INUIT CULTURE - THE FAMILY

Grade Level

This lesson plan is designed to be used with students ages 12-15.

Objective

Students will learn about the characteristics of the traditional Inuit family and how these characteristics relate to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), or the Inuit way of doing things. Students will read selections from Isuma Inuit Studies Reader, "Saqiyuq: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women," and will write 10 questions about their assigned selection. Students will then trade selections and questions.

Estimated Time Needed

1 ½ - 2 class periods (over two days)

Materials (included)

Isuma Inuit Studies Reader, "Saqiyuq – Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women":
pages 184-188, pages 188-193, pages 197-200, pages 203-207, pages 207-213

Activity

1. Ask students to take out a scrap of paper. On it, have them write their definition of "family."

2. Have volunteers share their definitions. Write on the board or overhead projector. Discuss the differences and similarities among the definitions shared.

3. Write Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) on the board. Remind students that IQ refers to the Inuit way of doing things. "IQ embraces all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, worldview, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations" (Nunavut Social Development Council, 1999).

4. Explain that family is at the center of Inuit culture. Write "qatangutigiit" on the board. Qatangutigiit is the Inuktitut word describing immediate or close family relations, including parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles and cousins. The outer family is "ilagiit," which often overlaps with the qatanguitigiit.

5. Explain that cooperation and sharing are basic principles in Inuit society. When animals are killed on the hunt, they are shared, when people are in need, they are looked after. Reiterate that one of the principles of IQ is stressing the importance of the group over the individual.

6. Ask students to reflect on their own families. How do cooperation and sharing play a role in their lives? Have students share examples.

7. Ask students to share any experiences they have with adoption. This will allow the opportunity to open up about personal experiences if students choose to do so, or share the experience of someone they know.

8. Explain that in Inuit society, adoption is done much differently. The Inuktitut word for adoption means "the one we took" or "my adopted," describing the practice from the perspective of the adoptive parent choosing and wanting the child. Inuit do not use words such as "give up" or "give away" to describe adoption. There is no stigma attached to being adopted. Rather, it is open and flexible, and a child knows his or her birth parents and family members, visiting with them if in the same community. How does this differ from traditional adoption?

9. Explain that "Qallunaat" is the Inuktitut word for southerners and/or white people. Beginning in 1955, Igloolik children were sent to catholic residential schools to learn the "Qallunaat way." (Apphia Agalakti Away, Isuma Inuit Studies Reader, p. 198). Many families wanted their children to remain in the camps and be raised the Inuit way, however they were forced to send their children away to school. "The teachers told my husband that if Solomon didn't go to school, they would cut off the family allowance that we were getting for him. My husband said that was okay, and that is what the government did." (Apphia Agalakti Away, Isuma Inuit Studies Reader, p.200).

10. Break students into partners or small groups. Assign each pair one of the following selections from Isuma Inuit Studies Reader, "Saqiyuq – Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women": pages 184-188, pages 188-193, pages 197-200, pages 203-207, pages 207-213.

11. After reading selection, students are to write ten questions which refer to their assigned selection. A separate sheet should have the answers.

Evaluation

Allow students time to read selection and write out ten questions. Once students are finished, have pairs switch with each other. Each pair should receive a different selection and set of questions. Once the new selection is read and questions answered, they should be returned to the original pair to be corrected.

Apphia Agalakti Awa

Growing Up, We Stayed With Our Mothers

Hair ornaments

I didn't go to school when I was a child. We didn't have schools. Young girls stayed with their mothers. We stayed with our mothers all the time. When we were growing up, we stayed with our mothers, and our mothers would ask us to do things for them, like go and get ice or take the bucket out. Also, we learned to sew. Our mothers taught us how to sew and clean skins. We were always helping our mothers, cleaning the skins, sewing, taking the bucket out, getting ice, making oil for the lamps, and chewing sealskins. Working like this, it was like going to school, because we would be woken up early in the morning to start our daily work. They would wake us up and tell us to get up and get ready because we were going out hunting or we were going out camping. It was like going to school.

Towards the evening we would finish our work. We went to bed early because we had to get up early in the morning. We went to bed at around seven or eight at night, and we would wake up around five or six in the morning. All of us in the camp would wake up early in the morning. It wasn't like it is today with some people sleeping and some awake – it wasn't like that. Our parents weren't like this. We all had to get up early in the morning. We all got up at the same time.

Often in the middle of the night they would wake us up. They would wake up the boys every time the dogs had a fight. They would ask them to get up and stop the dogs. The boys, they would get up in the middle of the night and go out and stop the dogs and then come back inside and go back to bed. Sometimes they would wake us up and tell us that there was a polar bear outside. We would have to get up in a hurry. We didn't stop to have tea every time they woke us. No, we would get up right away and put on all of our clothes and go outside.

We were taught, like soldiers, that we had to be on guard all the time.

They taught us how to get up and put on our clothes in a hurry. If there was a polar bear outside, the men would go out and hunt the polar bear. We were always on guard.

Even those nights when we were up in the middle of the night, they would still wake us up again early in the morning. We had a lot of things to do between the time we got up and the time we went to bed. The men always had to make sure the gear was ready in case we had to go hunting or change camps in a hurry and the women always had to make sure they were ready to go. The teenage girls were always chewing sealskins. I chewed on skins all through my childhood – I always had skin in my mouth. Every single day we would work, and then towards the evenings we would relax and play games. In the springtime the little ones would go out and practise hunting with targets and birds. They would hunt birds and take them home, and the rest of the family would eat them. Even the teenagers ate what the family ate. We ate every type of food, and everything was useful.

That was the way it was for us. We were asked to do a lot of things, and we would listen to our parents. It wasn't that our parents were mean – they did this so that we could learn to be strong to help others and help ourselves. They did this so that we could learn to survive. In the future, when we were adults, we would have to know how to look after our own children. They did this to teach us the way.

This Is How We Spent Our Year

January is the time for light. February is the time for bright. Animals deliver in March, and April is the month of baby seals. May is for putting up tents. June is time for eggs, birds' eggs. July is for calves of caribou, they start delivering in July. August is the middle of the year and September, halfway through the year. October and November are fall. November is for hard times and December is the dark season. That is how the year was described.

This is how we spent our year, this is what we did. I will start with the spring. Seal-hunting season, out on top of the ice, it would be in early spring, April, May, June, no, not June... April and May would be seal-hunting season out on the ice, We would live in igloos. Then in June the sea ice would start to get thin, so we would move to the camp on the shore, the camp with the sod-houses. We would go back to the shore because in June we started walrus-hunting. We didn't use the sod-houses in this season, we would put up our tents right beside the sod-houses. We just left the sod-houses where they were. Everyone would put up their tents right next to the sod-houses. We would walrus-hunt with boats. We would use boats to hunt because in Igloolik in June the ice would be all gone in the area where we walrus hunted. It was

that particular season that we would go out on the boat and hunt for walrus meat. We would use the walrus meat for the dogmeat cache, and we would eat some of it too. Some of it we also used to age. We would let it sit in rock caches over the spring and summer and eat it in the fall.

