

## REVIEW

UUMAJURSIUTIK UNAATUINNAMUT. HUNTER WITH HARPOON. CHASSEUR AU HARPON. By Markoosie Patsauq. Edited and translated by Valerie Henitiuk and Marc-Antoine Mahieu. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. Pp. xviii + 334.

This book is a critical edition of *Uumajursiutik unaatuinnamut*, a story originally published in 1969–70 by Markoosie Patsauq, an Inuit bush pilot from Resolute (Canadian High Arctic), born and partly raised in Arctic Quebec. Totalling around 30 printed pages, it appeared in three installments in the *Inuktitut Magazine*, a periodical issued by Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). The text had been written and was published in Inuktitut, in the syllabic characters in use in most of the Canadian Eastern Arctic.

In his preface to the book, Patsauq tells about the making of the story. It came to his mind and was put into writing at times when weather delayed him from flying his plane. Relating a polar bear hunt that ends in tragedy, it was based on tales heard from his parents and grandparents. But, the author says, "I had to add subjects of my own" (xiv), thus producing an original narrative. Patsauq wrote it in his first language, the Nunavik (Quebec) dialect of Inuktitut, occasionally mixing it with North Baffin dialect words. He did not think about translating his story into English (a language he had started to learn young, when in a Manitoba hospital), but when asked to do so by DIAND people, he accepted, even if "using two languages is not easy" (xv).

This English translation, edited by DIAND's employee James H. McNeill, identified the author by his first name only. It was published by McGill-Queen's University Press (Markoosie 1970). The English version diverged markedly from the Inuktitut original. The book was apparently aimed at a young public, and its wording was allegedly modified, in order to turn it into a marketable narrative expected to corroborate Euro-Canadian ideas about "nature," "survival," and "the North." It is not clear up to what point the editor may have had a hand at this adaptation, but it seems highly plausible (see chapter 8 of the 2021 edition). Moreover, when Patsauq explains in Inuktitut how he translated his text, he uses the stem *aarqik-* ('to arrange') rather than the usual base *qallunaatituurtisi-* ('make into English'), thus hinting at an adaptation rather than a translation (267).

In any case, the English edition, touting the book as the first Inuit novel ever written, knew immediate success. Within a few years, the story was translated into French, German, Ukrainian, and, later on, several other languages, always from the English. In 2011, a French-Inuktitut version edited and introduced by Dr. Daniel Chartier was published, in a new French translation from the 1970 English (Markoosie 2011). The Inuktitut syllabics were provided by Nunavik's Avataq Cultural Institute, which had Patsauq's original text adapted to the Inuit orthography currently in use in Quebec. This transcription was basically accurate, although not perfect, due to difficulties arising

from the absence, in the original, of diacritics (graphemes standing for single consonants) and of a written distinction between some phonemes (e.g., /k/ and /q/).

The present critical edition stems from the joint efforts of Drs. Valerie Henitiuk and Marc-Antoine Mahieu. A translation studies specialist teaching in Alberta, Henitiuk had become intrigued by the “translation journey” of Patsauq’s text, from Inuktitut to an English adaptation, itself retranslated in several other languages without any regard for the primary source. For his own part, Mahieu, a linguist holding an Inuit studies professorship at a Parisian university, had started working on a more literal French translation of *Uumajursiutik unaatuinnamut*, in order to facilitate his students’ learning of Inuktitut through a comparison with Patsauq’s original. The two scholars got together and ensured the collaboration of Patsauq himself. The author had moved back to his native Nunavik, where he died in 2020.

Henitiuk and Mahieu decided that their critical edition should include, first of all, the Inuktitut base text, in syllabics as well as in an alphabetical transcription that would make it readable to non-Inuit. However, as mentioned above, the original syllabics lacked the all-important diacritical symbols and did not mark some phonemic contrasts. So Mahieu traveled to Patsauq’s home in Inukjuak, Nunavik, reading him aloud his manuscript—the author’s failing eyesight prevented him from reading it himself—and whenever necessary noting down his comments on how it should actually read. The reconstituted syllabics were then transcribed by Mahieu in alphabetical form. In the critical edition, the two transcriptions of the Inuktitut text are followed by Henitiuk’s (assisted by her coeditor) English translation and Mahieu’s French rendition.

These four versions constitute the first (and longest) part of the book. Then follows the editors’ critical apparatus. It consists of nine chapters discussing the perspective and methodology of their work; the genesis of Patsauq’s story; its position in Canadian Inuit literature; the context surrounding the life and times of the author; the translation history of *Uumajursiutik unaatuinnamut*; and the decolonial effect accurate translations have on Indigenous languages. Five appendices with linguistic or bibliographical data conclude this remarkable piece of scholarship.

The book may indeed be considered one of the most complete and far-reaching critical editions of a text directly uttered—even if in writing—in any North American Native language. The work can thus be useful to many people: students of Inuktitut; linguists interested in understanding and analyzing the text by referring to two rigorous translations; and specialists in translation studies—especially those concerned about less-spoken languages—who will find here a meticulous and encompassing analysis of the translation/adaptation vicissitudes of an Indigenous story. It is worth mentioning that besides this critical edition, McGill-Queen’s has published a trade edition of the English translation, and two commercial publishers, in Canada and in France, did the same with the French translation. However, Inuktitut speakers eager to read Patsauq’s story in its original language must still resort to Markoosie (2011), if they want to avoid the much higher cost of the critical edition.

LOUIS-JACQUES DORAIS, *Université Laval*

## REFERENCES

- MARKOOSIE. 1970. Harpoon of the Hunter. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- . 2011. Le harpon du chasseur. Angunasuttiup naukkutinga [title in syllabics]. Quebec City: Presses de l'Université du Québec.