

INUIT WORLDVIEWS: AN INTRODUCTION: INTERVIEWING INUIT ELDERS. Edited by JARICH OOSTEN and FRÉDÉRIC LAUGRAND. Interviews with Elisapee Ootoova, Hervé Paniaq, Saullu Nakasuk, and Pauloosie Angmarlik. Iqaluit, Nunavut: Nunavut Arctic College Media, 2017. 332 p., glossary. Softbound. Cdn\$27.95.

*Inuit Worldviews* is one of a series of volumes published by Nunavut Arctic College Media, which range from dictionaries, to biographies of prominent Elders, to works on ethics and values (Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit*). This volume has its genesis in a 1996, three-week cooperative course between Arctic College and Leiden University. Led by three mentors (the late Jarich Oosten, Ms. Alexina Kublu and Frédéric Laugrand), the course, “Oral Traditions,” gave eight students the opportunity to engage with four generous Elders about their experiences within a number of student-chosen themes. The course objectives (outlined in the volume’s Introduction) were severalfold; of these, two are of particular relevance to non-Inuit readers of *Worldviews*: 1) conduct research on selected themes and 2) collect and record oral traditions. The students admirably achieved these goals and, it must be noted, each has since contributed importantly in fields as diverse as public government, Indigenous activism, the performance and documentary arts, and Inuit Studies within the academy.

For two reasons, I have outlined at some length how *Worldviews* came to be. The first is that it shows that north-south institutional collaboration done thoughtfully is rewarding, and that ethnographic research can be fruitful and revealing. The other is that because the students pursued themes about which they were curious, the resulting interviews provide insights as relevant to Inuit culture and the depth of Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit*, as about the personal pasts that Paniaq, Nakasuk, Ootoova, and Angmarlik narrate. Each Elder spoke only of what she and he personally knew to be *uppirijatsaq* (truth), rather than *unikkausiq* (legend).

The volume is divided into three substantive sections. The first, “Life Stories,” provides temporal, locational, and relational provenances that situate the experiences of each Elder very much in biographical form; elements from the biographies are followed up by two-student teams in thematic interviews. What is apparent is the mobility and flexibility in spatial and social terms that characterized their own lives, and by implication Inuit life generally, before sedentarization in permanent settlements by Canadian government policy. Movement, whether within families through adoption or to find partners and establish families, was as much an aspect of Inuit mobility as were the seasonality of animals and the quality of hunting.

The narratives of each Elder’s experiences and observations provide insight on topics from the socialization of children, the role of play, and the prominence of adult authority, to the influence (and sometimes divisive effects) of religion in peoples’ lives, to changes in intergenerational

relations (for instance, a lessened, or at least circumscribed, usage of kinship terms as the normative form of interpersonal address, especially between youth and Elders). I was particularly struck by the interview by Nancy Kootoo and Bernice Kootoo with Saullu Nakasuk about midwifery and birthing customs. The information about the importance that pregnant women loosen tight garments and even the strings holding their *kammit* and hair explained things that I observed in the early 1970s, but the significance of which I was completely unaware.

The middle section is simply titled “Essay,” but offers considerably more than the term implies. These essays are reflections on specific information drawn from the Elders’ biographies and especially through the thematic interviews transcribed in “Life Stories.” Strong examples of the depth of information obtained and the deep reflection exercised by the students is evinced in the essays by Aaja Peter, Myna Ishulutak, and Bernice Kootoo. Peter explored how Inuit in the Pond Inlet/Mittimatalik and Pangnirtung/Pangniqtuuq regions identified the seasons through the environmental and ecological changes they observed. Ishulutak and Kootoo each explored the rules governing women’s activities in general and during pregnancy, areas of inquiry not easily accessed by male non-Inuit researchers. Although I have singled out these particular contributions, all the essays contain important ethnographic information. While several of the student interviewers unabashedly admit that they were uncertain about how to proceed, they each did an admirable job of completing the assignment and of informing this reader. I must mention that the contribution by Susan Enuaraq especially captured my attention, as over the years I have gleaned some, albeit incomplete, information about her family’s history. Reading her contribution filled a few of my own “open spaces.”

“Stories” is the last section of the volume and is a change from the elements that precede it. Here, the focus is a number of legends (*unikkausiq*) that are related by Alexina Kublu, Marie-Lucie Uvilluq, Maaki Kakkik, and Tapea Keenainak. As Kublu notes in the introduction to this section, the stories that she relates came to her from her father and were earlier recorded by Bernard Saladin d’Anglure; indeed, all the presenters in this section received their stories from a grandparent, parent, or other Elder. (I must note that while Kublu humbly demurs regarding her Inuktitut facility, she went on to ably serve as the Nunavut Language Commissioner.) Each legend is transcribed line-by-line in Inuktitut and English, but other than some mention in Kublu’s introduction, they are presented without interpretation of meaning and it would be presumptuous of me, if I could, to attempt to do so.