In August we would start caribou-hunting. We would start working to get skins to make caribou clothing for the winter. It was the younger people who would do this. It was like we had a job – we worked for the elders. The first week of August the elders would take us to the inlets by boat. At this time the ice would be broken up. We would start walking inland from there. Since the caribou were way up there on the land at that time, we would walk quite a ways. The elders would leave us in the inlets and go back to the camp so they could hunt walrus for food for the winter. The walrus meat would be used in the winter, for the dogs and for us to eat. We cached that meat. When the weather was good, like better than it is today, calm and flat on the water, we couldn't travel. We didn't have outboard motors, so we would have to use sails if we wanted to travel. We would have to wait for a windy day to travel.

Doll

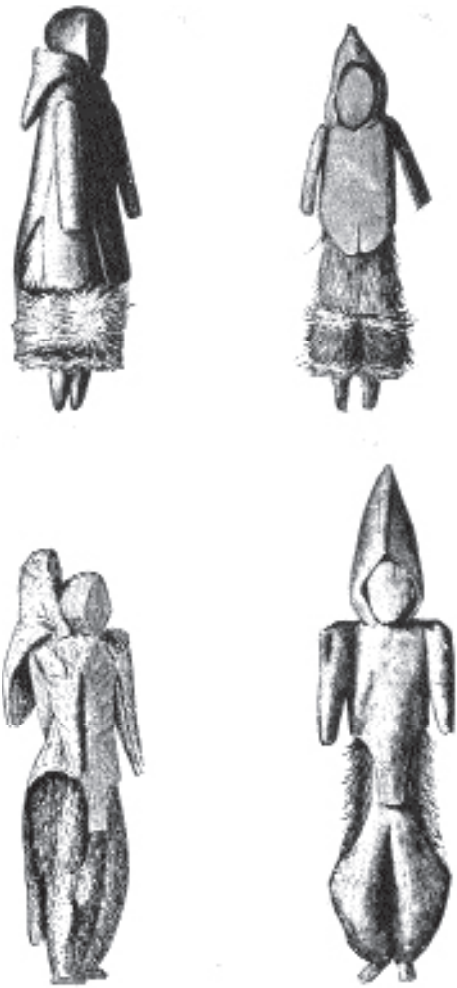
The elders would drop us off in the inlets, and we would leave all of our things back at the camp with the sod-houses. I grew up going caribou-hunting with my father, Arvaarluk. He wasn't too old to go. He stopped going up to the inlets by the time I was twelve years old. That is when he became old. I got married after that and started going with my husband.

In August we would walk inland from the shore. We would walk for days, looking for caribou. We would take our dogs. We would leave our sleds in the elders' camp, and we would carry everything on our backs. Even the dogs would be carrying supplies on their backs. We would walk for four days, five days, or a week. We would walk with our dogs and our supplies until we reached where the caribou were. Then we would settle down with the caribou. We would spend the whole summer trying to get enough skins for the year, and we would cache meat at certain points to pick up later on in the winter.

In the fall the lakes would become covered with a thin coat of ice. We would still be out caribou-hunting, but the elders at the camp would go looking for fish. We would fish in the fall, spring, and summer – that is when we fished for char.

Then in early fall, about the first week in October, we would wait for the first snowfall to start travelling by dog team back to the shore, back to the sod-house camp. We would wait for the snow to come, and then we would start travelling. We would use polar-bear skins and caribou skins as qamutiks.

We would be waiting for the first snow, and when the snow came, that is when we would fill up the caribou skins we had brought with us and use them as qamutiks. We would fill them up with all the supplies and all the caribou skins we had prepared. We would take everything off that we had on our backs, make a makeshift qamutik with the skins, and start travelling to the shore. We would start travelling and caribou-hunting at the same time. We would leave the caribou meat behind and bring only the skins so that they could be used for bedding and for clothing. We would come home when the snow was really hard and good. We would use our qamutiks later on to get the meat that we cached along the way.



Dolls in the dress of the Oqomiut and the Akudnirmiut

On our way back to the camp from caribou-hunting, we would build an igloo and use the caribou fat as qulliq oil. We would walk into the tents and they would be so warm and smelly. Seal and caribou fat, they smell different. Caribou smells so much better than seal! ... We would come back to the shore with all the caribou furs, and people would like our smell, the way we smelled. We smelled like caribou. When we reached the camp, the people in the camp would have been using seal blubber as oil for the qulliq. To me, after coming from inland, it was a different smell in the tents. It didn't smell very good to me. It smelled like old blubber. I would notice the smell right away, and I didn't like the smell of the seal fat. During different seasons there would be different smells in the sod-houses. In the summer we would burn moss and heather and different plants in the quiliq. They would make the tent smell really nice...

When we reached the camp after hunting inland, the elders would take the caribou skins. We would have nothing to do with the skins after this, because we were young. The young people would do the hunting inland, and then the elders would take over and distribute the skins. This would be in mid November. Once we were back in the camp, we would start trapping foxes for a while. In the late fall, foxes get fresh fur on the outside.

We would stay in our sod-house camp over the winter, during the dark season. We would stay there until the days started coming back. We would eat meat from the caches. We would hunt seals through breathing holes. We would hunt narwhals, sea mammals, anything we could find. We would stay there until March. It is always different every year. If we didn't have enough in our caches, even if it was really cold, we would move from our winter camp early. We would start moving when the caches ran out. March, that is when the caches of walrus meat would go down, and we would have to go to another camp closer to the floe edge to get seal meat.

The birds arrived in the spring. We hunted them as long as they stayed around, all summer long, and then they went back down South. As soon as they arrived, we started hunting the birds. Birds were really useful. We would use their feathers and their skins. The birds would start arriving in the spring. They would arrive during seal hunting seasons when we were out on the ice, April and May...

Yes, that was our year. As Inuit, we did lots of different things to survive. Since it is a very long story, I have just mentioned the important things. That is all I have told you.

Marriage And Family: We Were Full Of Children

I Will Tell You About My Marriage

Arranged marriages, they aren't done any more. We used to live with a man really, really young. Sometimes it was right after we had our first period – that was when we were seen as an adult. Sometimes it was even before that. My mother got married when she was twelve years old... no, maybe she was fourteen. I was born in 1936. No, it was 1931. Maybe she got married a year or two before that, when she was twelve or fourteen. That was a long time ago – I cannot remember. It was before I was even born. I was born in 1931.

