

**(RE)IMAGINING
ALASKA NATIVE PERFORMANCE**

By THOMAS RICCIO

Edited with an Introduction by Dale Seeds

To My Mother and Father, Filomena and Anthony Riccio



CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Preface

Acknowledgements

Introduction

PART I

Essays

Chapter One: Traditional Alaskan Eskimo Theatre

Chapter Two: Message from the Eagle Mother

Chapter Three: Tuma Theatre, Reinventing Yup'ik and Inupiat Performance

PART II

Performance Scripts

Eagle's Gift

Qayaq

Utetmun (Homeward)

Now You Are Part Of Our Story: Alaskan Native Elders in Performance by Dale Seeds

Naam/gen eehu (I don't know, whatever)

Yup'ik Arnaq (Yup'ik Woman)

PART III

Resource Appendix

Ritual Preparation

Elemental Forms

Notes

Bibliography

Index

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PREFACE

(Re) Imagining Alaska Native Performance vividly demonstrates the capacity of the human being, whomever they are, to cross over the gap that unfortunately exists between people. The author, Thomas Riccio, through the mechanism of theatre, has cleverly built a bridge between differing worldviews, and he has done it well. This kind of bridging is magical and sometimes mystical, which is appropriate for Alaska native cultures and the art of performance. Crossing this bridge the fog below clears and we get a glimpse of the cognitive landscape of the Yup'ik and Inupiat mind. Standing on this bridge we can hear the resonance of my ancestral drums and begin to see how traditional performance—expressed through storytelling, dancing, drumming and singing—form not only an integrated, place specific performance, but holistic way of seeing the world. Being a Yup'ik Eskimo and having been born and immersed in Yupiaq verbal and performance art, I have personally experienced and appreciate the bridge presented by this book.

The essays and the five plays contained within this book demonstrate the inventive spirit of the human beings to recreate themselves, while maintaining the essential elements of their particular group. While the essays are centered on the Yup'ik, Inupiat and Athabaskan traditions, the actors that took part also included members from other Alaska natives, the Haida, Aleut, and Tlingit groups, who share the unique indigenous worldview particular to the far north. Riccio examples and articulates throughout this book, a sensitivity, insight and respect for the Alaska native worldview. He not only recognizes and appreciates Alaska cultures, but more importantly, he documents and makes accessible a wealth of material to a broader audience. In so doing he does service to native and non-native people alike, articulating a juncture in history and world cultures as he contributes to the field of indigenous and cross-cultural performance.

The concept of theatre has Western roots and when applied in a non-western, indigenous context could very easily have gone awry, having adverse consequences. Theatre, and all of the Western cultural values and ways of seeing the world that it implicitly encodes, could have very easily been used (wittingly or not) as yet another, tool of Western acculturation. Rather than imposing a Western theatrical methodology and expression on the Alaska native situation Riccio found himself in, he instead allowed our traditional cultures to speak for themselves, investigating and seeking the origins and reasons for Alaska native performance as expressed on its own terms. This approach, though seemingly obvious, is counter to the usual practice of the Western culture to view and indeed shape (educationally, culturally, spiritually, economically, politically) indigenous groups in their own image.

After two years of extensive travel and research, interviewing with Alaska native elders, documenting and performing traditional Alaska native performance, Riccio began to transform his findings into a practical application. Riccio fashioned Tuma Theatre (an Alaska native performance group) into a process oriented forum, providing a medium that explored and experimented with traditional Alaska native performance traditions. His only objective was to find a way for traditional performance to once again breathe with contemporary viability, enabling it to speak the ways of the ancestors as it addressed the issues of today. Tuma was a mechanism in which tradition could co-mingle freely with modern expression, and ideas. This freedom of expression privileged and empowered the participants and facilitated the re-imagining of an Alaska native past as it contributed to the imagining of its future.

Riccio, being an outsider and non-native, had no easy task. He walked the fine line (if not a minefield) between cultures, recognizing not only the wealth of Alaska native cultures but also faced the reality of how those cultures must exist and cope with the modern world. Riccio's work, as partially exemplified by this book, created not only a database and methodological approach to Alaska native performance, but just as significantly, it created a reference point for dialog. In less capable hands such an attempt would have been disastrous.

Riccio recognized that indigenous people expressed themselves quite well through their own voice even while using elements of Western dramatic structure and theatricality. He taught his native performers how to recognize and knowingly apply Western theatrical methods and expressions to make a point. He also taught them how to appreciate the significance and wealth of their own culture, giving them the means and encouragement to apply and re-invent their tradition. Riccio recognized the inherent talent of his indigenous actors when performing material from their cultures or related cultures (hunting and gathering peoples) and fashioned a theatrical style, methodology and training program that evolved from, and was consistent with, the Alaska native experience. A culture that does not grow, dies.

(Re) Imagining Alaska Native Performance demonstrates how performance is an ancient technology essential to every culture, each expressing itself in a unique and place specific way. Performance allows humanity to step outside of their ordinary existence and themselves to understand who they are, reassert what they value, and debate how they must adjust in order to survive. Traditional performance and ritual is no different than ancient Greek or modern Western theatre, each is a verbal, gestural, and visual art mechanism that point towards a meeting place, a somewhere in between. That in between is performance. This book expresses the genuine effort to explore, experiment, and respectfully incorporate differing worldviews, which in turn gave voice to a transformation enriching all of our lives and our world. It was an affirming process

showing how people can appreciate their similarities as they celebrate their differences. The result from such an initiative is diversity, which in turn leads to new levels of excellence.

The words of Saami activist Ande Somby speaks to the cultural rights to indigenous people and could easily be the subtitle of this book: “We have a right to our past, we have a right to our present, and we have a right to our future.” As an indigenous person I am happy to tell you we also have the right to express ourselves, through performance, in the manner we chose. As this book will reveal, be it performance rooted in the past or in the present.

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INTRODUCTION

My first exposure to Tuma (pronounced "Duma") Theatre and Alaska Native performance came on a frigid winter evening in Fairbanks. As I pulled into the parking lot, the car radio quoted the temperature at minus twenty degrees Fahrenheit. The night spilled over with stars, framed by the iridescent curtain of the aurora borealis. My boots crunched noisily through the snow and I caught my breath sharply, as much from the cold as from anticipation of what I was about to see. Ahead of me, a group of people, wreathed in their frozen breath waited to enter the theatre. I scanned their faces, and saw native people, college students, local residents, and children of all ages.

Inside, the theatre was beginning to fill up, but the scene bore little resemblance to any opening night in the theatre that I had ever seen before. The space roughly approximated a thrust theatre, without chairs. Instead, the audience sat on tiers of platforms, cushioned by pillows, parkas or stacks of carpet scraps.

The house lights dimmed, followed by a sound cue of synthesized wind, followed in turn by the heart-like beating of Eskimo hoop drums. It was readily clear to me that this was not going to be an evening of Ibsen or Chekhov, or anything else I might be familiar with. I was not disappointed. Even after the evening ended, my head swirled dizzily with images of shaman, ravens, walruses, foxes, bears and indescribable creatures that could only come from the darkness of an Arctic imagination. At first, I attempted to understand what I was seeing by trying to overlay it with Western dramaturgical notions, what I had read, the traditional stories that I knew before, and the few words of Yup'ik that I understood. Ultimately, it became necessary to deny my cognitive processes and simply let the performances happen.

My initial contact with Tuma theatre came through an obscure flier that crossed my desk at the College of Wooster four years ago. According to the letter, The Cleveland Public Theatre was offering a workshop on Alaskan Native theatre. The workshop was to be conducted by Thomas Riccio, who I knew by reputation because of his dramaturgical work at the American Repertory Theatre at Harvard and the Cleveland Playhouse, and as artistic director of the experimental Organic Theatre in Chicago. Since

I was in the process of developing a research leave proposal on Native American Theatre and Performance, I marked it on my calendar. Unfortunately, like so many things intended for that Christmas holiday, I never made it. Nevertheless, I dutifully filed the information for another day. Later that year, I wrote Thomas and was invited to The University of Alaska, Fairbanks to observe rehearsals and performances of Tuma Theatre and to participate in a variety of their activities and classes.

So began my journey into Alaska Native culture and performance. It is a journey that forced me to re-think and re-evaluate the how and the why I do theatre. It is a journey that illustrates how performance can be deeply imbedded within a culture. It has touched my mind and heart, enriching and transforming me as a theatre artist. I am still on that journey and it is something I would like to share with you, the reader.

As I begin this introduction, I realize how difficult it is to describe the Alaskan Native and the performance that reflects their hunter-gatherer worldview. The first two essays in this book will put Alaska Native performance into a broader historical and cultural context. The first essay, *Traditional Alaskan Eskimo Performance: Performing the Spirits of the Earth*, serves as an overview introduction to a unique performance tradition. This essay outlines the concepts that underlay the performance tradition and illustrates those concepts with examples. The second essay, *Message From the Eagle Mother: The Messenger's Feast of the Inupiat Eskimo*, documents the revival of the Kiviq ritual recently revived by the Inupiat people in Barrow. This essay follows the process of melding the ancient with the modern in reviving a ritual last practiced in the 1920s. Both essays provide a glimpse into a little known living performance tradition that is unique and heretofore only sporadically documented. Consider these two essays as a prelude and preparation for understanding the living tradition Alaska Native performance as expressed by the work of Tuma Theatre.

The third essay, *Tuma Theatre*, documents the development of Tuma Theatre, an Alaska Native performance group at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In this essay the reader can follow how Tuma evolved its unique place and culturally specific training program and performance development methodology. This essay offers a personal and informative insight into a culture, politics, personalities, and process of Tuma. The work

of Tuma Theatre and Thomas Riccio questions fundamental concepts and approaches, offering an alternative way to reimagine the function and expression of performance.

The final section of the book contains a selection of Tuma Theatre scripts. Most of these scripts, created using an oral tradition model, are documents of performances written during and after production. I can describe the plays in the collection, their development, and maybe even discuss the multi-directional search for a native voice or voices in performance. This, however, is where my discourse will begin and end. An application of western dramaturgical thought and critical assessment to the works would be incomplete at best and at its worst, would perpetuate the paradigm in which dominant cultures control how indigenous people are perceived. I prefer to leave the discussion of what Tuma is and means to those individuals, Native people and elders who have been touched by it.

Tuma, which means the "path" or the "way" in Central Yup'ik, began "in about 1977," according to one of its early founders, former Alaska Native Studies faculty member and Tuma co-director, Theresa John (Yup'ik). The loosely organized group originally met in the evenings and functioned as a support organization for Alaska Native students who wanted to be able to dance, drum, and share their traditional culture and beliefs. Theresa John describes it as "the only place where native students could come together to dance and tell their stories." Although the group was primarily composed of Yup'ik students, members of Inupiat, Athabaskan, Aleut and Tlingit peoples also comprised its membership.

One of the first things Theresa stressed to me in an early interview was that in the Yup'ik culture [arguably in all indigenous cultures], there is no word for, nor concept of, "theatre", at least not in the sense that we understand it in the west. At best, we might be able to group traditional story telling, dancing, drumming and singing under the term "performance," but even this term fails to describe the significant role of these activities in traditional culture. What we would understand as the separate expressions, music, song, stories, art and dance, are all part of the same process that reaffirms the cultural and spiritual life of the individual and the community. These activities are part of the web of indigenous culture.

At times, Tuma gave public performances with the support and sponsorship of a number of groups, departments and individuals. Critical among these were the Departments of English and later, Theatre under the leadership of Steve Crosby. These performances ranged from traditional stories and dances to scripted performances based on western models. As Tuma became more incorporated into the University's structure, students were able to receive academic credit for their work. Crosby's work with Tuma culminated with the production of *Village*, which was written collaboratively by Crosby and Tuma cast members. *Village* examined contemporary problems such as teen suicide, and alcohol and drug abuse. The production toured successfully throughout Alaska, strongly affecting its Native audiences. Although these scripted performances focused on specific issues in the native community and were collaboratively written, it is an open question as to whether their adherence to western dramaturgical structures may have limited the production's style of presentation and perhaps its ability to address the very problems they presented.

In the fall of 1988, the chairman of Alaskan Native Studies Department, Michael Gaffney asked new theatre faculty member Thomas Riccio to consider taking over Tuma as a joint project between the Theatre Department and the Department of Alaska Native Studies. Although not without some apprehension, Riccio accepted the challenge and began a concentrated effort to learn what he could about the cultural and performance traditions of Alaska Native peoples, particularly the Yup'ik, Inupiat and Athabaskan peoples.

Riccio was initially struck by the incongruity of traditional people attempting to explore and express their culture through, what was for them, an alien form (Western scripted drama.) He describes his reaction to viewing the Tuma videotapes:

After I viewed the Tuma Theatre tapes, a realization struck me like a blow. The native people depicted were expressing themselves through an alien medium -- Western theatre -- which was inorganic, if not a travesty of their world view. The performances smacked of an insidious form of cultural colonialism, affording native performers an expression, but at the same time shaping the expression in Western terms.

This became one of Riccio's greatest challenges: to evoke a new process, based on the cultural traditions of the actors themselves, from which a performance vocabulary

and text would emerge. The performance would be a means through which the actors could “reimagine” themselves in terms of the tension between their traditional heritage and the challenges of the modern western world.

University of Alaska student and Tuma member Paul Jumbo (Yup’ik) recalls his first encounter with Riccio. “When Tom Riccio came to Rural Student Services recruiting native students to be a part of Tuma Theatre, I didn't think much of it. When he started talking to me, I was surprised at how much he knew about Native rituals, that's what took me in.” Respect for tradition and mutual trust and sincerity would prove to be tremendously important throughout the development of Tuma Theatre. Wilma Brown (Inupiat), who later worked with the Greenland Inuit of Silamuit Theatre commented, “Tom Riccio was a key element in my Tuma experience. He was knowledgeable, experimental, courageous, funny, energetic, passionate and excitable. I came to trust and believe in him and what he was doing with us in Tuma.”

Eventually, Tuma was, cross-listed in both the Theatre Department and the Department of Alaska Native Studies Departments. Course enrollment size varied, with 12-15 being the average, roughly split between native and non-native students. The first semester was devoted to “script development”, with the second semester culminating in a performance in late February and early March. The development of the performance text was based in improvisation, a process that was informed by traditional culture and oral literature. Often the students would seek out their own relatives and native elders as resources. Riccio and each Tuma group developed a variety of unique improvisation processes to allow these traditional stories to evolve into performance pieces. Early productions such as *Qayaq* (1991) and *The Eagle's Gift* (1993) incorporated a variety of western staging techniques including the use of video projections, intricate sound tracks and contemporary references. While firmly based in traditional stories, the politicized components of the performances were readily recognizable.

The return of Theresa John to The University of Alaska, Fairbanks as a faculty member and co-director of Tuma stimulated a further development of the company and strengthened its traditional foundation. Her experience in western theatre as well as her understanding of Yup’ik culture, dance and performance traditions was a tremendous asset to the company. The presentations *Agayu* (1994), *Inua* (1995) *Naam/ Gen eehu*

(1996) and her one-woman show *Yup'ik Arnaq* (Yup'ik Woman), (1997) are examples of her influence.

The importance of Tuma Theatre, however, lies far beyond a description of how it came to be. It must be understood in human terms, particularly in the effect it has had on its members and audiences.

Ringo Jimmy's (Yup'ik) comments echo the feelings of many of the Native students in Tuma. "It is a celebration of being a native, a celebration of your culture. It is a good thing. Tuma is where I can find that, where I can be reconnected with my culture and that connection can be strengthened."

Three-year Tuma veteran Melanie Brown, granddaughter of Inupiat author Emily Ivanov Brown (Ticasuk), describes Tuma in terms that suggest both an intellectual and spiritual understanding.

Tuma finds its roots in a certain people, culture, and place yet it lies within and speaks beyond these boundaries. The stories are drawn from myth, movement, language and gesture, all of which are culturally encoded. The confines of linear time are shattered, for time expands and returns to an all-inclusive time of myth and the eternal.

Author-actor Paul Jumbo speaks of Tuma in personal terms that also reflect a traditional Yup'ik understanding of the importance of pathways between spiritual worlds.

As to what Tuma means to me ... well, the main thing is that it's my pathway to the lives and struggles of my ancestors. It also is a pathway for others, natives and non-natives alike, to their inner selves. Tuma, meaning path, is a trail that leads oneself to the animal world and vice versa. Spirits that live in harmony bring out the good in all things, in particular, the earth, for it gives us nourishment throughout our lives.

Inupiat student Wilma Brown candidly describes her experience with Tuma and its effect on her personal growth:

Before you could understand what Tuma did for me, I think it's important for you to understand from what world I come. For some, Tuma could be fun and interesting, but it was a powerfully transforming time for me. Before I joined Tuma, I had inherent questions about my heritage and place in the universe. I grew up with drinking, drugs, gambling and abuse with a small light of hope and love from my grandparents. Going to college was my escape from tragedy. My rage propelled me through the White Man and I left my home with many

questions my people could not answer for me, like where do my people come from? What are my responsibilities here? What is good and what is bad here? I was traumatized in many ways spiritually and emotionally before I joined Tuma. When I joined Tuma, I faced some of my greatest fears about who I was, what I was, what I was doing here, why I was the way I was ... why I felt like a sick person. Tuma and Tom Riccio changed me forever. My world began to open. Wrongs toward my people were being acknowledged, the power of the people who once were was being asked for, and it was safe for me to grieve and ask for myself. I was with Tuma for three years, and with every year, I grew. I was extremely shy in the beginning and harbored much hurt that I did not understand. I became empowered, confident, and learned to focus my rage in a different way. Now I am more expressive and have a deeper understanding of what happened in my people's past and what is happening now and what I can do about it.

Tlingit student Cory Mann (Gutchquena) (Eagle Thunderbird, Shungookatee clan, Kluckwan, Alaska) offers a similar observation:

Tuma affected me by showing that Alaska Native people do not know their own history and language. Tom told me that somehow it [traditional Tlingit culture] was still in me. I was so afraid of this that I wanted to run away and become white, like if Raven would play a trick on people and they'd think I was white not brown. It was through his [Tom Riccio's] thoughts and teachings that I was inspired to live my fullest in theatre.

Today, Mann owns and operates Stories and Legends Incorporated, a tour guide business in Juneau. The tour guides he trains are responsible to bring Tlingit culture alive through the telling and performing of traditional stories. The legacy of Tuma is passed on.

The five plays featured in this anthology, while not inclusive of Tuma's past seven seasons, does represent the diversity of its productions. Appropriately, Riccio's work with Tuma begins with *The Eagle's Gift*. Although not chronologically the first of his productions, Melanie Brown (Inupiat) underscores the importance of *The Eagle's Gift* since "this story tells how the gift of song and dance was given to Alaskan Native people (Yup'ik and Inupiat). It also confronts the modern Native man and woman about the lives they are living. For example, *The Eagle's Gift* parallel's the story of a contemporary Native man and woman with the telling of the Eagle Mother and her gift of song and dance to the Inupiat people." She also suggests that this was when Tuma came together as a cohesive whole.

Qayaq is an epic hero tale told by both the Inupiat and Yup'ik people. The contemporary references infused in this story by the Tuma company makes their message very clear. Melanie Brown states "a man endures an epic journey and upon completion of the goal, becomes a falcon who will return to his people when he is needed."

Uetmun (Homeward) is based on a short story written by Paul Jumbo. As a member of the company, Jumbo not only participated actively in the adaptation of his story into performance, but also was featured as one of the principal performers in the role of Grandfather Wolf. He describes the more personal creative process of Tuma when he discusses the production.

Utetmun, meaning homeward, is a story of two generations not getting along in the beginning. Through teaching of the old ways, the young man begins to understand the harmony of life. The story was inspired by, and is dedicated to, the memory of my late grandfather, who passed on from this life to the next the year I was born. When I wrote the story in high school, I didn't think it would become a part of history. In the story, I imagined myself as my grandfather telling my grandson of the old ways and how to live life. The reason *Utetmun* is a part of history is because historical events of Alaskan Natives, mainly the epidemic, were suppressed. Also, the use of masks is a ritual that was wide spread among Native communities throughout Alaska. Now most villages do not perform the rituals. That is why I used animal characters and masks to portray the story of *Utetmun*.

Naam/ Gen eehu (I Don't Know/ Whatever) represents, in some ways, a movement for Tuma toward the performance origins of oral literature among indigenous peoples. Two Athabaskan elders from Minto and Fairbanks, Alaska, Evelyn Alexander and Ruth Grant, were commissioned by the University to tell their stories to the Tuma students, who subsequently performed them through improvisation. The live performance created a wonderful sense of simultaneity, featuring both Evelyn and Ruth as storytellers interacting with the company, as their life stories were being improvised and re-presented on stage.

The final offering in the anthology, Theresa John's *Yup'ik Arnaq* (Yup'ik Woman) completes the cyclical return toward oral performance. Subject, performer, and storyteller merge in this deeply personal one-woman show. Like the lives of the Yup'ik people themselves, the production blends tradition with new (Western) ways to tell the

story. For example, traditional story knife tales are presented through the use of an overhead projector.

These plays are presented within this anthology not so much that they could be reproduced, but rather that they illustrate a process, a guide by which indigenous peoples everywhere, facing the threat of assimilation, might use performance as a means of cultural survival. Indeed, it is hoped that the value of these productions as models is not limited to indigenous peoples. There certainly are implications that these scripts, for example, could be important performance models for Hispanic youth in the barrio or for the residents of a rural Appalachian community.

Paul Jumbo's comments on the experience of Alaskan Natives clearly suggests the responsibilities of performance for all cultures:

The Tuma scripts are, in my view, a journey from the Alaskan Native history to the present. There is little and often no historical written accounts of how our ancestors lived their lives on a day-to-day basis. Our elders are the keepers of that knowledge and when they are gone, they will leave a void in our history. The Tuma scripts are in a small way, saying thank you to our ancestors for all they have given us and in a big way, preserving our history.

The scripts also have a responsibility to heal the deep cultural wounds of the past.

Wilma Brown comments:

I would want people to know that it is necessary to grieve for the past, share what we have now, and explore together ways to go from here. People always did this in hard times. For example, they would gather and tell their stories of the devastation of a volcano or a flood, grieve, and then go on. Tuma is a vehicle for this essential process.

Indeed, performance may be the only means left for indigenous people to reaffirm their culture and discover their own pathways leading to the reimagining of the traditional self within the modern world.

The essay *Traditional Alaskan Eskimo Theatre: Performing the Spirits of the Earth*, was first published in *Theatre Topics*, V1, March 1991. The essay *A Message from Eagle Mother: The Messenger's Feast of the Inupiat Eskimo*, was first published in *The Drama Review*, (T137) winter 1993.

PART I

Chapter 1

TRADITIONAL ALASKAN ESKIMO THEATRE: PERFORMING THE SPIRITS OF THE EARTH

The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo was a theatre of visions and myths and functioned in a time when the world was a shroud of mystery filled with spirits. It was a theatre tradition that originated in the time before time. It was a time when humans could easily transform into animals and animals into humans, when myths were formulating the earth's shape and its ways. A millennium before Aristotle's Poetics, this was a theatre of the earth, for those who lived by, off of, and with the earth. And like the earth Alaska Native people practiced a dynamically changing medium of performance expression. The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo was a theatre of the land, its elements, and the animals and humans that inhabited that reality. It was a theatre interlinked to its culture as only aboriginal performance can be; separate but inseparable, a part, but of the whole.

Generally dismissed or forgotten by the West as satanic, heathen, idolatrous, ritualistic and ceremonial, the theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo, for lack of easy comparison to Western theatre models or concepts, was deemed unacceptable and subsequently persecuted along with other Alaskan Eskimo cultural traditional practices. Today, the Alaskan Eskimo theatre tradition in practice exists only in traditional social dancing and in increasingly infrequent and fragmented ceremonial presentations. The theatre tradition of the Alaskan Eskimo has been essentially destroyed after years of missionary colonization, another victim of western culture's inevitable invasion. What does remain of this once vivid and complex theatre of the spirit world has been relegated to anthropological and ethnohistorical record -- incomplete bits and

pieces of a theatre tradition, marginalized by a materialistic western culture that values the empirical and written over the spiritual and oral traditions of aboriginal people. Not practiced widely since the turn of this century, this orally transmitted theatre tradition still exists in the memory of some living elders, but there too, as only a vague and fragmented memory with incomplete meaning. After years of Christian indoctrination, even those elders who might remember choose to keep those memories hidden. To this day in several Alaskan Eskimo villages the missionaries still forbid the performance of traditional drums, singing or dancing even for benign entertainment, denying these villages the slightest continuity with their traditional past. The meaning of Alaskan Eskimo theatre resided, thriving as do oral traditions, by its living practice. Written Alaskan Eskimo language is only a recent occurrence, and with the written has come a further removal from the living, breathing past/present that only an oral tradition can embody. It was this dynamic reality of a living, oral tradition that made their theatre tradition vital, ephemeral and because of discontinuity, nearly lost to today.

The fragments of performance records that do exist are scattered about and between the lines of the Alaskan Eskimo cultural history indicating a profound and highly sophisticated theatre tradition, rich with tradition, song, dance, masks, puppets, costumes and scenography. It was theatre that was developed over a period of nearly three thousand years. It was a theatre unlike any other in the world, and antithetical to western theatre in purpose, substance, methodology and execution. Theirs was not a theatre exclusively of human endeavor; theirs was a theatre of the earth and the spirits that inhabit it.

THEATRE OF THE SPIRIT WORLD

In the theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo, the spirit was given a voice and a body. The spirit world became incarnate and tangible to the community. The maintenance of the spiritual world was of primary importance. The community and its individuals interacted with the spirit world within their daily lives by observance of taboos, use of amulets, by way of social structuring and the like. But it was only through ritual and ceremony, (i.e. theatre) that Alaskan Eskimos were able to participate with the spiritual world. Performance served as a window to a greater world and within this greater world was the mystery and the transitory essence of the world. It was their theatre that attempted to make visible the invisible that

surrounded them. With so little, existing in the most severe and inhospitable environment ever inhabited by human beings, the Eskimo took stock in every resource at their disposal, including the spiritual, which became inexplicably intertwined with their worldview. A close-knit, semi-nomadic and clan-like people, isolated and faced with a constant concern for survival, the ancient Eskimos of Alaska went inside of their psychic and spiritual selves as a matter of survival. They developed a highly complex system of spiritual hierarchy, mores, and rituals as to better maintain their harmony with the earth upon which they were so precariously dependent. For them everything had a spirit, an Inua, which is a belief that still persists within the contemporary Alaskan Eskimo culture today.

GEOGRAPHY OF MIND AND SOUL

Ten months a year the land of the Alaskan Eskimo is blanketed with snow. The treeless, barren tundra is swept with constant blowing wind and the ever-changing sky melds white, gray and blue into a horizon of sea or land. Distance is immense and distorted and ordinary perceptions are easily altered to accept reality and illusion as one.

This is a land that remains today a land of unique visions. Where it seems that the farther you can see in the distance the further you are able to see within one's self. Today, as in the time of their ancestors, a village (numbering in size from 75 to 600 people) is set in the palm of the earth, surrounded by a vast white plain. It is also a land of extremes. In Barrow, Alaska, there are 24 hours of daylight in the summer and no sunlight for nearly two months in deep winter. In the winter the earth is illuminated by the reflection of the moon and the luminous, colorful, indescribable poetry of the northern lights. It was within the long and deep fall and winter -- a time when the spirits were said to roam freely -- that Alaskan Eskimo theatre took place.