*Worldviews* is important for any number of reasons. Earlier, I pointed out the success of the collaborations through which it came to be. Beyond that, it offers Inuit and non-Inuit readers a window not just on Inuit culture as lived by the Elders who generously participated in the project, but also the depth of Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit* as a behavioral guide. Finally, a closing note specific to the research

process in an age when broad generalization sometimes trumps deep probing: as Saullu Nakasuk states on the first page of the volume's introduction, "I can be asked what I know. I only state what I know."

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INUIT STORIES OF BEING AND REBIRTH: GENDER, SHAMANISM, AND THE THIRD SEX. By BERNARD SALADIN D'ANGLURE. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-88755-830-6. 400 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., index, notes, glossary. Originally published as *Être et renaître inuit: homme, femme, ou chamane*, Editions Gallimard, Paris, 2006. Softbound. Cdn\$31.95.

In *Inuit Stories of Being and Rebirth: Gender, Shamanism, and the Third Sex*, anthropologist Bernard Saladin d'Anglure sets out to explore ideas of Inuit personhood by unpacking oral histories and mythologies that can otherwise seem nebulous or inaccessible to non-Inuit audiences. Through this work, he explores themes that often recur in Inuit narratives and underlie Inuit concepts of personhood, including human origins, birth, human-animal relationships, aging, violence, and death.

Saladin d'Anglure has devoted more than five decades to Inuit research, with much of his focus penetrating the realm of what we might call intangible culture; he has examined concepts of personhood, gender, spirituality, cosmology, and shamanism. Fittingly, in the book's foreword, the prominent late anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss describes Saladin d'Anglure's knowledge as "incomparable" (p. xii), (omitting, of course, the knowledge of Inuit themselves). As such, this book provides an in-depth exploration of oral tradition that I have not seen paralleled in any other work of its kind, with a form that in some senses echoes other ethnographies, but in others subverts the tradition of anthropological texts penned by white researchers that attempt to distill complex ideas in ways that often undercut their richness.

In this text, Saladin d'Anglure interweaves stories recounted to him by Inuit informants from Igloodik with his own explanations of what these stories convey based on decades of research. In meticulous detail, he unpacks complex symbolism, ties together seemingly disparate themes, and ultimately provides a glimpse into an ontological realm that is otherwise closed to those who have not lived it.

The editorial form of this book enhances its readability. Because multiple voices are represented, a different font is used for the firsthand stories and Saladin d'Anglure's explanatory passages. This creates a sense of dialogue

that is fitting for an oral history-based text. Because the stories are left in their raw form and commented on, rather than summarized and quoted sparingly, the reader is also given the opportunity to question the author and his interpretations. In this way, he is able to convey analytical information that gives the reader a deeper understanding of the stories they are reading while showing more restraint with his own voice than many other anthropologists of his generation have tended to do.

The primary strength of the book—its breadth of information—is also, perhaps, its primary shortcoming. Because there is so much information provided, and because so much of it is left raw, it sometimes becomes difficult to discern the central goal of the book. In this sense, its title is largely unhelpful. Saladin d'Anglure has published extensively on gender, shamanism, and what he refers to as "third sex." Picking up this volume, I assumed that these would be the central focus of the work. However, that is not what I found when I started reading. The book does not stick to these topics, but instead explores a variety of themes in Inuit storytelling. While the book does centre on concepts of Inuit "Being," the rest of the title almost feels like filler to avoid attempting to distill the ideas presented in this work into a comprehensive title. This leaves the reader with little framing for what they are about to consume.

Leaving the theme of the book open-ended like this makes it difficult, at first, to apprehend exactly what is being communicated. As a result, the reader needs to be willing to allow the stories to carry them. This is a good reminder, however, to researchers who are too eager to cut to the root of a text to remember that these stories can be viewed as beings unto themselves, which have multiple layers of meaning and that change with each telling.

One of the other issues that runs through Saladin d'Anglure's work is his use of the term "third sex" to describe a variety of Inuit gender identities and expressions. Having been trained in the field of anthropology toward the middle of the twentieth century, Saladin d'Anglure's discussions of gender, while non-judgemental, fall short of what many of us tend to expect in 2020, when the discourse surrounding gender is moving away from such structural categorizations. The trouble with the term "third sex" or, as many other anthropologists have used, "third gender," is that it seems to naturalize a flat binary while slotting all expressions that do not fit within that binary into a tertiary category. When we read Saladin d'Anglure's work we see that the gender system to which he refers is complex and varied. The language of "third" fails to encompass this complexity.

That said, any work that touches on Inuit gender diversity is invaluable, as it moves us to look beyond stereotyped notions of gender and personhood. This has too often been lacking in anthropological research generally and certainly in Inuit ethnographies.

The minimalist aesthetic of this book's text and cover scheme allows the Inuit prints and illustrations to take centre stage, creating a focused visual experience. The