sewn into skin and used as a brow band [to give him] a strong head, especially in fisticuffs” (Rasmussen 1931: 275). Stating that this consists of one of “the more important amulets”, Rasmussen (1931: 45) includes “bees, sewn into piece of skin and placed in the armhole of the inner coat [which] give hard blows when boxing and great ability to stand hard blows”.

#### **4.4.2 Mabel Angulalik’s *Anguak***

Mabel Angulalik (2001) also recalls having her own *anguak* as a child. Unlike Nakashook (2001) however, she knew the contents of this object, and its purpose. One day when Angulalik (2001) was very young (she estimates that she was four or five years old at the time), her older sister sewed a caterpillar into a small skin pouch and proceeded to attach this to the wristband of her coat. Angulalik (2001) explains that “my sister said that the caterpillar was beautiful and colorful and that this object would make me a good seamstress who made clothes with the same qualities as the caterpillar”. Angulalik (2001) was told however that the object was meant to eventually fall off, and much like Nakashook’s (2001) *anguak* was attached loosely to her clothing. Indeed, Angulalik (2001) states that “*anguaks* worn by children were usually meant to fall off, but that the abilities they gave you would stay with you the rest of your life”. Angulalik (2001) also states that “even though the object was attached to my wrist, it could have been attached anywhere to my jacket and it would have had the same effect”.

This object incorporates several interesting notions. Primarily, this object was made and given to Angulalik by her older sister. The vast majority of the *anguaks* noted thus far had been made and given to children by their mothers. However, Angulalik (2001) states that although the older sister who gave her the *anguak* was her biological sister, she was raised by an adoptive mother, and this perhaps had an effect on the usual dynamic of *anguak*-giving, possibly explaining why a biological sister would have taken the role of making and giving an *anguak* to her. Given that in this case the wearer was actually told what the pouch contained and what its purpose was, the connection between the qualities of the object and the abilities it was supposed to transmit to the wearer are fairly simple to make.

Similar to Nakashook's *anguak*, Angulalik (2001) was told that this object was eventually meant to fall off, and that if she was aware of this when it happened, she was to leave to there and not to reattach it to her clothing. Once again, this custom was hardly, if at all, mentioned in the literature, but it would seem that the abilities the object was meant to bestow to the wearer would persist, regardless of the fact that the object had been lost.

Another interesting element here is that the object was attached to the wristband of her jacket, which presumably affected an association between her wrists and hands, and the activity of sewing along the same associative lines as have already been discussed. However, Angulalik (2001) clearly stated that although she could not speak for every *anguak*, her *anguak* would have transmitted this ability to her regardless of where it had been placed on her clothing. This once again demonstrates that while the associative placement of objects about the body was certainly generally applied, this was by no means the rule.

#### **4.4.3 Moses Koihok's *Anguak***

Essentially, this object consisted of a sash of depilated caribou skin to which had been attached a number of strips of caribou throat skin from which the characteristically white fur had not been removed. Koihok (2001) recalls that "this sash did not really belong to me" however. Rather, the object, which he believed to have been made by his mother, was placed on him by either of his parents on several occasions, and then removed from him and stored away. At about the age of nine or ten, his parents placed the object on him for several hours a day over a period of approximately two weeks. Although he did not wear the object every day during this period, he did not see anyone else wearing it, nor another object like it. However, Koihok (2001) states that "my parents told me that every community would have an object like it, but that there would be only one in each community". The two-week period over which the object was placed on him coincided with the peak of the caribou migration in the area around the middle of October. Although he admits that "my parents explained the object to me, but I was very young and did not pay much attention to what my parents were saying. I know the object had to do with the caribou hunt" (Koihok 2001). Every time a caribou was killed, the

hunter would give Koihok's mother a strip of caribou throat skin, which she would then attach to the sash. According to Koihok (2001) this gesture meant the "the hunter was showing gratitude to the caribou". This gesture would, in turn, improve the hunter's chances of killing more caribou by ensuring that the soul of the animal would be pleased and come back to the hunter to be killed again. At the end of the caribou migration that year, his mother removed the object from him as usual, and he never saw the object again. Koihok (2001) said with regret "I was too young to understand, and that I wasn't really interested in [the object] at the time. I never asked what happened to it or for my parents to explain the object to me".

Aside from being a way to express gratitude to the slain animals, Koihok (2001) remembers that the object was intended to give him certain abilities. Although he was not yet old enough to hunt at the time, having worn the object as a child "was supposed to make me a better hunter in later years". Koihok (2001) added that it was supposed to make him strong and to give him a generally "good life".

This object was seemingly a way for the hunter to perpetuate the cyclical relationship with the animal with which he was involved. An animal's soul was to be properly appeased in order to ensure its return. However, several questions remain unanswered. Why was Koihok singled out to wear the object? Why was his mother singled out to make it? Why would retaining a piece of the animal in such a way please the spirit of the animal such that he would be inclined to return to the hunter? Why would it have to be worn during such specific periods, and why just that one year? Koihok (2001) admits that "I started hunting either one or two years after that season, so maybe that is why I was made to wear it then, but I cannot be sure". Regardless, objects such as this are still remembered and would have to be studied further with the elders to answer any of the questions above, or to come to any further conclusions.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation Collection**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The following section consists of an analysis of the selection of objects identified in the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation's (hereafter referred to as the CMCC) collections as having Copper Inuit origins. As many of these objects themselves were too delicate or too large to have been transported to Cambridge Bay and presented to the elders in person, photographs of these objects were shown to the respondents, and discussions upon which the following chapter is based ensued. For simplicity of presentation, a structure has as such been assigned to this section based on these discussions. Generally speaking, the material has been subdivided based on a presumed similarity between objects, either on a material or functional level. The reader should therefore realize that although in some cases the explanations of the elders differ from the explanations provided in the CMCC archives, the following has been grouped into these sub-sections based primarily on the responses provided by the elders. Proceeding this, a summary of each object according to the CMCC archives will be provided, followed by a photograph or photographs of the object in question. This will be followed by a summary of the object as elaborated by the elders of Cambridge Bay, and a discussion section comparing these discussions with the literature analyzed thus far in this research.

## 5.1 Objects Composed of Various Animal Bones

### 5.1.0 Belt of Fox Bones (IV-D-371)

According to CMCC documentation, Jenness collected this object along the Coppermine River during the Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-1916). According to Jenness' notes, it is a woman's belt that consists of approximately 60 fox bones strung on a cord of plaited sinew.

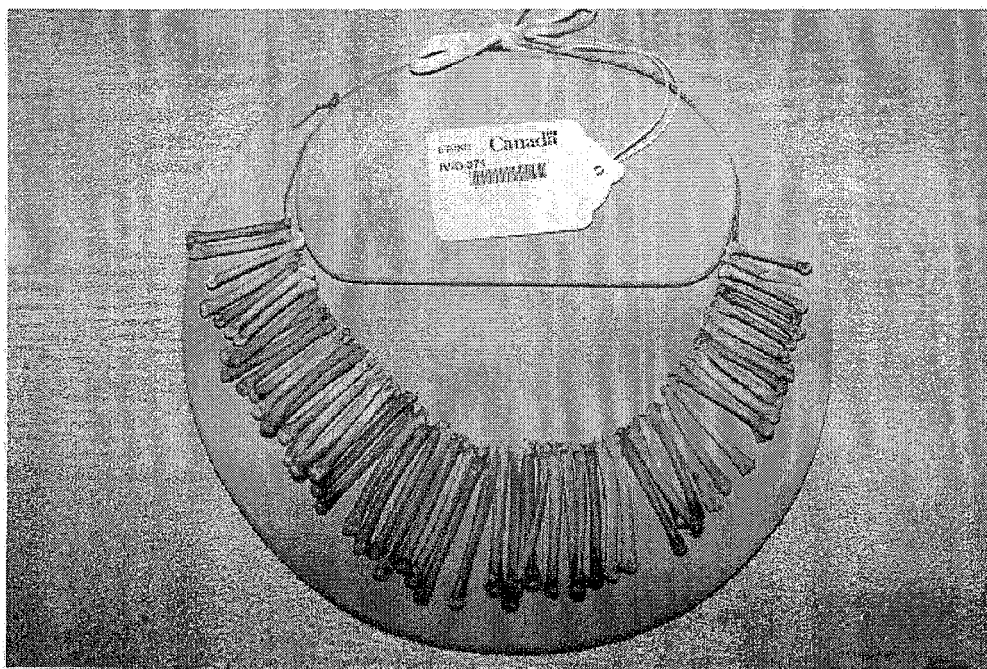


Figure 2: Belt of Fox Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-371. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Among the elders of Cambridge Bay, opinion differed as to what type of bones these were. While Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) agreed that it could be made of fox bones, they also said they could be seal flipper bones, an opinion that was also echoed by Kaosoni (2001). Koihok (2001) was of the opinion that they were caribou, bear or musk ox bones, but admitted that it was difficult to tell from a photograph. Analok & Angulalik (2001) thought they may be wolf bones, in which case they were inclined to think that the object was most likely a hunting *anguak*. They stated that “the wolf is a good hunter, so a man or boy might wear it so that he may become a good hunter” (Analok & Angulalik 2001). Furthermore, one of a child's parents could wear it for him to the same end. They said that this was so the child would “absorb or inherit the power

of the object”, however one would not wear this object while actually hunting as it would be far too cumbersome to wear during the activity. When questioned further on the subject, they revealed that the hunter would still be able to exploit the abilities of the object even though he was not physically wearing it during the activity. An object such as this was not for everyday use, and would be stored safely when not in use. They also stated that objects like these were worn by shamans or by laity during drum dances, but did not know what purpose they served during these activities.

Koihok (2001) was of the opinion that the object was merely a decorative necklace to be worn by a woman or child, and that it had no special function. He also offered that bones such as the ones pictured were frequently strung together to be used for *inugait*, an Inuinaktun word which corresponds not only to name of the type of bones themselves (what we know as carpal, metacarpal, tarsal and metatarsal bones), but also to a variety of games in which the bones were used as playing pieces. Kaosoni (2001) did not think the object was a necklace, but agreed that it may very well be a set of *inugait* bones. Apparently, such a collection of bones would be strung together to keep the playing pieces from getting lost.

### **5.1.1 Belt of Bird Bones (IV-D-1791)**

This object was collected by Burwash between 1925 and 1926. Originating in Cambridge Bay, the CMCC artifact notes state that the object is composed of bird bones, and is described as a “dress ornament”.

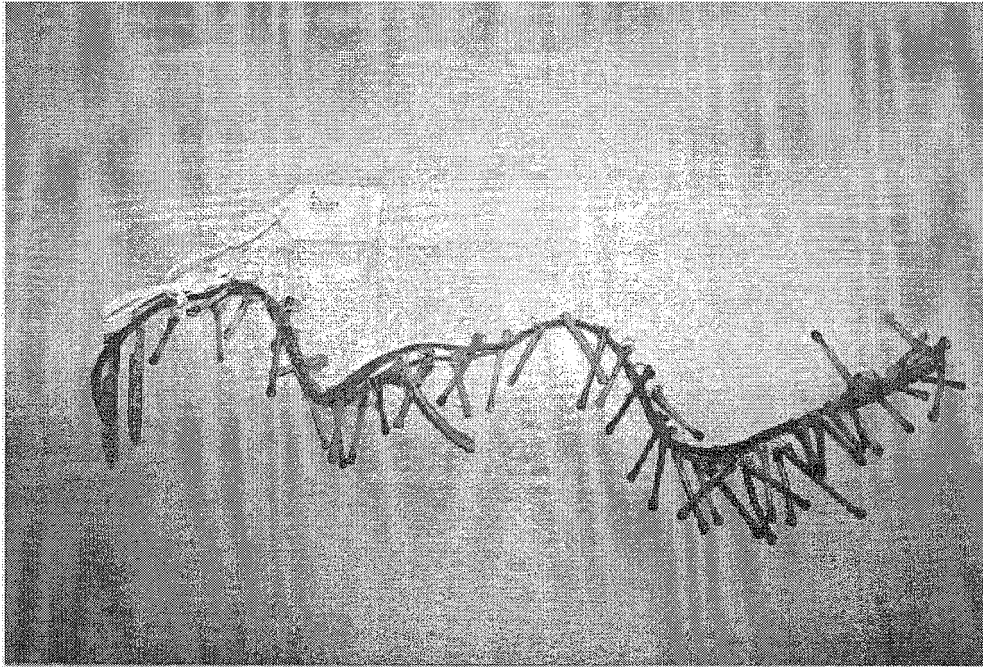


Figure 3: Belt of Bird Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1791. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Opinions as to what kind of bones this object was made from varied. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) thought that this object might be composed of fox leg bones, while Analok & Angulalik (2001) were under the impression that they were bird bones. Koihok (2001) further suggested that the bones might be from seal flippers, or perhaps a mixture of several sorts of bones. What are however the principal points of interest on this item are the two miniature carvings representing what many of the elders said to be snow knives shown in the photo below.

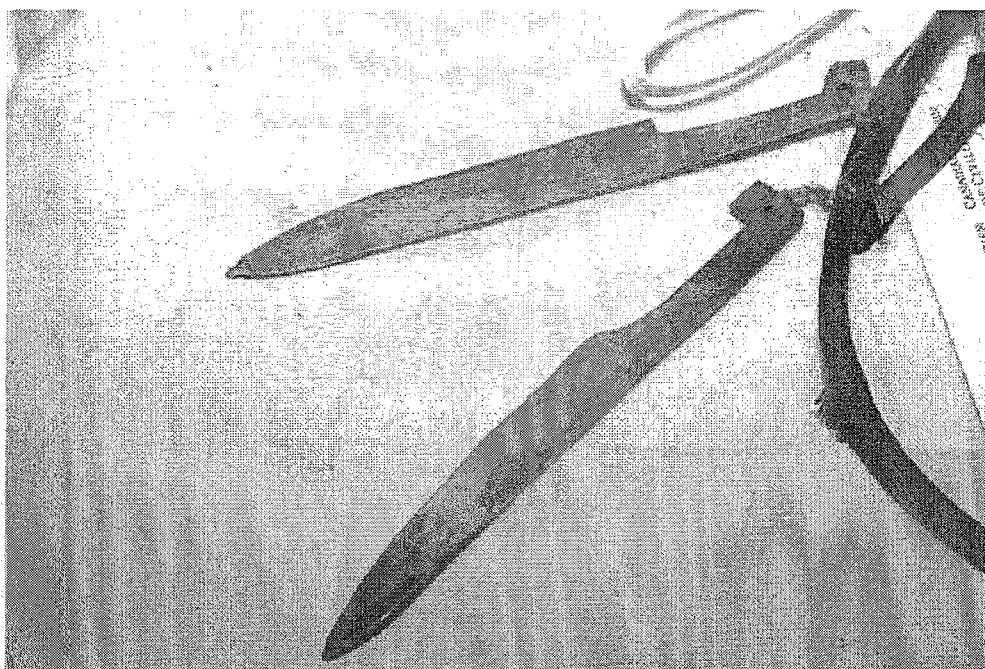


Figure 4: Belt of Bird Bones (Detail), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1791. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) were certain that they were indeed representations of snow knives, pointing out the protrusions at the ends of the handles, stating that these protrusions were to help grip the handle of the full-sized counterparts when working with them. They said that these two items were most likely made of caribou antler but could not be certain from the picture. They also stated that the object, worn either as a sash or belt, was likely an *anguak* for a hunter, but could explain no further.

Analok & Angulalik (2001) were able to shed some more light on the object. Agreeing that the two stylized pieces were representations of snow knives, they went on to explain that knives were sometimes lashed to harpoons and used to wound or kill polar bears. Therefore they theorized that due to the presence of the miniature snow knives, this object was likely a sash or necklace to be worn by a hunter, and “could have been to give him strength, accuracy, or to help him to find more animals, anything like that” (Analok & Angulalik 2001). Koihok (2001) also added that as snow knives often doubled as flensing knives, these objects may have established a connection to this activity, but he could not provide any details as “this was just an idea”.

### **5.1.2 Fringes of Animal Bones (IV-D-1792, IV-D-1793)**

This object was collected from Cambridge Bay by Burwash in 1925 or 1926. It is described in the CMCC artifact notes as a dress ornament composed of bird bones.