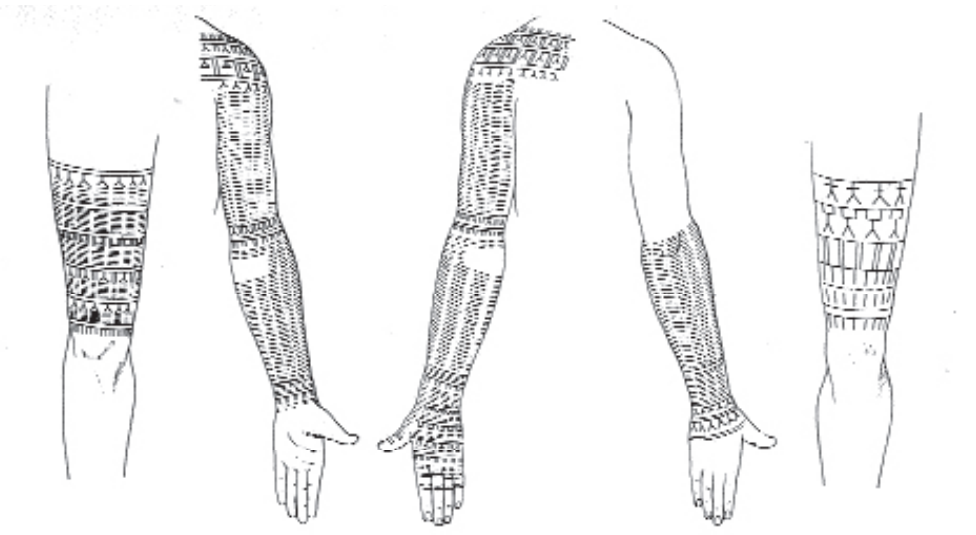
This story isn't about my mother, it is about my own arranged marriage. I am a little worried talking about this... I am a little worried about saying this on tape. If these tapes become a book, I would worry about people becoming shocked, people becoming upset when they read it ... I would worry about that, people being shocked... My marriage, it isn't a nice story, it doesn't sound nice. I don't want people to be shocked. At first I didn't like my husband, I

didn't like him at all. But as I grew up, I began to realize what a good husband I have and how lucky I am. He is a good man. I will tell you about my marriage. I will tell you anyways – that way younger people will learn.

I think my mother was fourteen or fifteen when she had me. I asked her once, and she couldn't quite figure it out how old she was when she had me. Her husband, Kublu, he was a man a lot older than her. It was arranged that she live with him, so she moved in with him when she was really young. He already had children of his own, they were about the same age as my mother. He was a lot older than her. His oldest daughter was a little bit younger than my mother, maybe just a year younger. It was an arranged marriage.

In the old days even if women didn't want to live with the man, the elders would arrange the marriage. They thought they were helping the woman. If the woman was an orphan, she would probably get married very, very young. If a woman didn't have a mother or father, she would need someone to look after her. She would move in with a man at an early age so that her in-laws would look after her. That is how it was in the old days with Inuit.

Not all women were married so young. Some of them would turn seventeen, eighteen or even nineteen before they started living with someone. They would learn how to sew, and they would learn a lot of things before they got married. Sometimes parents and adopted parents wouldn't let their daughter marry early. If they were older people and they couldn't took after themselves, they would want their daughter around to look after them. Daughters would stay at home and look after the parents. They might let their daughter marry if the man who wanted to marry their daughter agreed to stay with that family. That is the only way that they would give the woman to the man to be married. Sometimes it was the man's parents who were old and needed help. Then a woman would be given to that family so that she could look after the parents-in-law. Back then every human being was useful. We would help each other in any way we could.



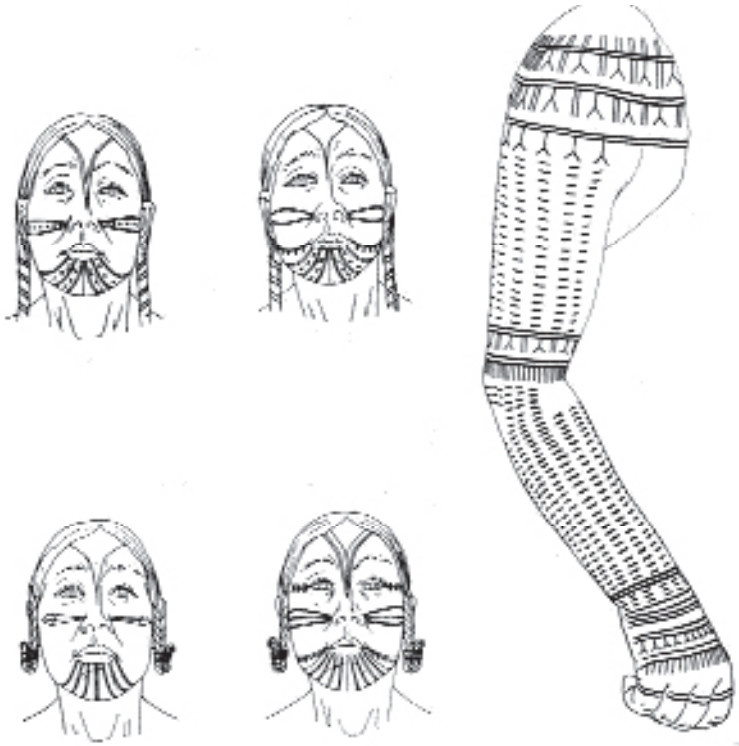
Styles of tattoos – Aivilik & Netchilik

Yes, the time when I first got married was a really unhappy time for me. I remember it quite well. When I got married, I had no idea what marriage was all about. I didn't know how to treat a husband. I didn't even know about sex. My husband and I, we weren't like the young people today. We weren't lovers when we moved in together. I was very young and I was forced to marry him – my family and his family, they forced me. He was a lot older than me and he was a widower. He had been married to a woman before me. I hadn't finished growing yet. I hadn't even started to menstruate. That is how young I was. I was just a child.

My whole life I had been promised to someone else. We had been promised to each other by our mothers when I was just a baby. I grew up thinking I was going to marry this other man, but he got tired of waiting for me to grow up so he married another woman.

My father, Arvaarluk, and my in-laws were from different camps. We met in a big group once in a while. I lived alone with my father because I didn't have a mother. We lived in a small camp. He wasn't my real father, he was my adoptive father, and he was very, very old. I loved him dearly and I used to help him. He was half deaf, so I would interpret for him every time somebody was talking. I even used to sleep in the same bed as my father. I did this until I was a teenager, until I grew breasts. I remember I used to get really cold in bed when I started sleeping alone.