THE PEOPLE

There are three major groups of Alaskan Eskimos: Aleut, Yup'ik and Inupiat Eskimo. The Aleut, inhabiting the Aleutian Islands, bore the brunt of first contact with the Russian traders and are nearly extinct as a racial group today. Though the least is known about this

Eskimo group, what fragments that remain suggest a long and developed theatre tradition. The Yup'ik Eskimo, divided into two language groups, central and Siberian Yup'ik, inhabited the southwest to central coastal areas of Alaska. The Yup'ik developed the most elaborate spirit theatre traditions. The land of the northern most inhabitants, the Inupiat Eskimo, extends from the arctic sea to the west central portion of Alaska's Bering Sea. The theatre of the Inupiat was the most thoroughly animistic. All three groups had a vibrant, ongoing, distinct tradition of theatre. Though there are many similarities in kind there was great diversity in execution. The diversity in their theatre, like that of their social and cultural traditions reflected and responded to the geography, environmental conditions, game hunted, and concomitant spirits of their world.

THE COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

Common to all three Eskimo groups and primary to understanding the Alaska Eskimo theatre tradition was the community house. Before the advent of European culture, at least one community house functioned in each of Alaska's numerous villages. These houses served a variety of purposes: a men's club house, workshop, steam bath, place to tell traditional stories, and ceremonial house. These houses were known by various names: kashim, qasgi, qalegi, barbara or qusiaq. Some ceremonial houses were said to accommodate up to several hundred people in large villages, although most were much smaller. Some villages had several ceremonial houses organized by clan.

These semi-subterranean structures had several tiers of hide-covered benches that created a three-sided or theatre-in-the-round stage setting. During some performances a central fire pit would throw off a powerful light and produce large and looming shadows on the soot covered driftwood, hide and earth structure. During some performances, when the fire pit was covered with planks, seal oil lamps provided an equally dramatic source of light. There were two tunnel entrances used to keep the arctic weather out, one entrance was for general public use the other tunnel entrance was connected to the fire pit and provided a draft for the fire. Through the fire pit entrance, performers and shamans would enter, for it was thought that the fire pit tunnel was a pathway to the lower world. Spectacular entrances were made from the skylight or smoke hole, thought to be an entrance from the upper world. The upper and lower

worlds were thought to be places where certain spirits dwelled, and where spirits were aligned more with the elements and hierarchy rather than with the heaven and hell connotations of Christianity. In this way the kashim, or community house, became a living metaphor. The community, gathered tightly together in an earth structure, was acted upon by the spirits from above, below and within the shadows of the fire flames. (Curtis, 1930:9-12)

In the instance of an Inupiat community house at Point Hope, the supporting beams were the jaw-bones of bow head whales, the community's major food source and most sacred animal. On the whale jaw beams were painted scenes of legendary events and ancestral hunters. Other village community houses had blue ceilings with depictions of stars and northern lights. Still others were hung with carved figures that represented mythical figures, or with painted animal bladders giving honor to the spirit of that animal's soul because it was believed that one of the animal's souls existed within the bladder. (Lantis, 1947:84)

Nearly all theatre occurrences took place in the intimate community house where the Alaskan Eskimo created events full of mystery, theatricality and community affirmation. The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo was thoroughly integrated and reflective of the day-to-day life and concerns of the community. Here the spiritual and temporal worlds demonstrated that they were separate but one in the same.

THE LAND, GIVER OF ALL

Born of the environment that the Alaskan Eskimo inhabits, a land of harsh and extreme realities, was a theatre of the land -- a theatre of ritual and ceremony that sought to maintain harmony with the earth on which the Eskimo depended. The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo was also a theatre of the community, and of the interdependence of the temporal and spiritual worlds. Disproving western theatrical precepts, this was a theatre without conflict as its generating source. The action of seeking harmony was in a sense the "drama" element of their theatre. Absent was the plight of the protagonist, an individual's (and specifically Western culture's) struggle in quest or journey to resolve social, political or psychological conflict. Within the Alaskan Eskimo tradition the entire community took a journey each time there was a performance. This journey occurred in the context of a shared cultural and cosmological framework.

It was much like the journey that the original audiences of Sophocles must have taken when witnessing their community values, ideas and issues revealed incarnate. But unlike Sophocles and the western theatre tradition he helped to found, the theatre of the Eskimo did not separate the acts of the individual from the acts of the spirits by putting them into opposition. As Western civilization developed a rational and scientific explanation for world order so its theatre gradually rejected the issue of “Man’s” relationship with the spirit world as unsuitable because it defied explanation. The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo reflected the view that the individual and the human community served themselves but only in relation to and as part of the larger community of the spirit world. For the Eskimo, the elements, the animals, the earth and humans were simply material expressions of one unifying spirit world.

The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo was a theatre of non-aggression, whereas Western theatre at its core a theatre dependent upon conflict. One could speculate that conflict in Western theatre took hold and evolved once it eschewed active dealings with the spirit world. Can it be that once the world order was quantifiable and Man was left to his own means, there arose conflict in theatre? The Alaska Eskimo inhabits the most inhospitable land on the planet, where survival was and still is a constant struggle in conflict with the elements. Yet their theatre reflected integration, balance and harmony. In the worldview of the Alaskan Eskimo, like that of other aboriginal peoples, the earth is the measure of all things, and, by extension, Man belongs to the earth. In stark contrast, the Western world views the individual as the measure of all things. This human-centered view has caused a disconnection from the ways of the earth and a rejection of the idea of interdependence with the spirit world. With humankind at the center of the Western worldview, the earth has been relegated to a secondary status. Likewise, in the drama of Western culture, the earth, and the spirit world it embodies, the earth either provides a backdrop for human action, is ignored altogether or is exploited as a convenient antagonist, a foil for a human drama.

The individual performer in the Alaskan Eskimo theatre was not an individual in the sense of the Western understanding, but was someone that was part of a whole. And that whole was greater than what was simply tangible. Being part of a whole was a cosmological view that connected everything and in this way all things were spiritually invested and transformational. Because the individual performer was a part of the whole, the individual could transform into an animal; the animal was within, and just another part of the whole to

which the performer belonged. To disrespect the earth, its elements or its animals, was to do harm to oneself. Alaskan Eskimo theater was a means of recognizing and maintaining the sense of cosmological whole, both spiritual and material. Respecting and giving thanks to the earth, the animals and the spirits was standard text to Alaskan Eskimo performance.

The Yup'ik Bladder Festival, for example, was an event centered on the returning of seal bladders to the sea so that the spirits of the seal would “tell” other seals how well they had been treated by the hunters. If the hunter had treated the bladder correctly (it was believed that the eternal soul, the soul of the genus, resided in the bladder) and gave it an appropriate four day festival of performance, then seals would return the following season to offer themselves to the hunters of that village. Though dismissed by the West as superstition, the underlying symbolism and the spiritual/ritual metaphor of such a performance identifies a fundamental understanding and respect for the cosmological interaction of hunter and game. The physical act of a yearly performance of the Bladder Festival reiterates this relationship as its actions made spiritual interaction tangible.

THE INVITING-IN FESTIVAL

This concept of the interrelatedness of all things also expressed itself in performance traditions focused on the interaction within the community and between community and another. In such performances as the Messenger and Inviting-In Festival, other villages or clans were invited to share and interact. Events included performance competitions to see which group could perform the most comically. Often comic presentations included current events, such as making fun of Russian whalers or interior Indians by way of masked performances and mimicking of their gestures and language sounds in song and dance. During the second day of the Yupik "Inviting-In" Feast, as recorded by Hawkes in 1912, in the village of St. Michael, competitive comic presentations were made between the Unalaklit and Unalit people:

The Unalit trotted out their champion, a lithe old fellow, wonderfully graceful and impressive in his movements. He wore a mask adorned with feathers and an enormous nose, which I was told was a caricature of the Yukon Indian. The Eskimo have lost none of their old hatred for their former foes, and still term them in derision inkilik,

"louse-eaters;" from the fact of their long hair being full of these pests. Neither is the Eskimo, with tonsured head, freed from the same affliction; as I learned more than once, at a crowded dance, to my temporary affliction.

The old man took his place in the centre of the floor amid perfect silence. With head on his breast and hands at rest on his lap he seemed sunk in deep reverie. Then he raised his hand to his head and cracked a louse audibly. This was too much for the Unalaklit, and they howled with laughter. Then having won the competition by this ruse, the old man began his dance. Two women with feather handlets stepped forth, and accompanied him, imitating his very move. Higher and higher he swung his hands, like the rapid upward wheel of a carrier pigeon. Then the dance stopped as abruptly as the others; the day was won. (Hawkes 1913:31)

WINGERUK MASQUERADE

Performance provided the community a means for diffusing potentially volatile situations. For example, the jealousy caused by extramarital affairs and attractions could produce devastating strife in the closed, interdependent community of the Eskimo. The problem was averted by the Eskimo of Point Hope in their Wingeruk masquerade dance which took place at the conclusion of the four day Sitting festival every fall.

Both men and women gather at their own ceremonial house preparing for the event. Then each clan goes to the others ceremonial house in turn, dressed in odd or old garments, or as members of the opposite sex. Both men and women usually wear full, carved wooden masks. These masks have no spirit significance and are simple, human, male or female masks.

Each visitor crawls slowly through the entrance hole of the other ceremonial house and upon entering dances alone before his or her "uma", a person who bears the same name as one's wife or husband.

Sometimes the dancers, taking their masks off, rubs noses (kisses) with the uma or lays his or her head upon the uma's shoulder as a portrayal of affection.

If the wife of a host had her nose rubbed, she pretends to pull it off and throw it away.[...] If a host umelik is kissed (has his nose rubbed) his wife grasps his nose and pretends to throw it away. (Rainey, 1947:50)

THE TELLING OF THE QOPAQAGIQ

The telling of traditional stories, ancestral events, and ancient performances, which occurred at most large performance events, was another way of linking with the past and reasserting an understanding of the Eskimo world. What follows is a description of a story

telling device used as a part of the elaborate Sitting Festival that took place during the early part of this century at Point Hope. The telling of the Qopaqaiq is the performance re-enactment of the clan's most famous legend of whale hunting heroism. Its performance not only served to entertain, but also served to link the audience with the past as it built the confidence of the umilek (boat owner and captain) and crews for hunting the formidable bow head whale. The performance served as a visualization of a successful hunt enabling the audience to see an important survival activity in perspective and with humor. Also implicit in the performance is the spiritual and transformational interaction between the shaman performer and the puppets. This performance record comes to us by way of oral history transcriptions.

The Qopqagaiq of this clan is puppet whale boat crew [...] This Qopqagaiq consists of small sacred puppets, wooden figures clothed in miniature parkas and seated in a miniature umiak (a walrus skin boat used to hunt whales) about 3 feet long, with paddles, harpoon, and all other necessary gear for the whale hunt.

Five sinew thongs operate the paddling figures and umelik seated in the stern, while a small tube of seal gut opening in the back of the umelik's parka is used by one of the three manipulators to make him breathe, simply by blowing through the tube.

The angatkok (i.e. Shaman) then acts as if he were the umelik puppet seated in the stern of the boat. The angatkok sings, "I want to see the people, and they want to see me" (the puppet umelik patted his own chest) and "they want to see me breathe" (the puppet's chest rises and falls with his breathing.)

As the song continues, the little umelik figure motions with his tiny arm, directing his crew, as the speed of their paddling increases until the song and mechanical activity reaches a climax. (Rainey, 1947:49 and Pederson, 1978:554)

In a fury of drumming, singing and dancing, the legend's story concludes onesection of The Sitting performance. It is in the heat of the escalating performance that a sort of communion has taken place. It is a performance communion facilitated by the shaman and includes the puppets, the spirits of the legend represented and the audience, which is intimately aware of the legend.

The use of puppets and carved figures -- both sacred and secular -- were an integral part of the Alaskan Eskimo theatre tradition perhaps because they served as a visual metaphor for the Eskimo worldview. The puppet was dependent upon the human performers in the same way that the performers viewed themselves to be dependent on the spirit world.

THE YEARLY FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD

The marking of passing old to new, the underlying notion of cyclical regeneration, was always evident in Alaskan Eskimo theatre as it is central to their worldview. At the Yup'ik Yearly Festival of the Dead (a village-wide commemoration of the deceased of the previous year), recorded by the Russian explorer Zagoskin in the 1840's, the interconnectedness, cyclical and transformational quality of the Alaskan Eskimo worldview was demonstrated in performance. Not forgetting that life must be lived by the living and the living carry the memory of the dead, this festival, like others, includes a section for feasting and gift-giving.

It sometimes happens that a guest is invited to such a ceremony from a far-distant village, just because he or she happens to bear the same name of the deceased. [...] this namesake was sometimes dressed from head to foot and presented with beaver pelts, otter and anything else that the mourner considers most precious to them. This, however, did not exclude other people in the kashim from also receiving lesser gifts. These other gifts are given to people that were close friends or had somehow helped the deceased during their life.

Each mourner then gives the namesake a bowl of clear water. Each namesake then takes the offered bowl and dips their fingers in, and shaking drops of water three times to the side into a crevice in the floor. With the shaking of the water each of the namesakes say quietly:

"Drink, our dead."

The namesakes of the deceased are then given another small bowl, this bowl contains food. Then the namesakes take small bits of food from their respective bowls and likewise throw them into the fire pit with the words:

"Accept, dead ones, from our supplies, and help us secretly next summer."

The namesake then begins to eat from the bowl and then offers others the food.

When the food from the small bowls is gone the small bowls are given to the children present.

Shortly thereafter dancing and singing begins to celebrate the memory of the deceased. This is done with drums and is meant to uplift and console the mourners. The dancing generally last well into the night. (Zagoskin, 1967:138-39)

During the Yearly Festival of the Dead, as in other performances cited, a spiritual/performance transformation takes place with one person (the namesake) standing in

for someone or something else. By honoring the namesake -- who could very well be someone from another village and unknown prior to the Festival -- it is as if they had honored the dead in person. The living namesake comes to embody the idea, if not the spirit, of the deceased in the same way that a performer transforms into an animal or into a legendary character in other performances. It seems that the spiritual world was so much an accepted and integrated part of the Alaskan Eskimo worldview that this spiritual/performance transformation was easily accomplished. During performance, the ordinary had the potential and opportunity of transforming into the metaphor of the unseen world. In this way the totality of the performance event would become metaphoric of something greater than itself. During the Yearly Festival of the Dead, the namesake, along with the other recipients of gifts, the dancers, the village and the children with their bowls together represented an arc between past, present and future. The Festival itself transformed the community from the empirical to the spiritual by the act of performance; which by its very structure represented the continuing interaction between the temporal and the eternal cycle that included the dead, the living, the young and the yet to be born.

THE ELDERS AND THE SHAMAN

Central to the Alaskan Eskimo theatre tradition were the elders and the angatkok. The elders were the holders and conveyers of tradition in every aspect of Eskimo life. It was the elders that kept their orally transmitted theatre tradition alive; it was a tradition that could lead back several centuries. From generation to generation performance stories, songs, dances, acting, props, costumes and mask traditions were passed on with adjustments and evolutions taking place over time.

In most theatre performances the elders worked in conjunction with the angatkok, the shaman, the healer, the medicine man or woman, the keeper of the community's spiritual well-being. The angatkok was variously chosen, trained or called into his or her position because of special expressed attributes, which generally included the ability of spiritual vision. The calling of the angatkok was a gift, something that came to a person naturally or something a person sought to obtain and to develop because with it came power and responsibility: a responsibility to the very survival of the community and a power to effect physical and

spiritual well-being. The angatkok was responsible for improving the weather, healing the sick, procuring game, foretelling the future, contending with evil spirits. All of the angatkok's activities were performed in public and with the community's interaction, for the role of the angatkok was, at its core, that of a performance artist. The performance of the angatkok reassured the community by demonstrating that there was indeed interaction between the human and spirit world and that decisive action was being taken. To the community, the angatkok's performance, trance, dance, vocalizations or ritual, was a bridge to a mysterious and ineffable world. Like the secular theatre artist of the Western tradition, the angatkok gave form and feeling to the intangible ideas and spirits that surround and live with the community.

The role of the angatkok in the community's theatre performance was that of master of ceremony cum stage director, choreographer, musical director, actor, priest, prop, light and scene designer. Although each community was familiar with virtually all of the songs, stories and dances of a theatre performance, it was the domain of the angatkok to make sure it happened in a way concomitant with sacred practice for nearly all community performances. Even the secular comic and entertainment aspects were in manifestation and/or propitiation of the spirit world. Specifically spirit world connecting actions were the exclusive realm of the angatkok, whereas other aspects of the performance were entrusted to elders or community sanctioned performers.

THE PERFORMANCE SPIRIT JOURNEY AND ORIGIN MYTHS

Nearly all of the Alaskan Eskimo theatre performances originated in visionary myths that involved an angatkok or spirit person. Many actual performances were inspired by direct physical interpretation of an angatkok's journey to a spiritual realm. Prior to each sacred performance, the angatkok would journey to the land of the spirits and return with fresh impressions of many new faces, which would in turn be carved into masks by himself or a woodcarver who had been given careful instructions as to how the spirit "face" must look. On the same journey the angatkok would learn new songs, stories and dances that would likewise reproduce scenes from the spirit world.

One such interpretation of the spirit world occurred in the Yup'ik Doll Festival, which is based on the myth of an angatkok from the lower Yukon River area that took a journey to the

land of the sky. One version of the performance myth was told by Ikogmut, of the lower Yukon River to Edward William Nelson in the 1880's.

Looking around, the shaman saw that every star was in reality a round hole in the sky through which the light from above was shining. Raising himself up, he put his head through the nearest star hole. [...] The shaman then found himself in a ceremonial house much like the one of his own village. [...] and lying at the side of each man was a small wooden image, all of which represented different kinds of mammals, birds, and fishes.

From the roof hung two great hoops extending entirely around the room, one of which was a little below the other, and both were about midway between the roof and the floor. Extending from the roof hole down to the upper hoop were many slender rods, the lower ends of which were fastened to the hoop at regular intervals. Fastened to the hoops and rods in many places were tufts of feathers and down. These hoops and rods represented the heavens arching over the earth, and the tufts of feathers were the stars mingled with snowflakes.

When the shaman returned to his village the people of the village were then directed to decorate the kashim just as the shaman had seen it in the sky house, and the people were taught all the necessary observances and ceremonies, during which food and drink offerings were made to the inuas of the sky house and songs were sung in their honor. [...] When the sky people or shades were satisfied by the offerings and ceremonies of the earth people, they would cause an image of the kind of animal that was needed to grow to the proper size, endow it with life and send it down to the earth, where it caused its kind to become again very numerous. (Nelson, 1983:494-97)

THE PERFORMERS

The performance style of the Alaska Eskimo is best described as a combination of mimetic acting and symbolic dance. Elaborate dances and illustrative gestures were able to convey stories, events and characters (animal, human and spirit) directly and simply. Illustrative gestures and dance movements were symbolic of actions or emotions (generally derived from daily life activities) and were recognized as a movement language by the region. Alaskan Eskimo performers and performances did not make the artificial separation between dance, movement, song, and acting that is the wont of Western performance. The worldview of the Alaska Eskimo culture, continues, to a greater or lesser degree, to this day.

DRUMMING AND FESTIVALS: THE GIFT OF THE EAGLE MOTHER

All performances were grounded in the drumming of either the gut head, tamborine-style, or the box drum. The two-beat, iambic rhythm of the drum was and is still standard to Eskimo dance. The tamborine-styled drum is prominently used to this day and is found in sizes of 1 to 4 feet in diameter, covered with the stomach lining of a walrus or seal (rip-stop or mylar also is widely used today) and is hit with a stick on either the drum head or on the rim from the bottom. The origins of the drum, dancing, singing and festivities are explained in various group-specific myths. According to one origin of performance myth, told by Sagdluaq to Knut Rasmussen in 1923, Alaska Eskimo performance was a gift from the Eagle mother.

The eagle carried the hunter on its back to the mountain; higher and higher they went until they had a view over the plains where men hunted caribou. But as they got near to the peak of the mountain they could hear a strange knocking sound, which grew louder and louder the nearer they came to the top. It was like the beating of enormous hammers, and it was so loud that the ears of the caribou hunter tingled.

"Do you hear anything?" asked the eagle.

"Yes, a deafening sound like the strokes of a hammer."

"This is my mother's heart you hear beating" said the eagle.

They reached the eagle's house, which was built right up on the peak.

"I must prepare mother, wait till I come back" the eagle said and entered the house.

A moment later he returned and led the caribou hunter inside. They came into a house that was built in the same way as the houses of men, and there on the platform, quite alone, sat the eagle's mother, decrepit and sorrowful.

Then her son spoke and said: "This young man has promised to hold a songfest when he gets home. But he knows nothing about putting words together into songs, he knows nothing of how to sing a song, nor does he understand beating a drum and dancing for joy. Mother, men don't know how to feast and now this young man has come up to learn it."

These words put life into the old eagle-mother; she became very pleased, expressed thanks and said: "But you must first build a festival house where many people can assemble."

And the old eagle-mother taught them to make drums, both the ordinary drum consisting of a large wooden ring with a skin stretched over it, and the special

ceremonial drum, the one used at the great present-giving feasts, made of four pieces of wood put together to form a hollow cavity, which gives a special clang when struck with a drum-stick, which is narrow at the handle and thicker and heavier at the other end. This festival drum had to have a deep, sonorous tone, reminiscent of the beating heart of an old eagle.

Later the eagle-mother taught him to put words together for singing and to arrange tones together so that they became song, and she showed them how to beat the drum in time with the songs; and finally she taught him how to dance. "Human beings are lonely, and they live alone, because they know nothing of the gift of festival, and I have promised the eagles to teach them how to feast." (Rasmussen, 1927:38-42)

When an Eskimo beats a drum today, he or she knows the sound helps to keep the Eagle Mother's spirit alive and young.

Performances were propelled by the rhythm of the drum whose subtle variations can elude the Western listener. When a Yup'ik elder was asked recently what accounted for such a seemingly monotonous beat, her reply was that "the beat was like the waves of the sea, there are so many and they seem to be the same, the sea is constant and always moving too, but the waves are all unique and different just like Eskimo songs, and are never the same." (Toolie, 1989) The subtle and sloping coastal tundra geography could be another analogy. Music, be it the rhythm of drums or the multi-layering of sung chanting, was what the dancer moved to when a performer mimed an animal's behavior or told a story. When drummers created the simple, deep rhythm it is as if earth performed through them. A similar style of rhythmic drum beating enabled the angatkok to enter a trance state and connect with the power or helping spirits in the lower or upper worlds. It may well be that drumming not only provided rhythm for physical action but helped to create a trance-like state which added further to the spiritual and communal event for performers and spectators alike.

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Central to the Alaskan Eskimo performer's task was the ability to transpose and transform oneself into another being. By mimetically performing an animal or another person they were not acting, they would possess a part of that animal or persons essence. Accounts of such transformations recall how a performer, using the drum's rhythm, would take on essential movements and attitudes as if becoming that animal or person. This performance attribute may

be rooted in the belief that every living thing has two souls and that the soul that travels is in a sense captured by the performer. Another explanation may be the cultural belief that at one time Men and animals were interchangeable and transformational performance simply attests to this fact. It must be remembered also that prior to the advent of Western written-orientated education, the primary method of transferring knowledge was by demonstration and imitation: close proximity to their animals of imitation, reinforced by story-telling, may also have contributed to strong physical imitation and psycho-physical character transformation.

Unlike Western styles of psychological based acting, the transformational performance style of the Alaskan Eskimo is meant to represent both the individual character and the archetype simultaneously. The archetype character portrayal is based on the mythology of the animal/character (each animal has a myth), its well-observed physical attributes and its spiritual transmission with the performer as medium. Rather than creating a world of the character, as is the case in Western style acting, the Alaskan Eskimo performer, in a sense, steps into a well-established cultural mythology, participating in what is familiar, if not instinctual. The performer's participation is in this way, both a reaffirmation and portrayal of deeply rooted cultural beliefs and values, a performance mythology that reveals and asserts the culture's infrastructure. The performer's character portrayal is in a way, a possession, both spiritually and culturally facilitated, by the animal/character.

MASKS AND TOTEM FIGURES

The Alaskan Eskimo, especially the Yup'ik Eskimo, have possibly the most elaborate and complex mask performance tradition in the world: they possess the ability to transform themselves into other characters through the extensive use of masks and other performance regalia.

Masks and totem figures were used, to a greater or lesser degree, in nearly all Alaskan Eskimo performances. Masks represented animals as varied as the spotted seal, raven and wolf. Comic masks, archetype masks of good and bad men and women and the spirit mask, would all find their way into performances. Most masks were carved from driftwood that washed along the coast from the interior. However, certain masks were made of molded caribou hide, and in the case of the King Island Eagle-Wolf Festival, the masks were the actual faces of the wolf itself. ¹ Totem figures were equally varied and included: carved figures representing myths,

legends or family stories; stuffed animals; finger mask fringed with caribou ruff or feathers; and protecting amulets made of animal parts.

Many masks, especially the powerful spirit mask, had a specific purpose within a performance and were discarded or burned after use, having lost their power. Eskimo masks and totem figures were believed to have a "life" which demanded that each must be treated and used in a special way. Such totems and masks also had a strong spirit power, which necessitated that songs be made for them in honor of that spirit. It was believed that the totem or mask came alive when possessed during performance. Masks and totems were often "fed" with food offerings of tiny pieces of meat put into the mask's mouth or thrown into the fire pit in their honor. In other instances masks and figures were believed to have received sufficient nourishment by simply being in the same room or atmosphere as meat.

The more fantastical masks were those that recorded the angatkok's journey to the spirit world. Such journeys could be to the bottom of the sea, to the land of the dead or flights to the moon where the Man in the Moon kept the genus spirit of all animals. The spirit journey masks were generally larger and more colorful than other masks and were full of carved figure attachments and hoops that symbolized the universe. An angatkok wore one of these "spirit" masks when presenting a public performance of his or her journey. The angatkok performed the journey as it had been experienced and the mask, embodied with spirit, guided his or her performance. Given their highly individualized, secretive nature, one can only speculate the performance meaning and application of spirit masks.

The angatkok also commonly used a mask as a means to communicate with the spirits during a time of crisis, using the mask to investigate an illness or bad weather. Other masks were used to pay homage to mythological personages, monsters, or the spirit of an animal. The mask, like the drumming, singing and the action of mimetic acting and dance, was another means of creating a transformational performance, a bridge to the ineffable.

H.M.W.Edmonds, an American anthropologist in the late 19th century recorded the following performance of the Yup'ik Bladder Festival, a vivid example of how both masks and totemic figures were used in performance:

Finally the natives range themselves along the sides of the room and a few dances of the ordinary kind take place. Then comes the great dance. The participants all gather down beneath the floor, while the drums are beating. The Shaman takes

position near the middle of the floor, when suddenly from all sides are heard the call of birds and the cries of animals being imitated.