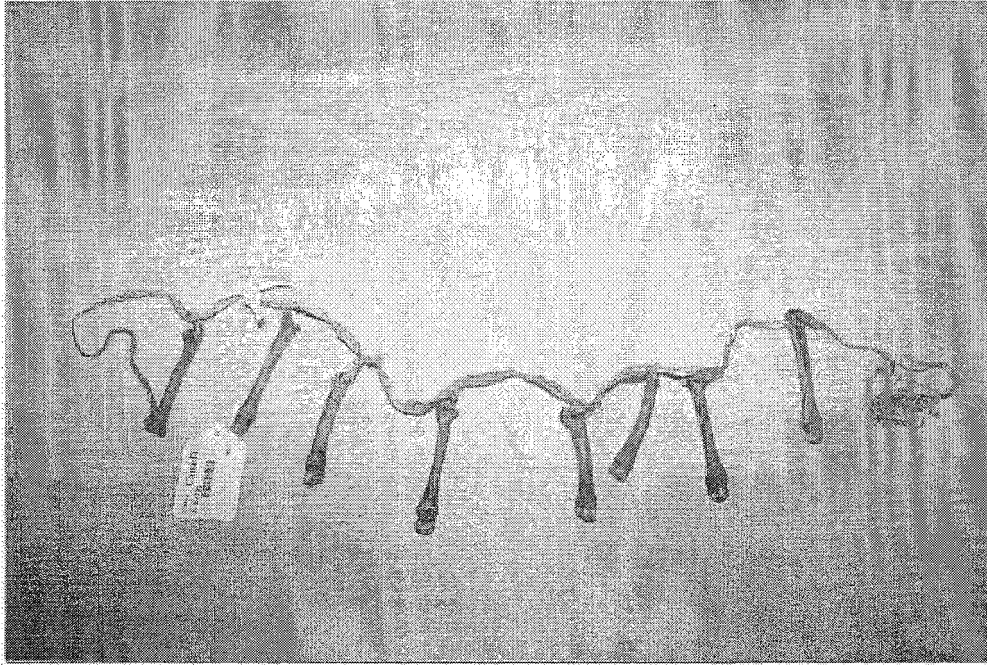


Figure 5: Fringes of Animal Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1792. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

The collector of object IV-D-1793 is not noted, although given that it collected in Cambridge Bay between 1925 and 1926, it was presumably also collected by Burwash. It is also described by the CMCC artifact notes as a dress ornament of bird bones.

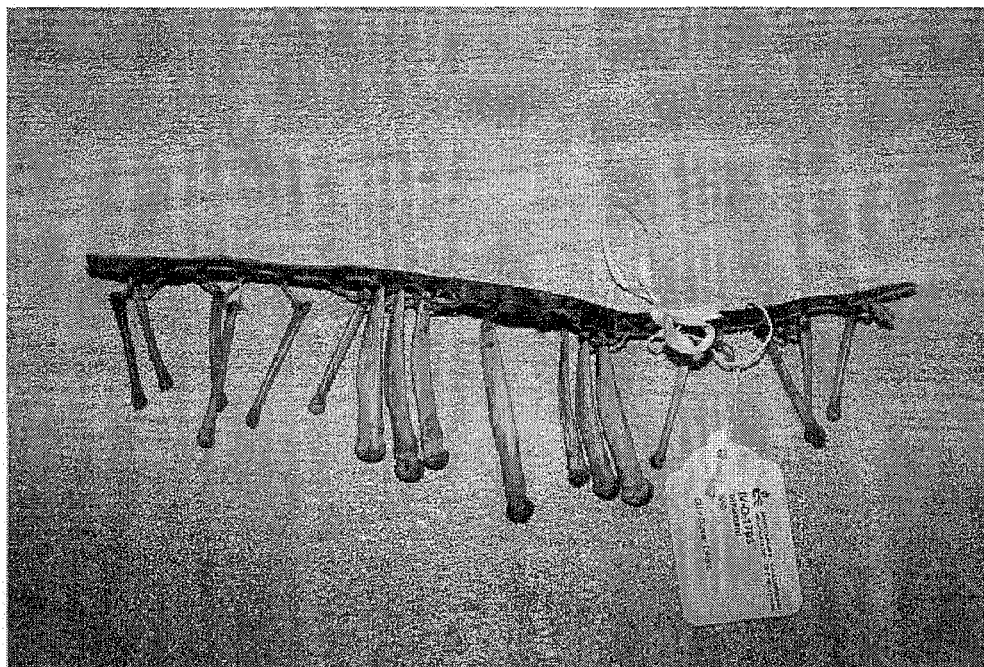


Figure 6: Fringes of Animal Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1793. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Due to their similarity, both of these objects had nearly identical explanations from the elders of Cambridge Bay. Regrettably however, they were unable to provide many details about these pieces. For both objects, the general consensus was that they consisted of either caribou foot bones or seal flipper bones. In the case of one of these objects (IV-D-1792), Analok & Angulalik (2001) suggested that they could be fox leg bones, and Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) suggested the same thing regarding the other object (IV-D-1793). Most of the elders were of the impression that objects like these were merely decorative objects to be worn “when visitors came” (Kaosoni 2001). Typically worn about the neck or sewn to one’s jacket, they were intended to create additional sounds and to enhance the movements of the dancer. Koihok (2001) stated that objects such as these were worn almost exclusively by women.

All of the elders except for Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) mentioned that the first object (IV-D-1792) could have been a collection of bones for the purposes of playing *inugait*.

### **5.1.3 Discussion**

The objects mentioned above by and large seemed to communicate the abilities of the animals in question in accordance with the characteristics noted by the researchers mentioned in the earlier sections of this study. Cambridge Bay elders noted that the belt of fox bones (IV-D-371) for example most likely consisted of wolf bones, and as such may have communicated the keen hunting talents of this animal to the wearer, a notion that was made clear by Rasmussen (1931: 45). An interesting point that developed in the discussion of this object is that several of the respondents stated that either the father or the mother could have worn it for the benefit of their child. Completely absent in the literature reviewed for this research, this constitutes the first mention of the possibility of a man wearing an object for which the locus of effect would be his child. Although acknowledging that women often wore objects in lieu of their children, the elders could regrettably add little information to this custom, much less to the practice of men wearing such objects.

As mentioned in the discussion of the belt of fox bones (IV-D-371), the elders explained that the wearer or recipient of the effect of such an object was thought to “absorb” or “inherit” the abilities of the animal. Although these are somewhat ambiguous terms by any means, virtually every discussion centered on the mechanism of the transference of power from the animal to the object it was fashioned into to the wearer of the object inevitably resulted in the use of these terms as explanations. Hoping for a more ‘scientific’ answer to these questions, the author was not initially content with these explanations. However, upon reflection the author was forced to concede that by comparison, very few Christians for example would be able to explain ‘scientifically’ how a crucifix functions. By and large though, the elders could not verify the notion that *anguaks* exerted their influence through the actions or will of a distinct and individually cognizant spirit entity, which although not necessarily stated explicitly by previous authors, seemed to be the generally accepted explanation for how the object was thought to function. Rather, they conceived the abilities as being transmitted in a seemingly more passive fashion, “rubbing off” on the person so to speak. This is perhaps similar to the dynamics of how a rabbit’s foot is thought to bestow luck on the person who carries the



object in our society. Suffice to say, the dynamic or dynamics through which *anguaks* were thought to function remains largely misunderstood, and these aspects need to be researched further, ideally from an Inuit paradigm.

Similar to several of the items mentioned by earlier researchers, another point brought out in the discussion of this object was that items did not always have to be worn on the person in order to exert their effects. This could have been a practical measure, as some of the objects such as the belt of fox bones (IV-D-371) related to hunting would often have been too cumbersome to have been worn by the hunter while engaged in the activity. This brings up another unanswered question relating to the dynamics of *anguaks*: given that a person did not have to be in direct physical contact with an object to exploit its effects, how was the transaction between the *anguaks* and the locus of effect perceived? While the person was wearing an object, was a cumulative effect building up, thereby enabling someone to shed the object in order to take part in the activity the *anguak* was thought to enhance? Or was a bond thought to exist between the object and its locus of effect despite the lack of physical contact between the two? Several of the elders explained that objects such as these were not to be worn every day and would be put away when not in use. This raises the obvious question as to what the term ‘in use’ refers to. Was an object ‘in use’ when it was being applied to a certain activity? Or was it always ‘in use’, bestowing power gradually or incrementally on the wearer while it was being worn? These statements made by the elders would seem to be in conflict with the notion mentioned previously that an object did not need to be worn by a person in order to exert its effect. Unfortunately, these questions remain largely unanswered and would require further research.

The belt of fox bones (IV-D-371), like several other objects in the CMCC collection, was noted by the elders as perhaps having been worn by a shaman. However, perhaps due to the fact that none of the respondents were or had been shamans themselves, they could add little else to this element, leaving the role of shamanic *anguaks* largely unaddressed with regards to this collection.

Several of the objects, including the belt of fox bones (IV-D-371) were described by several of the elders as being merely “decorations”. Although not discounting this

possibility by any means, it must be noted that these items were collected at a time when the Inuit were still nomadic. As such, they were required to transport all of their material possessions whenever they moved from place to place. As such it is doubtful that they would want to burden themselves with many items that were merely ornamental.

The belt of bird bones (IV-D-1791) is particularly interesting in that it features miniature representations of snow knives. Much has been written about such objects, and several mentions of “little models of flensing knives and snow knives” (Balikci 1970: 201-202) being suspended from belts or sashes have already been made in this study. The elders and previous researchers often associated these objects with shamans, several cases having already been mentioned. To reiterate, Issenman (1988: 90) states that although “In Canada, the shaman usually wore the same clothing as other Inuit; a belt or headband was the only distinguishing feature”. Birket-Smith (1959: 171) is in accord with this statement, elaborating that “Only among the Central tribes will they [the shamans] fasten strips of caribou skin and small bone carvings of human figures, harpoons, knives, etc., to their belts”. Balikci (1970: 225) terms these articles of clothing “shamanic paraphernalia” and states that these items were given to the novitiate shaman by his parents while he was undergoing his training. As mentioned by Oosten (1997: 111) “The notion that magical objects had to be given in order to retain or acquire their efficacy played a central part in the beliefs and customs concerning the shamanic belt”, however it is not known whether the miniature knives were also given to the novitiate by his parents, nor what the significance of this gift would be. Regrettably, the elders could share little information regarding this custom. Regardless, a potential clue as to the purpose of these objects may lie in the descriptions of shamans fighting off *tupiliqs* or evil spirits. Balikci (1970: 226-227) provides one such description of a shaman attempting to exorcise such a spirit believed to be the cause of illness in a person:

In a typical performance the shaman, adorned with his paraphernalia, crouched in a corner of the igloo or behind the sleeping platform and covered himself with a caribou skin. The lamps were extinguished. A protective spirit called by the shaman entered his body and, through his mouth, started to speak very rapidly, using the shaman’s secret vocabulary. While the shaman was in his trance, the *tupiliqs* left the patient’s body and hid outside the igloo. The shaman then dispatched his protective spirits after the *tupiliqs*; and with the help of the benevolent ghost of some deceased shaman, they drove the *tupiliqs* back into the

igloo through the entrance. The audience encouraged the evil spirits, shouting: “Come in, come in, somebody is here waiting for you.” No sooner had the *tupiliqs* entered the igloo than the shaman, with his snow knife, attacked them and killed as many as he could; his successful fight was proven by the evil spirits’ blood on his hands.

This description, combined with the mentions made by Rasmussen (1931: 268, 270) of such objects being attached to the belts of shamans and laity may provide insight into these items. Evidently, miniature snow knives and flensing knives were thought to protect the wearer from the actions of evil spirits. This perhaps relates to the shaman’s use of snow knives to kill *tupiliqs*, but this is, of course, mere speculation. Be that as it may, the snow knife seemingly constitutes one of the few Inuit items to enjoy other roles outside of its functional use, and to have effigies carved of it to be used as *anguaks*. The actual item could be used both as a tool to kill spirits and miniature could be used to protect the wearer from them. This makes the snow knife a particularly intriguing item, and one that had been little researched.

Furthermore, as was mentioned by Koihok (2001), snow knives could also be used to hunt polar bears, being lashed to a harpoon to serve as the head. As per his suggestion, perhaps these items were hunting *anguaks* aimed at establishing a link between the hunter and the activity. As he mentioned, the items could have been intended to improve his accuracy, strength, luck, or any other variety of skills associated with hunting.

## **5.2 Objects Incorporating Loon Bills and Ermine Skins**

### **5.2.0 Woman's Coat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill (IV-D-944)**

Jenness collected this woman's coat during the Canadian Arctic Expedition, and although it was collected in the area of the Copper Inuit, the precise location of its origin it was not recorded in the CMCC notes. The item is described as a "woman's inner and outer coat for woman with baby; loon's bill attached to sleeve for charm, and ermine skin on back" (CMCC artifact notes).

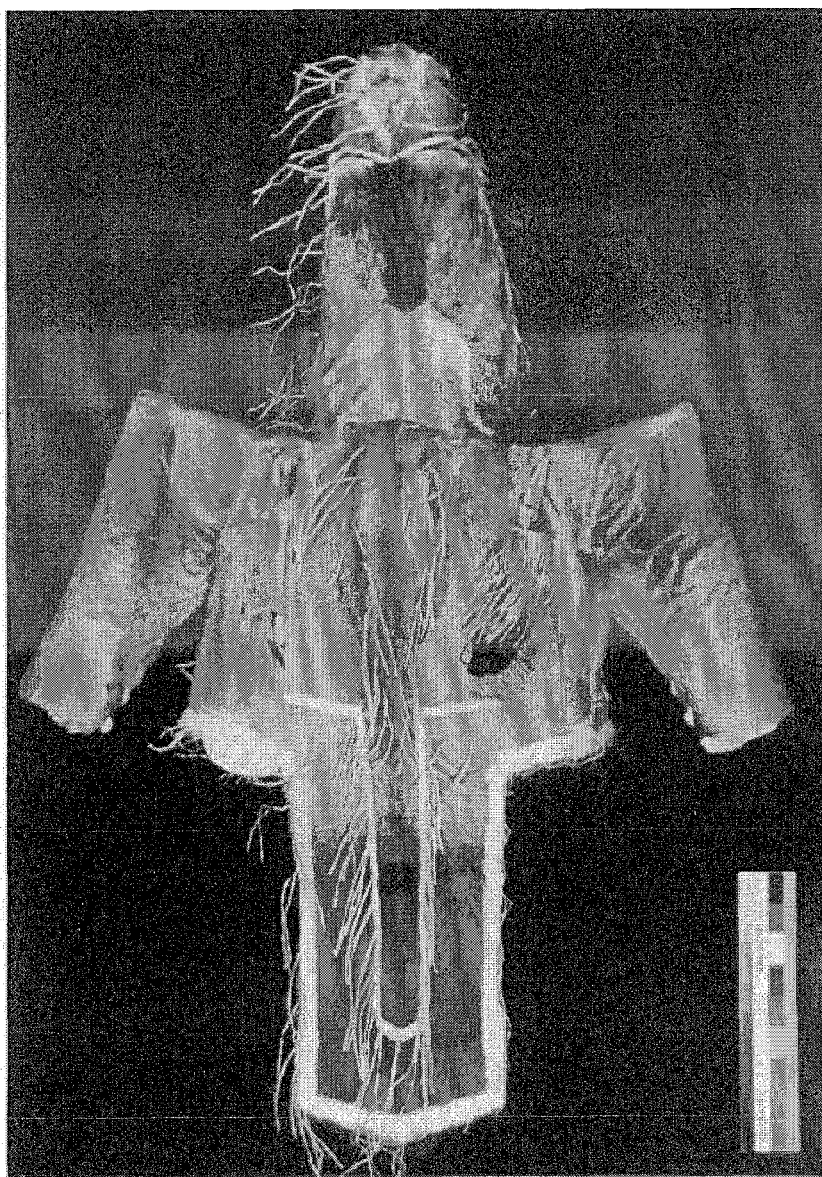


Figure 7: Woman's Coat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill. CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-944, Back View (Photograph Archive # S93-3566). Credit CMCC, 2001.