My father, Arvaarluk, he was getting old when I got married. He knew that he wouldn't be living on the earth for many more years. He knew he was



Styles of tattoing on face

Tattoing on arm/Iglulik

going to die early, and he wanted me taken care of. I had no mother, and my father was afraid of me being an orphan, so he asked my husband's family if they would take me as their daughter-in-law. He knew that when he died I wouldn't be able to live alone, so he arranged a marriage for me. He arranged it out of love. Even though I was his only daughter and the only one around to look after him, my father gave me to this man and his family. At the time my husband and I got married, there were other teenage women in the camp who had their periods and were ready for marriage, but I was the one who got married. I was so young I had never thought about falling in love or marriage. They took me away and we travelled to the Arctic Bay region from around Igloolik. I was maybe thirteen or fourteen years old.

My husband, he was a really shy person. When we got married it was his father who told him to come and take me away from my father. My husband, he was a lot older than me, and he had already been married, but he was still really scared. I remember that day. We were at Akkuniq. I was with my father and there were people camped together there. My future husband came to my house while I was playing outside with a friend. He had a blanket with him

and he covered himself. I was running around with my friend, visiting people, and he started following me. I noticed that he was following me, and I started running away, trying to get away from him. The friend who I was with, she had her period already, she looked older than me, but he wasn't after her. He was after me.

We went into a house beside the beach, and in the house there was an old lady. It was night-time. She asked me what I was doing there, and I said Awa was looking for me. As soon as I told her that, she told me not to be scared. She said she had already heard what was going on. I was still scared. Her whole family was in the sod-house, they were all on the bed together. The older people were not concerned with what was going on. They thought I was being silly, so I walked over all the people on the bed to where the young people were. I was desperate, and I figured the young people might understand. I walked on top of the people who were in bed and put myself between the young people and tried to hide. My husband, he looked in, but he didn't see me. He just came in and took off again. As soon as I noticed that he had gone, I got out of the bed and left the sod-house. As I was walking out, he grabbed me, and I started crying. I was so scared. I wondered why he was after me. I was so scared of him. I was wondering what he was going to do. I had never thought about falling in love or going to bed with a man.

My future husband, he took me to his parents' house. I was crying and struggling so hard he let me go. As soon as he let me go I started running. I ran over to my friends' sod-house, and when I reached the entrance-way I hid myself underneath all the caribou clothing. My future husband followed me. When he entered the house I ran out. I was really young. I went and hid somewhere else in the entrance-way, and when my future husband came out again – when I heard him leave – I went back outside to where my friends were. He wasn't around, but I stayed close to the other teenagers playing outside for the next little while, and when he came outside again, I started running. He grabbed me. He took me over to his house again. I was fighting

Hair combs

and struggling, so he had a hard time taking me into the house. I was still crying when he brought me in, but he held on to me so hard that I couldn't move. I didn't want to stay in the house, I wanted to go back to my father, so I started kicking the door and the wall and crying. He still held on to me. There was an axe close by and as soon as he let me go, I grabbed the axe and I tried to kill him. Since I was weak and he was strong, he grabbed the axe from me. My in-laws were in the same bed as us. They didn't care what we were doing. They were laughing at me. I felt so alone. He kept me in that house all night long. Since I couldn't leave the house, I slept inside.

The next morning when I woke up, my future husband left the house, so I ran home. I told my father what happened. He didn't care, he just laughed. My stepsisters, they heard what I said and they all started working together, making new caribou clothing for me. They told me that I was going to need new caribou clothing because I was leaving the camp. They didn't want to worry me, so they told me that I was leaving my future husband behind to go out travelling. I was so happy!

They put the new clothes on me. They were beautiful clothes, and I went out to the entrance-way to get oil for the quiliq. While I was there, I heard my future husband and my father talking about me becoming his wife. My father was telling him how he was getting old and how he couldn't look after me anymore. "As long as she is well looked after," my father said, my husband could take me.

The Time That We Were Baptized

The time that we were baptized, I remember it was winter. That fall was the first time we were going to have our own sod-house. That was the first time we were going to be by ourselves. We had always lived with my in-laws before that, in their big sod-house, in their tent, all of us, my mother-in-law, her husband and her children, three daughters, and Peter, myself, my husband and my children – Oopah, Arvaluk, Simon, Martha, and Jakopie. My in-laws said that there were too many people in their house, and they told us that we should build our own sod-house. I remember it was a small, small sod-house. If we brought a big seal inside to skin, there would be no room on the floor for anything else, just the big seal, there would be no place for us to walk around.

That spring, in March I think, a minister came to our camp. He was a fat man. He is dead now. He came in with Nasuk and Peter Paniloo – he was a little boy then, Peter Paniloo. They came to our camp. I remember it was scary for me to get baptized. I remember they were teaching us to sing songs. When I think about that I smile and I laugh. They wanted us to sing properly, to sing nicely! I

Qallunaat.

With Solomon It Was Different – We Kept Him Out Of School

In the 1960s it seemed as if all our children were leaving us to go to school. They had to, that was the law of the teachers, that every student had to go to school. All my children were so young when they went to school. It seemed as if they were getting younger and younger. I remember when Joanna started I went down to Iqaluit to have Ida. It was August when I left, and I came back in January. Joanna, the five year-old who I left behind, she came to say goodbye at the plane in Igloolik. All the older children were in the community in school, and my little Joanna, five years old, she didn't want to stay in the camp all alone while I was away. She wanted to go to school with the older ones. She was only five years old when she went away to school.

When I came back from the hospital from having Ida, I stayed overnight in the community with my in-laws. I slept with Joanna in the same bed, my little Joanna... I left for the camp the next day and I left her in the community, I left her in school with the teachers. I was on my way back to the camp and I felt hurt inside, knowing that my little Joanna was in school and I had left her behind. I left her behind and I was crying and crying as we travelled by dog team back to our camp. Later on, with Ida, she started when she was four. That was when we were living in Pond Inlet. Ida was only four years old and she started school. She stayed in school.

With Solomon it was different. We kept him out of school. This was before Ida and Joanna went away. Arvaluk and Simon were far away in Churchill, Martha was in Igloolik, Rhoda and Jakopie were in Pond Inlet. Joanna and Salomie were young, and Phillip was just a baby in my amautik, he wasn't even a year old. We asked them if we could keep one of our sons with us. We asked the teachers that if we let them take Rhoda and Jako away, would they leave Solomon to stay with us? Solomon was just seven years old, and my husband had nobody to help him when he was going out hunting and camping. When the teachers came to get him to take him away, my husband told the teachers that he didn't want his son in school. We asked for Solomon to stay with us because he was ours.