While this is going on, the Eskimos jump up through the floor, all wearing masks representing hawks, foxes, wolverines, etc. They all proceed with their backs to the center of the room and so remain till at a given signal they turn around and advance towards the center. At that same time the figure of a hawk swoops down upon the figure of an ermine. Up through the hole in the floor jumps an Eskimo flopping about and growling like a bear while another Eskimo appears at the hole as a fish. From behind the lamps Eskimos come out rigged up in devil masks and look on at the proceedings to see what mischief they may make. Then all at another signal from the Shaman, go to their places and repeat the preceding ad infinitum until, at another signal, they raise their arms aloft to the four cardinal points, and with the hissing noise, make declaration that the ceremony is over. (Ray, 1967:39)

CONCLUSION

The theatre tradition of the Alaskan Eskimo was deeply rooted within its culture and unique to its environment and spiritual reality. As rich and varied as the people that practiced it, the Alaskan Eskimo theatre was fundamentally different in expectations and execution from that of the Western theatre tradition. The Alaskan Eskimo theatre tradition has no easy handles, definitions or record. This is a theatre tradition that was reflexive to the lifestyle of those who lived close to the earth. And like the earth, this theatre was constantly changing and adapting its form in a mysterious, evolutionary way, which makes its meaning for us today the work of conjecture. What survives today are fragments from anthropological, oral and historical record; museum artifacts and photographic records speak to us too. But nowhere does the Alaskan Eskimo theatre speak as loudly as it does in the living Eskimo culture of today. In their lifestyles, dancing, singing, drumming and remaining ceremonies, a rich tradition is evident; a sense of what must once have been echoes with deep resonance. Memory of the Alaska Eskimo performance tradition to this day runs deep within its people, embedded within the Eskimo cultural DNA; a heritage encoded by an ancient and continuing relationship with the earth. The theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo was a spirit theatre of the earth. Its very inspiration and purpose was to honor the land and to maintain its harmony. Despite nearly successful attempts to dismiss the theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo to the margins of history within the Western categories of primitive, idolatrous, ritualistic, ceremonial, its voice, in form and substance speaks to today with a new relevance. With the rising consciousness of Man's fragile relationship with the earth and its creatures, the theatre of the Alaskan Eskimo

still speaks the voice of earth as it offers an ancient model of how Man and the earth once lived in harmony.



Chapter 2

MESSAGE FROM THE EAGLE MOTHER: THE MESSENGER'S FEAST OF THE INUPIAT ESKIMO

In January of 1988 the North Slope Borough of Alaska sponsored a Kivgiq. It was the first such presentation in over 80 years of the Inupiat Eskimo Messenger's Feast which can trace its origins to the beginnings of the Inupiat culture. Participants came together in Barrow, Alaska from all of the eight arctic villages of the North Slope Borough--where the sun sets in mid-November and rises mid-January each winter. The 2,000 plus spectators and participants that gathered in the high school gym for three days represented the largest single gathering of people ever on the North Slope. The revival of the Kivgiq was motivated not by the spiritual necessity of its origins, nor by trade or barter, which it later facilitated, but by renewed interest in the traditional social and cultural values that the Feast encodes. The 1988 Kivgiq brought together in performance the songs, dances, and events that lay scattered in cultural memory, threatened with extinction. And with its revival came a reaffirmation of Inupiat values that consoled the present as it re-discovered an ancient past.

It was in 1987, when newly elected Borough Mayor, George Ahamaogak, coming to office on the heels of a political scandal and sensing the need for an uplifting community event, decided to sponsor a Kivgiq. He appointed a "special assistant", Rex Okakok, who traveled and met with elders throughout the North Slope Borough to reconstruct the Kivgiq from their memories. The elders were more than glad to comply for they had long been concerned with the increased Westernization of their culture; the old ways were being lost and the language forgotten because there were fewer and fewer

cultural events to hold it. "Every time I spoke to someone about it there was a sense of excitement just by mentioning Kivgiq to the elders [...] there was a real positive feeling to bring people together" (1992), recalled Okakok as he traveled to the villages of the North Slope. Starting with oral history records and then personally interviewing elders, Okakok, with the help of a North Slope Borough History and Language Commission (a three person committee) then decided what basic understandings of the Kivgiq would be performed. "We came up with the central events in the Kivgiq and used those as the basis to kind of organize the event" said Okakok in a recent interview, "but the major theme was to get people together for Eskimo dancing and to visit their long lost relatives and sharing the culture."(Okakok 1992) Inupiaq leader James Nageak, a Kivgiq performer, Presbyterian minister and Assistant Professor of Alaska native language at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, recounted some of the motivation behind reviving the Kivgiq in 1988:

The elders were seeing that we don't use it as much as we need to, the Inupiaq language. And there are some activities that we have lost over the years that get the people together. In the Western world, where we have the (native) corporations and the North Slope Borough and all of these things on a daily basis, we get involved in that. So I guess the elders said let's get those activities back where the values, the Inupiat values and those things that pertain to the activities that they use to do. They tried to think back to the time when it was the last time they had a Messenger's feast. And it was 1910. And a lot of the elders said: "I've never been to one, but my father, my parents and, my grandparents talked about it. A Kivgiq, the Messenger's Feast, and how, and what kind of activities they had and why it was used. (1991)

The Kivgiq was a pathway to the rediscovery of traditions and values that had been challenged by years of near epidemic drug and alcohol abuse that was provoked by the cultural and social trauma wrought by the introduction of Western culture. Yet even in memory, the Kivgiq had remained to serve as an encoder of traditional values. The songs, dances, regalia, and events, though fragmented and incomplete, still provided a doorway to the past. It was a doorway opened by performance, which led directly to the mythological core of the Inupiaq people. Within the performance of the Kivgiq one can find the echoes of ancient myths, rituals, and performances. Living in the performance of the Kivgiq is the Inupiaq creation myth, the myth of the Great Eagle Mother's Gift of

Song and Dance, the shamanistic Eagle-wolf Messenger's Feast, the animistic Wolf Dance, and the secular precursor of the Kivgiq, the Messenger's Feast. 1

The Messenger's Feast will provide the focus of my exploration because of its historical and cultural detail. But the Messenger's Feast is only a point of departure within a cultural context where past, present, old and new have blurred distinctions, often elusive to the control and relevance of time as the western world knows it. The Messenger's Feast has traveled a path that is as much myth as it is memory, as much mystery as it is fact, and as much of the spiritual as it is of the material world. The Inupiat people could be represented in no other, nor better way.

THE INUPIAT CONTEXT

The traditional philosophy and beliefs of the Inupiat of Northern Alaska--as is with other aboriginal people--is to live with the earth. In keeping with this their scattered ritual records, myths, artifacts, and archeology point to a performance (ritual/ceremony/theatre) based on spirit-human world interaction as to maintain or achieve harmony with the earth. That the ancient Inupiat Messenger's Feast survived to this century intact is as much a consequence of geographic isolation as it is of late contact with Western culture. The perseverance of the Messenger's Feast is also a testament to the deep cultural roots from which it springs; it remains relevant today because, like the Inupiat, it has developed a bond and relationship with a part of the earth from which it is inseparable.

The advent of "civilizing" missionary pressures--which in some cases persecuted and banned the speaking of the Inupiaq language, song, and dance in any form--became most pronounced for Inupiat Alaska during the 1920's. Overt magico-religious and animistic performances such as the Eagle-Wolf Messenger Feast did exist up until that time, when participants were shamed, pressured, or persecuted into either abandoning or secularizing their traditional culture. When Inupiaq elder and Barrow Dance Group leader Martha Aiken as asked recently if Inupiaq dances held any spiritual significance, she replied:

It keeps our culture alive. That's spiritual. If you mean do we do our shamans, that's another thing. We don't and we've forgotten those parts. Because a shaman cannot be a shaman unless they are taught a ritual song. A shamanistic ritual song. And we have lost those. We don't even know what they sound like. The shamanistic part had faded away, but not the cultural, that's still alive and well yet. That's part of the spirituality...They confused the two. They did not understand how it was. So that's why most of the denominations, when they came to a native village they thought in the Eskimo dancing that they're doing the shamanistic thing, which they were not doing. They were just celebrating getting some catch and they misunderstood that part. They thought everything was for shamans and stuff like that. Which of course was very bad for us who understand our rituals and our culture and traditional ways. (1992)

Possibly the most devastating event for the Inupiat was the "great death" that occurred between 1910 and 1930. During this time entire villages were decimated by diseases — cholera, diphtheria, and polio — brought by European and American commercial whalers. The Inupiat culture that survived, devastated by the loss of its tradition bearers and shamans, was altered irrevocably. Weak and vulnerable, the survivors of the once complex and ancient Inupiat tradition were no match for missionary pressures. As a consequence of the "great death" and subsequent, forced Christianization, many songs, dances, rituals, and celebrations became either lost or dislocated from their original context and spiritual origins. Eskimo dancing and singing were considered as expressions of paganism and banned outright. Today some of these villages have lost their traditions entirely. What has survived—with few exceptions—has done so by virtue of its secularization, fading in meaning and significance with each passing generation.

Traditionally, the Messenger's Feast had also served a trade and bartering function, bringing villages together to exchange specialties. The advent of commercial stores and cash economy rendered obsolete this function of the Feast. James Nageak offers his theory about why the Messenger's Feast ceased:

The Nunamiu people (inland dwellers) get seal oil and all these other things they normally don't get inland. And of course, the wolf skins and the wolverine skins and the caribou skin and the people from the Qualimiut, they get those. So when we're looking at about 1900, there were these (commercial) whaling activities. Charles D. Bower began setting up a store in Barrow and branching out to these other little places

like at Brownlow Point, the Hooper Bay area; people can get what they need. They didn't need the Messenger's Feast anymore. (1991)

THE MESSENGER'S FEAST IN TWO HISTORIES

Written historical accounts of the Messenger's Feast and its derivations exist today as fragments scattered amongst anthropological, ethnographic, travel, and oral history transcriptions. More recent records exist in the form of photographs, audio, and videotapes. However, the history of the Messenger's Feast is also held in the living cultural memory of the Inupiat people. It is here where it exists most vitally--in the body and mind of elders, and in individual songs and dances that are performed to this day. These songs and dances literally breathe the tradition, keeping it alive in many forms and contexts, throughout northwest Alaska. That there is no one single and definitive representation of the Messenger's Feast is as it should be. The derivations are evidence of how Inupiat holistic (oral and physically transmitted) history and performance traditions have traveled through the region, passed from generation to generation, with a fundamental structure intact. Martha Aiken commented that in the 1988 Kivgiq all they wanted to do was "a little part of it, just to show how they did it." (1992) Nageak addressed the flexible and evolutionary process of the Kivgiq:

I think what they're trying to do is to--as long as they can remember--is to try to pick out one aspect of the Kivgiq as they understand it. And some years later they might do that again. I think that's why you don't see the whole thing, but different aspects of it. That and the time constraints of the three days. I think the attitude is do your own thing, surprise us a little bit sometimes, you know. Sometimes they said things like "Next year we're going to do the dancing where we dance with the gift." Every year it is a little different and that's okay. (1991)

Vincent Nageak, an Inupiaq elder and father of James Nageak, gave a description of Messenger's Feast adaptability:

There is not only just one certain way to have a Messenger Feast...It's different in Barrow, the people-of-Nuvuk do it differently, also the people-

of-the-inland do it differently, the people-of-Wainwright also do the Messenger's Feast differently...you just keep adding the customs...which are different (in Kisautaq: 575).

Though different in detail of practice, each version and derivation of the Messenger's Feast shares the same well-spring of fundamental Inupiat principles of culture, psychology and beliefs. J.L. Giddings concluded, based on his interviews with two Inupiak elders from the Kobuk River area in the 1940's, the diversity of the Messenger's Feast, which is referred to below as the "trading feast."

The slightly different accounts of Pegliruk and Oolayak point up the variations possible on a main theme, and indicate the futility of trying to reduce the trading feast to a single formal pattern. The ceremonies of the Kobuk were built about a central idea, and built upon long-established framework, but each actual procedure was staged and directed according to the ideas of individuals who were eager to produce an original and outstanding show (1961: 152).

This inconsistency and variation of the Messenger's Feast is much to the chagrin of the Western historical expectation that looks to written, rational, patterned, consistent and, above all, objective verification to mark historical credibility. The Messenger's Feast has remained elusive, ephemeral, irrational, subjective, contradictory, and consequently outside the framework of Western theatre and historical criteria. Even Inupiaq Rex Okakok, who has possibly done more research, interviewing, and organizing of the Messenger's Feast is the first to admit that "to this day we don't have a full picture, and things kind of come out here and there." (1992)

There are many hazards and difficulties inherent in attempting to portray a performance such as the Messenger's Feast in this paper or any other paper. There is an inherent irony, and contradiction, in trying to reveal an aspect of an integrated cultural system by pulling it from a tightly woven cultural context and by using a written, systematic analysis, which is antithetical to its very nature. Such is the liability of any attempt to transfer and equate the means and terms of one culture to that of another; one can only aspire to informed awareness as to do more justice than damage in such a situation.

HISTORY AND CULTURE AS COMMUNITY

Each element of the Messenger's Feast is a culturally accepted, endowed, and integrated manifestation with identifiable antecedents in Inupiat mythology. Messenger's Feast elements need not explain themselves with great detail, they were instead immediately understood within their tight cultural context. Part of this is explained in that there were fewer options and less need to distinguish character types in early hunting and gathering societies where work and identity was a communal function. Diversity of occupation, geography, climate, circumstances, and social setting simply did not exist for the Inupiat that created the Messenger's Feast. Diversity was limited and need not be explained to a culture that held a communal world view; the Inupiat were less concerned with the particular individual's story and more concerned with how the story related to group held beliefs, behavior, and relationships. The Messenger's Feast establishes a point of entry into the Inupiat mythological world. The Messenger's Feast serves as a re-affirmation and identification to mythological antecedents from which to mark the change that the unfolding of events of the Messenger's Feast will bring. The performers, in a sense, enact as they interact with mythological spirit world.

The Messenger's Feast, and its derivations, (both historical and modern day) is not performed unless there has been a successful hunting season. The analogy for a successful hunting season is articulated in the modern context of the Messenger's Feast as financial ability. Although lifestyle adjustments have been made to accommodate the living in a cross-cultural world of cash economy and subsistence--where many Inupiat hold 9 to 5 jobs in addition to subsistence hunting--the context for the Messenger's Feast presentation has remained intact. Okakok illustrates how the traditional community support system for the Feast has evolved:

It was funded though the North Slope Borough and corporate giving (ie. native corporations), villages, city councils, tribal governments, individuals. The private part totalled about \$85 to \$89,000 that we raised

in the villages. The rest of it, an additional \$120,000 came from the Borough. The general feeling that the mayor and I had was that if we're going to get real good support in this, that maybe if people would give a little they'd own the thing and really participate in it. (1992)

The success of the community still provides the context from which the performance is initiated. The performance context was provided by the community itself. In the integrated and holistically conceived traditional worldview of the Inupiat, the community itself is also the medium of expression. The performance realization exists in a holistic tradition, meaning that it exists amongst, within, and inseparable from the community's beliefs, mythology and day-to-day life. The archetypal successful hunter of Messenger's Feast mythology is parallel to and emblematic of the successful hunting community that can afford to provide for the presentation of the Messenger's Feast. By a community deciding that it should, and can afford to present the feast, is the first step in the enactment of the Messenger's Feast.

A version of the Messenger's Feast myth recorded in Kotzebue at the turn of the century demonstrates the community's involvement once it was decided that the Messenger Feast's was to be held. The success of the community is parallel in context with the Young Man, the successful, archetypal hunter; both community and the Young Man must be prepared for their journey into the performance.

Now began the preparations for the coming feasting and dancing, preparations which lasted all summer and until after the fall freeze-up. Furs of all kinds taken in their prime and skins were laid away. Meat, marrow, and fat were sorted. Toward the end of summer, fish were caught and dried, then new clothes were made. The people were glad to know that they had plenty of food for their visitors and themselves; that all would be well dressed. (Curtis [1930] 1970: 173)

The community's decision to present the Messenger's Feast represented a commitment to enact the performance, which implied material as well as spiritual preparedness. With subsistence success also came recognition that the community was able to fulfill its responsibility of giving thanks to the generous spirit world.

J.L. Giddings, in his ethnographic notes based on interviews with Inupiat elders regarding the Messenger's Feast, drew some general observations about the frequency,

sense of community, and special demands required to provide for performance realization:

This reunion of families from the various local groups along the Kobuk and neighboring rivers furnished the means of enriching relatively isolated culture patterns with ideas and goods from all over the general region...the building of a kadegi (temporary ceremonial house), and temporary concentration of a local population, increased the group solidarity of a neighborhood; and its exchange of local goods for exotic goods cross-fertilized the material and spiritual content of culture.

Because of the enterprise required for the staging of a festival, as well as the surplus of goods that had to be accumulated before invitations were sent out, no single community could afford to hold a trading feast oftener than perhaps once a decade. (Giddings, 1961: 151-2).

That the Messenger's Feast is less frequently held today may be, in part, attributable to the wane and dissipation of collective community consciousness and values that were once held and demonstrated by the performance realization. The Messenger's Feast, in the context of the late twentieth century, has evolved beyond its original meanings to take on new meaning and cultural significance. James Nageak explains the importance of Kivgiq and how its function has changed:

People don't necessarily go out hunting and gathering all the time now. They have 9 to 5 jobs too. And the young people grew up without having to work too hard for what they have on the table, or what they put on in the morning when they wake up. It is just a matter of going to the store and there is no respect for the care you had to have when you had to go out and hunt for the food and clothing. The activities that pertain to hunting and gathering activities, the respect, the respect for the equipment, and how you take care of your clothing can save your life. The young people today haven't had that experience. The meaning behind what is being used as a family has become removed. It becomes removed and modernized and it becomes Sears and Roebuck product and I don't know who made it. Maybe it was the Taiwanese made it. The clothing, put together someplace else and the value of working for what we have. These things are lost. They're going to be lost if we don't re-enact them. Because the art (of the Kivgiq) is the re-enactment of what happened. It is no longer a reality. But there should be ways in which we can at least show the young people. That's how I'm defining art. (1992)

A significant part of the Messenger's Feast tradition is its late 19th century adaptation which emphasized regional barter and trading. Flossie Hopson, an Inupiaq elder recalled that: "...people would gather together, coming from every which direction, exchanging their food or whatever, seal oil, before their stores came about" (Kisautaq 591). Arnasungag, an Inupiaq elder, told Knut Rasmussen in the 1920's of similar memories as a young man: "All trade was then a joint affair between different settlements, and as men had no money all trade was done by barter.[...] The trading alone was not all, but only a part of the things that could tempt and gladden the people who had to undertake long journeys." (Rasmussen, 1932: 40).

How the Kivgiq will function in the future is pondered by Okakok:

I think there are a lot of things that we can do with it, we just have never tried. Using Kivgiq as a basis to deal with it (social problems) both from a traditional standpoint and the modern. I think that just knowing, that as a community that you're not alone in this ordeal and that there are other people going though the same thing. It kind of puts people together that want to do something. (1992)

CORE NARRATIVE OF THE MESSENGER'S FEAST

In the ancient myth of the "Eagle's Gift" the Great Eagle Mother gives song and dance to the lonely and isolated Inupiat people. When the Inupiat use the gift of song and dance the once old and sad Great Eagle Mother becomes younger and happy. Song and dance also brings together the Inupiaq people, who were formerly isolated in small nomadic bands, to participate in song and dance communally to relieve the isolation of the long, dark winters.

A Kotzebue version of the Messenger's Feast myth demonstrates how the structure of the ancient "Eagle Gift" myth is maintained as it is evolved to reflect the needs of the culturally advanced Inupiat. The structure and participants of the "Eagle Gift" myth remain intact as they reflect a change in the relationship between the human, animal, and spirit worlds.

One time, about sunset, when out alone, the young man saw something

shining up in the sky. The object came closer to earth, and he made out the form of an eagle, which was carrying a flint knife and a bow and arrows in its beak. With its claws the huge bird held a large whale. The young man was frightened. He thought that now he would be killed, but his spirit prompted him to shoot at the monstrous eagle. [...] As the eagle flew slowly above him, the young man shot an arrow at its breast. The Bird glared at him with eyes as large as moons. It rose high in the air. The young man then shot at its belly (Curtis [1930] 1970: 169).

The once benign Young Eagle messenger of the Eagle's Gift myth has here evolved into a fierce threat. And the Young Hunter of the Messenger's Feast, rather than being a supplicant to the Young Eagle, kills the bird. The Messenger's Feast mythology also marks an evolution away from the more harmonious and respectful co-existence with the animal world.

As the Young Hunter strips the skin off the Young Eagle, two spirit messengers appear, sent by the Great Eagle Mother. These two messengers are the antecedents of the two messengers found in the Messenger's Feast performance. The Young Hunter is informed by the spirit messengers—usually a red and/or white fox human qualities—that he must go with them to the Great Eagle Mother.

As they progressed, a thunderous noise, as regular as a heart-beat, shook the air. The two reached a huge cache from which oil dripped and ran down the trail. Great whale bones surrounded it. Fox-man said: "The old ones who wish to see you live in a house on the highest pinnacle. You remain outside while I go in."

A young woman soon came out. Her face was painted red with blood, and she wore a hairless parka. She pointed to many human bones scattered about the house. She offered the young man food and water, enjoining him first to make an offering to the spirits. Before eating, he threw some small pieces of meat in the air and sprinkled water on the ground. While satisfying his hunger, he noted two great caches filled to bursting with food, furs, and clothing. Then the young woman bade him to enter. In the entrance way were two huge eagle-skins hanging on the walls. Inside he saw an old couple, both of enormous stature, dressed in old clothes. The heartbeats of the woman made the air tremble. Food was again offered, and all ate in silence.

The old man finally spoke in a low, sad tone: "Young man, you have killed my only son, our hunter who brought us food. Now you must do something for us. I shall tell you how my eagle son is to be brought home" (Curtis [1930] 1970: 169-70).

The life-or-death symbolism of the human bones juxtaposed with the "Great whales bones" reinforces the extreme consequences of the Young Man as it suggests the belief that all creatures, human and animal, are from the same spiritual source. The young woman that the Young Man meets is wearing an attractive "hair-less parka" (probably white or light in color) that contrasts sharply with her face painted with red blood. Throughout this the pounding of the Eagle Mother's heartbeat makes the "air tremble" with a trance-inducing drumbeat. The sense of the unexpected is heightened as the Young Man sees food caches filled with furs and clothing. Images of abundance and domestic contentment juxtapose sharply with an atmosphere filled with potential threat. When the Young Man is finally confronted by the old couple they are in human form and enormous in stature (befitting their power over the Young Man), and dressed in the old clothes of neglected elders. Significantly, the Eagle Mother in this version of the Myth has been transfigured into human form and has been joined by a Eagle Father. The old man continued: "When you go home, do not kill so much game, only what is needed."...The old woman added: "My heart is beating fast. Whenever I think of my son, my heart nearly burst, so I try not to think of him (Curtis [1930] 1970: 170).

In all variations of Messenger's Feast mythology the Young Hunter is taken to the Great Eagle Mother where he, like the Young Hunter of the earlier "Eagle Gift" myth, is taught by the Great Eagle Mother. This time, however, the world is more complex, hence the teaching more detailed and elaborate. The Great Eagle Mother's teaching--in all variations of Messenger's Feast mythology--is assisted by spirit helpers and is what provides foundation for the performance of the Messenger's Feast.

There were two spirit men standing. [...] The two men talked like one man. They spoke to Toolik, (the hunter/shaman) "You are a human. You cannot return the tingmiakpak's spirit to his mother yourself. You must watch us and tell the Kauwerak men to do just as we do. When you do everything we spirits are teaching you, we can take the bird's spirit to his mother.

"Send two men dressed like we are to all the villages near and far around Kauwerak. We will help you human men so you can do the job. Your men will be messengers. They should invite the other villages to take part in a great dance. At the same time they must ask four strong

hunters at each village to bring thing to give. The marks on the red alder-bark dyed bands on these messenger staffs will remind them what each village should send..." (Oquilluk 1981: 153).

The Messenger's Feast mythology also indicates that four men are chosen to perform the Eagle and Wolf dances. Like the messengers, the four dancers that the Inupiat community chooses to participate in the Messenger's Feast are part of mythology.

Once more a voice called. This time there were four men standing on the air. They were all dressed alike. They wore eagle feathers standing up in a band all around their heads. They wore long sealskin mittens with little pieces of ivory sewn on. When they moved, the ivory made a rattling noise. Nobody had ever seen men like that before. The men danced a strong dance. They danced to songs Toolik had never heard before. The spirits said, "We will help you to remember the songs." Then they were gone (Oquilluk 1981: 154).

William Oquilluk cites the contemporary interpretation of the myth: "Four of you older men who have the biggest families in Kauwerak and help other people out when they need it are the men the spirit people said should be dancers" (Oquilluk 1981: 157). These four Eagle-Wolf dancers are the community's best, wealthiest, and most influential hunters and secular leaders--they have gained the most from the animal/spirit world--and as a consequence owe the most in terms of spiritual return and thanksgiving.

The sense of return and thanksgiving is still central to Inupiat cultural values as Okakok describes in referring to the Kivgiq:

A good hunter who had a very successful year, or a couple years, and had a lot to share gives everybody an opportunity to renew family ties. That's the very highest part of our values, I think. Part of sharing our environment is something. The animals we get that are put here on earth are from the creator and part of our management is to make sure that we do it right--with great care. And at times we get a lot more than we normally get, so when they do that then we share with everybody. The Point Hope dancers especially do a lot of story telling relating to the creator, the story about the earth, a variety of story telling that relates back to living with the environment and honoring the creator for the gifts that have been given. That seems to be the main theme when talking to the elders of Point Hope. (1992)

The four successful hunters of Messenger's Feast mythology take responsibility for the enactment of the feast, as dancers, patrons and organizers. Much in the same way the North Slope Borough—enjoying success from mineral and oil right royalties—sponsored and organized the modern Kivgiq.

THE MESSENGERS

Arnasungag, an Inupiaq elder from Teller, told Rasmussen in the early 1920's of when he was a young man and a messenger:

We were two young men who were sent out as messengers. Each of us received a staff to carry, decorated with eagles' down and painted with red rings of ocher. Each ring stood for a name we had to remember; and the names had to be given accurately, in the order in which we had received them. [...] Early in the autumn we set out and took the trail down over the mountains that led to the sea. Many nights running we made our solitary camp, often in fine weather and comfort, sometimes during storms, when we had difficulty in finding even the simplest shelter because of blizzards. But we were young and restless and used to traveling (Rasmussen 1932: 40-41).

Like the fox-man of mythology, the Messengers carried a staff symbolic of their sacred mission; the eagle down recalling its spiritual origin. All Messengers had "asking" or "inviting" sticks that represented requests and are carried to the invited villages. According to anthropologist Margaret Lantis, the staffs of the Messengers function partly as mnemonics, in remembering the host's requests, and partly as a symbol of office (1947: 70). The staffs also functioned as a kind of spiritually symbolic vertical that went to the heavens or to the mountaintop where the Eagle Mother lived. An Inupiaq elder, Pegliruk, describes his early 20th century memory of the inviting stick:

The kevhok (Messengers) take the message from each man to his partner, inviting him to come to the trading feast. And the way they do is to make a reminding stick for each kevhok. This stick is about four feet long and about an inch thick. It has rings painted around it with graphite and other colors of paint, and between these rings it has strips of skin--one strip of skin for each family to be invited. When the kevhok invites someone, he

takes off the strip of skin and gives it to the man he invites. That person must bring that skin when he comes to the feast (Giddings 1961: 25).

Dressing in the fox skins and running great distances over barren tundra for several days—some Messengers were also known to fast—further emphasized the sacred and mythic aspects of the task. Amasungag continues his personal account: “When at last we reached our destination we were received with great cordiality and treated as holy men who ran the errands of the mythical eagle. We were solemnly entertained, and many meat offerings were made to the originator of the feast.” (41)

The Messenger for the Barrow Kivgiq of 1988 was a little less formal: Rex Okakok served as a Messenger simultaneous to his official role as organizing the Kivgiq. As a modern day Messenger he flew in small Cessna planes between the eight villages of the North Slope Borough, and though he was without traditional ragalia and ritual, his function was the same. However, unlike the Messengers of the past, Rex Okakok, like a Messenger, brought memories together as well.