Attached to the back of this woman's coat were two *anguaks* commonly worn by drum dancers and singers. Indeed, Analok & Angulalik (2001) state that this is a very luxurious example of a woman's coat and that due to the quality of seamstressing (i.e. the tassels and inserts of white fur) it is definitely to be worn on special occasions such as drum dances. Koihok (2001) stated that the style is representative of the Kitikmeot region, and that the style of seamstressing and objects attached to a jacket was often a sign of pride and identification with one's area of origin, to be worn when meeting people from another area. Koihok (2001) was of the opinion that these objects had no significance other than this, and were worn merely as decorations to enhance the sound and movements of the dancer. He added that they could be a form of trophy, and that they indicated some achievement of the wearer, although he could not say exactly what these achievements might have been. He offered that it could have been a form of hunting trophy. He did go on to say that the jacket could also have belonged to a female shaman and that the objects were to give her both physical and spiritual strength, however he was unable to explain how or why.

Although they had seen people wearing objects like these on their jackets, Analok & Angulalik (2001) stated that in their experiences it was more common for people to wear these objects on dance hats. When asked whether it was important for an object to be placed over the area it was thought to effect (corresponding to the aforementioned tendency of the associative placement of objects), they responded that these objects "would have the same effect no matter where they were worn on the person". They stated that the loon had a "pleasant, loud and strong voice" (Analok & Angulalik 2001) and would transfer these talents to a singer. When asked whether another part of a loon such as the feet could have sufficed for the same purposes, they were unsure and could only respond that they had never seen any other part of a loon other than its head used as an *anguak*. They verified that the ermine or weasel however was used primarily by dancers and drummers. They stated that the ermine was an agile creature, and would bestow this quality on a dancer. Drumming was also a tiring task and the ermine skin would provide the drummer with the endurance and dexterity needed to perform. They also agreed that losing or not being equipped with *anguaks* such as these would be a

cause for alarm for the singer or dancer, and that their performance would suffer because of it. When asked if the objects functioned because of the soul of the animal, they responded that this was not so much the case. They could only explain that the object was worn in the hopes that the qualities of the animal “rubbed off” (Analok & Angulalik 2001) on the wearer.

Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) agreed that a singer and/or drum dancer would wear these objects, and that “the ermine would make you light-footed and that the loon would make you a good singer”. Having experienced it themselves, they were familiar with the custom of mothers wearing objects to be transferred later to the jacket of a child. They said that objects like those pictured on the jacket were placed on children at a very young age, but that children typically wore smaller versions than those of an adult. They said that while an adult would wear an entire ermine skin for example, a small child would only wear a tail or foot of the animal, but that the same abilities would be granted regardless of the size of the object. They said that a person who put such an object on themselves or their child was “thinking about their future” (Nakashook & Novoligak 2001). When asked to explain this statement, they responded that *anguaks* were a preventative measure. The person was investing in their future in that the objects, while not functioning all the time, would somehow become active and exert their abilities upon the wearer only at a time of need, such as during a dance or during an emergency.

### **5.2.1 Hat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill (IV-D-977)**

Collected by Jenness on the Canadian Arctic Expedition, this hat is described as being “entirely made of white, red and brown parallel bands” (CMCC artifact notes), but little else is noted in relation to it. It was apparently worn by a man, and although a Copper Inuit artifact, the precise location it was collected is either unknown or not noted.

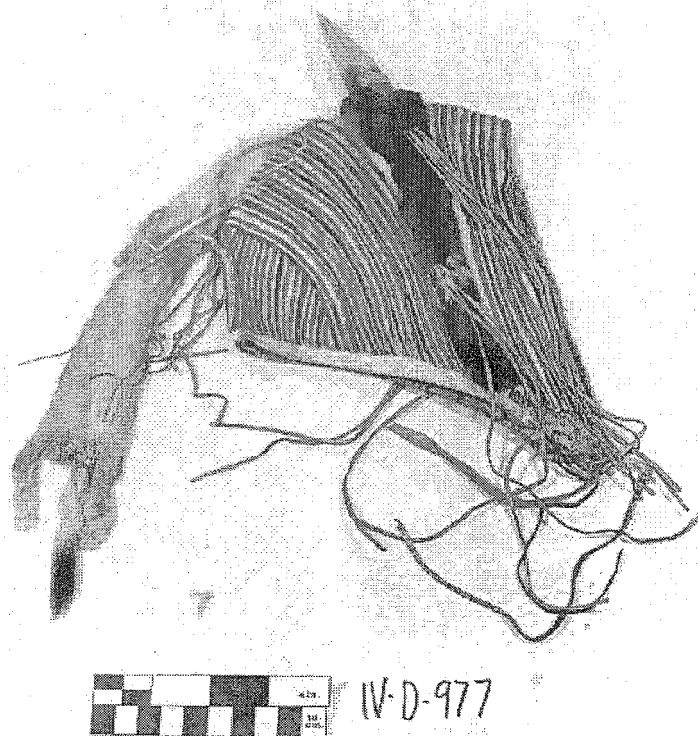


Figure 8: Hat with Ermine Skin & Loon Bill, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-977 (Photograph Archive # 73-12783). Credit CMCC, 2001.

According to Nakashook & Novoligak (2001), as singers, dancers and drummers often made use of such objects. This object in particular is most likely a hat to be worn by either a man or a woman on “dress-up occasions” such as dances or social gatherings. Although some hats were worn on a daily basis, due to the quality of this hat, it would not have been worn every day. Rather, it was stored away when not in use and taken out and worn on special occasions such as dances and meeting with visitors. They said that objects such as the loon bill and ermine skin were typically attached to a hat or on the back of a coat as this kept them out of the way, leaving the wearer’s arms free and unencumbered for dancing or drumming. As mentioned earlier, they also stated that most

often only a piece of an animal could be used as an *anguak* rather than the whole animal. They considered this to be for the sake of convenience as they imagined it would very difficult to dance with an entire loon attached to one's jacket.

Analok & Angulalik (2001) agree that this is a dance hat composed of dyed strips of caribou skin, with the two accompanying ermine skin and loon bill *anguaks*. They stated that there were essentially no stylistic differences between men and women's dance hats, so it could have belonged to and have been used by either. Regardless, they were under the impression that due to the quality and ornateness of the object, whoever wore it must have been a very important and celebrated dancer. When asked what constituted an important dancer, they explained that although dances were competitive, the atmosphere was friendly. The dancers and singers would show off their endurance and dexterity in dancing, and their memory and voice by reciting long stories in the form of song. They would gain the respect of the onlookers by demonstrating these talents and the singer or dancer would get satisfaction from giving a good performance. Serving the same functions as the objects attached to the woman's jacket mentioned in the segment above, the ermine skin would augment a dancer's dexterity and agility, and the loon bill would improve a singer's voice. The ermine skin would also give the drummer endurance to play the instrument for a long period of time, and the absence or loss of such an object from one's clothing would be a cause for alarm, making the wearer unable or at least unwilling to perform. Other than the more practical applications noted above, they add that the objects enhanced the movements of a dancer, being spun around or moved in time with the drum or song.

Koihok (2001) agreed with much of what has already been noted, but he was under the impression that although the hat was most likely made from caribou skin, the difference in the colors of the strips was not a result of dyeing, but from taking the skin from different areas of the caribou. He said that "the dark skin most likely came from the back of the animal, and the lighter strips from the sides and stomach" (Koihok 2001). He said that there was no significance to this combination, it was primarily just the aesthetic of the area. Koihok (2001) had little say about the objects attached to the hat, but was certain that it was indeed used by both men and women for dances. When asked to



elaborate on the themes and content of songs, he responded that “the songs could be about many different things, but certain songs were about the dancer’s clothing” (Koihok 2001), extolling the craftsmanship and beauty of the clothes. As the dancer would move about, he or she would comment in the form of song on how the objects such as tassels, ermine skins and loon bills moved about with the rhythm of the song. To this Kaosoni (2001) adds that hunters would often dance when out on a sealing trip, and that the topicality of the songs and dances after having caught a seal were focused on expressing gratitude to the animal they had caught for having given itself to the hunters.

### **5.2.2 Pendant of Squirrel Skin (IV-D-1050)**

This object was also collected in the Coronation Gulf area by Jenness during the Canadian Arctic Expedition. It is described simply as a “coat decoration” made of “squirrel skin” (CMCC artifact notes).

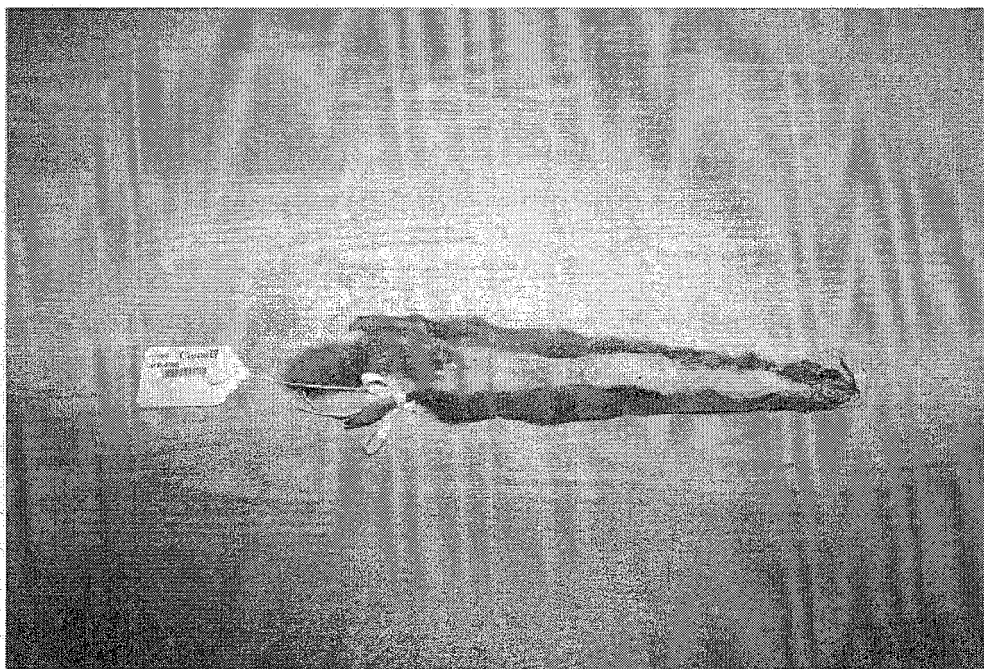


Figure 9: Pendant of Squirrel Skin (Stomach), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1050. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Little could be added about this object that had not already been said by the elders concerning ermine skins. This specimen is somewhat larger than many of the others portrayed in the collection, which prompted Analok & Angulalik (2001) to conclude that

this object was most likely worn on a jacket as it would be too heavy and cumbersome for a hat.

Opinions varied though as to what type of animal it actually was. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) clarified that the light coloration along the stomach is natural, and Kaosoni (2001) stated that the somewhat darker coloration compared to the other specimens portrayed in the collection is also the natural summertime color of virtually all rodents in the area. However, the three parallel lines of white fur along the back of the animal (shown below) are not natural to it, actually consisting of inserts of caribou fur.

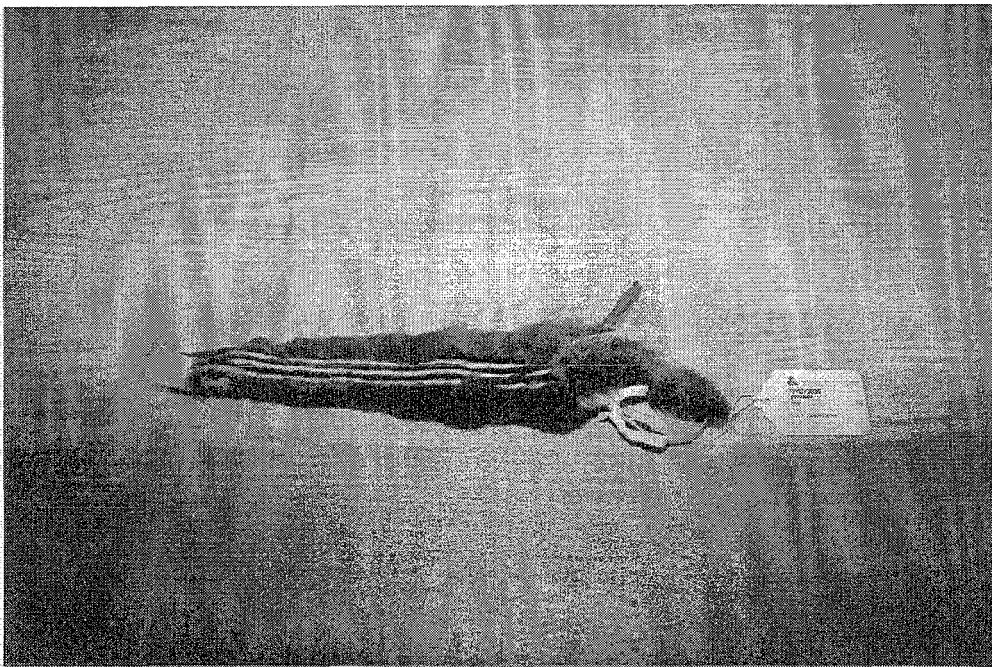


Figure 10: Pendant of Squirrel Skin (Back), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1050. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

The elders were made aware of this, but there was still some confusion, and several of the elders lamented the fact that they did not have the actual items in hand to inspect personally. None of the elders could identify what the significance of these lines would be, nor why someone would be inclined to insert them in the fur, except for perhaps aesthetic or decorative purposes. When asked whether the color of the fur (corresponding to what season the animal had been killed in) had any symbolism or significance, they responded that this was not the case. Some seamstresses would use different colors of fur to decorate a jacket, but this seemed to be merely a matter of preference and aesthetics.

All of the elders interviewed agreed that it was most likely an ermine or weasel, but Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) said that it could also have come from a muskrat. Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) added that it was possibly a squirrel skin. Koihok (2001) was of the impression that if it was actually a squirrel skin that it could have been an *anguak* employed by a singer as squirrels were associated with a good voice.

### **5.2.3 Ermine Skin with Loon Heads (IV-D-1293)**

This object was collected on Victoria Island by Stefansson some time between 1914 and 1917. CMCC artifact notes describe it as a “charm or ornament ? birds heads and fur”.

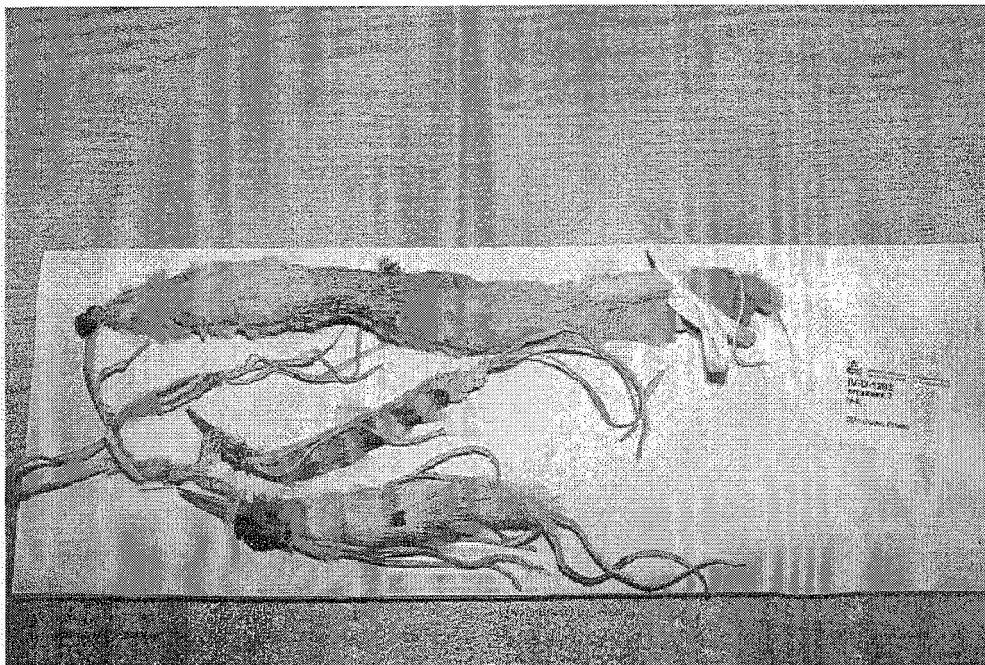


Figure 11: Ermine Skin with Loon Heads, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1293. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

The elders could add very little to this object, although unanimous was the opinion that it consisted of an ermine skin and loon heads. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) believed the fringes of fur decorating the loon heads was the characteristically white fur from the neck of a caribou. Although Kaosoni (2001) could not explain what the object was used for, he had apparently seen similar ones and said that either a man or woman could make such an object. Carried about in one’s hand, he was unsure why a

man would carry one, but that a woman would carry about an object like this as a showpiece to demonstrate her talent at seamstressing.