We were in a camp outside Pond Inlet that time. We were at Qaurnnak. We had moved there from Igloolik, and we stayed there through the fall. The boat came to pick up the children at the camp and take them into school. There were only a few buildings in Pond Inlet at that time, and Rhoda and Jakopie were going to live there and go to school. When the boat came, my husband started arguing with the teacher. He was telling him, "He is mine! He

is my son! Since you have taken all my other sons away, I am going to keep this son! He is going to help me. He is going to learn how to hunt!" He was telling the teacher how he would rather see Solomon learn the Inuit way, not the Qallunaat way.

We were still living in a tent when the boat came. It was early fall and we had a pot of seal soup on the floor. Solomon and Rhoda were playing that day the boat came in, and Solomon accidently put his hand in the seal soup and burned his hand. I had to cut off his sweater, his only sweater, the sweater that he was wearing. When I pulled off the sweater, some of his skin came off with it. Since the boat was already there, we put Solomon on the boat so he could go have his arm bandaged in the community. We had a smaller boat and we had to pack up our camp, so we arrived in Pond Inlet a few days after our children.

It was the RCMP who looked after him when he got into town. There was no nurse around at that time. The RCMP, we called him Pangnialuk, he put a bandage on Solomon's arm. When we were ready to go back to camp, my husband was looking for Solomon around the community. He thought Solomon was visiting people. It was around 1966. Solomon was seven years old at that time. We couldn't find him. My husband went to the school to see if he was there, and he found him in the school sitting with Rhoda and Jakopie in the classroom. He was one of the students! He was the only one of all our sons that my husband didn't want in school. When my husband went into the school and found him there, he told the teacher that Solomon wasn't going to go to school, that he was going to stay with us out in camp. The teacher got very, very angry. My husband asked the teacher if he could take his son out of the classroom, and the teacher said no, so they started arguing. They got into a big argument, and then my husband just took Solomon by his hand and walked him out the door. He was very, very angry. He didn't even stop to get Solomon's parka. My husband gave Solomon his own parka to wear back to the camp. Solomon was crying that time. He wanted to be at school with the older children.

After this the teachers told my husband that if Solomon didn't go to school, they would cut off the family allowance that we were getting for him. My husband said that was okay, and that is what the government did. They cut off our family allowance. We were poor back then, not like today when we live in the community. We were out in camp. We didn't have food from the Bay or clothing from the Bay. We didn't have jobs, so we sold things like sealskins and other types of skins to make money.

After that incident we moved back to the camp that we had lived in a long time before, we moved back to Naujaaruluk, near Igloolik. We had Solomon with us. He wasn't going to school. We cried when we left Pond Inlet. We

Aiviaq (Walrus Hunt)

were sad knowing that we were leaving our two children Rhoda and Jakopie behind in school.

We started travelling back to Naujaaruluk. There was an Inuk, an Anglican minister and his wife living in Igloolik at that time. The minister and his wife lived in a small shack. Simon and Arvaluk were staying with them that fall, before they went back to school in Churchill. We went to see them on our way through. The minister gave us a house in the community so we could stay all together. It was a small house. It belonged to someone else at the time but they gave it to us. It was heated with a woodstove, and we stayed there for a while to be with our sons. After the school year finished the next spring, we picked up Rhoda and Jakopie from Pond Inlet and moved them to the school in Igloolik. We wanted to be near them. Igloolik was a small community at that time. There weren't very many houses. Our children stayed there and we stayed at Naujaaruluk, not far from town.

When we settled back in Igloolik, Solomon was asked to go to school again. At that time, ITC (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) had just been formed. We talked to ITC. Since Solomon was taken off the Family Allowance, we talked to ITC about him. They told us that when he got to be fourteen, he would have to go to school. They told us that when he was fourteen he would be a student and learn how to write in English and Inuktitut. He would learn about the animals in school – that is what we were told. We were told that he would be an interpreter. We were told that in the future, Solomon was going to take Qallunaat out hunting and out to see all different kinds of animals. He was going to learn the names of animals in English and Inuktitut. When Solomon turned fourteen, we agreed to let him go to school. He stayed in school for one year, until he was fifteen.

There was a company called Panarctic at that time that used to take Inuit on tour to drill oil. Panarctic was looking for Inuit, so Qiluqqisaaq[2] asked him if he wanted to go. Qiluqqisaaq asked Solomon how old he was, and he said he was fifteen years old. The job would only hire men who were sixteen and over. They have to be old enough to know how to look after themselves. He was only fifteen, but Qiluqqisaaq put his age down as sixteen and put him on the board to go to work. That is how he learned his English, not from school but from working with the Qallunaat. Jakopie also started working at the Panarctic site.[3]

We sent our children to school at such early ages. We sent them to Igloolik and to Pond Inlet and to Churchill. They only went because we were very poor at that time, and we couldn't support all of them. It hurt us very much that we couldn't get jobs and keep our children with us. I think that is the only reason why we left them in the schools. We couldn't support them by ourselves.

The Old Culture: Stories Since A Long Time Ago

I Have Heard of Shamans

I don't really know about shamans. I grew up when God and Jesus and Christianity were around. I never hear people talking about shamans any more. Today they talk about God, about Jesus. I have heard of shamans, but I don't believe in them.

My husband's father, when we lived with him, he never talked about shamans, even though his father was a shaman. His father, he was the shaman Awa, my husband's atiq, the one with the picture in the Qallunaat books.[4] The people in the camp treated his father like an ordinary person even though he was a shaman. He had the power to visit other settlements with his spirit. He was a strong man, a good hunter, a powerful man. He would catch many animals and would feed the different camps. He would share with people. Maybe it was because of his powers, because he was a shaman, that he fed all the people in the camps. He was a rich person back then. He had lots and lots of children, and none of his children ever starved. He used to provide a lot of food to his family and his friends when he was younger. He had a big family, he had lots of brothers and sisters.

There were many different kinds of shamans back then. Some shamans had powers to kill people, some had powers to find out where the animals were. Others could heal sicknesses and disease. There were bad shamans who hated people and tried to kill them, and there were good shamans who could find people when they went missing on the land. If someone was lost out in a boat, or if someone was stuck on a piece of ice that had broken away, shamans would turn into spirits and go out looking for that person. The shaman who found that person would say, "He is wherever," and the dog teams and the men would go find the lost person. Shamans would tell Inuit in camps where to look for people. Those were the shamans' powers.