After I made the initial contact and found that we could possibly hold it with the initial funding we got, I went around and kind of served as a Messenger. Telling them what we're planning to do and what kind of reactions I get from the village themselves. I went to all the villages and informed all the villages and informed them of what we're planning to do, and it really got exciting as I hit each village...They (the elders that belonged to dance groups)) would tell what had happened and what they had heard from their parents, or from the stories that they normally tell. And in each village somebody had a story to tell. The intent was to have people share their knowledge about Kivgiq...I flew, you got to take into consideration the modern conveniences as much as possible. Blend the tradition with modern day technology. (1992)

In subsequent years the role of the traditional Messenger was replaced by far more convenient and expedient teleconferencing among the eight villages of the North Slope Borough.

TRADING PARTNERS

Historically, during the time the request is made by the Messenger until they leave, the invited village hasten to prepare all of the items requested of them. Such items included a variety of furs, (caribou, fox, wolf, polar bear and seal skins used in mukluk--shoe making), ivory, and a quantity of food items for feasting. The same exchange of gifts occurred during the 1988 and each subsequent Barrow Kivgiq. Today, as well as historically, gift giving was organized by establishing trading partners from different villages. These trading partnerships develop and are maintained by people between different villages over the years. For the Inupiat, trading is understood as sharing and gift giving rather than trade for profit. The Barrow Kivgiq served to renew and formalize trading partner friendships. Exchanging local specialties is still an integral part of the Kivgiq as Okakok explains:

When you sit down to share with somebody you talk about things you enjoy doing, things that are happening in your area, food that they have and the kind of stuff that they would like to have. When you hear that you kind of remember. And when you have a partner you try to send them something that is very special, that they probably don't eat a lot, or don't have, like a fur in their area. You give them something very special that they don't normally get. (1992)

Okakok, like many others, has several trading partners, who exchange gifts informally. James Nageak who has two trading partners explains the process:

I have two partners--one at Anaktuvak Pass. When I first went up there in '61, Noel Auguk, kind of made me his partner, and we became partners, and I was living in Barrow so over the years we have interchanges. So I asked for caribou dry meat, the special one. That was my message. And the following year my partner in Barter Island wanted an ice chisel and scoop for when he went camping. (1991)

The formality of the "inviting" stick of the historical Messenger's Feast is less adhered to. An "inviting" stick was used in the 1989 Kivgiq. These request messages were hand written notes attached to the stick. James Nageak continues:

I wrote out a little something in Inupiaq and asked: "To my partner Herman Wexford, I want you to make me a knife"...At the gathering at

Barrow, where all the villages are represented, then they read the messages...There was a message to "Winford at Wainright" he had a message from Rachel from Anaktuvak Pass. And Rachel said "I want fermented walrus flipper"... The messages are for those partners that heard the messages to produce those things for the following year. (1991)

MESSENGERS OF MYTHOLOGY

Historically, the Messenger's role and actions were defined by culturally shared mythological references that became a loose text, holistically transmitted. Those who accepted the role of Messenger accepted the responsibility to become mythological or spiritual surrogates; their actions embodied, for the duration of their enactment, what was culturally inscribed and shared. They were entrusted with the responsibility of making momentarily visible what is normally invisible; namely the belief that human-animal transformation exists and that there is a linkage between the spirit and human worlds. The distinction between performance and myth, animal and human worlds, is blurred. The Messengers of Kauwerak mythology not only emulate, but transcend to embody the role model of the spirit Messengers. Like the fox-men Messengers that Toolik, the hunter/shaman experienced, they too are paranormal beings.

Being of both the mythological and human world simultaneously, the Messengers required a response that had to be weighed carefully by the invited village. Acceptance of the invitation made not only extensive material and physical demands—goods, preparation, and travel—on the invited village, but also required their participation in performance. In the past the rituals, ceremony, social dancing, gift giving, feasting, and competitive games could last for weeks.

The Kauwerak version continues as the entire village—having been alerted to the surprise appearance of the fox-men Messengers—has gathered, in the kazghi ceremonial house. Once the entire village is gathered, the Messengers make their appearance by way of the fire pit (katauk) entrance that had the association of being connected to the lower world of the spirits.

All at once those people heard a loud noise like ice breaking. Then they

saw two hands had slapped hard on the floor [...and] a man's body was coming up out of the katauk. He was raising himself up using just his thumb and first finger to pull his body. Then that man swung his legs out on the floor. Suddenly, he jumped up standing straight and holding that staff. He moved over a little way, and a second man came up through the katauk, just like the other one. (Oquilluk 1981: 159).

The appearance of the Messengers—their unusual costume regalia and presentation—is complemented by their singing and dancing the requests of their home village. This spectacular entrance was followed by the request of the Messengers.

The first Messenger walked one step. He pounded the floor of the kazghi with the bottom of his staff. Then he took a second step and pounded the floor again. Third time, he did the same thing. He stood still.[...] The kivgaauhk (Messengers) started their songs. They told why they had come to Sinrapaaga. Then the first Messenger pointed to the red bands on his staff (Oquilluk 1981: 160).

The Messengers called out, in turn, the names of the four Eagle-Wolf Dancers from their home village and told of their material request. Once the Messengers finished they sat down, laid their "reminding" or "inviting" sticks next to them, and faced the fire pit entrance. The Messengers were fed with a variety of food but no response to the request was given. "Then the Messengers told the Sinramuit what they should do to help the Kauweramuit return the tingmiakpak's spirit to his mother. The Sinruk people wanted to help them" (Oquilluk 1981: 160)

Historically, once a village was invited by the Messengers preparations were made for travel and the feast. The invited village—preceded by the Messengers—would set out, en masse for the host village. Once outside the host village, the invited village would wait and sometimes camp.

[T]he guests arrived in a long procession with heavy laden sledges. But for a long time before this, a lookout was kept for them, for they must be received by special envoy a day's journey from the settlement. For this, young men were chosen who were called runners. They had to be the best sportsmen, the swiftest, the deftest, the strongest. They, too, received sacred symbols during the festival, and their foreheads were adorned with strips of skin decorated with eagle's feathers. In their hands they must

carry a staff at the tip of which there was fastened a dainty morsel. [...] As soon as the runners came in sight, the whole procession had to stand still. All the men, women and children placed themselves in line and struck up a song (Rasmussen 1932:44).

THE BOW AND ARROW CHALLENGE

Historically, once the invited village is seen waiting outside of the host village, the young men of the invited village and host village would engage in a race to the kazghi. The purpose of the race was to "take the kazghi" which meant honor for the runner's village and entertainment for all. This race was revived during the 1991 Kivgiq with the runners starting at the Barrow airport and running through the streets to the gym where the Kivgiq was held. After the race--in both historical and modern occurrences--the Kivgiq begins with the runners being followed by the rest of the people. For the Barrow Kivgiq, a procession of the eight North Slope Borough villages took their places in the gym and there were ceremonies for the start of events.

In historical occurrences, as exemplified by the Kauwerak version of the Messenger's Feast myth, the host village would line up in front of the kazghi facing the visitors who would do likewise. The four "invited" men (village leaders) from guest villages would stand together in front of their people and sleds. Both villages would stand watching as their counterparts from the host village came out of the kazghi:

They were dressed in old clothes. The parkas had no hair left on them. The sleeves were too short, and there were holes where the elbows showed. The pants were old and the knees were showing through. They sure looked poor. All those men had belts with a tail hanging from it on the back. These were wolverine, fox, or wolf. [...] They carried bows and arrows[...]and] they waved their bow in front of the Sinrapaaga with the arrows put in backwards. Then they turned the arrows around and shot them up in the air and over on the ground away from the Sinrapaaga (Oquilluk 1981:162).

These four men were hunters who behaved poorly and then challenged and threatened their guests with their bow and arrows. The older Kotzebue myth portrays a similar and far more extreme picture: "These runners had painted their heads, arms, and

hair with charcoal. Another man, naked except for boots, and armed with a bow, rushed up and threatened the visitors as if they were unwelcome" (Curtis [1930] 1970:175).

The challenge, which was taken with great seriousness, ended in the hunters shooting their arrows into the air. The purpose of the challenge is debatable. The Kotzebue version states that "if any of the four men became frightened they would be ridiculed and not allowed to take part in the dances, feasts, or gift-making" (Curtis [1930] 1970:175). This would make the challenge a sort of challenge of leadership and/or spiritual worthiness. Roxy Ekowana, an Inupiaq elder, commented on a telling of the spiritual aspects of the Bow and Arrow Challenge:

Things usually occurred while the anartug, and the mediums, were in full swing. The arrows are always aimed right above the spectators' heads. One of the contestants was going to do just that when his bow string broke. There was nothing one could do, but to stand there in stunned silence. These I have heard my mother tell us (Uiniq 1988:33).

Another explanation may be found in the King Island version of the myth. In that version the Young Hunter, while preparing for the festival, accidentally kills one of the Messengers. Rather than tell anyone and spoil the preparations, he dries the body and brings it into the festival where he proceeds to feed it and treat it as if it were alive. This creates confusion, the sudden exit of the guests and then more killing. The King Island version of the myth, which is essentially the same as the others except for this element concludes with this admonishment:

And this was the occasion of the first war that ever took place among men. [...] Thus merrymaking and war succeeded each other. It could not be otherwise. Merrymaking and gaiety warm the mind; it is but a step from wild exuberance to rash behavior (Rasmussen 1932:17).

It could be that the challenge of the hunters expressed the opposite of what was appropriate and provided a warning to both their guests and themselves. Also suggested by this extreme and threatening act is the worst possible circumstance. With the challenge the worst is over with and the festival can now proceed; the worst scenario has been exposed. Whatever the complexity of meaning, the challenge was presented by the

village of Wainright at the 1988 Kivgiq. The Bow and Arrow Challenge has not been performed since, probably because its original significance was lost to the modern Inupiat.

THE WELCOME

With the Bow and Arrow challenge complete, the guests of the historical Messenger's Feast were welcomed with smiles by the hosts who were bearing torches (seaweed dipped in seal oil) to illuminate a night that is two months long. The host villagers would run among the visitors to warm them and accustom them to their new surroundings. The people of Barrow, in keeping with this tradition of the Messenger's Feast, welcome their Kivgiq guests into their homes. The guests for the closely knit Inupiat are either friends or family for whom the revival of the Kivgiq in 1988 brought an unexpected awareness as described by Rex Okakok:

Getting people together to visit with their long-lost relatives. Renewing their family ties. Something we didn't realize, something we just sort of took for granted was that people knew their relatives fairly well when they traveled. So it was great for people to re-new their family ties. Kind of take a look at their family trees and how they were related. What we didn't plan, after Eskimo dancing, after event like one in the morning people would get together and just talk about families and eat to like three or four in the morning. We didn't realize that was happening till the last day. It was something exciting that happened, unplanned. We kind of took it for granted that people knew each other because of the telephone and letters. (1992)

THE EVENTS

Like every other aspects of the Messenger's Feast and modern day Kivgiq, there is no one strictly adhered to structure of events. Traditionally, events lasted over a period of three or four days. However, the visit of the guest village could last longer. Generally, the first day was filled with greetings and competitive events. ² The first evening brought the ritual of the Eagle-Wolf Dance (described in greater detail below) as

performed by the host village; then there was feasting. The second day brought visiting and competitive events. During the second evening it was the visiting village return to perform the Eagle-Wolf Dance to help return the spirit of the Young Eagle to the Eagle Mother. Again there was much feasting. The third evening brought the ritual of returning the spirit to the Eagle Mother. There was feasting, gift -giving, and social dancing. If there was a fourth day, it would also include social dancing. Social dancing includes: "regular" dancing (dances shared by the villages) and "invitational", free-style dancing when everyone is invited to do what they want; "motion" dances were more specific to each village and tell of local events; and "unique" dances are specific to a village's history and/or ritual practice. Only the unique dances could not be shared because they were "owned" and generally sacred.

The 1988 Kivgiq posed a far greater organizational challenge than its historical antecedents. Rex Okakok had to organize eight villages for the gathering rather than the two (or, rarely, three) that historically participated in the Messenger's Feast. The distance between the villages of the North Slope Borough is great--Barrow and Point Hope are nearly 650 miles apart. The wealth of elder memories of the Messenger's Feast and the multiplicity of its expression also created the dilemma of what to use and what not to use. Okakok and the North Slope Borough commission on History and Language defined the major events allowing enough freedom for each village to present their expression of Kivgiq. The 1988 Kivgiq had to create a new organizational structure given the circumstances of a modern presentation. Okakok describes his organizational work:

There are nearly 250 dancers from all over the North Slope and you try to give them as much time as possible. But at the same time you get tired watching. [...] What we did was take on a major dance group like Barrow, Wainwright, Point Hope, and then starting with the host community, which is Barrow. Then we took one of the smaller villages like Point Lay, Nuiqsat, Kaktovik, and then try to keep the interest going, trying to mix it up with Anaktuvak Pass, an inland group because they do it a little differently. So we try to balance that out. It is just part of balancing, what might keep the group interested all the time. But the first time, the interest was so high that no matter what you put in, or who you put in, it didn't matter. (1992)

Each village dance group performed three times over the period of the three day

Kivgiq. Dance gatherings took place in the evenings because many of the Barrow participants held 9 to 5 jobs. The first day consisted of "regular" dances, the second day "motion" dances, and the third day a little freedom was given to dance groups to present dances unique to their own village. "The regular dance the first night is kind of a way to get everybody participating, and the second night is specialized dancing, and the third night is trying to keep the communities unique, to see how they do it, a kind of showcase of the community." (Okakok 1992)

Activities started in the late morning with some Barrow people not working and the guest village people gathering to share what they know about Kivgiq. The afternoons became a time to do village specialized events such as comedy dances. It was also a time for storytelling and bartering--which is distinct from the gift giving that occurs in the evening. Furs and sealskins and specialized food such as caribou and Dall Sheep from the inland villages, were bartered with whale from coastal villages. The bartering can best be describes as a good natured and friendly exchange. In 1988, the gift giving occurred on the third evening of the Kivgiq. For the second and each subsequent year, the gift giving has occurred on the first evening. A modern adjustment was made, by general consensus, to identify partner relationships earlier as to allow more time for them to develop. The Point Hope dancers had a special song to accompany the gift giving. The Barrow elders knew that there was once a gift giving song their village practiced, however, no one remembered it.

THE EAGLE-WOLF MESSENGER FEAST

The ancient precursor of the modern Kivgiq and the Messenger's Feast is the sacred Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast. Not performed in its entirety since 1912, the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast provides a vivid portrait of how Inupiat values, mythology, and spirituality were expressed in performance. Highly ritualized, animistic, and shamanistic, the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast was possibly the most significant performance expression of the Inupiat. It is from the deeply seated cultural roots of the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast that the secular tradition of the Messenger's Feast and modern day Kivgiq grew.

The Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast can be traced back to the creation story of the Inupiat people. The progression of the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast from creation myth to sacred performance to the secular modern day, was outlined by James Nageak:

It's important to get back, to get as far back as you can, back to the creation story. Because the stories that were perpetuated over generations were not just being talked about, they were being performed through the dancing and the celebration, and the exchange of gifts that were being done back then. Those activities and the stories behind all of the things can begin to make your worldview and begin to relate to the people around you. They might be refined over the years, kind of a trial and error situation, rather than "this is the way you're supposed to do it." The creation stories became human stories and when that happened the humans could transform into wolves and foxes once they were human beings. (1991)

The road from creation myth to Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast to Kivgiq passed through generations of Inupiat performers and in so doing was transferred, transformed, and adapted. Albeit, altered, shamed and censored by Westerners and Western religions, the structure of the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast remained viable in spirit and form. "It keeps our culture alive, that's spiritual" (1992), says Martha Aiken about the ancient dances that have survived to the modern Kivgiq. But she admits that parts have been lost to mis-understanding missionaries "That's why they looked down on Eskimo dancing, some religions thought we were doing shamanism" (1992). The missionaries, sensing the central and spiritual place of the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast and not able to distinguish social from sacred dancing, forced the stopping of all dancing in several villages in Alaska. As a consequence, much of the spiritual heritage that was encoded in the Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast was lost.

The implication of the Kauwerak myth is that the spirit/animal world required performance to reveal itself; the language of the humans was inappropriate and too limited. The Eagle-wolf Messenger's Feast was an appropriate form that allowed for a fleeting participation with the spirit world. The Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast was an appropriate form that allowed for a fleeting participation with the spirit world, a place where the human, animal, and spirit world could co-mingle.

Toolik saw a circle of spirit dancers. Men and women were one next to the other all around the circle. The men were all dressed alike. Each wore a hood made of wolverine head-skins. On top of the white parkas they had skins hung across their chests and backs. Weasel tails hung down from the side of their sleeves next to their bodies [...] The spirit men danced a lively dance and the weasel skins and tails looked like they were floating around their bodies. The women danced and the wolverine strips all moved the same way at the same time. The drummer told the dancers what to do by the beat of his drum (Oquilluk 1981:153)

Compared with the above description, the historical photographs (seen elsewhere this book), taken circa 1912, detail the mythology almost exactly, replete with the wolverine hoods, white parkas and weasel tails across their backs and chests.

THE SONG AND DANCES OF THE EAGLE-WOLF MESSENGER FEAST

Many of the songs and dances presented at the modern day Kivgiq have been handed down through the generations. However, The older the song or dance, the more vague the understanding of its original meaning and application. Songs and dances are not standardized nor necessarily distributed throughout the region, but rather vary from village to village as explained by Martha Aiken:

Some villages have certain dances they do, maybe the inlanders had that wolf dance. But they don't do it in Barrow. Point Hope has the very ancient rituals that we don't even know about. Some of these are very, very old rituals. In the Barrow area the dancing is not connected with the shamanistic rituals. (1992)

All eight villages of the North Slope Borough have thriving dance groups (Point Hope has two), which maintain traditional songs as they create new songs and dances to reflect modern events such as basketball, boxing, and motor boating. But the traditional song/dances that are included in the Kivgiq are treated with respect as Vincent Nageak recalled: "So Kivgiq started on the instructions of an animal. It is not known why the movements are so precise, but you have to understand that the instructions came from an animal" (Kisautaq 1978:184). The instructions are vital: "If we follow instructions carefully, the Eagle spirit will return home. [...] let all do their best.[...] this is not my

ceremony, but that of the Eagles (Curtis [1930] 1970:176).

The sequence of song and dances noted below are from the Kauwerak version of the myth as done "just as Toolik saw the spirit people do up on the mountain" (Oquilluk 1981:163). The following dances were performed by the four Eagle-Wolf dancers (in full eagle regalia) and their wives. It should be remembered that songs were often location and community specific. The songs listed below are specific to the Kauwerak version.

INTRODUCTORY SONGS: Eagle Dances

1) A song about the village people coming together to feast

2) A resting song without words

(Note: resting songs mean not danced with great physicality)

3) A song about all the beavers that lived around Kauwerak

4) A resting song about the enjoyment of walking in the land in the springtime

5) A song about eating ripe, soft salmon berries around Kauwerak and the good taste of salmon-eggs

6) A resting song about how spring was really coming when the birds sing out on the open ground

7) A song about fresh rabbit meat to be found around Kauwerak

8) A resting song about gathering of caribou fawn skins in the early spring (Oquilluk 1981:163)

For the following section the four Eagle-Wolf dancers are wearing wolf heads. They dance the following sequence of dances after having suddenly disappeared backwards into their 'dens,' 2 foot diameter holes cut out of a sheet of wood covered over with stretched walrus or seal skins. The male assistants sitting above the bank of wooden holes cover the holes quickly with stretched, semi-transparent seal gut. The women, who are standing above the wolf den holes, sing and dance a resting song. Suddenly the Eagle-Wolf dancers poke the seal guts from the inside, timidly considering an entrance; they are wary of the Great Eagle flying overhead. Toolik shakes his drum club at the Eagle-Wolf

dancers and they draw back. This goes on for some time until finally the seal gut is lifted from the holes and wolf heads look timidly out; they are progressively more courageous. Finally, the Wolf dancers suddenly jump out of their holes. They are wearing masks fixed at the top and front of their heads--real wolf heads supported internally by wood. As the songs progress, the wolves look up to reveal their human face, then face down to become wolves again. ³ The transition between wolf and human is highly theatrical; one can only imagine what effect it had in the flickering fire lit confines of an Inupiat ceremonial houses a century ago.

The next group of songs comprises the Wolf Dance. The wolves have different concerns as expressed with their songs and dances.

WOLF DANCES

9) A song tells that the wolves are ready to go back in their dens when the tingmiakpak (great eagle) flies overhead again--the wolves are threatening to come out of their dens

10) A happy song--the wolves are going to come out of the den and they will soon share the food the giant bird left behind after it has eaten

11) A very happy and lively song -- the wolves dance to show how happy they are to share the tingmiakpak's food

12) A resting song -- the wolves are showing that they are very happy to be helping the Kauwerakmuit return the giant birds spirit to his mother

13) A happy song -- this is where the wolves help the Kauwerakmuit send the spirit on its way to the Mother who waits in the Kigluaik Mountains.

(Oquilluk 1981:163)

A spirit tells Toolik, the archetype hunter, that the wolves eating the remains left them by the Great Eagle is an indirect asking of Toolik to be kind to the Great Eagle Mother that has been kind to the wolves (i.e. humans). The implication is explicit: since you have shared the bounty of the Great Eagle Mother, you must show thanks by some

return gesture. The return of her son's spirit (by humans) will make the Great Eagle Mother (the universal being) happy. The means of return is via performance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WOLF

The Wolf-Dance segment of the mythology is elaborate and complex. The prominence of the wolves has significance that can only be discovered by closely examining Inupiat mythology.

Four spirit men were sitting on the edge of a wide sitting-shelf along the wall. Four spirit women stood on the bench behind the men. Each woman held a staff with an eagle's wing feather on the top. Next to the feather was a thin strip of baleen with a ball of eagle down at the tip. [...] There were four round holes in the wall. [...] Somehow, Toolik knew the holes in the bench were sitit (i.e. wolf dens) (Oquilluk 1981:155).

The appearance of the four round holes is significant for several reasons. The use of four dens complements the four spirit men as it suggests the four carnal directions--beyond suggesting a birth canal, or mysterious place of transformation. The wolf den holes can also be symbolic of holes that go into the earth--similar to such holes that a shaman enters to journey to the lower world. So strong was this belief that the Kotzebue version of the myth included a divining segment at the conclusion of the Messenger's Feast. The entire community--hosts and guests--would crawl through any of the fur-lined wolf holes with lamps shining from behind the holes. Those casting the longest shadows would live the longest and vice versa (Curtis [1930] 1970:176).

Because they are wolf dens has significance in light of the ancient Inupiat belief that all people once came from wolves. In telling of the King Island Performance Myth by Inupiaq elder, Frank Ellanna, the drummers are marked on either side of their noses with ochre (referred to as dance marks) as to convey the appearance and identification with wolves (Ellanna 1988:109-11).

Inupiaq elder Elijah Kakinya recalls asking elders, when he was a boy at the turn of the century, about the origin of the universe. What follows is a story that he was told

by two old men from his village. The men were so old and feeble that they had to crawl to get around; the young Elijah reasoned that they must be the first people because they were like wolves on all fours.

I cautiously asked one of them, "A long time ago, when you were young, what did you hear sometimes, regarding the beginnings of the universe?" [...] He said: "It is said that at that time, long ago, their sky was that which is now down under us. [...] It is said that it was dark, there was no sun. [...] After it was that way for a time, the earth turned over. [...] While they were down there a wolf had two children, a little boy, a little girl and from these two the people multiplied and increased while they were still down there. [...] It is said that from these wolves, from this part wolf, this young person, this little girl and little boy came all the people and began to multiply and increase. [...] I call myself part wolf, to myself. [...] When it (the earth) began to have people it turned over this way." (in Kisautaq 1978:42-44).

Through performance the community revitalizes a myth that directly leads back to the core of the Inupiat cultural origin and relationship with the earth and its spirits. The spirit world performance is but a model for performance in the ordinary world. The spirit world gives what is needed--skins, songs, dances, and the means--to return the animal spirit to the universal being. Expressed is the underlying belief of the Inupiat people that what is taken must be respected, and the taker has responsibility for its spiritual return as a way of giving thanks. The hunter and those that benefit from the universal spirit are only a part of a cycle. A game hunting morality--and the obligation to respect the spirit of the game--is asserted. In the Kotzebue myth the Eagle Father admonishes: "When you go home, do not kill so much game, only what is needed" (Curtis [1930] 1970:170).

THE BOX DRUM

Like other aspects of the Messenger's Feast myth the box drum and its use evolved. In the Kotzebue telling of the myth the Great Eagle Mother instructs the Young Hunter:

My heart is beating fast. Whenever I think of my son, my heart nearly

bursts, so I try to think of him. When the dance begins, I shall send my heart-beats to the box. It must have handles of whale whiskers. When you are ready for the beating, go outside and fill the bucket with water. This you must pour in the box, that it may not become thirsty, but will beat faster and give the time for the people to dance by. If any one does not like our dance, send him outside, and we shall eat him. We must have some human to eat. By following these instructions carefully, the spirit of our son will return to us. (Curtis [1930] 1970:170).

The sawtooth pattern top cut out at the top of the drum represents the mountain top where the Eagle Mother lives and where the Hunter journeyed. The booming hollowness of the drum is the heartbeat of the mother. Pouring water into the box drum not only creates a water drum but quenches the thirst of the eagle spirit of which the drum is a symbolic manifestation and incarnation. [14] The whale whiskers are significant for the Inupiat culture, one of the last great noncommercial whale-hunting cultures.

The mother's threat of "We must have some human to eat" is probably meant metaphorically; if one does not abide by the feast, then the natural or animal world will have its revenge. It may however, suggest that there was at one time an element of human sacrifice associated with the Eagle-Wolf Messenger Feast.

In 1885 ethnographer John Murdoch recorded the use of a box drum in the village of Point Barrow, which was intended to represent a tree. Shamans in numerous other indigenous cultures (including neighboring Siberia) climb the "tree of life" or "world tree" to visit the upper world of the spirits (Eliade 1972:120). The vertical tree as a connection to the spirit world, is compatible with the use of dance staffs, both having an "antenna" to the spirit world. The drum as a symbolic "tree" is surprising in the arctic tundra inhabited by the Inupiat where there are no trees and the only vertical deviation of landscape is mountains. Murdoch goes on to detail the use of the drum and accompanying performance although he was ignorant of its meaning. It is likely that Murdoch recorded a derivation of the Eagle-Wolf Messenger Feast; the vividness of his performance account gives some insight into the intensity of the performance.

At one end of this a small space was partitioned off with a piece of an old sail, and from the roof in the middle hung an object intended to represent a tree. This was made of two oblong boxes about 6 inches in diameter, open at both ends, the lower about 2 and one half feet long and the upper about

1 and one half, hinged together with a seal thong. At one side hung a wolf's skull, and on the other a dried raven. Two performers sat in the middle of the floor with their legs extended one between the other's legs, with his nose touching the tree. A row of old men beat drums and sang, while the performers chanted a monotonous song, in which could be heard the words "rum, tobacco, seal, deer, and whale."

Presently the bottom of the curtain was lifted and out crawled five men on all fours, wearing on their heads the stuffed skins of the heads of different animals -- the wolf, bear, fox, lynx, and dog. They swung their heads from side to side in unison, keeping time to the music, uttering a low growl at each swing and shaking their rattle mittens. This they kept up for fifteen or twenty minutes, while the chant still went on, and the chief performer, with excited gestures, embraced the tree and rubbed his nose against it from time to time. At last all 'sprang to their feet with a howl, and ended with the dance with wild gestures' (Murdoch [1892] 1987:374).