#### **5.2.4 Man's Coat with Ermine Skin (IV-D-1259)**

Collected by Jenness in an unspecified area between 1916 and 1917, this object is identified simply as a man's jacket, with no mention of the ermine skin attached to the back.

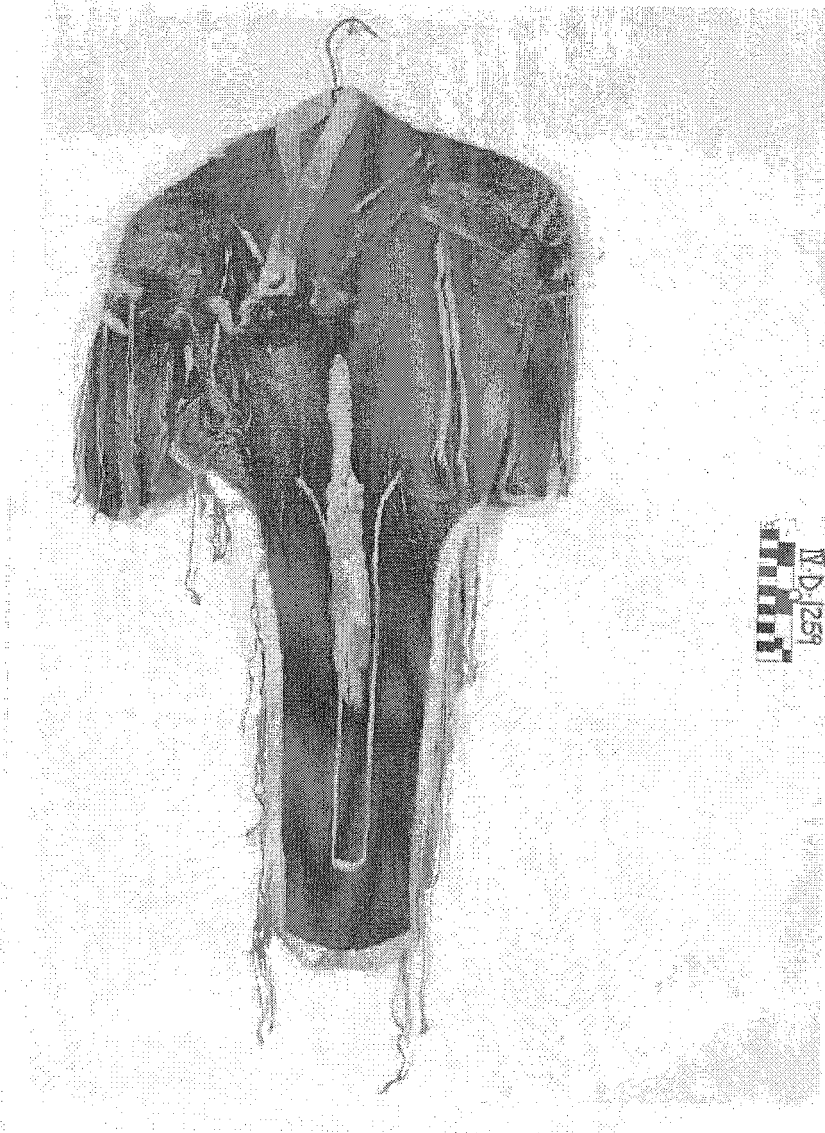


Figure 12: Man's Coat with Ermine Skin, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1259 (Photograph Archive # 85-7037). Credit CMCC, 2001.

The item of note on this jacket is of course the ermine skin, which will be described in conjunction with the objects below as the explanations are identical.

### **5.2.5 Jackets with Ermine Skins (39417)**

This photo taken in 1914 (presumably by Jenness or another member of the Canadian Arctic Expedition) portrays examples of dance outfits commonly worn by men and women at the time. Of interest are the many ermine skins attached to the man's jacket and hat, and the one skin worn by the woman.



Figure 13: Jackets with Ermine Skins, CMCC Photograph Archive # 39417.  
Credit CMCC, 2001.

Once again, the elders were unanimous that the skins were from ermine, and that this was a photo of dance costumes for a man (left) and woman (right). They reiterated that having ermine skins attached especially to one's dance jacket was customary, and was a way to accentuate the movements of the dancer. When asked why the man's costume has six ermine skins on it and an additional one attached to his hat, Analok & Angulalik (2001) explained that this was because he was a very good dancer. However, they pointed out that although the ermine skins would give the dancer the aforementioned talents of agility, dexterity, endurance and so on, he was not necessarily a good dancer because he had seven ermine skins attached to his clothing. Rather, they asserted that he had seven ermine skins attached to his clothing because he was a good dancer. When asked to explain this statement, they explained that an ermine skin attached to your clothing was simply to identify you as a dancer, and subsequent ermine skins would merely identify you as a more accomplished dancer. They stated that due to the fact that "this man had so many skins on his clothing he must have been one of the most important dancers in the community" (Analok & Angulalik 2001). In short, having multiple skins attached to his clothing did not seem to augment the effects that the ermine might have, either qualitatively or quantitatively. Rather, it was merely a means of identifying the person as an accomplished dancer.

### **5.2.6 Discussion**

The objects discussed in this segment consist primarily of ermine skins and loon bills, and will be discussed contiguously as, although each embodies very separate and distinct characteristics, they were both often found incorporated into the same object, be that a jacket, hat or hand-held object. Furthermore, in whatever way these objects were manifested, the elders of Cambridge Bay associated them with the activities of drumming, dancing and singing.

Once again, the elders were largely in agreement with the research that has been done so far, at least insofar as the individual characteristics of the animals that were to be passed on to the wearer are concerned. The elders did find it difficult to distinguish between ermines and weasels based on photographs, some of which were in black and white. The ermine and weasel, although two different animals, were both native to the

area and seemed to be indistinguishable however with regards to the qualities they embodied and could therefore bestow. While the bear for example was associated with brute physical strength, the ermine or weasel was associated with more subtle physical qualities such as dexterity, endurance, agility and so on. As mentioned before, although the literature only makes mention of ermine or weasel skins applied as *anguaks* on a casual or everyday basis, the objects in the CMCC collection were identified almost exclusively by the elders as objects to be used on special occasions such as dances and social gatherings. And although the literature makes very little mention of *anguaks* related to dancing at all, the elders seemed to associate ermine skins with the acts of dancing and drumming. These activities would require the agility, stamina and dexterity that the ermine could provide. Although the elders stated that ermine skins could make the wearer a good runner (once again, the question is raised of what the term 'good' refers to: does it refer to speed, endurance, dexterity, etc?), they mentioned very few cases where such objects would be worn for any other activities than those mentioned above. In one case, that of the pendant of squirrel skin (IV-D-1050), the animal, identified by Koihok (2001) as a squirrel, was also associated with the quality of a pleasant voice, the only reference by the elders and in the literature to such an animal being associated with that talent.

As was evinced by the literature, the loon was associated with the talent of singing, being noted variously by the elders as an animal whose products could give the wearer a strong, pleasant or loud voice. Similar to the ermine, the articles in the CMCC collection derived from loons that were presented to the elders were associated almost exclusively with social occasions such as dances, where it would pass on its talents to a singer. The elders did not mention any association between the loon and good vision as the literature sources did, nor did the elders make any mention of the loon serving as a kayak *anguak*. This is perhaps because the objects shown to the elders consisted solely of loon heads, whereas the literature sources cite loon feet primarily as kayak *anguaks*. It would perhaps seem intuitive for members of Southern culture to associate the head and mouth of a loon with its voice and to associate its feet with its nautical abilities. Although the question was raised as to whether any part of the loon could be used as an *anguak* other than the head, they responded that they had never seen any part of a loon

used, so these points are difficult to verify. The discussions around these objects also brought up several other questions: if an animal such as the loon could be associated with several seemingly unrelated abilities such as singing, vision and kayaking, would specific parts of the animal convey the particular traits to the wearer, or would any part of the animal suffice? For example, as was stated, the feet of the loon were often associated in the literature with speedy or sure kayaking skills. Could a loon head have served the same purpose? And vice versa, as was asked to the elders, could loon feet have transferred the vocal qualities of the bird, or would only the head suffice? These are questions that unfortunately remain unanswered, but would undoubtedly prove illustrative if further researched. Regardless, the abilities of the loon as well as the ermine were once again described as ‘rubbing off’ on to the wearer, providing no further insight into how the mechanism of power was conceived, nor how the wearer would absorb it.

An element that was introduced in the discussion surrounding the preceding group of items (as well as items to be discussed later) was that of the trophy. According to several of the elders, items such as the woman’s coat with ermine skins & loon bills (IV-D-944) and the ermine skin with loon heads (IV-D-1293) mentioned above could be used to showcase someone’s talents. According to some of the elders interviewed, men and women seemed to be equally able to carry objects such as these, but of course to demonstrate different talents. A man for example would wear a showpiece item composed of fragments of each of his kills to demonstrate his hunting proficiency while a woman would fabricate an object of great beauty and detail to demonstrate her proficiency at seamstressing. This would be in both cases to gain the respect of ones’ fellows. The elders could not explicitly identify such objects as being *anguaks* as well, but that possibility still remains. Regardless, the notion or practice of fabricating showpiece objects to demonstrate ones talents were absent in the literature, and as such were not explored in great detail in that context or with the elders of Cambridge Bay.

Another point that was brought out was the aforementioned tendency to place an object near the area of the body that it was thought to affect (for example, items thought to give the wearer strong arms would be placed on the arms or shoulders, and so on).



While many of the objects cited in the literature did seem to follow this trend of associative placement, given the testimonies of the elders though, it did not seem to be a rule by any standard. Analok & Angulalik (2001) stated clearly that an object would have the same function no matter where it was placed on the body. In many cases however, this is perhaps merely due to practicality. Admittedly, an ermine skin attached to one's legs for the purpose of making one a better runner would likely prove to be more of an encumbrance than anything else. As the elders mentioned as well, objects such as the ermine skins and loon bill were tied to the back of one's jacket to keep them out of the way and to not encumber the dancer or drummer.

One element that was seldom if ever elaborated upon in the literature was the actual necessity (or lack thereof) of *anguaks*. It is certain that *anguaks* were considered to have a palpable effect on the wearer, but would the wearer be just as able to perform without them? Seemingly not, according to the elders. It was mentioned several times that the loss or absence of an *anguak* would be a cause for alarm, and that the owner's performance would suffer for lack of the object. One could perhaps claim that this was merely psychological, such as many of our sports figures that purportedly conduct various rituals prior to every game or carry 'lucky charms' on pain of a meager performance. However, given that several objects have already been noted that did not need to be physically in contact with the wearer to exert their influences, but that the absence of other items could be a cause for alarm leads the author to believe that there is a more elaborate (albeit perhaps individualistic) structure of thought surrounding *anguaks*. These are points that would have to be researched further however, as they did not enter into the scope of the discussions with the elders of Cambridge Bay, and little evidence could be found to support them in the literature.

The elders were, in any case, familiar with the custom of having objects handed down from generation to generation, as well as having mothers attach objects to their children's clothing. This custom had already been well-documented, and thus little time was spent discussing it. However, as was already mentioned, an interesting point that did develop was that children would often wear a diminished version of the object to achieve the same effect as its full-sized counterpart. The example that was given was that rather

than wear an entire ermine skin attached to his clothing like an adult, a small child would have perhaps just the head skin, tail or another appendage of the animal attached to his clothing, and this was sufficient to produce the desired effect. It is known that a child's soul was generally considered weak compared to that of an adult, hence the preponderance of *anguaks* that were comparatively worn by children. Oosten (1997: 114) states that "The observance of ritual injunctions and amulets was related to age...The wearing of amulets was particularly important for young people who still had to strengthen their life force". This brings up several interesting questions, however: was the smaller portion of the animal considered to be equal in power to a larger portion or whole version of the object? Or was the soul of a child considered 'smaller' or less needy, and therefore an object with a lesser 'quantity' of power would suffice? Was a smaller version of the object merely applied for the sake of practicality? In a variation on this theme, Photo 39417 depicts two coats, one with a single ermine skin attached to it and the other with multiple ermine skins. When asked whether multiple objects of the same type would augment the desired effect, the elders generally seemed to disagree. Given that a dancer or drummer most often wore ermine skins, they were under the impression that a person wearing several ermine skins would do so to identify himself as an accomplished or expert dancer rather than wearing the objects to augment his dancing skills. In this case, these objects may fall closer to the category of trophy than *anguak*, but in the absence of more detailed research, the question still remains as to whether or not the wearer would acquire a greater degree or quality of skill by applying multiples of the same type of object. Granted, these are difficult questions to ask, much less to answer. Terms such as 'power' and 'quantity' are conceptually problematic even in our culture and language, and do not necessarily find parallels with any Inuit concepts. A further recommendation for future research would be to clarify these concepts and the terminology surrounding them from an Inuit paradigm, and to research the concept of the soul in Inuit culture more deeply. Without the development of these points, it is very difficult to come to any conclusions regarding the aforementioned questions.

Questions of the constancy of the power exerted by *anguaks* also developed in the discussions with the elders. As was mentioned by the elders, one who wore an *anguak* was "thinking about his future" (Nakashook & Novoligak 2001). This meant that a

person who attached an *anguak* to his clothing was investing in his future in that the object, while described as inactive under normal circumstances, would become active and exert its effects when it was needed. Few earlier researchers had explored or discussed the possibility of a 'dormant' object, nor did they delve into the active dynamics of the object and/or the spiritual force that empowered it. In his study of the Iglulik Inuit, Rasmussen (1929: 151) does note an object that seemed to adhere to this faculty, a point that is recapitulated by Oosten (1997: 107) as follows:

The skin and skull of a strong little ermine or a lemming were considered to be very effective amulets. The dried skin was worn inside the hod. The wearer of such an amulet could, when attacked by a superior force, breathe life into it, and the ermine or lemming dashed in unnoticed among the enemies with such force as to drive right through the bodies of the enemies, as a rule up through the anus and out of the mouth, exterminating a whole party in a moment...The amulet became active through the breath of its owner, which was associated with his life-force.

This object seems to require the initiative of the wearer to become active, whereas the elders implied that an otherwise dormant object would become active of its own volition and/or devices when it was needed. These elements introduce some intriguing and little-researched dynamics in the study of *anguaks*, however they unfortunately cannot be answered within the scope of this research.

## **5.3 Objects Composed of Teeth**

### **5.3.0 Ornament for Woman's Coat (IV-D-1013)**

Jenness collected this object in the Coronation Gulf area, once again on the Canadian Arctic Expedition. Composed of caribou skin and teeth, it is described as an “Ornament, for woman's coat, made of caribou skin and milk teeth of caribou” (CMCC artifact notes).