There were shamans who knew how to find out the cause of something. Like, if people were starving and they were wondering why

From Inuit To Qallunaat Culture: I Remember My First Day Of School

Rhoda Kaujak Katsak (Apphia's sixth child and third daughter)

That First Winter I Was In School

It was really rough that first year, going into Igloolik to go to school... My grandparents were in Igloolik at the time, and I was staying with them. I was only about eight years old. I remember my father taking us into school. I remember my first day of school. We had this Qallunaat teacher, I can't remember her name. My aunt had already been in school there for a couple of years before me, so she was helping me out the first day, trying to take care of me. When I first went to school I didn't speak any English at all, absolutely

Qarmaq (Stone House)

nothing. I was eight years old. My aunt was showing me where things were, telling me that I had to ask to go to the bathroom, that I had to raise my hand if I wanted to ask a question, stuff like that. She was telling me all this in Inuktitut. I remember all morning that first day of school she made me practise the words, "Can I go to the bathroom?" Those were the first English words I learned – "Can I go to the bathroom?" It was hard to learn English.

That first winter I was in school was really difficult. I had a terrible winter those first three months. Just thinking about it, that first year, I think, "Gee, I feel sorry for that kid, she was only eight years old and she was all alone!" That was the first year I had ever been away from my family. I had never been in a

day-care centre, never been away from my parents, I had never even stayed alone visiting my grandparents. I had always been right next to my mom. That was the first time I had ever been out of my family's sight, and I was in a totally different community. I couldn't just go out and walk home. Maybe for a child it is worse. I knew that my parents were going to be coming at Christmas time or at Easter time, but it seemed like a million years away. Kid mentalities are like that – one day is one day too late, that type of thing. I think that was why it was really difficult.

There was so much I was not used to, different schedules, set schedules. We had to get up even if we were sleepy and go to school at nine o'clock. In the outpost camp we used to get up when we wanted to. It is not as if we slept all day. We got up early in the camps. My dad was always out hunting before we got up. But we got up when we were finished sleeping. In town we had to get to know the teachers, the Qallunaat environment. We had to learn a new language and all that. All that time I stayed with my grandparents and my other grandmother, my father's stepmother. I didn't know them very well at that time. I hadn't spent much time with them when we were in camps, and I was the only kid in my family living with them. Jake and Martha were being put up in other places. That year I felt really alienated, maybe because I was away from home.

I remember that first Christmas that my parents came for the holi-days, I remember having a really difficult time. I was enjoying myself because my parents were there, being with them and staying with them, but when they were ready to go back to the camp, that was heart-breaking for me. I was crying and crying. I remember my father was sitting upright on a chair and I was kneeling at his knees, crying and crying into his lap. I stayed like that for hours and hours. I was crying and begging him to let me go with him, but he couldn't do anything. Even if he had wanted to he couldn't do anything. At that time I was really mad at him for not taking me home with him. Later I realized that we had to be in school. He had no choice. The Qallunaat authorities in the settlement said so, and there was nothing he could do. Yes, the first time I saw them come and go away, it was really hard...

When school ended, going back out on the land in the summertime was fun. Arvaluk and Simon had been in Churchill. Martha, Jake, and I had been in Igloolik. The whole family was back together again! We came back from Igloolik around June, and my older brothers didn't get back until late July. Then, after a little while, they had to head back out again. They had the long trip to get to Churchill.

That first year was really, really hard.

To Change Me Into A Qallunaaq

I came in from the land to go to school when I was eight years old. I don't think I ever really thought about money back then... I knew about it, I knew what it was, but it wasn't part of my life. I never felt poor. Even when we were really hungry in my childhood, I never felt poor. We might not have had food, but it wasn't that we couldn't get it, it was just that my father wasn't hunting.

Up to the age of eleven or twelve, I never really thought about money. I remember being a kid when I first started going to school, my aunts and uncles, I remember they had pocket money in the settlement, because they had their parents with them, but we were staying at the hostel. I had food and I had clothing to wear every day, so I didn't think about money. I never really thought about having it or not having it.

When I was about eleven or twelve years old, my parents moved into the community. I remember around that time feeling kind of poor at times. I think it mostly had to do with my age, but I remember feeling poor because I didn't have the clothing that was the latest trend, the clothing that the other young girls were wearing at that time, the bell-bottom jeans and the jewellery and stuff. I didn't have this record or tape. My father couldn't afford those kinds of things. That was when I was made to feel poor. I wasn't poor, but I was made to feel poor. You know how kids are, they tease each other all the time, "You tramp from an outpost camp" type of attitude. But that didn't last all that long.

When my parents moved in off the land, I remember money becoming more of an issue for all of us. I remember my father playing games with us – he would give us a quarter or a dime for every grey hair we pulled out of his head, stuff like that. A quarter at that time could buy a pop, a chocolate bar, and some little pieces of gum. People thought about money a lot more then. Around that same time Panarctic Oil started hiring people. Two of my brothers went to work for them.

There was a lot more money around, I noticed. People were buying ski-doos. There were more ski-doos available, and people were buying dif-ferent models all the time. A big part of what I remember around that time was the alcohol. There were so many more drunks in the settlement. People were spending all their money on alcohol.

I remember when I first started living with my husband and working, it took me a long time to start thinking about money. The first year that we had Sandra, we were still living with my mother in-law, so there wasn't any pressure for us to provide our own food or our shelter. By my standards we were living quite comfortably. We had our own room in my in-laws' house, my husband had a part-time job at the Co-Op, and he was doing very well. We

had enough money to get some clothing now and then. I never felt poor at the time. Even today I don't feel poor.

I think for me I only felt money pressures when we had our second child and we moved into a little shack. When we moved out of my in-laws' house, we started having to get our own food. Before we moved out, Josh and I made a bed out of pieces of plywood. He drilled holes in it so we didn't have to buy a bed set. We brought a little table with us to our shack, that was about it. Mona was about two years old at the time. I was working at the time for a newspaper, a local newspaper here just to make extra money. After a while I switched jobs and started working for the hamlet office full time. I guess we felt like we needed the money. I think that is the first time I started really thinking about money a lot.

Things have really changed now that I have my own children. Things have changed so much from when I was a kid! My kids, they think about money every day. They are always saying things like, "Mom, do you have two dollars, three dollars, five dollars? Mom, how come you gave me only a dollar?" They are always in the Bay store or the Co-Op, seeing things they can buy. I am just thinking of my little child, Ruby, she is only three years old and she already knows what money is. She is already interested in coins.

Another thing I find with my kids and money is that if I don't have store-bought food on the table every day, my kids act like we have no food that day, no "real" food. It's called "real" food – chips and pops, pizza, hamburgers, tacos, spaghetti, that sort of thing. When we go to my mom's for lunch, my mother feeds us land food. She makes really nice cooked caribou soup. Maybe she'll have some seal fat to go with it. At certain times of the year she'll prepare a dish made with caribou fat and blueberries. If she doesn't have blueberries, she'll use raisins. For us that is dessert. So we have cooked caribou meat, a cup of tea, and dessert. That is fine by me. But if that's the only thing available, my kids will say there's nothing to eat because there's no rice, there's no fried chicken, there's no juice. They have different standards than I ever had. For them you're supposed to have toilet paper every day in your bathroom. You'll die if you don't have a toothbrush, you know, that sort of attitude. For them money is a way of life, they can't live without it. It has changed so much from when I was growing up.