THE FUTURE OF THE MESSENGER'S FEAST

The North Slope Borough did not sponsor a Kivgiq in 1992, preferring to use those funds normally used for Kivgiq for a summer 1992 event celebrating the twentieth year anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. It was this congressional act in 1972, that gave Alaska native people both land and cash settlements in addition to establishing native corporations to manage their new found wealth. The North Slope Borough did not hold a Kivgiq in 1993, but held one in 1994, 1997, and 1999. The transformation of the Kivgiq, in form and function, is in keeping with the Messenger's Feast's evolution. The Kivgiq adjusts to reflect the changes in the lives of the Inupiat people.

In addition to traditional Inupiat dances, gift-giving, storytelling, and bartering, the 1991 Kivgiq included a Tae Kwon Do awards and Boy Scout presentation, a blessing (in Inupiat) by a local minister, and a talent contest that was heavy with country western music. "The aspect of gathering together is trying to make people laugh and entertain them" says James Nageak. A part of the entertainment in 1991 was the Barrow Mother's Club presentation of "Hawaiian Hula" dancing parody. This addition of contemporary elements doesn't seem to trouble the Inupiat and is seen as just a part of what happens when Inupiat people come together. The inclusion of non-traditional elements doesn't

bother James Nageak, his concern is more for what he views as the commercialization of Kivgiq over the last few years:

One of the things I don't like is the getting into commercialism. RAT NET (Rural Alaska Television) comes in and that kind of disrupts the flow. We have to start at a certain time, Western culture's time. What happens is that the people performing, all of the sudden say, "Okay, they want to see Koktovik people today." So the people that were already on get off and then Koktovik comes in. It's kind of a media show. If they want to do it on the terms of the people, they can't interrupt. (1991)

In addition to being shaped by the media--Kivgiq is broadcast throughout rural Alaska and to Anchorage--the event has increasingly been manipulated by local politicians who see it as a forum to demonstrate their adherence to traditional values. Nageak continues:

It feels like it is no longer something that is just spontaneous. That wasn't the intent. The thing is to get people together. What we are losing, we are losing the Inupiaq language; we are losing things that we really need and contribute to the world. I guess that's where the media can come in and contribute to the world. Interpret the value system, the worldview of the Inupiat people. But on our own terms. But now it is something more commercialized. "Oh, this would be something good for the tourist industry." No, that isn't the intent. (1991)

Sometime each fall the North Slope Borough's person in charge of Kivgiq will have a conference call with the leader and elders of the borough's eight villages. He will discuss with each village leader whether they should have a Kivgiq or not; if so, they will talk about how the event can be improved and adjusted. The dance groups of each village will then rehearse their traditional dances and think about presenting something unique and special. Furs, meat, fish, and other local specialties will be gathered in preparation for the Kivgiq months away. Trading partners, because there was a lapse of one year, will telephone one another or otherwise communicate what they would like to receive as a gift. And so the spirit of the ancient Messenger's Feast will travel again through the minds and hearts of the Inupiat people.

Chapter 3

Tuma Theatre

A few days after my arrival in August 1988 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, I was asked if I would be interested in working with Tuma Theatre, an Alaska native theatre group. The offer baffled and intrigued me. I had left Chicago, the Organic Theater Company and work in the American regional theatre system out of disillusionment and artistic dissatisfaction. As the newly appointed assistant professor of Theatre in such a unique and unusual place like Alaska, I saw an opportunity to reconsider my life, work, values and goals. Alaska native culture and its people, however, were as alien from my expectations, and mid-western inner city, Italian-American Catholic background as one can get. If ever there was an unlikely person to work with such a group, it was I. Intrigued by the opportunity of exploring another culture through its performance, I accepted, having no idea how or where to begin. Little did I realize it would open to a world of undreamed possibility.

In the empty room given to me as my office there were several videotapes. Some were of previous Tuma Theatre productions, and the rest were of traditional native dancing.

Tuma Theatre was initially organized in 1978 as a club by a group of Alaska Native students out of their need to meet and share dances and songs from their respective cultures. The formation of Tuma gained much of its inspiration from Tukak' Theatre, a Greenland Inuit group that performed on tour in Alaska. Tuma, like Tukak' was also concerned with survival and maintenance of culture amidst the overwhelming confrontation of Western culture. The need for Tuma was best articulated by David Epchook of Kwethluk, Alaska.

A new Beginning in expressing a way of life is always important. Today, many young Native Americans are enrolled in institutions of higher education. Facing a new culture at times makes one feel a sense of weakness. Through individual strength and integrity, all future events can be viewed from a positive perspective. A greater sense of strength is accomplished through group endeavors. [from Tuma Theatre program notes, 1980]

Original Tuma members were primarily Yup'ik and Inupiaq: Theresa John, Chuna and Drena McIntyre, Nellie Aluska, David Epchook, Morean Mayo, Cathy Lincoln, Veron Chimgalrea, Pam Van Dyke, and Christine Andrews. Joshua Weiser, a Jewish-American student from Los Angeles, and Yup'ik, Chuna McIntyre, became the group's organizers and fundraisers. McIntyre became the group's "spiritual" leader and Weiser "organizational" leader and through their effort Tuma was established within the English Department as an ongoing program; Weiser would later become director of Tuma. The curiosity of a non-native, like Weiser, taking leadership owes much to his commitment and organizational ability. It also says much about the indigenous organizational structures of the circumpolar north which values communalism over hierarchy. Working in a Western system, with its reliance on the written word, paperwork, budgets, structures, and timetables was anathema to Alaska natives. For similar reasons, the Greenland Inuit Tukak' also had a non-native director, Reidar Nilsson, a Norwegian.

Tuma's first production, *Story Knife*, dramatized six traditional folk tales taken from the Bethel area by using story telling and traditional dance. Story knifing is one of several traditional Yup'ik ways of telling stories. By using a decorated bone shaped as a knife, girls and women use the earth as their canvas, telling and drawing a story simultaneously. To go on to the next 'scene' the storyteller spits, wipes the earth clean and draws again. Specific archetypal figures were used in story knifing. Girls and women traditionally conveyed stories relating to myths, whereas men conveyed stories relating to subsistence hunting and survival.

Josh Weiser describes the production development process for *Story Knife*.

Each student submitted folk tales from his or her background that they thought would be suitable for stage dramatization. As a group, we reviewed the stories and chose the best one. As a group we pooled ideas on how the stories could best be staged. The result is not just an hour of entertainment. It can be better described as a warm cultural bath: a bath that is rich with the words, the wisdom, the songs and dances of our native elders. [from Polar Star, March 9, 1979]

The success of *Story Knife* prompted funding from the Kellogg Foundation to take the production on tour to Sitka, Juneau, Seattle, Portland, and Bethel. Nellie Aluska, a Yup'ik from Bethel, Alaska describes the purpose of "Story Knife" and the effect Tuma Theatre had.

We will be helping our people to remember instead of putting memories aside and locking them away in museums, in libraries, and on cassette tapes. [Tundra Drums, May 17, 1979, an article by Corey Flintoff]

This is a great learning experience for all of us. It is a great feeling to help our people remember some of the stories they use to hear from their ancestors. Not only will they remember, but they will see them acted out and that's great! In this way we are giving new life to our culture and are better able to cope with the constant pressures of cultural change, which all our people feel. [From Tuma Theatre program notes, 1980]

Tuma, which means "pathway," "the way" or "trail" in the central Yup'ik language, produced several story telling dramatizations. Tuma's next production of *Our Stories* used story telling and dancing similarly. Tuma's third production, the highly

successful *Raven Faces*, combined story telling, dance and mask performance. The production toured widely through the western and southwestern United States, Hawaii, and New Zealand.

Tuma's early success prompted its establishment as an academic program with course offerings under the auspices of the English Department. In 1983 the University of Alaska Fairbanks, in recognition of Tuma's success, hired non-native Steve Crosby as an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Alaska Native Studies. With most of its originators graduated (Weiser went on to direct Tinqiuk Theatre in the village of Chevak) Crosby became an important link in Tuma's evolution and continuation. Taking disparate components Crosby integrated and defined Tuma's academic curriculum and vastly expanded it organizationally to the point where its productions would tour to native villages each spring. Like his predecessors, Crosby used the rich story telling and dance tradition of Yup'ik and Inupiat Alaska as a starting point for theatrical production. His 1984 production of *In the Beginning...* used five traditional origin stories tied together through narration by a grandfather character that tells the stories to his grandchildren.

The University allotted Tuma Theatre \$80,000 for development and operations. According to memos, much of the money was used for program development and research. A territorial riff between the departments of Theatre and Alaska Native Studies (Crosby was cross-appointed) in addition to personality conflicts put Tuma in limbo. The Theatre Department was academically geared to produce Western style theatre and had no interest in producing native theatre. The Theatre Department had the facilities and support personnel and Alaska Native Studies had the budget. Crosby was obliged to each department and caught in the middle. Tuma Theatre suffered, and as a consequence, during the period from 1985 to 1988 Tuma produced only "Work in Progress" productions.

Tuma Theatre productions and curriculum, under Crosby, shifted to Western academic theatrical models for structure and expression. The shift was due to a combination of Crosby's inexperience with Alaska native performance traditions and, towards the end of his appointment, to acrimonious pressures from the Theatre Department. In order to 'fit-in' with the Theatre Department's season, the Western-trained Crosby gravitated to Western theatrical models. His *In the Beginning...* had the

look of Western children's theatre and did little to reveal the spiritual worldview beneath the chosen stories. Tuma's next production *Village* completed the shift away from traditional story and dance, adopting Western theatrical dramaturgy instead.

The *Village* premiered during the 1988 15th Annual Festival of Native Arts held in Fairbanks. The Theatre Department had little involvement with the production, which used minimal set pieces, lighting, and costumes. The *Village* was a highly successful portrayal of contemporary Alaska Native village life. Set in the imaginary village of Illustik, the play looked at the near death and then rejuvenation of a town plagued with alcoholism. The play began with a celebration followed by the cast telling the audience about their home and the issues of land claims, subsistence rights, and the biggest problem, alcohol and alcohol abuse.

The play walked the fine line between theatre and therapy with many of the actors using personal stories. Linda Ayagarak, who played a suicide victim's mother, was raised in an alcoholic family. She cared for her younger brothers and sisters and at age fifteen began drinking herself. She once attempted suicide. The play helped Ayagarak stop drinking. Her character was a recovering alcoholic. Ayagarak herself stopped drinking during the rehearsals for the performance. Ayagarak comments on the play's subject matter and importance.

The play is very important. It says there is always hope and you can always hope and you can always reach for help. I felt so alone. I thought nobody cared. But there is help and it's important you tell people that somebody does care. [Fairbanks News Miner, February 19, 1988]

The well-received *Village* premiered at the Festival of Native Arts and subsequently toured to Anchorage, and several villages and towns in Alaska. It was however, Crosby's last production. Citing budget cuts and the Theatre Department's insurmountable non-support, he resigned from the University in May 1988. The *Village* elicited these comments from the Nome Nugget.

The audience was left in stunned silence as the play ended, until the players wisely led a welcome dance, joined by a few local people, to bring us back to reality. Then the players and director sat on the edge of the stage to answer

questions. They got more than just a few questions from the audience. Four people rose spontaneously from their seats to speak of how the play affected them. Tuma Theatre responded that their script was freely available to groups who would like to do a performance themselves. [Nome Nugget, March 18, 1988]

After viewing the Tuma Theatre video in my office I was, struck by the dilemma of native performance. Their choices were either story telling and dance or the alien medium of Western theatre, an inorganic rendering of their worldview.

Adopting the performance model of Western theatre smacked of an insidious form of cultural colonialism, affording the native performers an expression, but at the same time shaping their performance expression in Western terms. Western theatre is a pervasive and highly developed form of expression, its influence spread throughout the world through television and film. It is easy to understand how it has become a convenient, adopted medium of performance expression for cultures worldwide.

The other videotapes on the bookshelf contained traditional Inupiat and Yup'ik Eskimo dance groups. Taped in small villages, the videos conveyed an easy informality and communal participation—children dancing with elders, laughing as family celebrating their cultural heritage. Traditional performance drew me in and spoke something deep and reassuring. The powerful beat of the drum, the fur, bead, and feather regalia, the deep back of the throat chanting, and the mimetic movements of animals, spirits, elements, and events were a simple yet complexly integrated expression.

Why was there a disconnection between the traditional and contemporary expression of Alaska native people? Was it because they had two different and mutually exclusive views of themselves, one a traditional, the other a contemporary (i.e. Western)? It was as if they were saying the traditional and modern ways do not mix, are separate realities.

Alaska native people, like indigenous people everywhere, are both influenced and challenged by Western culture. More times than not the influence has been traumatizing and destructive. Living in a limbo present, between a traditional and assuring past and the alien uncertainties of modern, Western culture, indigenous people, exist between cultures. The values of traditional culture, rooted in their land and their cosmology evolved from that land, seem irrelevant in a world that values the immediate

over the long term, development over maintenance, change over balance, individuality over communality, and mobility over continuance.

Between these worlds there is a great confluence and conflict with few devices for indigenous people to decipher what has happened to them, define who they are, and what they should do next. Traditional performance reassures and maintains continuity with ancient values. The challenges of contemporary life--social, political and personal--are deemed beyond the capacity of traditional performance. As a result, to deal with contemporary issues, indigenous people often resort to the well-established mechanism of the Western performance tradition, often forsaking their own cultural point-of-view for an expression appropriate to their other, contemporary self and context. In so doing, however, they betray themselves and culture, abetting the demise of their own unique cultural legacy. In turn, they deny themselves and other traditions, including the Western tradition, the ancient insight and wisdom their culture offers.

Indigenous performance creates a window into a very different, ancient reality. It is not some exotic "otherness," but a living, viable, transformable expression revealing startling new realities the Western mindset had historically chosen to overlook, patronize or marginalize. To understand and work with indigenous people is to witness the slow and painful swallowing of smaller cultures by the West. We know it is happening, we see it, yet one feels helpless to do anything about it.

There were fundamental questions prefacing my work with Tuma. Many of these questions and debates still rattle through my mind: How to preserve a culture? Should it be preserved? Change is inevitable in this increasingly interdependent, networked world. Why not let cultural progression or evolution take its course? History is full of cultural absorption, transformations, extinction, evolution, and recombination. Who cares? Why care? Where do I, a white guy, fit in? Why and how should I react?

For whatever reason, for better or for worse, the dominant culture of the West, my cultural tradition, has had its way for the last thousand or so years. Today, the culture of the West realizes there is nowhere else on earth to go. Now it turns inward, taking inventory in what it is, appreciating others, admitting wrongs and attempting to make things right. Western culture's strongest suit is its adaptability. The success of a world culture, and the survival of the human race, will depend upon dialog and consideration of

all the best humanity has to offer. The knowledge of Alaska native and other indigenous people of the world needs to be a part of the emerging global culture dialogue. Dialogues have always created the most fruitful and best results. Dialogue is an essential part of the earth's evolution.

The problem, unfortunately for Alaska native and many other fragile indigenous cultures, is that the mechanism and momentum of their transformation (absorption or destruction) already is in play. The plight of Alaska's native people is similar to that of other indigenous cultures threatened with transformation and acculturation. When an elder passes away, a part of the earth's legacy is lost.

The question becomes how to best preserve the essence, on their terms, of an indigenous culture that offers centuries of existence and untold knowledge. Performance is, within orally based and transmitted indigenous traditions, an encoding, record, and key to their culture—a DNA-like braid of being, living on the earth, past, present, mind, spirit, and body.

The earth still speaks through indigenous people; their performance is a living diagram of their being, ways, history, and cosmology.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

During the fall of 1988 UAF's Mike Gaffney, chair of the Alaska Native Studies department, and James Nageak, an Inupiat elder teaching in the Alaska Native Languages Department, led me to what little documentation existed on the subject of Alaskan indigenous performance. Alaska native performance was a rich terrain, however, no coherent map existed--I would have to explore first hand the geography of the performance culture allowing it to take me where it would.

My journey began with the obvious--a library and museum study of anything relating to Alaska native people. The written record of Alaska native culture exists in fragments scattered amid usually dry anthropological records, explorer travelogues, and a small amount of oral history transcripts. Video and audio tape recordings of contemporary festivals and dances were helpful, but made me realize how the tradition had been transformed and lived in the present day as benign social events, far removed

from the direct reference of their “savage, primitive” or “heathen” ceremonial and ritual origins.

There exist few photographic or pictorial records of historical Alaska native performance. Novelty-seeking white photographers, like Edward Curtis, generally staged what few records exist. In my research I found performance artifacts to be in abundance: masks, shamans' costumes, drums, puppets, dance sticks and fans, and totems. However, any detailed indication of their function and meaning was scant. A wonderful resource was Edward Nelson, the indefatigable Smithsonian botanist, who in the late 19th century became Alaska's great recorder and collector of Alaska native lifestyles and artifacts. But, like other early white recorders, Nelson generally did not comprehend the complex meaning and context of the numerous masks and performances he did not witness nor the regalia he acquired. His record and collection, nonetheless, still stands as a significant resource for artifacts and traditional performance.

Soon, what began to emerge from the research were bits of a puzzle. As a fuller picture emerged, however, I had to constantly remind myself to resist the urge to glue the puzzle together with categories of definition, classification, and organization that was the inclination of my cultural tradition and training. Kept foremost in my mind was patience and respect, allowing what I found, speak for on its own terms, and not condition it with my expectations. A fine balance between enthusiasm and respect and practicality was necessary. Anthropological research was one tool, which helped to identify and record traditional performance occurrences, but it was only the entry point and a means to an end. My primary objective was to define the meaning, motivation, and methods of how to create Alaska native theatre. To do so I had to scan for an essence and not the detail; in the essence I sensed, lay what was important for Tuma's significance. The detail would come. Anthropology and traditional practice were but means by which the group would reimagine the traditional methods and expression, providing context from which to extrapolate the creation of a contemporary Alaska native performance idiom.

To further prepare I became a student of Alaska native dance which later proved to be a surprise catalyst to my understanding of the culture. The drumbeat sent their cultural rhythms through my body. Dancing the stories of hunters, animals, and mythology, transforming from hunter to walrus to moon to snowfall, I understood their

culture in a way that no words can explain and only personal experience can teach. The heartbeat-like rhythm pounded out on drums stretched with walrus stomach, combined with emotion-evoking throat singing, and a strict pattern of repeated mimetic movements was a trance-like pathway to the Yup'ik and Inupiat Eskimo worldview. 1

Learning Yup'ik and Inupiat dance also went far to demonstrate my sincerity and commitment to learn of their performance tradition. Though not able to speak more than a few words of their verbal language, I could speak their language of dance. During one dancing session with dancers on St. Lawrence Island, an elder sat pointing at me, and chuckling. I had just danced a walrus dance and I thought he was making fun of me. Through a translator I asked for an explanation and the reply was: "He can't believe how you can dance so good like an Eskimo. When he sees you dancing he says it is like watching the Disney Channel!"

Mike Gaffney made the reduced 1988-89 Tuma Theatre budget (approximately \$12,000) available for me to travel throughout Alaska to meet and work with native elders, dance groups, and anyone else who had anything to do with Alaska native performance. My work with Tuma demanded time and personal adjustment. I resolved my work with Tuma had to be thorough, not only for myself, but also in response to the responsibility I had been given. My first year I traveled over six thousand miles without leaving the state of Alaska, to remote villages such as Chevak, Hooper Bay, Savoonga, Toksook Bay, Minto, and Gamble, meeting with elders, conducting interviews, dancing and singing. My objective was to record and develop a broad sense of performance styles, history, and methods. My village travel often meant flying in flimsy, in noisy six-seat planes that were sometimes blown sideways by strong Arctic cross winds. Traveling to villages meant flying over hundreds of miles unending white tundra or the ice floe filled Bering sea, and landing on gravel runways that suddenly appeared out of a vast whiteness located next to a cluster of hundred or so houses, a church, and a school.

My travel and first hand experience in villages provided the catalyst of revelation to understanding the context and function of traditional Alaskan Eskimo performance. Their rituals, ceremonies, and festivals evolved out of the necessity of survival and were a practical tool by which to shape and guide their existence. Inseparable, implied, and ingrained within their performance are their land, lifestyle, and spirits. It is performance

that brought traditional (historical and to a lesser degree contemporary) Inupiat and Yup'ik people back to a rhythmic and spiritual dialogue with their part of the earth. Dance movements are memoirs of the animals, the elements, and their life. Their performance is simultaneously a metaphoric and metaphysical context for their daily existence with the earth and a participation in a spirit reality that, by its intent and expression, asserts living in balance and harmony with their community of place. It is a community that includes the human, animal, elemental, spiritual, and ancestral. 2

David Abrams explains the indigenous worldview as primarily a sensual reality of which humans are a part.

The larger community includes, along with the humans, the multiple non-human entities that constitute the local landscape, from the diverse plants and the myriad animals, birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, insects--that inhabit or migrate through the region, to particular winds and weather patterns that inform the local geography, as well as the various landforms--forests, rivers, caves, mountains--that lend their specific character to the surrounding earth.

[Abram, 1996:6-7]

Standing alone on the unending and soft sloping tundra of Tooksok Bay overlooking the Bering Sea and surrounded by vast and deep quiet provided me with an understanding about the Yup'ik and Inupiat cultures, and for myself, that will forever live with me. In the worldview of the Alaskan Eskimo, the earth is the measure of all things, and by extension, Man belongs to the earth. In stark contrast, the Western worldview, maintains humans are the measure of all things. And with this cultural view has come a disconnection from the ways of the earth that rejects the idea of interdependence with the earth, animal and spirit world. With humankind at the center of the Western worldview, the earth is relegated to a secondary status. Likewise, in the drama of Western culture, the earth--and the spirit world it embodies--is but a backdrop for human action, ignored altogether, or exploited as an antagonist. Traditional Alaskan native belief considers the individual differently--as someone that is part of a whole. A whole is greater than what was physically tangible.

Being part of a whole is central to a cosmological view connecting everything--all things are spiritually invested and transformational. The individual performer then is a part of the whole, able to transform into an animal or spirit, becoming

another part of the whole to which the performer belongs. To disrespect the earth, its elements or its animals is to do harm to oneself. Traditional Alaskan Eskimo performance remains a means of recognizing and maintaining a sense of cosmological whole, both spiritual and material. Respecting and giving thanks to the earth, the animals and the spirits was standard text to Yup'ik and Inupiat performance. [Riccio, 1991: 14]

In a land of such extremes and experiences every event, every moment, became a revelation. My most basic perceptions altered. Ten months a year the land of the Alaskan Eskimo is blanketed with snow. The treeless, barren tundra is swept with constant blowing wind and the ever-changing sky melds white, gray and blue into a horizon of sea or land. Distance is immense, disorienting, and distorted. Ordinary perceptions are easily altered to accept reality and illusion as one. The Western sense of time is rendered irrelevant on the tundra. Instead it is the rhythm of the all-encompassing and mighty earth that dictates the course of a day's events. Daily events, like those of the Eskimo hunter, are not influenced by a wristwatch, but by the changing tides, light, sky, winds, and seasons. The call of a bird may indicate the approach of fish, seal or walrus. The sea's stillness or change in smell indicates the approach of a whale. In villages the rhythm of the earth is accepted and adjusted to--for it can be no other way. Once, I was unable to leave St. Lawrence Island because of a snowstorm lasting several days. It was mid-May and the storm had been unusual for that time of year. "This year we had two winters" an elder Jimmy Toolie shrugged. "We'll just do some more dancing, that's all." Snow covered entire houses to their peaks, and stairs, carved in the snow, descended from a level near the roof to a house's doorway. They adjusted to the inconvenience without much difficulty or complaint.

By virtue of their isolation and remoteness the Yup'ik and Inupiat people experienced late contact with Western culture. Unlike the Native Americans of the contiguous United States, the brunt of Alaska's colonization occurred during the early twentieth century. Today, the majority of Alaska's approximately 75,000 native people live in small villages. The Aleut, Yup'ik and Inupiat Eskimos of Alaska inhabit over one hundred villages along the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea. The Athabaskan Indians, along with a scattering of interior Eskimo villages, dot the great interior of Alaska with villages. The Aleut, Chilkat, Tlingit, Haida, Tsmisian Indians populate the southern areas of the

state. Despite the modern world manifestations, such as satellite dishes, electric generators, and pre-fab bungalow houses built (and mortgaged) by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), village life has remained fundamentally as it has for thousands of years. Central to village life--its economic, social, political and cultural life--is the subsistence lifestyle. More than a century after Native Americans of the "lower 48" witnessed the demise of their subsistence lifestyle, Alaska natives have retained the ancient birthright of hunting and gathering. For the Alaska Native subsistence lifestyle is more than a way of life, it is a way of being--if not their identity. It organizes, identifies, and perpetuates their culture. It has accordingly influenced the substance and form of their cultural performance.

Many of the villages were built only after church, governmental, and educational pressures forced the formerly seasonal nomadic Eskimo and Athabaskan Indian to permanently settle. The time of missionary fervor and settlement occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries on the heels of fur trading, whaling, and gold expeditions. To forestall competition over a limited and isolated population, Alaska's Christian missionaries each agreed to limit their activities to certain villages and to recognize the sovereignty of the others sphere of influence. As a consequence many villages today bear the indelible religious, cultural, and social mark of the church that missionized them. In those villages with Anglican churches, such as Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island, it is not unusual to find people with names like Cedric or Nathaniel—eighteenth century English names reflecting the influence of the church (in this case Anglican) and authors' names found in hymnals.

The effect the missionaries had on the social, religious and cultural life of a small village unit can vary. Some churches did not allow traditional drumming or even the speaking of traditional languages, claiming it was the manifestation of the devil. To the colonizers the alien back of the throat sounds of native languages inspired fear and associations with the widespread and influential practice of shamanism. As a consequence, the legacy of early missionary work still scars the Alaska native population today. There are several villages where few if any are able to speak their native language--other villages such as the Yup'ik Kipnuk and Inupiat Buckland have totally lost their drumming and singing tradition. Many religious groups today acknowledge the

missionary zeal of the past and have made a variety of gestures of reconciliation and forgiveness. Atrophy over three generations, however, has broken the fragile continuity of oral tradition. Some Alaskans are trying to recover their heritage, while others are overwhelmed by the task.

The events thrust upon a few generations have exacted a heavy toll on the fragile orally transferred traditions of Alaska native people. The forced break in oral transference and traditional performance practice is symptomatic of a fundamental reordering and adoption of indigenous people to an inorganic and alien worldview. For the Yup'ik and Inupiat, the forced colonization of the mind, body and spirit have induced self-loathing, confusion, depression, and trauma. The result has been a tremendous social, political, and cultural upheaval that in turn has given rise to drug, alcohol, and domestic abuse. The native people of Alaska have one of the highest infant mortality, fetal alcohol syndrome, spousal abuse, and suicide rates in the nation.

Going to an Inupiat village today one might see the bones of a recently landed whale littering the ground outside of a school's computer lab, or a hunter flipping through fifty channels on his satellite, cable-linked television as his wife butchers a seal on the kitchen floor next to him. The predicament of being in two worlds simultaneously creates the core of their culture shock. The ancient world, which gave their life meaning and order, vanishes a little more with each passing day. The Western world's dominance has conspired to dissolve the ancient ways of this small group of proud, gentle, and respectful people. The younger generations--attracted and influenced by the hipness, fashion, and glamour of the West--have for the most part, forsaken their traditional folkways. Many of the native students at the University of Alaska do not know where or how they fit in. They are forced to participate in the Western culture that simultaneously excludes and overwhelms them. The elders and traditional ways are seen as alien, irrelevant, or simply old fashioned--they are caught in the middle with few options or guidance. However, despite Western culture's onslaught and the confusion it has brought, there has slowly come a renewed awareness of traditional values and ways and with that a developing sense of cultural re-evaluation and renewal. Like waking from a bad dream or recovering from an injury, Alaska native people, both young and old, are beginning to re-evaluate their ancient ways as a source of strength and identity.