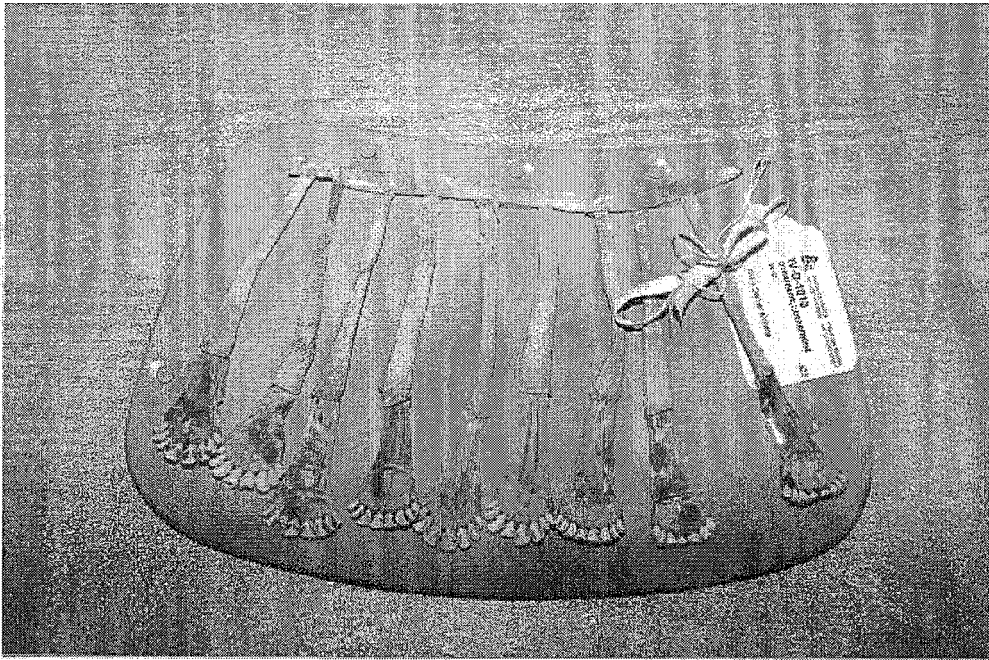


Figure 14: Ornament for Woman's Coat, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1013. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

The elders of Cambridge Bay could share very little about this object. Many claimed that they had never seen anything like it. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) said it was probably composed of dehaired caribou or seal skin, and that the mandibles of which it was composed were definitely caribou, most likely the lower jaws from yearling animals. They stated that while anyone could make or wear an object like this, it was possibly for a man. They said that men often wore objects like this as a trophy to demonstrate how many animals they had killed or their proficiency in the hunt. They added that a woman could also have worn an object like this merely to demonstrate her seamstress talents.

Analok & Angulalik (2001), Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) were all in accord that the object could very well have just been a decoration, but could not say whether it would be for everyday use or for a special occasion. Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) both agreed that the object was composed of caribou lower jaws, but although the CMCC identified them as caribou milk teeth, these elders could not verify that the teeth came from such young animals. Koihok (2001) did agree with the opinion given by Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) that the object was most likely a man's trophy, demonstrating that the man was a proficient or fortunate hunter.

### **5.3.1 Bear Teeth (IV-D-1294 a-m)**

Collected between 1914 and 1917 by Stefansson on Victoria Island, this object is a collection of 13 teeth categorized as a "personal symbol" by the CMCC. It is described in the CMCC artifact notes as "bear's teeth suspended by cord, charm?".

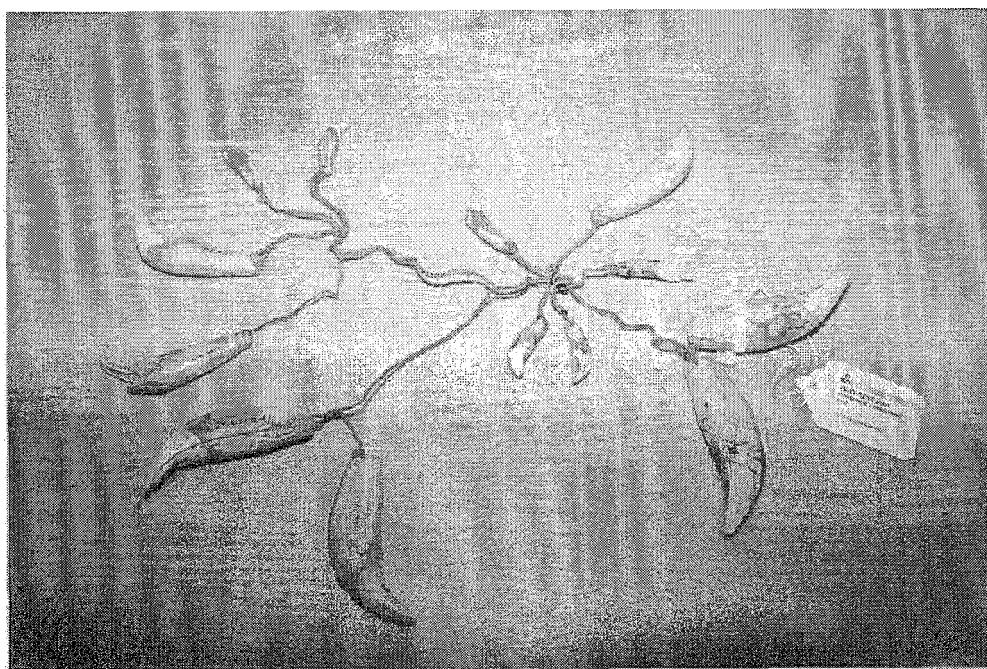


Figure 15: Bear Teeth, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1294 a-m. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

The larger teeth from which this object is composed were unanimously identified by the elders of Cambridge Bay as bear teeth. As several different species of bear such as the polar, brown and grizzly are native to the area, they could not specify which species it was in particular, but given that the polar bear was by far the most common bear in the

area, they presumed that the teeth were derived from this animal. There was some debate concerning the smaller teeth, however. Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) believed them to polar bear teeth as well, but perhaps from a cub. They also asserted that the smaller teeth could be the front teeth from a full-grown polar bear. Analok & Angulalik (2001) as well as Kaosoni (2001) disagreed with this however, asserting that the smaller teeth were most likely from a wolf. Koihok (2001) agreed that this could be the case, adding that they may even consist of wolverine teeth.

Analok & Angulalik (2001) offered several different possible interpretation of the item. They stated that the wolf was reputedly a good hunter in general, and that bears in general (but the polar bear in particular) were good seal hunters. As such, they thought that the object could be an *anguak* for a hunter, but could offer no further details about how such an object would be thought to work. Another possibility they discussed was the frequency with which objects composed of polar bear teeth were worn and/or used by shamans. They stated that as bears in general and once again polar bears in particular “were so powerful, these animals were often the familiars of shamans” (Analok & Angulalik 2001). They explained that such an object could have served as a tool for the shaman to cure people with. They also added that during a *séance* that was being held to divine the cause of a relevant problem in the community, a shaman whose familiar was a bear would go into a trance, begin to growl, and soon bear teeth would be seen to protrude from the shamans’ mouth. This meant that he or she was now possessed by the spirit familiar. The onlookers would then ask the shaman/spirit questions in an attempt to discover what was causing the problem, and the shaman/spirit would respond in the voice of a bear.

### **5.3.2 Hat of Bear Skin & Teeth (IV-D-1297)**

Collected by Stefansson on Victoria Island between 1916 and 1917, this object is described as an “apron of skin with bear’s teeth (charm?)” (CMCC artifact notes).

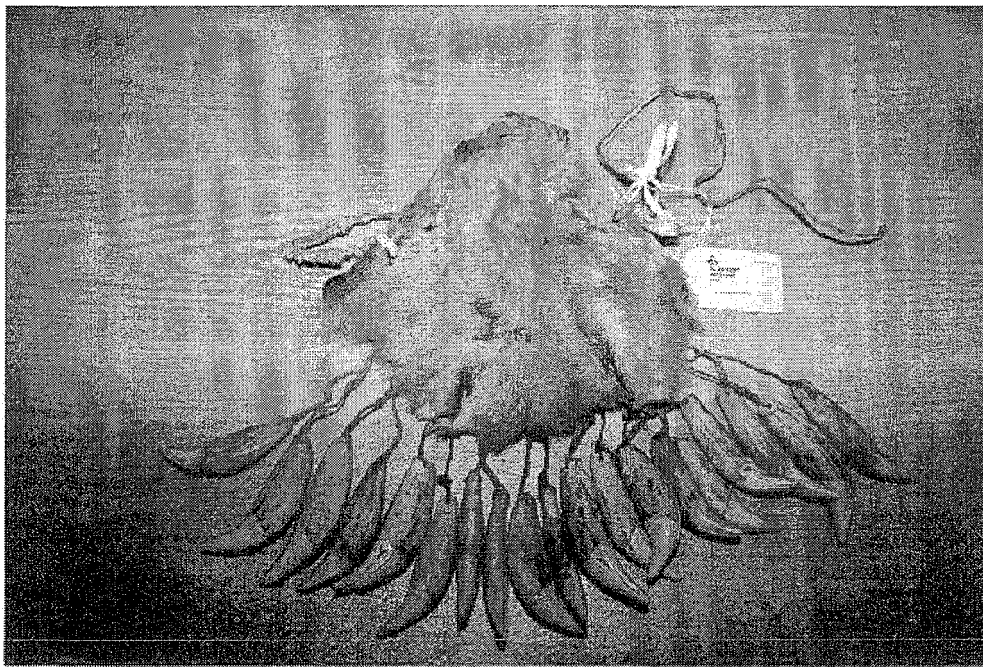


Figure 16: Hat of Bear Skin & Teeth (Front View), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1297.  
Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

The elders had little to say about this item, however almost unanimous was the conclusion that the teeth attached along the fringe of the item were polar bear, and that the skin was also from the head of a polar bear. Kaosoni (2001), noting that the muzzle of a grizzly bear is much lighter in color than the rest of its body, believed that the skin could have come from this animal instead. Evalik (2001) upon a close inspection of the photograph of the item disagreed however, believing the skin to be from a wolf.

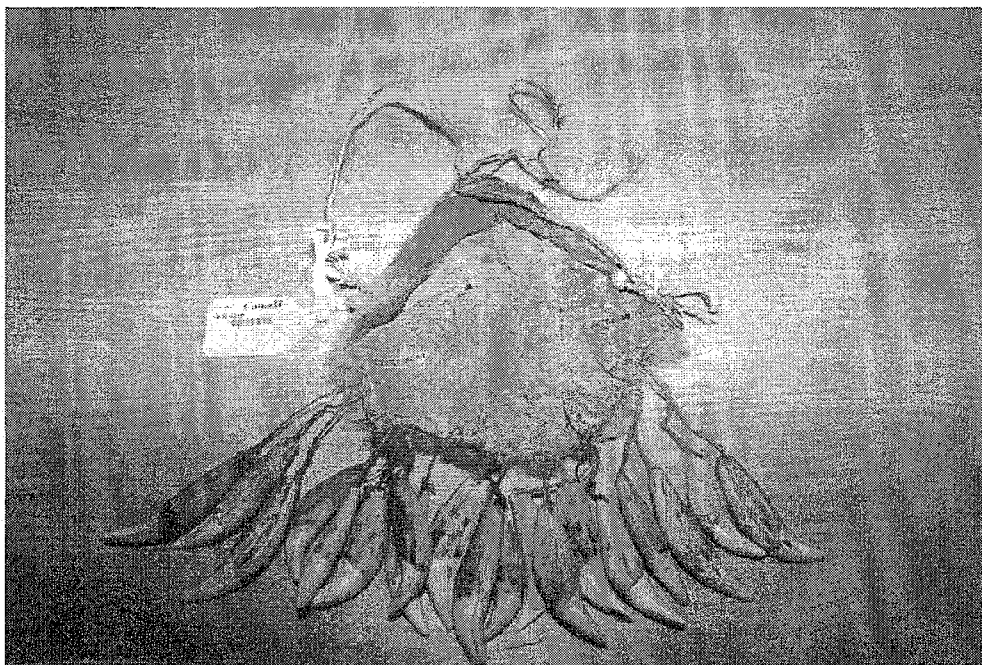


Figure 17: Hat of Bear Skin & Teeth (Back View), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1297.  
Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Although the unanimous conclusion amongst the elders concerning this item was that it was a headdress to be worn by a drum dancer, they could offer no opinions as to why the dancer would want to make use of bear teeth or head skin as an *anguak*. They stated that the teeth were most likely for no other reason than to be shaken about in rhythm with the song to create additional noise and to accentuate the sounds and movement of the dancer. Analok & Angulalik (2001) did mention that it could have been a headdress for a shaman during a *séance*, but could offer no further details about this possibility.



### **5.3.3 Bracelet of Dog Teeth (IV-D-1794)**

Collected by Burwash in 1925-1926, this Cambridge Bay artifact is recorded by the CMCC as a dress ornament composed of fringes of dog teeth.

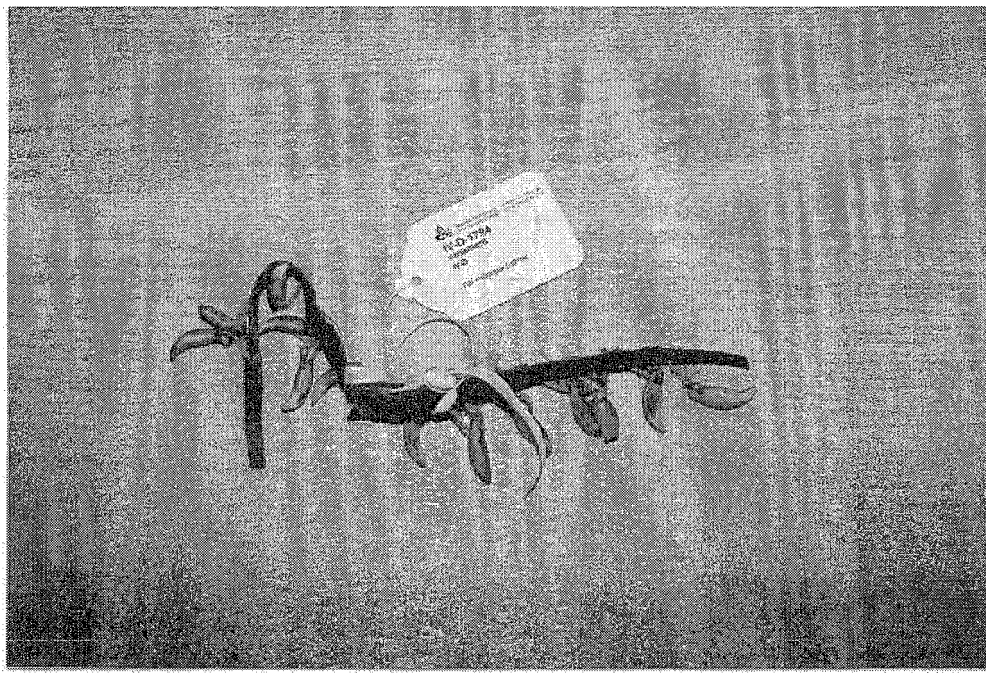


Figure 18: Bracelet of Dog Teeth, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-1794. Credit J. Pollick 2001.

The elders could add little to this item, but they unanimously agreed that the object indeed consisted of teeth. The general consensus was that the teeth were most likely from a wolf or dog, although Koihok (2001) mentioned that they might actually be fox or seal teeth. Kaosoni (2001) also suggested that they might be wolverine teeth. None of the elders could venture an opinion as to what purpose the object may have served or what the relevance of the teeth might be. However, Analok & Angulalik (2001), Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) all agreed that as it was most likely a bracelet, it was almost certainly a woman's object. Men never wore bracelets according to Koihok (2001) as they would get in the way of their activities. He adds that it was most likely an object to be worn at a dance.

### **5.3.4 Discussion**

The first question that was brought up in the discussion of these items concerns the object composed of bear teeth (IV-D-1294). The CMCC artifact notes describe the object as a “personal symbol”, without explaining what this term means. However, the literature and the elders made a clear association between the bear (specifically the polar bear) and shamanism. Objects composed of bear teeth were apparently sufficient to identify someone as a shaman. Analok & Angulalik (2001) offered that a shaman might have used this object to cure sick people. Unfortunately, they could not explain how this object would assist the shaman in his curing, if indeed it played an active role at all. Although they could provide no further explanation concerning the object, given the association between bears and shamans, it could be that this object was a personal symbol of a shaman, and that this is what the CMCC notes refer to. This is however mere conjecture, and this object remains largely unexplained. Questions were raised regarding the significance of combining different types of teeth, be they from different types of animals or teeth from different specimens of the same animal, however the elders could not comment on this.