They Wanted Us To Become Qallunaat

The stories we told – well, that I told, anyways – most of them are from a particular period. They are from the past I don't really talk about today, now that I am married with children, now that we are living in rural Canada, in small-town Canada.

Drum-making on the Atanarjuat set

These stories are about me and my life, but they aren't just my stories. I mean, they are mine, they have to do with my life, but they are the same stories a whole bunch of people my age have. It is the same with my mother's stories and the same with Sandra's. We are the same as a lot of people our ages. I don't think we are any special type of family. The details of our stories may be different, but a lot of the experiences are the same. My mother talks about how it was for people on the land. I talk more about the people who are the adults in the community right now, my generation, the Baby Boomers, the people who are making the community decisions, the politicians. The stories, most of the ones I have told anyways, they are from a transition period that we all lived through. It was very difficult for me, this period. I don't know about other people, but for me it was very difficult coming in off the land and going into school. It was difficult for me to learn when I was a child that there are other races, like the Qallunaat, who have the power, who have the authority. It was difficult for me.

When I went to school, when I came off the land, everything changed for me all at once. My parents didn't have a say anymore in the way I lived my life. When I came off the land, the people with any type of authority were Qallunaat. The teachers were Qallunaat, the principals were Qallunaat, the RCMP were Qallunaat, the administrators were Qallunaat, the nurses were Qallunaat, it was them who told us what to do. We were told to go to bed at ten o'clock at night and get up in the morning before school. Our parents used to get us to bed early when we were out on the land – they did it because they had hunting and sewing to do, not because the clock told them to. It was the

teachers who taught us how to watch the clock. The nurses, they taught us that we weren't supposed to have lice in our hair. We had never thought that lice in our hair was necessarily a bad thing! When I got to town that very first day, they found lice in my hair, they took me to the nursing station and cut my long hair off. The nurses, they taught us to take pills when we were sick, those sorts of things. The RCMP told us that we were not supposed to stay out late at night. We had a curfew at night, and if the RCMP saw us on the streets in the day, they could pick us up at any time to take us to school. They had that kind of authority. Same with the administrators, same with all of them.

Not only that but once we went to school, we had to comb our hair, brush our teeth, wash our hands, wash our faces, have breakfast, make our beds. We weren't allowed to leave the hostel in the morning until our beds were made. At the camps we used to be able to run outside when we woke in the morning, then come back a while later for some tea and bannock. It wasn't like that for us at school – we had to follow a certain routine and watch the clock. When we were in school, going to school, we had this group of people looking after us, and they weren't our parents. They acted like our parents, but they weren't our parents. It seemed to us at the time that the administrators, the nurses, the teachers, the principals and whoever else was in authority were talking above our heads, talking about our welfare and not letting us have a say about it. They treated us like we belonged to them, not to our parents.

We didn't have a say, and our parents and grandparents didn't have a say. Well... that is the impression I got anyways. As soon as I stepped into the school system, these rules were all forced upon me, and it was a very difficult period. They taught us a new culture, a different culture from our own. They taught us that we had to live like the white people, we had to become like the white people.

I moved in off the land and went to school when I was eight years old. That is when they started trying to teach me how to become a Qallunaat. I don't know exactly how it was decided that I go to school. I think there must have been something forceful that went on for my father to let them take us away from the family at such a young age. I remember crying on his lap that first Christmas, crying for hours with my head in his lap, begging him to take me home. He said he couldn't. I don't know what happened, but it must have been forced on him to give me up and let me leave my family at that age.

That first day of school in Igloolik, when I was eight I started doing everything in English. English was all around us. It wasn't so much that we were punished when we spoke Inuktitut – it might have been that way in earlier years, but there didn't seem to be that pressure for us. It was just that all there was at school was English, so we were more or less forced to learn it. The teachers were brand new in town, they were all from the South, and they

didn't know any Inuktitut. We had to communicate with them. Also, all of the material was in English. Fun with Dick and Jane; Dick, Jane, and Spot the Dog – those books were what we were learning from, so we had to learn English pretty quick.

We had to learn to act according to Qallunaat standards and codes of ethics too, "thank you, excuse me, pardon me," that sort of thing. You say a sentence, and then you say "please." I could never remember "please." And like I said, there was a schedule to follow all the time. We had to be up by seven, get out of bed, comb our hair, and wash our face. We never did this in camp! Maybe we combed our hair once in a while but not every day. At school we would have breakfast, have recess mid-morning, go to lunch, have recess mid-afternoon, go to supper, have maybe a little bit of free time, and then be back in bed every night. All of that was kind of forced on us because they wanted us to become Qallunaat. We even had to wear skirts in school. They used to get pretty cold sometimes. We weren't allowed to go to school in our caribou clothing, even if it was freezing outside. We even had Brownies and Girl Scouts when we were young. We even had the uniforms.

When I was young I used to have dreams about my future, about what I wanted to be when I grew up. I always thought of people from the South, movie stars and musicians like The Supremes. They were my idols! I would have given anything to be able to sing like them, or look like them, or be as popular as them at that time. People loved Elvis Presley. I wasn't too crazy about him, but other people were. Then there were movie stars like Clark Gable and Tony Curtis. We fell in love with those guys.

There were a lot of different things going on back then, things going on to make us look up to the Qallunaat. We were taught in school that it was Columbus who discovered America. We were told that Franklin and Frobisher discovered Frobisher Bay. There was this mentality that Columbus discovered America, therefore he discovered you, you came from him, that type of thing. Frobisher discovered Frobisher Bay and all this area, so we kind of owe something to him, we are like his children. It wasn't said literally, but that was the mentality. We were supposed to look up to him. We grew up thinking that we should try to be Qallunaat, and that is why we had Qallunaat idols, idols like the Supremes, like Elvis, like Frobisher. We didn't have Inuit idols, we weren't told at school about people like Attagutaaluk who almost starved to death in this area – our heroes were all Qallunaat. It is difficult even today to change that mentality, to change it even to a point where you think, "I am an Inuk, I am a good enough person as I am." When we were growing up, the Qallunaat were the better people. We were supposed to look up to them. You didn't visit their houses unannounced, you had to knock when you went in, you had to say "please" and "thank you" if you were talking to a Qallunaaq. It

was like we were bowing to royalty. We even had to sing "God Save the Queen" every day in school, "God Save the Queen" and "Oh Canada." That is why I got mad at Trudeau when I was young. I was mad at the authority he represented. I don't mind him now, but back then I was pretty angry.