In an odd twist of history and fate, an institution of Western culture--the University of Alaska, with Tuma Theatre, its' Native Language Center, the Alaska Native Studies Department, Rural Student Services, and the Art Department--has found itself in the unusual position of being a tradition bearer and caretaker of Alaskan native culture. At the university many Native students learn to dance traditionally, speak their native languages, study native stories, or carve a native mask. Tuma Theatre has become, because of its centrality, a gathering point for the evolution of Inupiat and Yup'ik performance culture.

THE PRACTICAL WORK BEGINS

When I began teaching Tuma Theatre classes in the fall of 1989, I knew enough about Alaska native performance and culture to acknowledge I knew very little. How was I to convey, within the context of an educational institution defined by Western cultural expectations, categories, analysis, and sense of reality, the performance of a culture reflecting such a different worldview? The task of shaping and articulating all of what I had researched the previous year and experienced into some sort of academic program while remaining truthful to the culture, was daunting. I could not help but feeling awkward being a non-native person presenting and teaching native culture. Was I nothing more than a latter day neo-colonialist? Was my effort yet another instance of a meddling white man thinking he knew a better way native people should do things? At the same time, would it be right to stand to the side and do nothing? There is a fine line between helping and harming. Honesty and patience with self and others is the only guide.

Before teaching my first Tuma Theater class I developed a set of principles, a navigational instrument for uncharted waters—inspired by Alaska native values. Remarkably this set of principles has held up well, remaining viable, with minor adjustment, throughout my relationship with Tuma.

The working principles (in no particular order):

- 1) Do not presume to know, or try to be an insider.

- 2) We have gathered to learn and explore their culture together.
- 3) We are all equal participants.
- 4) We must all endeavor to be informed, honest and sensitive to one another.
- 5) Differences will arise.
- 6) We all have a responsibility to one another and to the work.
- 7) The work is guided by consensus.
- 8) The work is as big or as small as we are.
- 9) We must all be willing to make mistakes
- 10) We must not be troubled about being corrected.
- 11) Authority is derived from trust and respect.
- 12) We are on a journey of sharing, working, and discovering together.
- 13) My position is as a guide, bringing knowledge and experience of creating performances.
- 14) The group brings themselves, their culture and their experience.

The first Tuma Theatre class I taught consisted of thirteen Yup'ik and Inupiat Eskimos, two Athabaskan Indians, and five non-natives (white students). After the first day class introductions I used a group exercise to warm up the students and to get an indication of how well people moved. It soon became obvious the Western theatre styled stretching and vocal warm-up was absurdly inappropriate for the objectives and type of performance work we were preparing for. I stopped the warm-up and said: "This is wrong. I don't know what we should be doing but this is wrong. We must create an Alaskan Native warm-up." The students looked puzzled and stood awkwardly. In the bodies of the native students were wellsprings of traditional culture and performance. The challenge was how to draw it out of them, how to learn from it, and then how to assist in the shaping of a contemporary performance expression.

THE RITUAL PREPARATION

Within the group were several Alaska native students with varying degrees of knowledge of their dance and song tradition. There were also, between the Yup'ik and

Inupiat, five men who came from villages who were their family's primary subsistence hunters. The entire class was asked to present for our next session as an assignment, three "traditional Alaska native movements." What "traditional" meant remained for them to determine.

At our next session each student presented his or her "traditional" movements. The Yup'ik and Inupiat are generally very shy people—so much so that most of the women and many of the men in the class would not look at me directly. The avoidance of eye contact was in deference to my position and age. With this in mind, I anticipated the presentation to be difficult, but a necessary first step in their Tuma Theatre training. To my astonishment their shyness evaporated when presenting their "traditional" movements. They presented a remarkable shift in personality. It was as if they were not alone in front of the group, but rather performing with their culture.

Many of the movements presented were lifestyle and subsistence hunting related, the majority of which existed, in one form or other, in their extensive traditional dance vocabulary. Mimetic movements portraying hunting, fishing, traveling, searching kayaking, and fire making were prominent. Other animal movements included walrus, seal, raven, grizzly bear, eagle, and whale. A smaller number of movements depicted natural events such as the northern lights, the wind, the horizon, walking across ice, and giving thanks to the spirits. A dance pulsating two beat rhythm accompanied all of the movements presented by the Inupiat and Yup'ik students.

Through a process of group discussion several of the movements were discarded while other movements were consolidated or refined; those remaining were organized into a sequence to serve as a warm-up. A warm-up that was not only physical and vocal, but also, as it turned out, a ritual evocation of their culture and spirituality. As the warm-up evolved through the following weeks, it became known as the "Ritual Preparation" because that is what it had become, or *Emmo*, named for a fictive character we developed. The Ritual Preparation was both a ritual and a story--the story of *Emmo* from the village of Emmonak, who travels and transforms freely from animal to bird to human as he or she hunts, dog mushes, and fishes among other things.

During the building of the Ritual Preparation, what was initially organized as a series of movements determined primarily by physical flow from one movement to

another, soon evolved, through association, into a story. Little did I realize at the time of initial presentation that the movements were a kind of hieroglyph that had meaning physically, imaginatively, and spiritually, beyond their simple gesture. The isolated movements and actions the students originally presented were for them culturally charged with association and history. Since their hunting and gathering lifestyle is by its very nature physical, the movements were also ideally suited for the purposes of physical training. One can speculate that the movements of Yup'ik and Inupiat dance served, in part, as a sort of mental and physical training for subsistence activities. For instance, the back of the thigh as well as many of the muscle groups exercised by their dances are essential to a variety of subsistence activities.

As the Ritual Preparation evolved, it became similar to how traditional Eskimo dance was created. Instinctually we had stumbled onto the methodology of how Alaskan Eskimo people created performance. The Preparation, as with Yup'ik and Inupiat dance, was drawing from a vast vocabulary of mimetic movements representing subsistence living, feeling, elements, and animals. The movement vocabulary was the building block from which to pull to create a dance, a Ritual Preparation, a performance. The movement vocabulary of the Yup'ik (southwestern Alaska) and the Inupiat (northwestern Alaska) were nearly interchangeable, the largest distinction being the Yup'ik tendency to perform stationary or seated, whereas the Inupiat moved through space. The movements were like codes that had immediate cultural recognition and reference—in this respect it compares with how Indian Kathakali or ballet function within their cultural contexts. However, unlike Kathakali or ballet, Yup'ik and Inupiat movements are not abstractions or stylization's of actions once found in daily existence, but rather direct, mimetic reference to actions and events still a part of their life. And like any living language new movements were created as others were adjusted and evolved according to need.

The warm-up movements had only a half-life without a rhythm. The use of rhythm, internalized, vocalized in chant and song or pounded out with a drum is what brought the movements to life. As in their dance tradition, the rhythm and dance movement became inseparable and indistinguishable. Tambourine style Yup'ik and Inupiat drums (which are traditionally stretched with walrus or seal stomach, but for durability we used rip-stop material) were added and became a vital part of our emerging

“ritual warm-up.” To heighten rhythm awareness, bringing its vibration into the body, two 2’ foot long sticks were given to each performer. The use of the sticks was inspired by the traditional Yup’ik dance stick, which was usually richly decorated and used as a baton in which the spirit of the rhythm lived. In addition to the performers being able to participate in the beat, the stick also served as a prop that could variously transform into a bow and arrow, a fishing pole, a kayak paddle, and bird wings among other things.

Variations of the iambic two beat rhythm combined organically with the movements to give shape, drive, and substance to the Ritual Preparation. Concurrently developed were vocal chants and song, which like the movements and drumbeat were pulled from a long established and well-known cultural vocabulary. Though many of the chant sounds had no literal meaning, they nonetheless communicated a wide variety of feelings and ideas by way of vocal placements (e.g. high nasal/forehead complemented with back of the throat sounds), repetitions, and intensity changes. Within a month a 30-minute, physically and vocally demanding Ritual Preparation was evolved, applying simultaneously the three elements of dance/movement, song/chant, and rhythm. Ritual Preparation resulted in complex expression that served as a culturally specific and meaningful expression of values, reality, and worldview.

The Ritual Preparation established during my first year with Tuma Theater evolved and changed over the next five years. It became a touchstone by which old and new members of Tuma could participate in a shared and continuous body of knowledge. True to its cultural inspiration and origins, the Ritual Preparation functioned like an indigenous cultural legacy passed generationally—remaining always practical, meaningful, and living.

The evolution of our ritual preparation into the story of *Emmo* was significant and indicative of the Yup’ik and Inupiat cultural tendency of relating experiences in story form. Traditional stories, legends, and myths are central to their oral history tradition and the primary vehicle of historical and educational transference between generations. Animal-human transformations and supernatural occurrences fill traditional Yup’ik and Inupiat stories. Besides encoding myth and cosmology, stories also efficiently conveyed practical information regarding geography, climate, subsistence lifestyle, and cultural values. Their telling was also a social event that enjoyed a central place within their

culture. Without our devising it, our *Emmo* diagrammed a hunter-gather performance narrative befitting the efficiency of the culture that inspired it.

The Ritual Preparation evolved into an ideal physical and vocal preparation warm-up. Unlike a Western theatre warm-up that emphasized technical development and control of the body, voice, imagination, and expression, the Ritual Preparation would also serve as a window to the Alaska native worldview. The Ritual Preparation not only readied the performers physically and imaginatively for the group's work, it also provided the means of re-establishing a very immediate interaction with their culture. The process of developing the Ritual Preparation was not, according to the oral communication emphasis we adopted, recorded in written form.³ However, for the benefit of the reader, a written outline of the Ritual Preparation as evolved and performed by Tuma Theatre in 1995 is included as Appendix 1.

The Ritual Preparation, its process and performance, proved to be a germinating seed from which all of my subsequent work with Tuma Theatre would evolve. The Ritual Preparation was also a blueprint, context, and metaphor to which our future practical work could refer. Indeed, the technique of the Ritual Preparation, created by trial and error and experiment, would also similarly serve as an entry point to my work with other indigenous performance groups. Several and varied successful applications would prove the Ritual Preparation to be an invaluable tool by which to initiate and evolve work in a variety of indigenous performance settings. I have successfully applied Ritual Preparation methods in the following cultural contexts: the Greenland Inuit, Siberian Sakha, Zulu, and Russian Slavs.

The Ritual Preparation was a reference point and watershed for all of Tuma Theatre's future performances. The building of the Ritual Preparation created a tangible and accessible language as it identified working methods of performance development.

With the Ritual Preparation, we had stumbled upon an operating and training model that established many fundamental working principles and served a multiplicity of functions:

- 1) Compact and efficient way of identifying and demonstrating to a group its own unique performance cultural language.
- 2) Focuses the work of the group.

- 3) A process oriented project that was allowed to evolve and change, establishing the foundation for important working principles.
- 4) A process belonging to the group and not for public consumption.
- 5) Established a group performance vocabulary and style.
- 6) Established and encouraged open debate and interaction.
- 7) Established and encouraged interaction with traditional/indigenous performance culture—making it participatory and malleable rather than simply served and fixed.
- 8) Established an atmosphere and method of working unique to the group and the cultural context.
- 9) Established a critical framework to which subsequent work could refer.
- 10) Encouraged and developed an ensemble and rhythmic sensibility.
- 11) Developed a technical ability for quick rhythmic and movement transitions.
- 12) Created a story line, and in a sense a group myth, that lived in each member of the group.
- 13) Established a creative working methodology between participants and between the director and participants.
- 14) Established and explored culturally specific rhythms.

BODY AS SCRIPT & THE MYTHOLOGY OF MOVEMENT

Each culture has or specifically creates coded movement as a consequence of its social interactions, relationship to the earth, its climate, and other creatures. Some cultures rigidly adhere to these coded movements as if sacred (claiming they were given by the ancestors, spirit, or gods) and by expressing them provide a window to the sacred and/or mythological. These coded movements become both mnemonics and living, participatory pathways to a culture's origins and configuration. In a sense these movement are a culture's mythology that lives and is expressed in the human body. Generally those cultures that depend and live more closely with their environment expressed themselves with performance more dependent on such movement coding. Within some cultures the coded movements have evolved into highly codified artistic

forms, retaining and recognizing, in some sense, a relationship that the culture once had with its part of the earth.

It is interesting to consider the performance expressions of Noh Theatre, Kathakali, the Beijing Opera, yoga, Tai chi, and ballet as formalized, codified, and re-imagined coded movements from an earlier and now removed interaction with the earth. Through codification these performance expressions hold, in the human body, their mythology and ancient connection with their indigenous place and way of being. Mircea Eliade, in his Cosmos and History: the Myth of the Eternal Return speaks about dance and its sacred, archetypal origins.

All dances were originally sacred; in other words they had an extra human model. The model may in some cases have been totemic or emblematic animal, whose motions were reproduced to conjure up its concrete presence through magic, to increase its numbers, to obtain incorporation into the animal on the part of man. [...] The dance may be executed to acquire food, to honor the dead, or to assure good order in the cosmos [...] for every dance was created in illo tempore, in the mythical period, by an ancestor, totemic animal, a god, or a hero. Choreographic rhythms have their model outside of the profane life of man; whether they reproduce the movements of the totemic or emblematic animal, or the motions of the stars; whether they themselves constitute rituals (labyrinthine steps, leaps, gestures performed with ceremonial instruments) a dance always imitates an archetypal gesture or commemorates a mythical moment. In a word, it is a repetition, and consequently a reactualization, of illud tempus, "those days." [Eliade, 1959: 28-29]

Alaskan Eskimo dance is unique amongst indigenous people in the degree it applies illustrative movements and gestures--the Eskimo themselves refer to it as "story dancing." The movement vocabulary of the Inupiat and Yup'ik dance traditions is very similar, sometimes identical and often interchangeable. The most distinct difference between the two is that Inupiat dance is performed standing and can move in the space, whereas Yup'ik dance requires its male dancers to sit on their legs as the women dance in place behind them. Another significant difference is how each tradition uses and expresses their basic dance beat: the Inupiat hit their drums from underneath their tambourine drums and accent the space between the basic two beat, creating a silent third beat. The Yup'ik hit their drums on the top and seldom accent the silent beat.

Yup'ik and Inupiat dance movements illustrate a full range of expressions and feelings such as looking, hearing, eating, walking, hunting, joy, age, surprise, talking, birds, seals, mountains, walrus, raven, northern lights. The mimetic quality of the dances refers to and evolves from the pragmatism of their traditional hunting and gathering existence. Dances told stories by movement for education, reflection, commentary, and in celebration of community, and their worldview. Dance stories are as vital to the transmission of Alaska Eskimo culture as is their oral story telling tradition. These two modes of traditional culture transmission complement one another—one illustrating the other. What oral stories could not convey, the body conveyed in sensory terms using rhythm, gesture, and performance. Dance enabled the Alaskan Eskimo to participate in their tradition proactively with the dancer understanding and personally expressing the rhythm and interplay between human, animal, and spirit worlds. Significantly, dances are communally owned and participatory and not the domain of specialist or artists, but rather something an entire community shared. Their community was not only the immediate, present-day community, but included their ancestors, their part of the earth, its animals and spirits.

Within this cultural context the body is in essence the performance script. The body script, in its application, form, transformational expression, and use of rhythm encodes dense and immediate messages of intertwining relationships between human-animal-spirit world cosmology, the climate, environment, and survival. This is not to say Yup'ik and Inupiat traditional dance is strictly illustrative and only pragmatic in its means and ends. Traditional dance contains within it a very fluid ability to abstract and convey feeling--with many movements expressed simply for their beauty. However, in keeping with its hunting-gathering origins, which mandated adaptability, many recently created dances have incorporated expressions of operating a boat's outboard motor, use of a rifle, playing basketball, and their enthusiasm for professional boxing. Their dance is not only a way of reflecting traditional events but also a way of incorporating new events into their own cultural perspective. Constant, however, is the ever present, always organizing traditional dance rhythm.

Entire multi-dimensional stories can be performed with one dancer taking on all of the story's components. For example, one Yup'ik dance tells the story of a hunter

spotting a goose while hunting. The dance begins with a hunter traveling, and then performing (with stylized walking movements) a beautiful day, the sun and wind. With a smooth movement transition the goose is identified in the air (with a pointing gesture) and easily the performer transforms, dancing with the movements of a goose flying. With the next move the performer transforms into a hunter and shoots the goose with bow and arrow, only to transform back to the goose and illustrate the wounded and falling bird. The dance ends with the hunter dancing happily and giving thanks to the day and the owner of the universe. The easy transmutability between human, animal, and element vividly portrays interconnectedness of their hunting and gathering cosmology and morality. Implied also is the ability of taking on multiple perspectives. In this way traditional dance transfers by representing, in immediate and practical terms, a deeply encoded way of life.

The dance of the Yup'ik and Inupiat people is efficient, simple, entertaining, and practical, serving many functions at once, reflecting its origins and how a nomadic, hunting and gathering people had to be. Thomas Johnston, an ethnomusicologist that spent twenty years studying Yup'ik and Inupiat music and dance, speaks about the origins and significance of dance.

The profile of features, which characterize Inupiaq dance style possesses a multiplicity of origins: psychological, historical, environmental, idiosyncratic factors, psychomotor socialization patterns, and invention, borrowing, convergence, or any combination of the above. For instance, an overwhelming majority of Inupiaq dance motions derive directly from survival needs and symbolize arctic subsistence activities: harpooning, hauling, and scanning the horizon (for the men), and carcass-cutting, skin sewing, and plucking birds (for the women). [Johnston, 1990:199]

The question confronting Tuma Theatre was how to access the rich, expressive dance tradition for theatrical application without corrupting it. Yup'ik and Inupiat dance movements communicate well within their homogenous cultural context where the community understands, in a deeply ingrained way, the meaning and references encoded by their dances. But in order for these cultures to have a dialogue with other culture—namely modern and Western culture—some sort of expansion of the performance language had to take place. If not, the gulf between traditional Eskimo and Western realities will continue to expand—ultimately, I believe, relegating traditional

performance to obsolescent nostalgia. Flexibility and enlargement of performance language would be necessary to meet the challenges of expressing themselves to a larger, non-Eskimo audience. An enlargement and re-imagining of their tradition would be necessary to address the issues facing contemporary Eskimo existence on its own terms.

Breaking dance movements free from their traditional performance context identified a performance vocabulary. Like extracting words from a foreign language to identify a basic meaning, the movements, once freed, took on a malleable, recombinant life of their own. Defining Yup'ik and Inupiat dance forms was the first step towards retro-fitting traditional dance forms, allowing for an expanded voice for contemporary theatrical expression. The freeing of dance forms would prove both practical and psychological. The cultural and social trauma the Eskimo experienced when confronted with Western culture had forced their traditional expressions into the role of repositories, holding the dance traditions as emotionally charged signifiers of their cultural identity.

Colonialized cultures define their general and vague idea of “traditional” around the time when their cultures bore the brunt of initial and traumatizing colonialization. The defining of cultural self in the face of an alien cultural invasion took the form of “freezing” their identity in song, dance, regalia, ceremony, and thinking. Tradition, as expressed in performance, became a necessary means by which to hold a culture’s identity. Through time, however, a culture’s idea of tradition many times became some sort of ideal, by which all else was measured. Traditional cultures tried to freeze time as a way of preserving self and culture, but by doing so denied themselves cultural evolution—not adaptation. For this reason the form, function, and context of the Eskimo tradition was, and to an extent remains, essentially sacrosanct. In a way, they had done what they resented outsiders for--they romanticized their own identity.

As the class explorations and development of the Ritual Preparation continued, it became increasingly evident that the movements that resonated most potently were those drawn from a well-established dance vocabulary. These coded movements were an alphabet, from which Yup'ik and Inupiat story dancing are created and readily available to our work. Led by those students having traditional dance experience, and drawing on my own dance experience, the group began a study of identifying hundreds of dance expressions. These expressions became known as elemental forms. By way of group

sharing, research (via videotape and elders) and exploration, the Tuma group defined the movements by separating these forms out of their story dance context. Possibly the single most important person in defining the elemental forms was Theresa John, a Yup'ik from Toksook Bay and instructor at the University. She is possibly the single most knowledgeable resource of Yup'ik dance in the state and I am deeply indebted to her guidance, insights, and continuing support in the evolution of Tuma Theatre. 6

What Tuma proposed by the separating out of the elemental forms was a dynamic altering, if not revolution, of traditional dance form conception and application. Such a proposed action had precedence in the Alaskan Eskimo culture. Lynn Ager Wallen, in her book The Face of Dance: Yup'ik Eskimo Masks From Alaska, explains Yup'ik dance structure. The same observations hold true for Inupiaq dance as well.

Where non-Yup'ik people might discuss these art forms as separate categories—dance, song, story, art, objects –it is doubtful that the Yup'ik would make the same analytical distinctions. The Yup'ik language itself reflects the differences in approach to meaning. Yup'ik is an agglutinative language in which a root word can be built up with prefixes and suffixes to convey in one word a thought that in English requires a separate pronoun, noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. In the same way, the meaning of a masked dance to the Yup'ik is a single complex of experiences. [Wallen, 1990: 7]

The Elemental Forms, as defined by Tuma Theatre, freed dance movements from their traditional dance context enabling the movements to take on a life of their own. The Elemental Forms became accessible and distinct expressive tools at the service of the individual performer and culture. Rather than simply walking across the stage floor as a Yup'ik might have formerly done, or as a Western actor might do, the Tuma performer would use one of the travel elemental forms to express emotion and situation. The rhythmically styled dance-theatre that emerged pushed the traditional performance idiom into a larger space--literally and expressively. It freed movements once contained by dance tradition and allowed the performers to enter a new performance space (i.e. theatre) with infinite potential. With a new understanding and application of traditional movements, Tuma found a language by which to speak to a broader, contemporary audience while remaining firmly rooted in the tradition that fostered it. The Elemental Forms would prove to be the conduit from traditional to modern context. Thomas

Johnston further explains how traditional values are imbedded within dance movements and how dance conveys the culture.

Cultural personality comes into existence when individuals internalize values, norms, and behavioral expectations as aspects of generalized good parental imagos. The cultural ideal and the overt behaviors that support it are learned throughout childbearing and through an institution such as traditional dance. Cultural personality is that behavioral organizational scheme common to members of a group, which acts as a centripetal force upon the emotional and cognitive structures of individuals in such a way that it overrides the individual aspects of personality.

Religious beliefs may influence cultural personality. For instance, the Inupiaq believe in the reincarnational transfer of identity of a revered ancestor to a child; this may be facilitated by a name, or an inherited dance.

Studying Inupiaq dance is a way of understanding Inupiaq aesthetic values and the sanctioned parameters of creativity. Dance ethnologist Royce defines aesthetics as a set of criteria which, if followed, will produce an artistic expression that is culturally acceptable, and creativity as that quality which allows an individual to recombine criteria or go beyond them to produce the new but still acceptable. [Johnston, 1990:199]

The dance-theatre stylization evolved from the elemental forms maintained and highlighted many essential aspects of traditional dance. Most notably was the sense of a metaphoric space that implied continuum and a cyclical rather a linear reality. The performer, like the metaphoric performance space, was particular and archetypal simultaneously, becoming a symbol, hieroglyph, and individual concurrently, and being of the present, but also of many pasts and futures. The easy transformational ability of humans changing into animals, then expressing a commentary of the action, and then performing the wind or northern lights, demonstrated an easy inter-changeability and interconnectedness of all things. In a sense their world-view transposed, yet retained, the cultural code that lives within the movement and rhythm. Wallen continues with a description of how Yup'ik dance movements were an accessible and malleable vocabulary within a traditional context.

There was no formal training of dancers. The only formal teaching of a particular dance occurred when a young person was to perform his or her first public dance in the qasgiq or when an adult composed a new dance for a special occasion and taught it to one or more dancers. Yup'ik dance was true folk dance in that it was not restricted to professional or specialist dancers but could be done by anyone

who was interested in dance (although ownership of particular dances limited the participants in at least the initial performance of some dances).

In the verse section, the “acting out” of the story told in song is done with symbolic gestures, which form a ‘vocabulary’ of movement that dancers must learn. It is from these conventionalized sets of movements that the verse of and dance is composed, just as in language words are selected to compose a sentence.

Individuals fluent in the language of dance and song create most new Yuraq (social) dances. Formerly shamans sometimes played this role, but there have always been and continue to be individuals with special talents in this art form who create the majority of new dance/song compositions, sometimes at the request of someone else who has an idea. Someone who has composed a song can ask a choreographer (an expert in the grammar of dance) to create a dance for it. [Wallen, 1990: 8-9]

Later critics of Tuma, Eskimos, whites, and anthropologists among them, would cite the re-tooled application of Eskimo dance expression as being “not traditional,” therefore not being “really” Eskimo, even though made from the culture and by its members. Re-working images of self and culture through performance invariably elicited strong responses, some disapproving, but overwhelmingly approving and supportive.

Extracted from their dance story context, each form identifies a distinct emotional and communicative expression. Often the group would improvisationally play with the forms to tell a story of their own making. Exercises included stories being told verbally with the performers responding with the creation of a dance based on the elemental form vocabulary. The list of Elemental Forms grew each year with the addition of new ones and the creation of others. A sampling of Elemental Forms can be found in Appendix. 2

ELEMENTAL RHYTHM

The traditional Yup'ik and Inupiat tambourine drum served as a natural accompaniment to the Ritual Preparation and Elemental Form. Soon, however, it became apparent some participants were more familiar and comfortable with the beat than others were. Some, non-native and native participants alike, did not know how to dance traditionally, and for them the beat and its movement coordination were awkward and made them self-conscious. Rhythm awareness seemed intimidating and foreign, presenting a disparity between those that could and could not dance. Rhythm was central

and implicit not only to the traditional dance and performance to which our work referred, but also to understanding the reality that the Yup'ik and Inupiat people lived. A way for each participant to share and participate in the beat had to be found,

Central to the class explorations and becoming a reference point for all of Tuma's subsequent work was the traditional Yup'ik iambic two beat and the Inupiat three-beat. These simple, heartbeat inspired rhythms are implicit in all traditional Yup'ik and Inupiat dance movement and song/chant expression. Indeed, it is difficult if not impossible to separate the rhythm from their dance and song--they are parts of the same whole. The rhythms are what charged the movements and vocal expressions with life. These elemental rhythms also served as a pathway to the land and Yup'ik and Inupiat cultures that evolved from the land.

The plaintive rhythms, reflective of the land they have lived on for thousands of years, are in a sense, the heartbeat of their part of the earth—the endlessly repeating rhythm of the waves of the Bering Sea; the simple calm of the open tundra; the gentle sloping hills or distant mountains; or slow paced village life, live in the plaintive rhythms. The rhythms, in their simplicity and repetition, portray a cycle of life, despite modernity, as it was since before the Empires of ancient Egypt. The simplicity of the rhythm is apparent in the way the Eskimo communicate, think, act, and interact; it is a part of how they perceive and live in the world, how they live with their land. It is a continuous and endlessly cyclical mnemonic of their life on a land. It is the expression of their land, its expression allows for a dialogue, celebration, and identification with their land.