The notion of the trophy or showpiece object was also raised again, this time in reference to the ornament for a woman’s coat (IV-D-1013), an object composed of caribou mandibles. Although no comparable object could be found in the literature, this object was described by the elders as either being a woman’s object to showcase her seamstressing skills, or an object for a man to demonstrate his hunting abilities.

Another object that regrettably went unexplained was the bracelet of dog teeth (IV-D-1794). In lieu of the information provided by Laugrand & Oosten (2002) on the special role of the dog in Inuit society, this could potentially be a very interesting item. But given the lack of information available to the CMCC and the fact that the elders were not familiar with the object makes it impossible to come to any conclusions regarding this object. Given the somewhat intermediate position of the dog between the realms of the living and the dead, this object may have had some protective function. Or, as mentioned previously, it could have transferred the fierce qualities of the dog to the wearer. Once again, as was mentioned by the elders in regards to many of the objects composed of

teeth, it could have been merely ornamental, designed to enhance the sounds and movements of the dancer.

## **5.4 Object Composed of Vertebrae**

### **5.4.0 Bandolier of Bones (IV-D-306)**

According to the artifact notes provided by the CMCC, this object was collected from the Copper Inuit by Jenness during the Canadian Arctic Expedition. It consists of a collection of unidentified bones and is described as a “bandolier worn as ornament to attige. Made from the bones of (?) sewed on strip” (CMCC artifact notes). Presumably the word ‘attige’ should actually be *atigi* here, an Inuinaktun word referring to a woman’s coat.

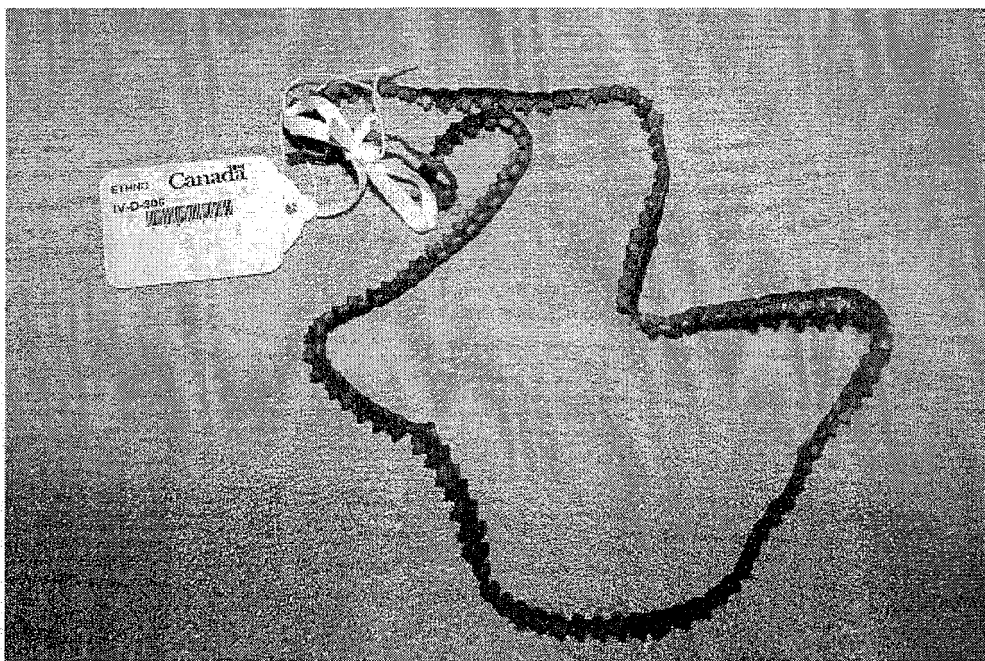


Figure 19: Bandolier of Bones, CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-306. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Most of the respondents agreed that the bones this object is composed of were likely vertebrae from several small animals of some kind, most likely fish, strung like beads on a length of caribou sinew. When asked whether the object was constructed from bones of just one type of animal, Nakashook & Novoligak (2001) responded that an object such as this could be composed of several species of animal. They also stated that

an object such as this would probably have been made by a woman, and worn by either a woman or a child. Novoligak (2001) had seen people making objects like this but could not specify what purpose it may have served.

Analok & Angulalik (2001), although agreeing with the aforementioned material composition of the object, had a different interpretation of it. Although admitting that such objects were sometimes worn merely as decorative sashes or used as handles for a skin bag, Analok (2001) stated that as a child if he saw a person wearing an object like this he became afraid because the object identified the person wearing it as a ‘fledgling’ or newly indoctrinated shaman. He also stated that such an object could have identified a shaman who was still in training. When asked why he was afraid of shamans, he responded that “people changed when they became shamans, they were frightening to [him] because their personality and appearance changed” (Analok 2001).

Kaosoni (2001) agreed that this object likely belonged to a shaman, stating that an object such as this was composed of objects that had been given to the shaman by the other members of the community, and that the shaman would wear this object regularly. According to Analok & Angulalik (2001) a would-be shaman would wear an object like this mostly during a séance, apparently with the intention of augmenting his power. The object established a link between the novice shaman and his familiar, however an experienced shaman, being able to connect with his familiar without the aid of such an object, would not require it. When questioned further about this connection with the spirit familiar, Analok & Angulalik (2001) stated that while neither the novice nor the full-fledged shaman would be less powerful without it, the novitiate would sometimes rely on the object as a channel for his spirit familiar if he needed more power. The spirit familiar was conceived of as working through the object, as opposed to being inherent to the object itself.

Speaking generally about *anguaks*, Koihok (2001) stated that many objects worn by people had been passed on to them from their ancestors, and would continue to be passed on from generation to generation. While he agreed that the specific object in question could consist of fish vertebrae, he also believed that they could be either caribou

or seal tailbones, or perhaps a combination of all these items. The bones from which the object is composed can be seen in greater detail below.

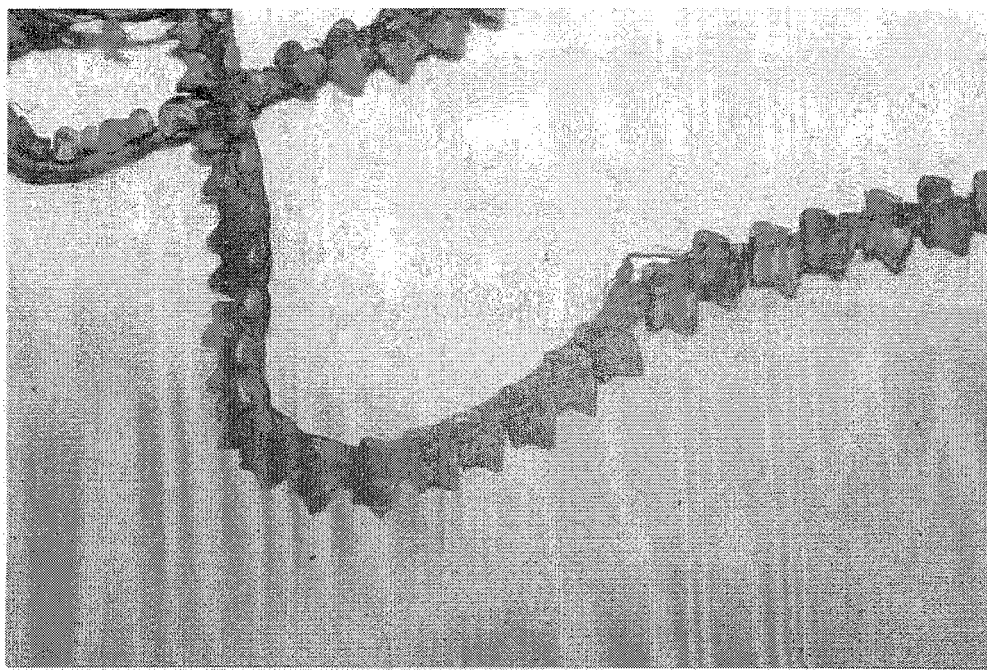


Figure 20: Bandolier of Bones (Detail), CMCC Acquisition # IV-D-306, Detail. Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

While agreeing that shamans would sometimes wear similar objects during a séance, Koihok (2001) favored another interpretation of the object, stating that the object was designed to make someone a better hunter. This would seemingly apply to either men or boys, as he stated that both active hunters and boys too young to hunt yet sometimes wore these objects. He himself had had a similar object placed on him as a child by his parents. This object consisted of a sash of caribou skin to which additional strips of white caribou fur were subsequently added. Although they had explained to him why this was done, he notes that regrettably he was either too young to understand or did not pay attention to what he was being told. Essentially though, these additional pieces of skin would be added to the object from each kill the hunters in the community had made. Koihok (2001) adds that the object would not only make the wearer a good hunter, but would also encourage strength and a generally “good life” in the wearer. Koihok (2001) likens the object to the custom of giving the name of a sick person or ancestor to a child: in the sense that the custom of ancestral name-giving was a way to preserve the spirit of the ill or deceased, such an object was a way to preserve the spirit of the animal. Given

that animals were “spiritual beings”, as a hunter you were apparently obliged to retain a piece of each of your kills in such a manner to ensure that the animals “may come back to you” (Koihok 2001).

Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) both agree that an object such as this was usually made by a woman. Likening it to the object he had worn as a child, Koihok (2001) said that it was probably made by an older woman, specifically the grandmother of the person who was to wear it. Although he could not explain why this was so, he knew that the old woman who had made it would wear it most of the time, however she would place it on someone else on special occasions. For example, if her son or grandson was going hunting, she would place the object on them to give them strength. Similarly, she might put it on her child or grandchild if there was a special gathering in the *qalgik* (a large communal *igloo* used for a variety of social occasions such as dances). He also stated that the object would be placed on a boy if there had been trouble finding game, as this would help to find or attract game. When asked to explain how this would help the hunter, Koihok (2001) responded that *anguaks* helped the hunter to “live like the animal” or to “have the spirit of the animal”. To this Kaosoni (2001) added that hunters would wear objects such as these “so they could see the animals they were hunting”.

#### **5.4.1 Discussion**

This is a particularly interesting item. Analok (2001) had identified this as an object that would typically belong to a shaman, which is perhaps related to the “shamanic paraphernalia” mentioned earlier by Balikci (1970: 225) that identified a novice shaman or a shaman in training. Whether the object was a merely a symbol to identify a novice shaman or whether it was a necessary tool for the shaman is still in question. Given that objects composed of vertebrae were so seldom mentioned in the literature, the elders were questioned about this choice of material, but little information could be gathered regarding the significance of using vertebrae. Given that they associated this object with shamanism, the elders could not however verify whether this choice of material was particular to a shaman. Kaosoni (2001) did mention however that the items attached to the belt were given as gifts to the shaman by other people, similar to the custom discussed earlier by Oosten (1997: 111).

An important point that developed over the course of discussions about this object was that the belt, while apparently not necessary for the shaman to exercise his abilities, did seem to act as a sort of channel for the shaman's spirit familiar. While the generally accepted notion is that regular *anguaks* have a spirit residing within them, the shamanic familiar did not reside within the object in question but was conceived rather as working through it. Therefore, a belt of this kind may or may not be considered an *anguak*. Many unanswered questions still remain with regards to this object. What is meant by 'working through' the object? How did an object like this help the novice shaman to augment his power? Why didn't a full-fledged shaman require one? Did full shamans sometimes carry one regardless? Given the relative brevity of the discussions, and the fact that none of the respondents were very familiar with shamanism, these questions would require further research.

Believing the bones to be from the tails of caribou and/or seals, another interesting interpretation of this object was that it consisted of a hunting *anguak*, similar to one that had actually been worn by Moses Koihok (2001). This object consisted of pieces of caribou skin rather than bones, but he said this was not important. Having had this object placed on him as a child, he said that every time a caribou was killed, additional pieces of skin from those animals would be placed on the belt. As mentioned earlier by Birket-Smith (1959: 171), shamans would often wear belts composed of strips of caribou skin that had been given to them as gifts by other members of the community. However, Koihok (2001) stated that he was not nor had he ever been a shaman, and this object had been placed on him when he was very young. All he knew was that the object was meant to help the hunters kill caribou. He said he only wore it several times and only for several hours at a time, after which his parents would remove it and put it away safely. He stated that this was done over the span of several weeks in October, the peak period during the caribou migration. According to Koihok (2001), animals are spiritual beings like humans, and preserving a piece of animal skin on this belt was a way to ensure that the animal would return. This practice perhaps relates to Balikci's (1970: 201) statement about death taboos:

Death taboos for dealing with animal souls were the main strategy by which hunting animals became a safe activity. It was thought that the soul of a killed seal for which all death taboos had been properly observed would be greatly pleased by the received attention and would reincarnate in another seal body with the intention of letting itself be killed again by the same hunter. In this sense a careful hunter continuously hunted the same animal. The death taboo about seals not only prevented the soul of a seal from turning crooked by helping it reincarnate, but also insured continuous successful hunting.

This statement, although making reference to taboos, nonetheless provides an interesting insight into the attitude the Inuit had towards the animal world. Particularly interesting is that a hunter and his prey were regarded as being involved in a cyclical relationship where the hunter would kill the willing animal and then provide propitiation of some sort to ensure that the animal would return and give itself to the hunter again. Jenness (1922: 185) explains further:

Mr. Stefansson's western Eskimos were responsible for the introduction of a new custom in 1910. They told the Copper Eskimos that if they did not cut off a fragment from every skin they sold to the white men to be taken out of the country, the animals would follow the skins and leave the country also. This applied particularly to the caribou, the natives said, which for this reason had almost disappeared from Alaska and the Mackenzie river delta. Hence some of the Copper Eskimos now cut a corner from each deerskin garment and an ear from each skin that they sell to the white men, lest their country too should be denuded of its game.

The information provided by Jenness (1922) and Balikci (1970), although not making specific reference to an object such as the one described by Koihok (2001) nonetheless provides useful insight into the beliefs and concepts that may have been responsible for the fabrication and application of such an object.

Few more details could be discovered about this object, but as Koihok (2001) had said, the similar object he had worn was a way for the hunter to 'live like a caribou' or to 'have the spirit' of the animal. He added that this was all towards the end of assisting in the hunt of the caribou, but he could not explain how these factors would help the hunter. Furthermore, it did not even seem to be the hunter who would wear the object. According to Koihok (2001), he was far too young to be hunting at the time, but that the object would help the other hunters. Also curious was the fact that his grandmother had made the object and reportedly wore it most of the time. This object therefore possibly



established any number of combinations of links between the animal, the hunter, the young Koihok and his grandmother, but he could unfortunately not add anything else about this object.

## **5.5 Objects Composed of Plant Matter**

### **5.5.0 Skin Stuffed with Moss (IV-D-1757, IV-D-1758)**

Burwash collected these two objects from Cambridge Bay between 1925 and 1926. Their material constituents noted merely as “leather”, this object is described as a “whaling charm” (CMCC artifact notes).