That whole time from when I was eight to when I was about thirteen or fourteen, all my learning was geared towards the Qallunaat way of life, learning how to speak the language the Qallunaat wanted us to speak, learning the mannerisms and ethics and morals that fit Qallunaat standards. I am not saying that this was totally bad. It might have been good for some people, but not for me, maybe for someone else. Education and learning a new culture is good in itself, but at that time it was forced on us, we didn't have a choice. For example, today if I decided that I wanted to learn about the French culture, I might decide to go live in Paris, learn about the French language and their customs, I would be quite interested in that! But it was different back then because it was forced on me, I didn't have a choice. The standards of living today have been set by the Qallunaat. All that changes your life after a while.

It is only within the last few years that I have matured to a point where I feel that I have a choice about how I want to live. Like, when I say that I think that I have a choice now, I am thinking about both the new and the old culture. Now I have a choice which culture I want to learn about. Lately I have been learning all that I can about the old culture. They didn't teach us much of that in school.

In just the past few years I have really taken an interest in sewing. I picked it up when I went out with Josh in the middle of winter in a down parka and I thought that I was going to freeze to death. I almost burned my face off, it was so cold. All of my early years, before I moved in, I had caribou clothing. When I moved into town, I think I forgot how cold it can get out there. Even down jackets are kind of useless in severe winters up here. Well, in town they are okay, but if you are going to go out on the land for six or eight hours, or if you are going to spend a whole day outside, Qallunaat clothing is very cold, especially for your feet because they are touching the snow. All this surprised me. I didn't know how cold it gets because I had been in school in a warm hostel all the winters since I was eight. I decided not long after I went out that time that I had better start learning how to sew caribou skins. We need caribou skins to keep warm. Josh, he needs them because he hunts every weekend. He is not about to start staying here in town and buying steaks at the Bay. It is up to me to sew for Josh and for my kids.

My mother, for the past few years she has been teaching me how to prepare and sew with skins, caribou skins. She loves doing caribou skins. Other skins, she is not too keen on them, but she loves working with caribou

fur, doing different designs with them, making different types of clothing with them. She teaches me all that. I have also learned a lot about sealskins from my mother-in-law and from Josh's aunt too. I still don't know how to do caribou kamiks, but I know about the mitts and the parkas and the wind pants. I know how to prepare the skins and sew them up. Also, just recently I learned how to do caribou-fat dessert. Sometimes it is called Eskimo ice cream. We make it with blueberries. Just recently I learned this. How old am I... thirty-six? if I had known how to make this when I was fourteen or fifteen, just when I started having children, my children would have been used to eating it. They would have been comfortable eating it. It is the same with other traditional foods, and it is the same with learning how to sew. I do it and I realize that our traditional culture is still very much a part of our lives.

Us parents today, we were brought up to be assimilated. Our children are being brought up the same way that we were brought up... kind of... almost... We aren't teaching them that Qallunaat are better people... we are not teaching them that any more, but the standards of living and Qallunaat ethics are still there as a pressure for them. It seems as if, just like we were taught to throw ourselves in the Qallunaat culture, we are forcing that same culture on our children. Our children all go to school. I insist that my children be home at night. I am always telling my kids to clean their hands, to clean their rooms. I wash their clothes. Even when I was first married, almost all of my life I was told that I had to try to be a Qallunaat, so when I had my babies, I read Qallunaat books which showed me how to raise them, books like Canadian Family. There are others. I think I still have the books somewhere. I didn't learn about childbirth and child-rearing from my parents. I didn't have time. I was in school all the time, and I didn't see my parents. We learned in school that we had to try and unlearn what we were first taught by our parents, things like no bed-times, eating when we wanted to, the way we cleaned...

So when it came time to have our kids, we went to Qallunaat books to try and find out what we needed to do to be good parents. We learned about things like bottle feeding, Pablum, straining food, bottled milk, apple juice, Pampers, diapers, ways to clean the baby, whatever. I am not against doing those things. I am not going to literally have my child dirty or underfed or whatever. But I wonder sometimes, if Sandra had been fed real meat – "real" meat, the word makes me laugh – country-food meat when she was four or five months old, country-food when she started teething. I wonder if I had raised her in a bit more of a traditional manner with values from the Inuit culture, I wonder whether she would have had more of a desire to keep the Inuit culture herself, learn about the Inuit culture. I am thinking about things like eating country food, using caribou fur, things like that. I don't know... I don't know whether all the learning I did when I was a child was a good thing

Qaisut

or a bad thing.

Like I said before, I feel as if I have a choice now. I am learning how to sew skins, speaking Inuktitut as much as I can. I am making traditional foods like caribou-fat ice cream, things like that. After all of that learning I did in school, after all those years learning how to be a proper Qallunaaq, I have decided now that this is the kind of lifestyle I want to have. I seem to have a choice now, and I am becoming more traditional. There are people who are a little bit younger than me who are very confused. They don't know what culture they value most, they are stuck. They can't hunt, not because they can't, it is just that they don't understand the importance. They don't sew traditional clothing. They don't understand the importance.

It is not that I hate the Qallunaat. I was always a bit of a rebel growing up, so I never thought that Qallunaat were the perfect human beings, I have never thought that in my whole life, but I have never hated them. I have had some very good friends in my life who have been Qallunaat. There was a nurse from Montreal who was here for awhile. She was black, but she was Qallunaat because she spoke the English language. Also, I had a good friend, Cheryl, when I was fourteen. I don't even have any hatred towards Qallunaat who were a part of my life when I was growing up, the teachers and the administrators who were here. I have nothing against them. I don't even remember who they are. I don't hate the Qallunaat, but sometimes, though, I get angry. I get angry not at the specific individuals but at the people who decided to do that to us back then. Those people I have no idea who they were, the people who decided to move us all off the land, but it is them who I get angry at.

I am trying to say this very clearly... I think about all those incidents in my life, I think about my life now and how I am trying so hard to learn things from

the old culture, things like sewing skins, making traditional foods, learning about my relatives, all these things. I think of all this information that I am trying so hard to learn now, that I really should have learned as a child. Then I think of the life my children have now, school, the schedules, TV, video games, junk food, all the Qallunaat values and expectations. When I look at all that, when I put it all together, I start to question whether or not it was such a good thing to be totally immersed in Qallunaat culture. I mean, looking back and hearing my parents' and grandparents' stories, what is so bad about my own culture, what is so wrong with Inuit culture, that it has to be removed? Why did I spend almost all of my life trying to get away from it? It's like... they spent all those years trying to change me into a Qallunaaq, and they couldn't. Was my life wasted?

That is about it... I guess we are done.