Through a variety of exercises and improvisational scenarios, we explored each culture's--Yup'ik and Inupiat rhythms are similar but different--elemental rhythm. For non-native, Athabaskan Indian, and those Eskimos coming from villages that lost their drumming tradition, the exploration of elemental rhythm was emotionally affecting. The elemental rhythm exercises were an induction to a worldview as experienced through rhythm. For those unfamiliar with the simple two beat, the exercises proved daunting. It was interesting to see an Inupiat or Yup'ik from a village where the dance traditions have remained strong next to someone that lost their rhythm tradition generations ago. Like the non-Eskimos in the group those who have lost their drumming are awkward and self-

conscious, a vital contact and inter-relationship with their land and existence seemed to be missing. For lack of a strong traditional and rhythmic reference points, those from non-drumming (which means also non-singing and dancing) villages are generally the most removed from the lifestyles of traditional subsistence observance and understanding. It is as if they are somehow more Western in their thinking and lifestyle.

Our rhythm explorations and rhythm accompaniment of the Ritual Preparation went far to establish the elemental rhythm as an infrastructure for subsequent vocal, instrumental, and movement expressions. The elemental rhythm provided not only a way of moving, but a way of seeing, being, and experiencing. The elemental rhythm became inseparable from our work, thinking, and perceptions. It became part of us. It didn't matter if the drum was pounding it out, it was implied in a chant or implicit in a movement. It became a medium through which we communicated. The rhythm reality we had established was specific to the culture we were participating in. Rhythm was the synapse, shaping action, thought, performance, and communication with our audience. The rhythm reality was not just another texture--it is what held, connected, and guided our work.

HITTING STICKS, HEALING STICKS

While working on the development of the Ritual Preparation I observed how those dancing traditionally would wear winter gloves or hold a handkerchief in each hand while they danced. The holding of handkerchief and traditional dance fans or wearing of gloves was in keeping with the Yup'ik and Inupiat belief of a person being more vulnerable when dancing. The palms of the hands were how unwanted spirits might enter a person, or possibly how a person's soul might escape, while dancing. As I watched the dancers holding their gloves, I recalled the ornate and feathered dance stick the Yup'ik and Inupiat I had seen used during traditional dance performances. Held to either accompany or lead the beat, the Eskimo believed the rhythm lived in the stick. The feathers attached to the stick represent the "breath" of the beat.

By the next session, I had acquired a pair of sticks--each two feet in length--for each of the participants. The sticks were immediately incorporated into the development

of the Preparation. The sticks would later become integral elements in the exploration of our work, as props, musical instruments, and mnemonic devices. The sticks addressed several needs simultaneously: 1) covered the palms, referring to and satisfying traditional needs; 2) gave the rhythm (symbolically and literally) to each participant; 3) made rhythm pro-active and participatory; 4) provided a group shared point of focus, interplay, and communication; 5) established traditional rhythms physically in the body of the performer; 6) and they provided an important tool of performance expression and exploration.

The sticks also proved to establish democratic sensibility, making everyone equal, for in traditional culture women never drum, the rhythm being the domain of the men. By giving all participants, male and female alike, assertive and shy, the capacity to create rhythm, we made a small but significant decision. We might have been participating in the realm of traditional culture, but we were doing it as it applied to modern needs and circumstances. In turn the sexually specific roles of traditional Inupiat and Yup'ik culture adjusted and reflected to realities already occurring within their contemporary society.

Beyond the work directly related to the development of the ritual preparation, the sticks proved an excellent tool for physical and imaginative exploration. Apparent immediately was the stick's ability to extend the sphere of expression of performer. Taking a larger space was an especially important psychological step for the native participants who are otherwise physically and socially reticent. By expanding and extending the physical self they gained personal confidence as they explored a very new sense of how to use, relate, and express themselves in space. Subtle cultural and socially bound codes of space expanded. Complementing our mask work, the sticks served the function of freeing the participants of their performance inhibitions while expanding their expressiveness.

Wilma Brown, an Inupiaq from the village of White Mountain, was initially quiet and shy to a point of making others in the group uncomfortable. Through the use of stick exploration exercises, she suddenly blossomed with self-confidence and expression. Her transformation was startling, but not an exception amongst the native students. Wilma's transformation, like that of others, went beyond performance applicability and

significantly affected their social and personal development. Wilma has, since graduated from UAF, developed one-woman performances and done performance work with Silimuit, a Greenland Inuit group.

Imagination exercises introduced the transformational abilities of the sticks into lasers, magic wands, and talking sticks. Through other exercises they used their sticks as paint brushes to paint their homes, people they knew, the character of the various seasons, dogs, village details, and the tundra landscape. Beginning with exercises relating to environments and situations familiar to them, they imaginatively moved through a series of story events from a traditional story. Such exercises were an unexpected boon for non-native students, allowing them an opportunity to leave themselves to gain insight into the Alaska native experience. For a non-native participant such as Megan Evans, a former lawyer from California, these exercises forced her to vicariously consider growing up and living in a village. Her perceptions sensitized her insights into the culture and native classmates and gave depth to her understanding of cultural rhythm and movements. The stick explorations also included personal expression work. Some exercises required the participants to use the sticks to express a wide variety of emotions. One exercise asked them to create a song of the four seasons “sung” with their sticks, body, and voice. Other exercises used the sticks to express the feelings they felt at that particular moment.

Expressing feelings so openly was a large step for the native participants. The expressiveness of the non-native students served as example, encouragement, and catalyst for comparatively shy native students. The decision to expand efforts and interpretation of traditional expressiveness was deliberate. Western styled individual expressiveness was a tool by which the native students could explore themselves and their culture. Expanding on their conception of self and culture initiated the process of re-imagining their performance language. Stepping outside of themselves enabled them to see themselves and their culture with greater objectivity and appreciation.

Drawing on the rich mimetic dance and cultural traditions of the Yup'ik and Inupiat, an entire series of exercises developed movement scenarios. Scenarios might require an appreciation of water and sky and moving to the cleansing the body with chilling wind and then warm sun; the night time and darkness comes, the moon shines

then wanes, the stars appear and twinkle, the earth falls asleep, then the sticks fall asleep. We learned from an Athabaskan, Paul Mountain, about a recently revived and formerly secret funeral ceremony called the “Stick Dance.” During the annual ceremony, Athabaskans from several villages gather to honor the recently deceased using sacred “healing sticks” to accompany their mourning songs. It was said the dead, upon hearing and responding to the sticks, would go on to their final resting. In an exploratory exercise, conducted with honor and respect, group members evoked the memory of their deceased ancestors with the stick beat and individualized song. With exercises like these the sticks gradually became integrated with our performance work in a manner consistent with the cultural context we were expressing.

Traditional Yup'ik belief maintains all things are alive and have a spirit known as a “yuaa.” Over time, the sticks themselves came to life, their spirits realized and endowed with power. The process of how the sticks became integrated into the work and into the traditional performance context were significant, guiding subsequent adaptations of traditional elements into a contemporary theatre context. Tuma participants eventually individualized their sticks with carvings, markings, beads, and feathers, reflecting the empowerment and spirit realization of the sticks. Through practice we came to understand, firsthand, the power of the medicine stick, divining rod, dance stick, and magic wand that are a part of so many cultures. The sticks became, in a sense, ritualistically endowed through our explorations and applications--the spirit alive within them. The beat they expressed took on a deeper, integrative meaning as appropriate to the culture we were participating in.

Several stick Ritual Performance explorations found their way into our performances. In *The Child From the Sea*, (produced by Tuma in March 1992 and included many of the student performers noted above), non-native Anthony Rivard, a former North Slope oil rig roughneck, evolved the aural and visual expressions of a herd of caribou. Having spent much time on the tundra and a hunter himself, Anthony had observational experience of caribou and their behavior. His ability to talk across cultural boundaries about the animals and hunting greatly enhanced the closeness of the group.

In other instances stick explorations evolved into more specific props. Tuma's (March 1991) production of *Qayaq: The Magical Man*, for instance initiated bird, fish,

seal, kayaking, and ocean wave expressions, using sticks and later replacing them with actual props. The influence of the sticks was apparent in the performer's sense of confidence, expressiveness, and expansiveness in space. The performer's larger-than-life movements extended into the performance space, serving appropriately, the mythic-symbolic-spiritual performance expression of Alaska native people. 4

ANIMALS & HUMANS

Identification with animals and birds is a significant, if not central, part of Yup'ik and Inupiat traditional dance performance, cosmology, and lifestyle. Realizing the significance and respect given animals and birds in the Yup'ik and Inupiat cultures, it was necessary to investigate carefully and fully how and why animals and birds are performed. It was natural that animal and bird movements figured significantly in our class explorations and Ritual Preparation.

Most of the native participants had close, life-long interactions with the birds and animals so integral to their lifestyle. The observational opportunity and intimate knowledge of tundra birds and animals the Eskimos take for granted is difficult for non-natives to appreciate. Those who do not live and depend on a subsistence lifestyle can never really understand the special relationship of growing up on a barren landscape and sharing the land with birds and animals. Only by being lived is understanding gained.

To Western thinking, animals are inferior others that either must serve or be controlled by humans. "Western ideology, specifically the Judeo-Christian tradition, assumes an inherent differentiation between humans and animals and focuses on the explanation of the relationship between originally independent parts. It holds that humans have souls and the ability to attain salvation, whereas animals do not." (Fienup-Riordan 1994:48)

For Alaska natives, still primarily hunters and gatherers, the characteristics of the birds and animals of their respective areas were made familiar through seasonal observations. The relationship between animals and humans, however, was more than just that of familiarity and subsistence interaction. Over the course of several millennia, the Yup'ik and Inupiat had evolved a highly intricate cosmological interaction with the

animals. “The differentiation of persons into humans and non-humans was for Eskimo peoples at the foundation of social life. The Yupiit believed all humans and animals--both male and female, living and the dead-shared personhood; however, within this category they distinguished human and non-human persons.” (Fienup-Riordan 1994: 48)

So important was their relationship with the animals that all major performance ceremonies and rituals dealt, in varying ways, with the continuity or relationship between the human and animal worlds. In traditional times the annual cycle of ceremonies, to a greater or lesser degree, were gatherings hosted and feasted by the living society to connect them with dead humans and animals. In this way both living and dead human and non-human persons were an integral part of the endless, ahistorical, and perpetual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth reciprocity. The relationship between humans and animals was viewed as collaborating with the animals giving themselves to the hunters in response to the hunters' respectful treatment. (Fienup-Riordan 1994:50) Poet Tom Lowenstein who spent several years living with the Inupiaq of Point Hope describes the traditional relationship between humans and animals. A qalgi is a clan's that is identified by animals such as walrus, whale, seal, and wolf.

The first autumn dances also conjured the animals. Everyone was connected with one or more animals through amulets given at birth by a spiritual guardian from another qalgi.

According to the guardian's choice people carried wolf's teeth, foptails, owl, ptarmigan, and squirrel skins, effigies of whales and walrus, eagles' heads and ravenskins. They wore these constantly: hanging them on cords round their necks, or on belts, in bags or sewn to the outside of their parka.

When they were sick people chewed their amulets to activate them with saliva, rubbed the amulet to massage their bodies and called on the animal spirit to help them. [Lowenstein, 1993:103-04]

Many of the rules and rituals guiding Yup'ik and Inupiat life in traditional times derived from their relationship between humans and animals. Animals were aware of human actions and some were said to be able to hear humans talking about them. Reflecting this belief, Yup'ik and Inupiat mythology is full of occurrences where humans transform into animal form and humans into animals. “It is also believed that in early days all animate beings had a dual existence, becoming at will either like a man or the animal forms they now wear; if an animal wished to assume its human form, the forearm,

wing, or other limb was raised and pushed up the muzzle or beak as if it were a mask, and the creature became manlike in form and features.” (Nelson 1899:394)

Within the Alaska native cosmological context, to perform an animal was to co-habituate with it--to understand it, to have a dialogue with it--and to vicariously become it. The forms of the Eskimo world were transformable, its categories permeable. Performing an animal would, for a Yup'ik or Inupiat performer, be no more unusual than a Western actor performing another person--for the birds and animals were "people," too. Each animal had a soul, personality, and feelings unique to who they were, how they related to the environment, and what they did. They were characters in every sense worthy of dramatization. The Ritual Preparation explored and expressed this traditional understanding of interchangeability.

Traditionally, animal identification extended beyond the context of performance and into daily life. Birds and animals could be called to assist a person in a time of need or to lend them certain characteristics. Traditionally, animal totems, amulets, and body makings lent a person certain animal or bird attributes--for instance wearing an eagle's claw for bravery or keen eyesight. Until the 1920's the Inupiat men belonging to the walrus clan wore labrets, pieces of walrus ivory pierced into their cheeks, to emulate and identify with their primary subsistence animal. By emulating the animal they honored it and vicariously became it.

David Salmon, an Athabaskan elder from Fort Yukon, spoke to the Tuma group at length about animal identification, saying animal identification remained strong to this day. “I belong to the beaver people, and other people are always kidding us because we live in long wooden houses by the river. But we're persistent, hard-working people, too... Them Caribou people are always on the move, they can never sit still, so I never lend nothing to a Caribou person, because you never know when you'll see them again. And the salmon people, they are stubborn...I don't know how people come to be like certain animals. It all happened a long time ago before anybody can remember anymore. I just know that people are still that way” (1992). Many of the native students (Eskimo and Indian) in the Tuma group claimed traditional clan identification with animals such as the wolf, walrus, bear or beaver.

According to Alaska Native cosmology, the Raven created the world and is a

trickster. In recognition of Raven's importance, Raven became a reoccurring character in the Ritual Preparation. Raven had major roles in several Tuma Theatre productions. Joshua Weiser comments on Raven, the role he played in *Qayaq: The Magical Man*.

The most important cultural values are embodied in raven in his attitudes towards people. But at the same time, he has a gift that is mischievous. So, when people take themselves too seriously -- 'I am this and I am that' -- the raven comes and busts them up. In other words, he makes the people realize that no matter what our background is, we are one people—human people, animal people, spirit people. I guess you can call the raven an equalizer. He's mischief, but he can be serious when he wants to be. So, he's hot and cold. In playing that kind of a part, I have to touch into that myself. Every show is going to be different and you play off the audience. And if you sense that the people need to be loosened up a little bit or take themselves too serious, raven's got to bust that all up. Same thing with certain parts of the play. If things are moving too slow, or if people are just not into it at the level that they should be, the raven's there to kind of move things up there. [interview, March 3, 1991]

As a part of the development of the Ritual Preparation each participant identified and explored the expression of their clan or "power" animal. Many native students (Indian and Eskimo) knew their animal identification, those that did not often called elders in their village to find out. Those participants that did not have animal clan identification discovered their "power" animal through a process of drum induced trance. Once determined, each participant explored and created a sequence of animal movements and sounds that could be presented as a dance (linked by the drum rhythm) that was either performed within or outside the context of the Ritual Preparation.

Eventually each participant developed a clan or power animal dance for a land and sea mammal and bird. Each of the animals dance was performed, either its entirety or partially during the course of the Ritual Preparation. Often these same animals would provide a resource of movement during Tuma Theatre performances with casting of certain roles determined by a performer's animal. Even when performing a human character or an animal not their own, the performer's movement would be informed by their clan or power animal. The animal(s) would provide a point-of-view and reference point for their performance. Human and animal movements were melded to stylistically express the unique worldview of Alaska native people.

Among many Eskimos the wolf and bear hold a position of significance and respect. Wolves are especially revered, possibly because of the numerous parallels between the social, hunting, and rearing habits of the wolf and humans. Paul Jumbo, a leading personality in the development of Tuma Theatre, is from Toksook Bay, a Yup'ik village in southwest Alaska. His grandmother, training as a shaman when the missionaries came, raised him believing his ancestors were wolves. Having wolves as ancestors was something he never questioned nor thought unusual. Paul wrote and co-directed *Utetmun* (Going Home) for Tuma in 1992. In the performance he played a contemporary native boy's grandfather who came to teach the ancient ways of the ancestors. Throughout the performance the grandfather character comes to the boy both as wolf and human--transforming easily between his animal and human form--being of both worlds simultaneously.

Such interplay between human and animal form caused no difficulty for our audiences to understand. The children in attendance especially appreciated the transmutability between human and animal forms, finding it easy to accept humans with animal characteristics, the stock and trade of children's theatre and cartoons. Performing an animal had a personal resonance as *Agayu* performer, Marie Saka, a Yup'ik from Choi, Alaska, in a 1991 interview relates.

I wanted to be something that was viscous and strong and mean. Something that is totally opposite of me, because I'm really nice, so I got it. Through the trance we did. I'm a wolverine. [...] It puts me into another dimension and into a different pair of shoes where I can just be myself and not worry about what other people think and try to show the audience a good time. When I'm up there and dancing, I forget about everyone and everything around me. And I hear the drum and my body just moves to it. And, if I know the dance well enough, I just close my eyes and my body just dances away and all that energy will come into me and I just give it away. I think that's the best part for me that I brought into the play because it's one part of my life that I enjoy doing the most -- dancing. And I'm glad that I have the opportunity to share that with other people - not only the people that I'm working with in the production, but the people that have come to watch it. I know that before the play started, I used to be really, really shy and wouldn't say anything. I would just sit or smile or say 'hi.' Now I want to talk and let myself be heard more. It's interesting. I like it too. Sometimes my animal spirit even gets loose. And I just want to growl around people. So, when my friends noticed from my dorm, noticed that from the beginning of the semester up until recently, my change in attitude and say, 'Marie, what's gotten into you?' I tell them wolverine.

Some non-native, adult audience members did find difficulty in accepting the human-animal transmutability; generally their difficulty centered on not understanding the “how” or “why” of the transformation. Within the performance of *Utetmun* as with other Tuma Theatre performances, an undifferentiated universe was presented, in which the boundaries between human and non-human, the spiritual and the material, were shifting and permeable. (Fienup-Riordan 1994:46) The interplay between animal and humans is, in a sense, what instigates the performance event.

The Inupiat believe that at one time all humans were wolves, and then the world turned upside down and those wolves unable to return to the underworld became humans. The “Eagle-Wolf Messenger’s Feast,” possibly the most significant and pervasive ceremony of Inupiat Alaska, builds on this belief. Known as the Kivgiq, and revived in 1988 in Barrow, the feast celebrates and vividly illustrates the cycle of human-animal reciprocity and interrelationship. The feast is essentially a gathering of humans to pay homage to the Eagle mother (a universal spirit representing nature) and return the soul of her son to her. The soul of the son is a stand-in for all the game caught within the past year. The Inviting-In Festival, in its many and various manifestations throughout Eskimo Alaska, includes many dances in which the performers portray wolves. 5

Tuma Theatre’s production of *The Eagle’s Gift* (March 1993) revived and elaborated on several of the wolf dances and animal/human characters inhabiting the original myth. Significantly in the myth, it is the wolves that teach the hunter how to dance, marking the origin of dance and song and how it came to humanity. The beat of the Inupiat drum is the heartbeat of the Eagle Mother—it is her gift to humanity. In order to keep the Eagle Mother well, humans must continue to beat their drums, dance, and sing. In this ceremony the inter-active reciprocity of animal and human worlds is simply and effectively asserted and maintained.

Simple technical proficiency, based on mimetic movements and cultural rhythm awareness, was only a starting point for our animal performance work. However, such Western theatre performance methods and techniques soon proved their limits. A very different set of objectives demanded the definition of a working methodology radically different from the way Western theatre operated. Tuma Theatre was not just about

performing. It was about fundamental conceptions of self and one's relationship to the world. The Western conception of performance implicitly conceived the world as consisting of separate, hierarchical, definable entities, where the performer becomes an "other" through a process of analytical, rationally or emotionally motivated techniques. Tuma Theatre performed animals in contribution to a well-established, culturally informed performance language context. Animals were respected, interactive, and equal, not an "other." To perform an animal, the performer becomes a part of an interchangeable and interdependent whole.

The Yup'ik and Inupiat believe each bird or animal has two souls, one is of the individual bird or animal, the second is the soul of the genus, meaning all of the individual bird or animals of a species are in fact the same. In keeping with this belief, to mistreat or pay homage to an individual of any species is to mistreat or pay homage to all. In turn, to perform one is to perform all. When performance of a bird or animal entails the performer to "become" the animal, the act of performance becomes transcendental. The performer is the animal and the animal is the species. The animal's Inua—the universal spirit that resides in all things—manifests and merges with the spirit of the human performer. In performance there is a spiritual convergence that takes place. There is joining together, as the interconnectedness of the world is reasserted through performance. Performance becomes a transcendental leap of great abstraction into a universality that can only be facilitated by a spiritual leap of faith. It becomes a meditation performed. A living meditation, active, dynamic, constantly transmuting and reflecting an unknowable wholeness which performance recognizes and celebrates. 6

With every living thing having two souls, the temporary soul (as opposed to the permanent, genus soul), travels and is in a sense captured by the performer. Another way to explain transformational performance may be the cultural belief that, at one time, human and animals were interchangeable, changing easily back and forth between human and animal. Prior to the advent of Western, written oriented education, the primary method of transferring knowledge was by way of demonstration and imitation; close proximity to their animals of imitation, reinforced by story-telling, may also have contributed to strong physical imitation and a heightened sensitivity for psycho physical transformation into another being.

Intrinsic to such transformational performance is the performer's respect and understanding that they are being given something. The performer does not "create" a performance, though they may work on the skills of performing, but rather is "given" the performance. The performance comes to them, the effect and quality of the performance being dependent on how deserving the performer is. Preparation for performance is a life-encompassing event—implied is a holistic reality that implies and reveals a person's spiritual and moral existence. This view of performance is in keeping with the hunting and gathering morality of the Yup'ik and Inupiat. This morality dictates that the "human people" are responsible to maintain the balance with the world because they have been given the greatest advantages.

Traditionally, the most successful hunters were the sponsors of the Inupiat "Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast" and the Yup'ik "Inviting-In Feast" because they benefited the most and so gave the most. In traditional times it was not unusual for a great hunter to give everything he had away. Such a gesture was looked upon as a crowning achievement. I once attended an Athabaskan funeral Potlatch (held years after the death of a son) where the parents had saved for years in order to give away nearly \$30,000 worth of gifts ranging from rifles to snow machines. Though weakened by modernity, the maximum "to give is to receive" still holds strong amongst Alaska's native people.

When a Yup'ik hunter has successfully hunted a seal, it is understood that the seal was "given" to him. In return the hunter melts a small amount of snow to offer the dead seal a drink of fresh water out of thanks. For a drink of fresh water the seal allows itself to be taken by the hunter. The Yup'ik "Bladder Festival" is a formalized thanksgiving ceremony that annually celebrates with song and dance, the season's seal hunt. In the ceremony the bladders of the seals (where the genus soul of the seal resides) are blown up and painted with pleasing designs. The bladders are then recommitted to the sea from which they came. It is believed that if the seal souls are well treated and respected by humans, they will tell other seal and return for the following season's hunt. The performance act re-asserts continuity and inter-connectedness between the animal and human people. With the Bladder Festival, like other similar daily and ritual gestures, symbolic reciprocity is enacted. In much in the same way the performance of animals by

a human is also a symbolic enactment of animal-human reciprocity and interconnectedness. The animal gives itself to the performers as the performers give themselves to the animals.

The animal or bird that is performed is giving its wisdom and spirit through its movement and sound--it is how they communicate to humans. It is the equivalent of one person participating in another person's idea or language. To do so gives one an understanding of the other, becoming in a real sense, like the other. The initial task of the Tuma performers was to educate themselves to read the language of their birds and animals as if it were a foreign language concurrently establishing an interactive relationship. Such a task was neither as easy nor as simple as it may seem. Unlike the hunter-gatherers of the past, who often performed the birds and animals and understood implicitly their interconnectedness, both native and non-native modern urban dwellers are removed from a conducive setting. For the hunter-gatherer, the birds and animals were an active, familiar part of their environment.

We soon realized, even though in Fairbanks, Alaska, a small city surrounded by a vast boreal forest, how far removed we were from animals in their natural habitat. For lack of a hunting and gathering cultural context, the Tuma participants had to observe and study their animals and birds from local sightings, books, audio recordings, and video. Animal "research" combined with mimetic explorations and was augmented with village natives and elders relating personal experiences and traditional stories about a specific animal or bird. Most significant, however, were the trance explorations. These explorations were pivotal in establishing a connection with the animal. Just as importantly the explorations identified the animal's essential rhythm--the where, and how, that rhythm was to be expressed in the performer's body. An understanding and articulation of the rhythmic expression made the accommodation of the bird in the human body more easily accomplished.

The importance of rhythm awareness and expression in the body cannot be overemphasized. Rhythm and body expression are to the Yup'ik and Inupiat performer what words and syntax are to a Western theatre performer. The reality of the hunter-gatherer is a rhythm reality, given shape and guided by the complex inter-workings of rhythm--from heartbeat, to the seasons, to the lapping of waves. To understand an animal's rhythm is

to accept its reality and see, think, and move as it does. An understanding of rhythm tells the performer what the animal sees, moves and dances. It is not just a mimetic imitation but a rhythmic adjustment effecting spatial and perceptual awareness. From rhythm comes the being, song, and movement of the animal. It is the window to the spirit.

Unlike Western styles of psychological based acting, the transformational performance style of the Alaskan Eskimo is meant to represent both the individual character and the archetype simultaneously. Rather than creating a world of the character, as is the case in Western style acting, the Alaskan Eskimo performer steps into a well-established cultural mythology, a sort of parallel universe. The performer is in a familiar yet greater reality. The performer's participation is, in this way, both a reaffirmation and portrayal of deeply rooted cultural beliefs and values. The performer's character portrayal is a sort of possession, where he is taken to a mythic or hyper reality. It is a reality spiritually and culturally organized; however, it is the power animal performance that serves as the connective tissue.

If a person can transform self and perspective through performance to another point-of-view, be it animal, element, person or whatever, then what a power. This is nothing short of an evolutionary jump into the potential that lives within us. A new respect evolves, along with a new understanding and responsibility. Is this a return to the ancient hunter and gatherer's morality? Yes, in part.

When an animal or bird becomes a helping spirit that spirit has been awakened within a person and becomes a part of a person from within. It speaks to the person if they listen—and will help if they wish. To perform with “power animal” (an animal obtained by clan affiliation, initiation, or trance) is to know the world in a wholly different way. Such a way of seeing and being with the world is central to the indigenous worldview yet a novelty within the Western cultural context. Abrams articulates a human-natural world relationship in terms of community and the Western worldview.

The larger community includes, along with the humans, the multiple non-human entities that constitute the local landscape, from the diverse plants and the myriad animals, birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, insects—that inhabit or migrate through the region, to particular winds and weather patterns that inform the local geography, as well as the various landforms—forests, rivers, caves, mountains--that lend their specific character to the surrounding earth. [Abram, 1996: 6-7]

Trees rarely, if ever speak to us; animals no longer approach us as emissaries from alien zones of intelligence; the sun and the moon no longer draw prayers from us but seem to arc blindly across the sky. How is it that these phenomena no longer address us, no longer compel our involvement or reciprocate our attention? [Abram, 1996:130]

Transformation is a central resource for the indigenous performance style. It offers up not only the resources of the human self, but also potentially the resources of the universe. The human form and point-of-view is but a channel by which to see the universe that lay both within and without simultaneously. We perform to understand this potential. We perform because we are responsible for this potential, for we are its stewards.

Traditional beliefs hold that animals give themselves to the person performing them. The animal gives its sound, its way of walking, talking, looking, being, and its special powers. The giving of attributes and the transformation of human performer into animal is nowhere better revealed than in the performance of the *angatkok*—the shaman. The *angatkok* had several animals as helping spirits at their disposal, with each animal or bird lending the shaman a spiritual or physical attribute. These spirits were both animal and bird--though ancestral spirits would also assist—and were called into service as needed to combat illness, seek game, divine, or do battle with evil spirits.