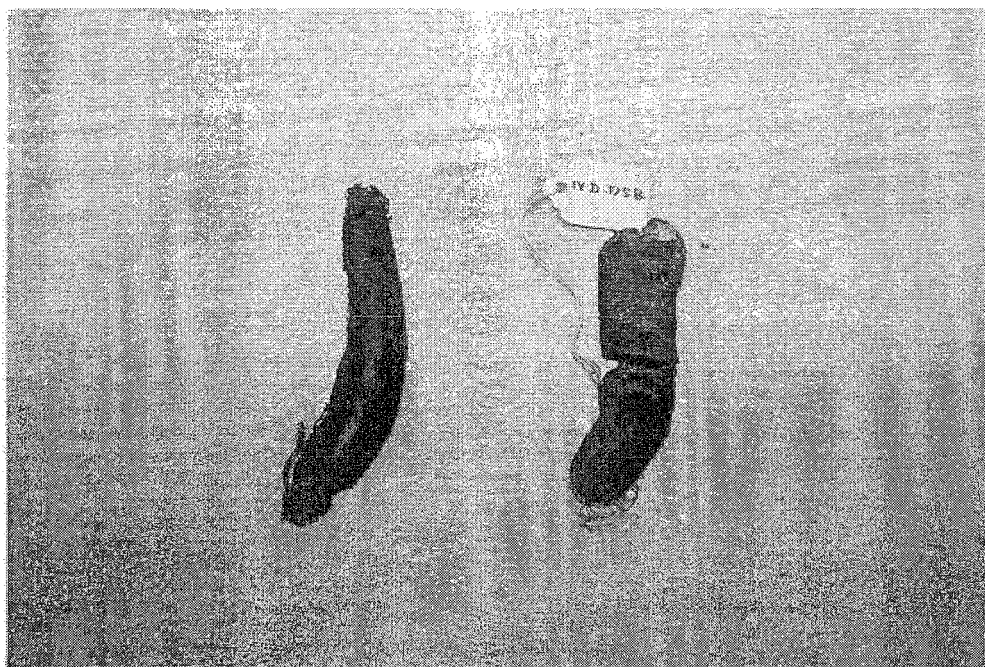


Figure 21: Skin Stuffed with Moss, CMCC Acquisition #'s IV-D-1757 (left) & IV-D-1758 (right).  
Credit J. Pollick, 2001.

Many of the elders testified that this item was most likely an object used to light the *kudlik*. This item, according to Analok & Angulalik (2001) was a method of carrying Arctic cotton or lamp wick moss. Koihok (2001) and Kaosoni (2001) stated that not only would this be a way to carry the material, but it was also used to light other *kudliks* once a fire had been kindled in one. The item would be dipped in oil and lit from the flame of the first household to kindle a fire in their *kudlik*, whereupon the person would then shield the flame under their coat and carry it to their *igloo* to light their own lamp.

### 5.5.1 Discussion

Given the lack of information about this object, both on the part of the CMCC and the elders, it is difficult to come to any conclusions regarding it. Although noted as being a ‘whaling charm’ by the CMCC, the elders could not associate the object with this activity, maintaining that very little whaling has been done in the Cambridge Bay area, either traditionally or in modern times. If the object is indeed an *anguak* for whaling, there was literally no information or comparison to be found in the literature. As the elders attested to, the objects were merely used to carry flame from one *igloo* to another once one *kudlik* had been lit, from whence the other lamps in the community would be lit.

Other interpretations of the object are possible. As previously noted, an object attached to Tertaq’s hood that consisted of lamp wick moss was “sewn in skin and fastened to the hood [was to give him] health”. In his analysis of Rasmussen’s work, Oosten (1997: 118) states that this object “was probably related to the well-attested association between the lamp and the soul”. In his research on the Netsilik Inuit, Balikci (1970: 199) provides an explanation of how and why this association was expressed:

Though the personal soul was the source of health and energy, it was also vulnerable to attack by evil spirits and malevolent shamans. All physical sickness resulted from evil spirits hurting the human soul by taking abode in the patient’s body. The Netsilik knew numerous techniques to protect their souls from these harmful influences. One such practice was to have the soul removed from the body at the very moment of birth. This was done ceremonially by a shaman, who placed the soul under the soapstone lamp of a close relative of the infant, preferably the mother, where it remained forever, free to grow to full strength. The distant location of the soul confused aggressive evil spirits, who were unable to find it in the body they wanted to attack, and so their action was rendered ineffectual.

Once again however, in the absence of further information regarding this object, this is mere conjecture.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter will present a summary of the principle findings and concepts observed over the course of this research. The difficulties encountered over the course of this research and the weaknesses of the approach will also be outlined. Suggestions will be made for future research based on the findings and the acknowledgement of the limitations of this study.

#### 6.1 Considerations of the Spirit / Soul

The notion of the divisible spirit (in the form of the *nappan*, *tarrak* and so on) in the Inuit cosmology was described earlier. This belief has been thoroughly researched and documented by scientists such as Jenness (1922, 1946). Several elements of this notion appear in the study of *anguaks*. Firstly, described in the present research is the possibility that a spiritual residue may have been contained in the hair or saliva of a person for example (and indeed, this may yet prove to be the case in *anguaks* derived from animal products as well). A comprehensive study of *anguaks* derived specifically from human products has not been done, and would doubtless prove very enlightening. As such though, *anguaks* derived from humans and their products constitutes one of the most interesting notions presented in this research. As was mentioned, it was largely believed that these products transmitted vague qualities such as vitality, but questions still remain: was this vitality an inherent property of the product itself or of the person from whom it was derived? How were these qualities transmitted to the new wearer? Were these dynamics similar to those of animal *anguaks*? In brief, a study of *anguaks* derived from human products alone would constitute a research project of considerable value to the field of Inuit Studies in general, and the study of *anguaks* in particular. Secondly, one could indeed ask the same questions with regards to *anguaks* derived from animal products, as little is actually known about the spiritual dynamics of *anguaks* in general. This will however be addressed in greater detail further below.

Another question that was raised by the research pertaining to the dynamics of the spirit was how the soul of a child is perceived in Inuit society. As was evinced by the research, children were the main recipients of *anguaks*. Although it was somewhat obliquely inferred by several authors, this was perhaps due to the Inuit belief that the soul of a child was particularly weak and/or vulnerable to attack from malevolent spiritual forces. However, this is never explicitly addressed. Was this the reason for children wearing comparatively more *anguaks*? Were they perhaps considered to be malleable to the effects of the objects at such a young age? Was it only reasonable for a child to wear these objects, as their skills needed assistance to develop? These questions and more remain unanswered. Furthermore, another interesting point that was developed regarding children was that they generally wore only a smaller rendition of the adult version of a similar object. This was perhaps only for the sake of convenience, but several interesting possibilities and questions develop from this. Let us use the example of the ermine skin that was discussed with the elders of Cambridge Bay: while a child could wear an ermine head skin or leg to help make him agile, could an adult have worn such a small piece to obtain the same effect? No doubt the ability of a small child would not be equal to that of a full-grown adult. Therefore, would the smaller portion of the animal deliver a lesser effect, given that that was all that was required? While there is no doubt that this object involves a definite part-to-whole relationship regarding the effects that it could bestow, the precise dynamics are not well explained and would require further research.

## **6.2 Associative Considerations**

The Inuit endowed animals and certain human beings with a number of characteristics and abilities that they sought to absorb or exploit in the form of *anguaks*. In the **Material Considerations** chapter of this study, an attempt was made to outline the characteristics of several different animals. One is left with the distinct impression however that this list is far from complete. Due to the relatively limited scope of this research, not only were a number of animals excluded from the list, but also only a limited number of characteristics could be provided for each. It is doubtless that a much more comprehensive survey of the characteristics of animals in the Inuit world would prove illustrative, not only to the study of *anguaks*, but to an understanding of the Inuit

cosmology as well. To add to this, a 'dissection' of each animal could also be done. For example, the loon was cited as embodying several different characteristics at once: its feet were often vehicles to transmit good kayaking abilities to its wearer, and its head was often cited as an object that could make the wearer a good singer or speaker, or would give him good vision. As was previously mentioned, there could be found no case where the inverse was true (loon feet giving the wearer the ability to sing, or a loon head giving kayaking skills), so it would seem that the individual parts of each animal were considered somewhat independent insofar as the abilities they could convey were concerned. Therefore, any study that would attempt to compile the characteristics of animals would need to consider this dissection as an essential element.

*Anguaks* that had been conferred on one person from another were found to be in the same vein as *anguaks* derived from human and animal products. Little was known about the objects themselves, nor the auspices under which they were thought to function. This was often further exacerbated by the fact that given their origins these objects had at least two potential sources of power: the abilities of the previous owner and of the animal from which it was originally derived. Rarely if ever did the earlier researchers specify whether the *anguak* was associated with the latter, the former or a combination of both. For example, it is not known whether a bear claw meant to give the new wearer strength was associated with the strength of the bear or with the strength of the previous owner. Was it the association with the previous owner that gave the object its abilities? If so, had the object perhaps been infused with the abilities or had a spiritual residue of the previous owner been somehow attached to it? Was the object rather associated with the abilities of the animal from which it was derived? In the future, researchers would have to ensure that they clarify these questions as it is crucial to a true understanding of the nature of these objects.

A further issue relating to the associative mechanisms of *anguaks* that was developed was the possible connection between an *anguak* and the deceased individual to whom it had originally belonged. Several pieces described by Rasmussen (1931) were identified as having belonged to someone who had since passed away. Although the research did not explicitly deal with the possibility, given the Inuit belief that a deceased

person had now become an active member of the spirit realm, the potential for his contribution to the *anguak* somehow because of his state is possible. The possibility of course remains that the object simply carried the qualities of the deceased individual much the same way as an *anguak* derived from an animal carried its qualities with it. Once again, there is little or no data to support this other than the fact that Rasmussen (1931) or his respondents placed an emphasis when describing certain objects on the fact that their original owner had passed away. This may very well indicate a special relationship or new perception of the object due to the altered state of its original owner. Suffice to say, this would be a valuable and interesting addition to the study of *anguaks*.

The custom of associative placement was also discussed in this study, and while researchers such as Rasmussen (1931) were under the impression that it was a rule that objects absolutely needed to be placed adjacent to the part of the body they were thought to effect, this does not seem to be the case. Although it is doubtless that this custom was indeed adhered to, it did not seem to be as rigorously adhered to as Rasmussen (1931) thought. Interviews with the elders and a number of cases cited in the literature attest to the fact that for the sake of convenience or perhaps esthetics, *anguaks* could be attached literally anywhere on the body and still transmit their effect seemingly unimpeded to the wearer.

### **6.3 Perception of the Functioning of *Anguaks***

As was mentioned above, indeed the dynamics of any spiritual object such as an *anguak* are still unclear. As was alluded to, this is the case in virtually all spiritual systems, but several questions still remain pertaining to the way in which an *anguak* was thought to function. Due to our own linguistic and conceptual framework, *anguaks* have been largely referred to as objects in this and other works. However, it is important to note that the Inuit did not consider anything in their environment to be inanimate. Rather, as has been briefly touched upon in this study, the Inuit landscape quite literally teemed with life. Hence one can say that there were no ‘objects’ in the Inuit world. How this conceptual dynamic relates to *anguaks* is unclear however. Many authors cited in this research were or are under the impression that the spirit of a certain object or slain animal was housed in the *anguak* that had been fashioned from it. Whether or not this

'resident spirit' was considered as the sentient and independent intellectual entity that most animal souls were generally considered to be in Inuit thought is as yet unclear. However, the elders of Cambridge Bay did not in any way support this notion. In fact, the only explanation they could offer for the functioning of an *anguak* was that the innate abilities of the animal 'rubbed off' onto the person who wore the object, suggesting a much more passive action than previous researchers have offered. This still remains to be verified though, as discussions with the elders did not focus on this aspect of *anguaks* very much. Nonetheless, if possible, a more comprehensive and detailed explanation of these notions is required.

Several other questions pertaining to the dynamics and functioning of *anguaks* also remain. Primarily, it is not known whether the *anguak* was conceived of as working constantly, or only activating when needed. For example, when a man was hunting, was his kayak *anguak* nonetheless exerting an influence on him, honing his skills as a kayaker while he was in contact with it? Or rather, would the kayak *anguak* only activate when he was kayaking? Questions of a cumulative effect were also presented. It is not known whether additional *anguaks* of the same kind would provide an additional effect to the wearer. For example, if an ermine skin made one a skillful dancer, would two ermine skins make one an even better dancer? This notion also precludes questions as to whether or not *anguaks* were considered necessary to one's performance. For example, if a dancer lost an ermine skin *anguak* used for that purpose, would he then believe that he would be unable to perform, or at least that the quality of his performance would be diminished? Although the elders did mention that the loss of an item such as an ermine skin would be a cause for considerable anxiety for a dancer, references to this could not be found in the literature. Questions such as these would require much more in-depth interviews than this research could afford.

Certain other objects were presented that seemingly had multiple functions or powers that they could pass on to the wearer. As was previously mentioned, certain objects for example could bestow the qualities of health and strength to the wearer. Herein lie several unexplored questions however: could a single *anguak* embody and thence transmit several different characteristics? As mentioned above, objects that had

belonged to a previous owner potentially transmitted the abilities of that owner and/or the abilities of the animal from which it was derived. This has not been verified however. As a corollary to this, it must be verified whether the characteristics noted by some of the earlier researchers are not identical. The example was given that in our mythology, strength is often associated with courage. Perhaps characteristic concepts such as 'strength', 'health' and 'vitality' are similarly considered to be synonymous in Inuit thought. As such, research is required regarding the definitions of these characteristics from an Inuit viewpoint. This would at least help to clarify the terminology used by researchers when approaching the study of *anguaks*, or indeed many other aspects of Inuit thought.

Perhaps indirectly related to the fact that a mother could wear an object for her child were several *anguaks* that could transmit their abilities to the intended locus of effect without being in direct physical contact with him. Several objects such as salmon skins were mentioned that could be kept in the owner's toolbox, and yet their effect of making him a good fisherman would nonetheless be felt. The elders also mentioned that certain objects meant to help the wearer in a hunt would be removed for the activity, largely because the objects would no doubt prove cumbersome to the hunter during the activity itself. The dynamics of these objects are not well understood, and further research would be required to provide the necessary understanding of this interesting aspect of *anguaks*. On one hand, referring to dancing *anguaks* the elders mentioned that the loss or absence of such an object would be the cause for alarm on the part of the wearer in that he or she would fear for the quality of his performance without it. Conversely, objects such as the hunting *anguaks* mentioned above could apparently be dispensed with for the sake of convenience. This raises several interesting questions about the constancy of the effects of *anguaks*, as well as the way the abilities of the *anguak* were transmitted to the wearer: did an *anguak* transmit its ability to the locus of effect gradually like the charging of a battery, leaving him free to remove it and benefit from its effects regardless of it being not physically present? Did the 'spiritual residue' of the object remain with the wearer? Was the object in fact considered to be in contact somehow with the person despite its lack of physical presence? Why would the absence of some objects affect one's performance and not that of others? All of these questions



and many others have yet to be answered, and yet an explanation of these factors would be essential to the understanding of *anguaks*.

The concept of ‘trophy’, showpiece or purely decorative items, although mentioned several times by the elders interviewed in relation to several objects in the CMCC collection, was completely absent in the literature. Although the possibility that these pieces did exist is a real one, their absence in the literature is somewhat conspicuous. That an object would be purely decorative with no other practical or spiritual function in a nomadic society is questionable, however possible. One such category of object was dance *anguaks*, typically ermine skins or loon bills. The elders mentioned that several objects composed of these materials were meant to enhance the sounds and movements of the dancer and nothing else. As such, the possibility that certain objects may have had no other function than those mentioned above requires further investigation.

#### **6.4 The Role of the Mother**

The role of the mother as a mediator between a child and an *anguak* was also presented in this study. In the resources cited for this research, the child to whom the effect was directed was exclusively a son. Nowhere could mention be found of a mediative effect being directed at a daughter, although it should be mentioned that this is not to discount the possibility that this could still have occurred. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, the vast majority of *anguaks* were indeed worn by men and boys, and this perhaps explains why this custom was never observed or recorded in the literature. Nonetheless, more research would need to be done to verify whether or not this custom did in fact exist. Regardless, another interesting point that came to light was that a mother could mediate the effects of an *anguak* not only to a biological son, but to an adoptive son as well. This also presents some interesting questions regarding the perception of nuclear and extended familial and kinship structures: was an adopted child considered for all intents and purposes to be a biological child? Could a woman also wear an object intending to mediate an effect to a person who was not her own biological or adopted child? Granted, these questions necessarily make use of our concepts of biology and adoption which do not necessarily reflect Inuit concepts. Although adoption

was evidently a common practice in Inuit cultures, little has been written about how this affected the perceived kinship and family structures therein. Therefore it is recommended that a more comprehensive summary of kinship, familial and relational thought in Inuit culture be undertaken. To add to this, although this custom was not mentioned in the literature, the elders made mention that a father might possibly wear an *anguak* in lieu of his child. As such, this possibility was not discussed at any great length and would require further exploration. Regardless, the mother did enjoy a prominent position as the mediator between an object and a child, although it is unclear why this would be so. As previously alluded to, it may concern the bond between mother and child, but this is mere speculation that would also require further research. How the mother was able to mediate this effect is also unknown. In short, the position and role of the mother remains largely unexplored.

### **6.5 Age**

That the age of an *anguak* had an effect on its perceived abilities was also discussed in this study. Once again however, little is known about this dynamic other than the fact that it existed. It is not understood why, for example, an object would acquire more power due to its age. Indeed, it is not even known whether it can be conceived in terms of acquiring ‘more power’, but this is unfortunately a debate that cannot be discussed in the scope of this study. Regardless, perhaps this followed similar lines as the soul of a person: it is weak at its inception, but becomes stronger and more established as time goes on. This is simply conjecture, as a detailed study on how age effects *anguaks* has not been conducted. Once again, this relates to the unanswered questions regarding the dynamics of *anguaks* themselves: was this change in power considered to be one of quality or quantity? Why would an older object be considered of more value than a newer one? Perhaps as the object had become associated with more and more successful ventures on the part of the wearer, this merely helped to solidify the fact that it was doing what it was supposed to, and hence came to be regarded as more powerful in this way. Regardless, these questions represent an interesting and little understood avenue to be further explored.

## **6.6 The Shamanic Belt and Objects**

A number of questions remain regarding the shamanic belt and mystery still surrounds this particular object. Although briefly outlined in this research, it is still questionable whether or not it can truly be considered an *anguak*. Certainly, it was an object with power, a definition that matches the one provided by the elders of Cambridge Bay. But due to the relative lack of information about this particular type of object, to place it in the category of *anguak* might be premature. From what can be surmised from the information gathered was that it was an object composed of smaller objects, each of which had been given to the shaman by members of the community. This would somehow protect the giver of the gift from the machinations of evil spirits. Although the giving of the gift was certainly an important action, how it is integrated into the function of the belt is unclear: did this gift affect the giver, the shaman or the spirits? How was this interaction thought to function? Furthermore, even if it is assumed that the belt is an *anguak* proper, it is nonetheless unclear whether the belt in its entirety was considered an *anguak* or merely each piece that composed it.

It is also unclear why a shaman would need the object. The elders inferred that only a novice or initiate shaman would use a shamanic belt. Why would this be so? Did it help to augment his power? The elders suggested that it helped to establish a connection with or channel to the shaman's familiar. How then was this link perceived? The elders did not seem to think that the object was absolutely necessary for the full-fledged shaman's performance or to his connection with his spirit familiar, which perhaps somehow relates to the aforementioned purpose of protecting the givers of the gifts that constituted the belt. How the shaman used the object is also little understood. It is evident that a belt of this kind was the privilege of the shaman, but to what end and for what purposes are unknown.

Other objects, little dealt with but evidently occupying special positions in Inuit thought also require further information. The snow knife, associated largely with but not restricted to the shaman, is one of these. As was illustrated, the snow knife was one of the few objects to be represented in miniature form for use as an *anguak*. As was further theorized, its use as a way to deflect evil spirits was perhaps due to the fact that shamans

used it during séances to kill these aforementioned spirits, but such notions remain speculation without further investigation.

## **6.7 Recapitulation of the Research Objectives**

Many of the research objectives postulated at the beginning of this research were addressed over the course of this research. Of course, it would be fair to say much research still remains to be done to obtain completely satisfactory responses to these questions. The research objectives were postulated as follows:

- 1) To understand what *anguaks* consisted of in traditional Copper Inuit spirituality.**
  - What were they made of?
  - How were they made?
  - Who made them?
  - Who could use them?
  - How did one acquire them?
- 2) To understand how and why power was ascribed to these objects.**
  - Was the material used important?
  - Was the history of the object important?
  - Was an association between the object and a particular event, person or activity important?
  - What purposes did these objects ultimately serve?
- 3) To assess what place *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit oral culture.**
  - How much do the elders recall with regards to *anguaks*?
  - What importance do *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit spirituality?
  - What place do *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit oral memory and history?

Many of the questions regarding the material composition and fabrication of *anguaks* pertaining to the first objective were successfully addressed. It is largely understood what *anguaks* consisted of, who could make them, who could make use of them and how an individual acquired one. Of course, it should once again be pointed out that *anguaks* enjoyed a great degree of flexibility and fluidity. As such, the answers to these questions are also subject to a great degree of flexibility. Little information however could be found regarding the methods and processes of fabrication that *anguaks* were subject to.

Many of the questions pertaining to the second objective were also addressed, specifically those of the material aspects of *anguaks*. Questions regarding the history of the objects and their association to a particular event or activity were also addressed, however once again only superficially. More concerted and intensive research would need to be done in these areas.

The questions pertaining to the third objective are perhaps a little more difficult to assess. The elders certainly do have many recollections of *anguaks* as evinced by this research. Many gaps still exist however, and it is difficult to assess the place that *anguaks* have in contemporary Inuit memory and history. Although the elders were quite open and frank in their discussions concerning the objects, the impression I was left with was that such objects are not the topic of much discussion, both in the Inuit and academic communities, and that little work is being done to preserve this very fascinating facet of Inuit culture. As indicated by the elders themselves, as years go by their memories of these objects are fading, and little effort is being made to preserve them, both within Inuit culture and the academic community.

## **6.8 Problems with the Research**

### **6.8.0 Linguistic Difficulties**

One of the most persistent problems encountered over the course of this research was largely a semantic and linguistic one. This problem presented itself however in a number of different ways. Firstly, the language and vocabulary used by earlier researchers such as Jenness (1922, 1946) and Rasmussen (1931) was largely inaccurate as it was applied from the cultural perspectives of the researchers themselves, and not from the perspectives of the Inuit. For example, the use of words such as ‘amulet’, ‘charm’, ‘ward’, ‘fetish’ and so on reflects an attempt on the part of the researchers to explain and describe the customs and beliefs of another culture, but from the point of view and cultural reference of the researchers. This has of course led to a great deal of confusion and inaccuracy, both in the field of Inuit Studies and many other areas of research. While some researchers have digressed into schemes attempting to categorize *anguaks* under the terms mentioned above, the fact of the matter is that these terms are linguistically and conceptually our own, and as such do not accurately reflect the

concepts of the Inuit. An *anguak* is effectively neither an amulet, charm nor a fetish as we would define them. As was previously mentioned, this is why the author has chosen to use the term *anguak*, adhering to the definition that was provided by the elders in that this seemed to be the most accurate and just way of conceptually representing these objects as a whole. These aforementioned terminological inexactitudes persist in research even today however, and must be eliminated, not only to achieve a greater degree of accuracy and uniformity in research, but also to more accurately reflect the actual ideas of the Inuit culture. In the future, a consensual revision of the terminology applied in the field of Inuit Studies should be performed, ideally with the concerted participation of Inuit elders and communities. This could perhaps culminate in the production of a standardized lexicon of concepts and terminology. This would provide accurate terms and definitions to be used by researchers in the future, thereby reducing at least the linguistic parallax that inevitably occurs when researching a culture that is not one's own.

The application of imprecise terminology is not however limited to the use of Inuinaktun terms and concepts. Certain concepts in our own cultural thought can also be misapplied, and often have been by previous researchers. As has been previously mentioned, earlier researchers such as Rasmussen (1931) often resorted to the use of terms such as 'luck', 'skill' and 'clever' when describing the effects that *anguaks* had on the wearer. These terms are ambiguous at best, even in our own culture, and in some cases have no doubt been erroneously applied by researchers. In the case of hunting for example, while it is certain that particular *anguaks* were meant to assist the hunter in catching game animals, to say that the objects increased his 'luck' or 'fortune' as we understand these terms is evidently inaccurate. As was also previously alluded to, these terms and concepts necessarily interplay with the Inuit belief that game willingly gave itself to the hunter, and the distinction between this belief and the concept of 'luck' for example has to be clarified. Perhaps it would have been more accurate to state that an object augmented the disposition of the animal in question such that it was more inclined to permit itself to be caught by the hunter. As this has not been recorded or proven in this manner, this is mere conjecture, however it seems to be a reasonable interpretation. It would be understandable had a researcher misinterpreted an explanation of this process,

attributing it rather to luck or skill. As such, although we can still glean the general function of an object from the descriptions provided, a precise explanation of the object is often impossible. Little can be done to rectify the oversights of past research, but in the future researchers should take care to clarify such terms and concepts in order to provide an accurate and precise description of the object and its functions.

### **6.8.1 Weaknesses in the Research**

There were of course several weaknesses to this research. Perhaps the primary one was the inexperience of the researcher. Having never conducted interviews of this kind, I was only able to prepare a preliminary questionnaire (provided in **Appendix 1** of this study) to act as a guideline for the discussions. However, as anyone who has conducted this type of interview before can probably attest to, the discussions did not always necessarily go in the desired direction. This was by no means a setback as the elders spontaneously offered many interesting points, and the discussions were very fruitful because of this. Having then set to the task of analyzing the findings and comparing them with the textual resources used for this study, many more questions were raised that if the opportunity were to arise to conduct further interviews, the author would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss these questions.

Furthermore, once again due to my own inexperience, it was difficult to rectify the two different intellectual and philosophical structures encountered. One is inclined to seek answers that correspond not only to the expectations of the researcher, but also to seek or interpret responses in terms of one's own spiritual and/or social inclinations. Therefore, questions pertaining to the functional dynamics of *anguaks* yielded very few responses as they seemingly did not conform to the conception of the Inuit regarding these objects.

Another difficulty that the elders frequently lamented was the fact that they only had access to photographs of the objects and not the objects themselves. As such, they could not closely scrutinize several elements of the objects such as the size of certain objects, the manner in which they were crafted and the materials that were used. This situation could have been somewhat rectified had the author been able to transport the

objects themselves to Cambridge Bay to be scrutinized by the elders, but due to the fragility of many of the items, this simply was not an option.

Another difficulty somewhat related to the previous point is that due to the obscurity of some of the photographs and the fact that the elders did not have the actual items to scrutinize, it was difficult to ascertain the exact species of some of the animals used in many of the *anguaks* discussed herein. Almost without question, certain species were associated with certain abilities. For example, it is unlikely that every species of loon was associated with excellent singing, fishing ability or vision. Rather, as suggested to me by Dr. André Couture of Université Laval, it was likely the case that one specific type of loon such as the *Gavia immer* (Common Loon) was associated with singing while another loon such as the *Gavia stellata* (Red-throated Loon) would be associated with another specific talent. Regrettably, the CMCC documentation drawn verbatim from Jenness' (1946) rarely provided the distinct species of animal used to fabricate the *anguaks*. It would have been illustrative and more enlightening had this information been provided. However, this is a possible fruitful direction for further research.

As was mentioned by several of the elders, *anguaks* such as those they were shown were objects they had only seen when very young. As such, their memories of these objects were not very clear. Furthermore, as mentioned by Koihok (2001), Nakashook (2001) and Angulalik (2001), they were not very interested in learning about the *anguaks* they were exposed to as children. As such, they could recall very little about these objects, leaving many questions unanswered. Furthermore, given that *anguaks* have largely fallen out of use in contemporary Inuit society, the memories and knowledge of the elders regarding many of these objects is unclear.

## **6.9 Suggestions for Further Research**

There is of course much work left to be done in the area of *anguaks*, much of which simply was not within the limited scope of this work. Hopefully though, this research, the questions it raised, as well as the weaknesses and difficulties encountered will serve as points of departure for future research. Particularly, several elements discussed in this study could, if more extensively researched, greatly increase our understanding of traditional Inuit thought and their cosmology. Of particular interest are



the questions involving Inuit perceptions of the soul or spirit. As indicated at the beginning of the research, our cultural perception of these terms does not necessarily parallel that of the Inuit, nor do these concepts necessarily exist in the Inuit culture. It is certain that some form of non-physical entity was perceived, but our understanding of these elements is often colored by our own perceptions of similar phenomenon. Hence, I feel that these points must be elucidated further.

The associative mechanisms by which *anguaks* were understood to function seem to be fairly straightforward: animals were endowed with certain qualities, and therefore *anguaks* derived from their products seemed to transmit these qualities to the wearer. However, this explanation is overly simplistic. Once again, an understanding of how and why these qualities could be transmitted to the wearer is necessary to fully appreciate these associations. Of further interest to the researcher would be the compilation of a more extensive database of animals and their characteristics. As mentioned earlier, a database of the qualities associated to specific genii of animals within one species rather than a general database of all genii within one species would be ideal. This project was necessarily limited in scope, however a more detailed and thorough documenting of these qualities, perhaps compared and/or contrasted with the beliefs of neighboring groups, would be very illustrative and necessary for a full appreciation of Inuit religious, cosmological and social beliefs.

The role of the Inuit mother as a mediator of the effects between an *anguak* and the recipient of the effect also requires further research. Ostensibly, the effects did not seem to be impeded or altered in any way when working through this intercessor, however it is largely misunderstood how and why the mother was uniquely privileged with this role. As such, this particular aspect would require further research.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

#### Possession:

- 1) Who would own such an item? (man, woman, child, shaman, etc.)
- 2) How would they acquire it? (gift, heredity, found it, made it)
- 3) Why would that person in particular have that item?
- 4) Would someone have owned it previously?
- 5) Why would they acquire it?
- 6) Could the item be lent, passed on or given to someone else? (a family member, a child, anyone)
- 7) Could the item be withdrawn or revoked?
- 8) What would happen if the item was lost or broken?
- 9) Did only the owner benefit from the effects of the object? The whole family?  
The whole community?
- 10) Could the item lose its power? How? Why?
- 11) What, if anything, did the owner have to do to maintain the power of the object, or the object itself?
- 12) What would the owner do if the object lost its power?
- 13) Did this item relate the owner to an animal? Spirit? Person? Community?  
Other?
- 14) Describe the relationship: did the person own the object? Did the object own the person? Was the relationship symbiotic?

#### Material:

- 1) What materials were used to make this object? Why?
- 2) What is the significance of each material?
- 3) What did each material do?
- 4) If it is a compound item, why that particular choice of materials?

- 5) How did the materials interact or work together?
- 6) How were the materials obtained?
- 7) Was there any special preparation used or ceremony observed in obtaining or preparing the materials, or in the fabrication of the object?
- 8) Did the materials establish a link or relationship to the original animal/object?
- 9) What was the nature and particulars of this link?

**Function:**

- 1) What does the object do?
- 2) How did it do this?
- 3) What was the agency that caused this to work? Who or what made it work?
- 4) Did the owner have to do anything to make it work or maintain its function?
- 5) Could the object cease to function? How?
- 6) Was the material used relevant to its function?
- 7) Was the object a “functional” item or incorporated into one? If so, what purpose did it serve? What benefits did it give the object or its owner?
- 8) What benefits did the owner, family or community receive?
- 9) Was this item worn everyday, or used for special events or purposes?



## Appendix B

### Consent Form

I, the undersigned, understand that this research is being conducted in conjunction with and authorized by The Nunavut Arctic College, Université Laval, and other organizations.

I understand that this study intends to record the discussed information for the sake of history and posterity, to allow the collection, translation, analysis, editing, publication and diffusion of the knowledge of the elders.

I understand that I will participate in several free and/or semi-directed interviews, approximately 90 minutes each, responding to questions posed by the researcher.

I understand that these interviews will be recorded for the purposes of review and analysis.

I understand that the aforementioned tapes may be used as archive material for future researchers once the research had been completed.

I understand that these interviews may address my personal life and history.

I understand that these interviews are designed above all to better understand the Inuit culture in the context of rapid social change and modernity.

I understand that the information obtained in the course of the interviews will be preserved, and may be made public, published or broadcast.

I understand that if I so choose, the information I give will remain completely anonymous through the use of pseudonyms or case numbers.

I understand that I am free to disengage from the research at any time, to refuse to respond to any questions I that are asked of me, and to refuse to allow the information I give to be used for research purposes. I may do so without justification, and without prejudice.

I understand that I will receive a monetary remuneration in return for my collaboration.

I understand that there is no risk involved with participating in this research, either to myself or my community.

I therefore consent of my own will to participate in this research which falls under the category of "Nunavut Memory and History".