The fantastical Yup'ik spirit mask combines human, animal, bird, and symbolical configurations to vividly illustrate the integrative and transmutable sensibility of their shaman. The shaman was in the service of their community--their Shamanic act was a performance and performing was seen as a pragmatic act in aid of the community. Within the performance the *angatkok* might travel to the moon, become an eagle, go to the bottom of the ocean, become a caribou, or go to the land of the dead. The function of the *angatkok* performance was to facilitate transformation and maintain connection between the human-animal-spirit realms. All other performance expressions, whether including the *angatkok* or not, were echoes of the *angatkok*'s function. The *angatkok*, in function, method, and expression, was a performance paradigm Tuma referred to.

The shaman's performance and significance to their community was less about magical transformation materially into something else and more about becoming a greater part of oneself. Their role was that of spiritual boundary-crosser, experts in

traveling and perception of greater realities, connecting with and transforming self into other spirits and non-temporal universals. Their expertise and value to their community lay in their ability to rupture the boundaries of ordinary reality and material form and participate in the ahistorical, endless cycle of existence so as to assist in and address the needs of the temporal reality. The secular and contemporary equivalent of such a boundary rupturing for the community for a greater perspective is theatre. How the Shamanic performance model differs (and in a sense how Tuma differs) from contemporary theatre performance is its recognition and interplay with the spiritual world, the reference to a shared cultural language and mythology, and implied cyclical worldview.

Performance was for the *angatkok*, a channel to tap into a greater power, to gain understanding, perspective, knowledge, and comfort. This ancient understanding offered a knowledge, guidance, adjustment, and continuity to its community. It is a function of performance our contemporary world has grown away from or completely forgotten. Out of its traditional context and bereft of its spiritual initiations, Tuma Theatre found in the function, methods, and expression of the *angatkok*, a model that would guide, inspire, and inform all of our subsequent explorations and performances.

Tuma Theatre, being limited by the schedules of its undergraduate participants and University setting context, could not fully embrace the Shamanic performance model. However, several explorations with trance inducing drumming and singing were facilitated and served to inform our work revealing its possibilities of the model. A fuller examination of the Shamanic performance model and process needs someday to occur.

SOUND, SPACE, AND EMOTION

Tuma Theatre explored ancient Yup'ik, Inupiat, Athabaskan, and Inuit languages for their literal meanings and for how each specific language formulated its sounds of the mouth, throat and articulators to convey emotion and ideas. English, albeit the *lingua franca* of the class, was recognized within our performance context as a power language with much political, social, and cultural baggage. It was a language to be used with sensitivity and consciousness and not simply as the most convenient communicator.

Need English be included in an Alaska native performance? How and why? Tuma performances such as *The Child From the Sea* used no English at all. The use of English leads the audience to certain assumptions and expectations. It brackets a performance within a rational and linear perspective, thereby subverting the affective, atmospheric understanding required for the presentation of the Alaska native worldview. In Paul Jumbo's *Utetmun*, the modern Young Eskimo man only spoke English, which demonstrated his removal from the ancient ways of his Yup'ik-only speaking grandfather. Ultimately, it was the emotions communicated through sound and movement that brought the Young Man, Grandfather, and the Animals together. When the Young Hunter found himself confused by the modern world at the end of *Qayaq*, the utterance of spoken English came, after nearly an hour into the performance, like a shock, slashing the atmosphere like a knife. It was exactly the effect we had hoped for.

On the most obvious level, the use of a native tongue offered a certain sound poetry. Alaska native languages use the mouth and back of the throat to produce many unique sounds unfamiliar to many and seldom heard in public. *The Eagle's Gift* included the use of Greenland Inuit, spoken by exchange student Karen Kielsen; Athabaskan, spoken by Paul Mountain; Yup'ik spoken by Theresa John, Ringo Jimmy, and Esther Stauffer; and Inupiaq, spoken by Wilma Brown. The performers not understanding each other's language was inconsequential to the creation and maintenance of the performance atmosphere. In *Inua*, produced by Tuma in 1995, the Tuma performers experimented with English and applied it from a native point-of-view. This approach neutralized the English language's baggage, putting it on equal terms (for those not speaking a native tongue) with the indigenous languages used, and significantly opened English to new expressive possibility.

The choice of using native tongues in performance, even though the majority of the audience could not understand an Alaska Native language, was deliberate if not provocative. The gesture of having Paul Jumbo in *Utetmun* or Paul Mountain in *The Eagle's Gift* speak entire monologues in Yup'ik and Athabaskan respectively, politically and artistically demonstrated that the performance was on in native terms, and that the audience must go to the performance because the performance will not come to them. For native speakers the use of native tongues on a public stage was a source of pride,

implied their language and culture were flourishing and on equal footing with English. The use of native languages prompted Tuma theatre member Melanie Brown, an Inupiaq raised in Anchorage, to learn her ancestral tongue. Others, such as non-native Geoffrey Stauffer have gone on to become fluent in Yup'ik.

For some native students, speaking in their native tongue was simply more comfortable. One assignment asked students to tell a story told to them by an elder. Yup'ik Erma Hooper became very stiff and tense when it was her turn to speak before the group. After a few difficult sentences I asked her to tell the story in Yup'ik. Suddenly her entire body and emotional range opened up. Initially her hands were stiff at her side and her head bowed. When she began speaking Yup'ik, however, she cracked a big smile, was gesticulating, and began illustrating all of the actions of the story. She told the group later that she doesn't feel alone when speaking Yup'ik: "It is like my grandma and ancestors are with me." Repeatedly, Tuma's native participants proved their comfort and emotional connectedness while using their native tongue on stage. Chant is a fundamental emotional expression of Alaska native people. With few exceptions, chants are pure sounds with no cognitive meaning. Meaning comes through emotional connection, physical evocation, and repetition. Many songs of Alaska natives are simply pure sound chants without any literal meaning; those songs having descriptive words also have substantial chant choruses. Chanting allows for a direct emotional communication between the performers and audience. Chant is a pre-cognitive communication both highly personal and communal (using and reaffirming sounds particular to the culture). Quite literally, chant allows one person to vibrate another. Chant allows the performer to speak pure and direct feelings to another human being. The repetitive, cyclical movement of chant is also significant for two reasons: 1) it evokes cyclical worldview and 2) it allows for the performer to evolve a physical/emotional connection and depth of expression. Chant expressions, like the dance movements of the Yup'ik and Inupiat, find their origin in daily and subsistence activity. Many chant sounds and patterns echo animal grunts, sound of the wind, sea, or subsistence activity. Many geographically and culturally specific chants were incorporated into the Ritual Preparation and figured prominently in Tuma Theatre performances. The most frequently used Yup'ik and Inupiat chant sounds included:

Yuu- yu rru- u u
 Unga ya ha ha
 Ya Ya raa raa
 Nga a- ya ya ya
 U-u-u lu a-nga gu -u
 Aa-ya-i ya-a nga ya-i-yaa-a

Tuma productions also applied chant sound as a way to identify or emotionally qualify a moment. This type of vocal commenting went far to add a musical texture and emotional complexity to the performances. It also was a way to tell the story across cultures--the communication was pure, direct and beyond cultural qualifiers. During Tuma's production of *Inua*, Theresa John and I performed the roles of the angatkok (shaman) who facilitated the telling of nine stories. Throughout the performance, Theresa and I would comment on the action by using sounds and chants. At times the use of pure sounds, such as "Ii yi yi yi yi!" in disapproval of a character's action, would be unrehearsed, coming randomly and improvisational, as inspired by the performance. Because of Theresa's knowledge of Yup'ik, she would often comment, in Yup'ik, on the action from the side while I would chant or vocalize a commentary using pure sounds. This application of native language, chant, and sound added texture and spontaneity to the performance.

PLACE AND EXPRESSION

The dance traditions of the Yup'ik and Inupiat were strongly influenced by the cramped quarters of a village's ceremonial house, known variously as the Kashim, Qasigi, or men's house. These semi-subterranean houses were where the community gathered, performing a wide range of social, ceremonial, and ritual practices during the long and dark winter. Because of the lack of architecturally supportive material on the treeless tundra, these houses were small. The smallness was, however, compatible to the small hunting groups that organized the Yup'ik and Inupiat. With driftwood from the

Yukon River the Yup'ik created roof beams. The Inupiat, bowhead whalers, used the ribs of the world's largest animal for roof supports to enable them to build larger ceremonial houses. Being in a traditional Inupiat ceremonial house was like being in the belly of a whale, their primary subsistence food.

Performance for the Yup'ik and Inupiat people is a transformational space where for a moment the wholeness of reality is exposed and celebrated. Traditional ceremonial houses of both the Yup'ik and Inupiat were less metaphor and more manifestations of the Alaskan Eskimo universe. Their womb-like nature was both practical and in keeping with origin myths of people coming from the earth as wolves. To enter a traditional ceremonial house, a person had to crawl on all fours through an Arctic entry before standing up in the community house—a reminder of their animal to human transformation. One can imagine the impression such an entrance had considering the only illumination being a flickering fire or seal oil lamp and everyone entering had animal fur parkas. The smoke hole represented the upper world, the fire pit the lower world, the ceremonial house was the human world. The three levels symbolized their cosmological belief in three parallel realities and how, though performance there is an interplay between these realities. Traditionally built ceremonial houses have not existed since the late 1970's, having been replaced by village community halls and school gymnasiums.

Tuma Theatre adopted the traditional ceremonial house as its practical and metaphoric performance space model. The studio space, which exists in the basement of the Fine Arts Building, was stripped of its ceiling tiles and painted black. It was in this dark, womb-like space that most of our exploratory and training work occurred. In contrast, the University of Alaska Salisbury Theater is a capacious 420-seat proscenium theatre highly inappropriate for the performance requirements of Tuma. Wooden risers were brought onto the stage (with painted curtains behind them) to establish an intimate 200-seat performance space conducive to Tuma's culturally specific expression. The average performance space created was approximately 14 feet by 14 feet and surrounded, depending upon the performance, on either three or four sides by audience.

Like its inspiration and traditional model, Tuma Theatre performances stressed an intimacy, comfort, and interaction with its community. To help facilitate this, the tiered

seating units were without chairs for the first three rows. The top row had chairs for those generally older people who needed the back support. The padded open seating was by its nature informal, creating a familiar, open, and village-like atmosphere. The lack of seating structure motivated more interactions between audience members who could lounge, adjust, and hold their children informally. The movements and comments of audience members along with the occasional cries of children became a part of the performance atmosphere.

Tuma performances highlighted either direct or indirect audience interaction. Joshua Weiser developed a traditional Raven character that became a prominent part of both *Qayaq* and *Utetmun*. Playing the Raven trickster (a creator figure for Alaska native people) he intervened variously throughout both productions serving as motivator, troublemaker, and action manipulator. Establishing a link with the audience, he would often play tricks, improvise, entertain, and guide the performance action.

The trapped stage floor of the UAF theatre provided an opportunity for Tuma performances to include a central "fire pit" and a variety of other floor entrances. The use of a central fire pit and such floor entrances were highly theatrical and expressed the transformational and multiple levels of reality that underlay the performance. We used a fog machine and lights for our fire pit, leaving room, as in traditional Kashims, for performers to enter and exit from the pit. The Tuma performances *Qayaq: The Magical Man* (1991), *The Child From the Sea* (1992), *Utetmun* (1992), *The Eagle's Gift* (1993) and *Inua* (1995) all extensively applied the use of the fire pit and other "animal" or "spirit" holes representing pathways to other realities in the Yup'ik and Inupiat world view. The use of so many floor holes for entrances were also practical, for it allowed for the quick and fluid entrance/exit of performers when no standing scenery existed. Its inspiration, however, came from the Yup'ik belief that shamans flew into the sky to stars, which were actually holes in the sky. Entering the hole the shaman would find himself or herself in a parallel world spirit Kashim where every action had a direct effect on what happened in the human village. For the Tuma performer entering though the floor holes, the performance space was the Kashim existing through the stars. It was a place of origins. Whatever happened in this kashim happened on earth.

In keeping with this transformational quality, stage actions lived in the shadows. Through using modern electrical lighting instruments, the feel of mystery and unreality, similar to what we speculated it was like to watch a traditional performance in a fire-lit kashim, was affected by lighting that was generally low in intensity and positioned at severe angles. Light shift motivation often related to emotional or spiritual changes in the action--that being the story line we wished the audience to follow. Location shifts were also highlighted and as a consequence location, time and space melded.

To address the needs of this kind of theatre lighting, designer Kade Mendelowitz, set and lighting designer Hugh Hall, prop and mask designer David Apple, and costume designer Tara Maginnis evolved a Tuma Theatre style. The style was not only revealed in how things appeared on stage but also just as significantly included how they conceptualized and worked with the performance evolution process. Tuma performance rehearsals would begin with either a group of stories or simply ideas. Through discussion and rehearsal attendance the designers would work with the group and become a part of the consensus. The exchange of ideas and suggestions between the performers and designers was encouraged and often proved fruitful.

The use of flown in objects, as if from the upper world, further elaborated on the performance tradition of things "flying" from the other world. Traditionally, a sinew rope coated with soot to disguise it was stretched across a kashim. On the rope elaborately carved birds or other objects would theatrically fly across the kashim to the amazement of spectators. In traditional times the Yup'ik and Inupiat also used sophisticated puppets in performance. For *Qayaq*, designer Hugh Hall re-created an elaborate multi-tiered "heaven" modeled on those used for traditional Yup'ik ceremonies. Constructed of feathers, sinew, and wood, the "heaven" was attached to the wrist of the lead drummer and danced with the rhythm of the beat. All Tuma performances, except *Naam/Gen eehu* (1996) have variously applied flown objects, puppets, and carved figures.

The Tuma Theatre style, like traditional performance rituals and ceremonies, has generally stressed the highly theatrical and at times visually fantastical. Props, costume, and mask were the primary devices used by Tuma with the communication emphasizing the performer and their vocal, movement, and spiritual totality. Performances were

implicitly about transformation and the transmutability, and ambiguity of reality. Nothing is as it seems to be, everything was simultaneously what it was, yet at the same time something greater. Every prop, mask, dance movement, word or chant aspires to an essence of its meaning. 8 The simplicity, grounded in pragmatism and clarity of purpose, is the ideal way to suggest the greater complexity of their transformational and dynamically interconnected worldview.

THE CONTINUUM

For the Yup'ik and Inupiat, the braid of meaning-reality-context, has remained as they have, as a part of the earth they inhabit. They, like other indigenous people, recognize that they remain a part of something greater. The forms and meanings of what surrounds them are a part of them. It is through their performance expression they recognize and celebrate that sense of greater belonging. Performance is a moment of magic by which to glimpse the ephemeral and ineffable wonders of a greater whole we know but will never understand.

Ringo Jimmy, a Yup'ik who work as a performer in several Tuma productions summed up his Tuma experience, hopes, and observations in a 1997 interview.

I think it should stay on the traditional path rather than getting into the contemporary, Western Theater because it is unique if it keeps up with the traditions and cultures of the people. Because if Tuma gets too Westernized, it will not be unique anymore. It will be like any other Western Theater, as we perceive it today, like Broadway. It is unique the way it is, and I think it should stay that way. If the lights and technology are used effectively, I think it will re-enforce the culture and make it stronger, more believable. I think, metaphorically, it can be used to express how people like me walk in two cultures—native and white culture. Tuma Theater represents that—how the native traditional culture and Western culture, with its technology, are coming together and working together coherently. Since most of the traditional dances and ceremonies are no longer practiced in my village, I think this is place for me to get back into my culture. Some people from my village are 'brainwashed' into believing that it [theater] is evil. I don't see anything evil about it. It is a celebration of being native, a celebration of your culture. It is a good thing. And Tuma is where I can be reconnected with my culture. Where my connection with my culture can be strengthened. (1995)

Theresa John, one of the student founders of Tuma and later a director, performer and

UAF Faculty member sums up her Tuma experience and how it relates to her traditional culture and teaching. 7

When I was growing up I always learned the old stories through hearing and they had to ask us to imagine this in our minds what going on in the story, never really performing it. The dancing and singing is the way we present our stories in a motion form. That's when our stories come alive, when we sing and dance them. With Tuma I incorporated what I know about traditional dance and song with what I learned about theater and Native stories. That's how we created plays from and through all the dancing and singing that relates to all the issues brought up in the stories.

I really enjoyed working with a Tuma, which is really a multicultural group using Alaska native traditions. I like the group because it allows contributions from everybody. It encourages every student, native and non-native, to bring in their stories, their songs, and share them together. That's how we get a richer concept of things to work with.

Tuma is about asking questions. Some are specific questions that force me to do more research. Like why do the shamans from this area do this and the shamans from over here do it in a different way? Or how come the vowel systems of these groups of people are different from another? It makes me wonder, think, and do research. I ask around and when I don't know, I always call people I know—elders, my other colleagues, and say 'what do you think?' The students and performers wonder about these things, and want to know more, and that's how a culture stays alive, too. By people asking questions and being interested in it. They ask me where shall I go? Can you lead me to books or resources?' So, I find myself also growing.

Having multicultural students is great. And I learn a lot. I think it's the best opportunity to have, to see how the traditional ways can speak to others. To see how our traditions are still alive and have something to offer. Having an interaction with the tradition, the audiences, and the performers, that's what I really enjoy about working with Tuma, even though it's really hard. (1995)

When I accepted my position at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, I had no idea what I was getting into. In a way I still do not fully understand what it is I do. And maybe that is as it should be. In this way I will always stay alert in respect for the mystery surrounding me. Though the work presented above may seem logical and systematic in progression, it was not. How does one reveal on paper the personal interactions, contradictions, frustrations, joys, revelations, and instinct that were a part of Tuma? The work is not done, nor can it ever be done. That is the humility revealed by the work. I am only a part of something much greater. Tuma theatre participated in,

and was one manifestation of, the cyclical continuum of the Yup'ik and Inupiat people.

A Yup'ik woman and audience member at *Qayaq: The Magical Man*, revealed how Tuma has become a part of Alaska Native culture.

I was raised in Dellingham during the 40s and 50s and I went to B.I.A. schools. It was during a period where Yup'ik speaking children were being punished very much for speaking their native languages in school. So, what was going on in the play was something that I had experienced first-hand, myself, and from seeing from that point of view. It was something that I never really understood and I always felt really badly for my friends who were always very punished and humiliated for just speaking their native language. So, during that transition period, a lot of things are set in motion that still are reverberating in Alaskan culture today. I think that taking a play, like *Qayaq*, where people can see, is very helpful to people. Because a lot of what happened to native Alaskan people is not easily described in words or at an academic level. But I think what happened in the play is very easily understood by any person from their heart and their spirit.

The process of creating performance with indigenous people has no set formula. This is as it should be. The variables of creating performance with indigenous people, given the vicissitudes of personalities, support structures, and existing circumstances, are mercurial and require constant adjustment and negotiation. The work is a daily initiation, education, and improvisation.

Working with indigenous people comes with a responsibility, for indigenous cultures are small, fragile, threatened, and much abused, suffering from social, political, economic, psychological, and cultural traumas. A betrayal of such a responsibility could easily injure a culture, becoming a meddlesome, counter-productive form of neo-colonialism rather than the sincere assistance intended. The Tuma performance projects I have been involved with have many times taken on high profiles accompanied by much public interest, curiosity, and skepticism. They have also been invested with much hope and trust, which in turn has made me acutely aware of my responsibility to a people and their culture.

My work with Tuma has never failed to leave me without a sense of accomplishment and gratitude. As an artist I have never felt so connected, alive and fulfilled. I feel blessed by the many opportunities to work with so many wonderful people, sharing their lives and the wealth of their culture in a way few outsiders have.

Somehow I believe Tuma will contribute in a positive way to the evolution, understanding, and continuance of Alaska Native culture. I hope and believe the work will contribute to a greater appreciation and dialogue between cultures and be a part of an emerging global consciousness that will respect the wisdom of each and every culture.

PART II
PERFORMANCE SCRIPTS

THE STORIES BEGIN:

THE EAGLE'S GIFT

Performance narratives are deeply imbedded within many cultures. They recount the moments within the culture in which often divinely inspired performance becomes a public expression, ranging from praise, thanksgiving and invocation to dramatic narration. The stories contained in the Hindu Mahabharata, or even the more Western traditions surrounding the Greek performances of Thespis, are familiar examples. Similarly, Tuma Theatre's 1993 production of *The Eagle's Gift* was based on the core narrative of the gift of the Eagle Mother of song dance and drumming to the Inupiat people.

The original story follows a native man and woman who are out walking on the tundra when they came upon a giant eagle swooping down on them. Out of self-defense, the man kills the eagle with his bow and arrow. They notice a deep drumming sound coming from high up the mountain. Fox spirit helpers inform them that the drumming is the heartbeat of the slain eagle's grieving mother. The only way to comfort her is to properly care for the body of her son and return it to her high upon the mountain. In return for their respect and penitence, she gives them the gift of song, dance and drumming as a means to spiritually connect with the powers of the universe. In times of sorrow and trouble these activities will be their salvation and their joy. (Rasmussen's account of the Eagles Gift is included in Chapter II).

The Tuma narrative begins with a modern day Inupiat man and woman re-telling the legend of the Eagle Mother. This leads them on a spiritual journey through their culture's mythology that has been cluttered and confused by incursions from the modern world. On the journey, they encounter the ancient spiritual forces and beliefs that lie within them. Two fox people arrive to serve as guides as they travel through the spirit world. The journey continues as Blood Woman, Dog Pungo (another spirit helper), and the Snakes of Hope, appear to reveal mysteries to the man and woman.

In many ways, the production resonates with the traditional Eagle-Wolf Messenger Feast, which is detailed in Part I, Chapter 2. It does, however, move beyond a specific culture, to become universal. The Eagle Mother appears old, frail, and lonely.

The man and woman must do something to bring the spirit back to her, for her survival is their survival. As in the original legend, the man and woman must give of themselves. In this version, however the gift must first be self-healing. They realize that their actions have put them out of balance with the traditional world. Alcohol, drugs, sex, disrespect of elders, environmental devastation and wanton killing of animals has blinded them from the path of harmony. With their confessions, the man and woman undergo a healing that is administered by the Eagle Mother and her helpers. They realize that their return to balance is ultimately their responsibility. Now healed, the wolf people return to teach them the songs and dances that they must take back to their communities.

The Eagle's Gift employed a diversity of performance practices derived from Inupiat, Yup'ik and Greenlandic Inuit traditions. Similarly, all three languages, plus English are represented in the text. Much use was made of multimedia technology, including projections, video and rock music. The audience was seated informally on chairs and cushions, which were placed on risers surrounding the stage space on three sides. This trademark of Tuma productions recalls the seating arrangement in the traditional ceremonial houses of the Inupiat and Yup'ik people.

The staging was quite simple, employing a variety of floor clothes and props to suggest various locales. Projection screens were placed at the rear of the playing space and a stage trap was used as the fire pit, providing an all-important pathway to the spiritual world. Lighting was particularly critical to the production as a means to express mood and to delineate the dream-like quality of the spiritual journey. Perhaps one of the most critical visual elements, however, was in the elaborate costume design. Traditional and fanciful elements organically fused to create characters from deep within the arctic spirit world.

Dale Seeds

THE EAGLE'S GIFT

Based on the story of how the gifts of song and dance were given to the Inupiat people

Adapted for the Stage by Thomas Riccio and the Tuma Theatre Company
First Performance: 28 February 1993 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Production Staff

Director	Thomas Riccio
Choreography	Andrea Yee & Theresa John
Set and Mask Design	David Apple
Costume Design	Tara Maginnis
Lighting Design	Kade Mendelowitz
Technical Direction	Kade Mendelowitz
Stage Manager	Jeannine Patané
Video Design	Shelly Kjonstad & Keith Oberecht

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Man	Paul Asicksik
Woman	Wilma Brown
Red Fox	Ringo Jimmy
White Fox	Esther Stauffer
Root Woman	Melanie Brown
Underworld Creatures	Amber Best
	Kathy Bolak
	Paul Mountain
	Andrea Yee
Bow & Arrow Men, and Puppets	Don Johnson
	Geoffrey Stauffer
	Peter Dillingham
	Olivia Hill
Blood Woman	Ransom Amarantal
Dog Pungo	Karl Kalen
Eagle Mother	Karen Kielsen
Wolf Dancers	Melanie Brown
	Karl Kalen
	Don Johnson
	Andrea Yee
Elder Woman	Theresa John
Elder Man	Paul Mountain

SCENE ONE

As the audience enters they see a large video screen that projects images of the tundra and natural scenes. As the program develops it includes images of contemporary life and television images. All of the images are abstract and distorted. The rhythm of the video increases as it becomes more contemporary. "Eskimo" by The Residents underlay the entire video. Then a **MAN** and a **WOMAN** emerge from the audience. They look at the video then, with a gesture, dispel it. They turn to the audience and tell them the ancient Inupiat legend of the "Eagle's Gift."

SCENE TWO

Man: One day, a long time ago, there was a **Man** and a **Woman** out on the tundra looking for caribou. When the sun came up over the mountain they decided to climb that mountain to look for caribou below.

Woman: When they got to the first shelf they could see no caribou in the basin below them. After they rested, they decided to climb up to steep rock place. All of a sudden, a dark shadow fell on them and a big wind rushed over them.

Man: That wind blew dust and little rocks all around the **Man** and **Woman**. They fell to one knee to keep from rolling down the mountain. When they looked up they saw a giant bird dropping down towards them. Its great big claws were open and it was ready to grab them.

Video image of an eagle flying.

Woman: The **Man** took out his bow fast, put in an arrow and aimed it at the giant bird. He was thinking hard:

Man: "Where should I aim to kill it?" He decided, and let his arrow go.

Woman: The arrow hit the place the **Man** aimed for. It entered the bird's body in the hollow where its neck joined the breast. The giant bird wobbled and then it rose higher in the air. Then the bird slowly sailed down into the valley below. It laid still on the ground where it landed.

Man: They looked at the giant bird and wondered.

Woman: "Did some spirit protect me?"

Man: They went down the rocky trail. They came to a little creek and walked toward the bird and circled it all around to make sure it was dead. When they got close they saw that the bird was truly a 'tingmiakpak'.

Woman: A giant eagle.

Man: Then they began to hear a drumming sound.

Woman: It had started right when the **Man** shot the tingmiakpak, but they had not heard it. Now it was getting louder. The drumming seemed to come from high up on the mountain.

Man: The drumming sound was not like anything they had ever heard before.

Two **Fox People** appear and stand behind the **Man** and **Woman**.

Woman: Then they went up to the dead tingmiakpak.

Man: Then a voice called out.

White Fox: (in Yup'ik) Usung, elpet, tunuteqa!!

Hey, you, turn around!!

Man: Hey, you, turn around.

Woman: They stopped and turned around to see what called to them like that.

Man: There was a **Fox Man**.

Woman: And a **Fox Woman** standing there.

Man: They knew they were spirits, even though they looked real.

Woman: The spirits spoke to them.

Red Fox: (in Yup'ik) Cauyalrianeknituten. Ting piim ircaquran nutengalqa.

Woman: "You have been hearing a drumming sound. It is the heartbeat of the tingmiakpak's mother."

White Fox: Alamgallalruuq, aliyullagnlani-llu tangllerminiu getunvaa tuquutellerpeiu ercaqura-llu nii tengvagluni.

Man: "She was so shocked and sad when she saw you had killed her son that her heart began to pound."

Red Fox: Utencetavlcaugan tingmiakpiim yucia aaniinum.

Woman: "There is only one way to make the mother's heart feel better. You must return the tingmiakpak's spirit to his mother."

White Fox: Qailukuararlcauguten utrtcecukuvgu yucia aaniinun. Tanageraquten allanek anernnervek wangtun.

Man: "Now, you must do certain things in order to return the spirit to the mother. You will see other spirit persons like me."

Red Fox: Nicugniqegcoarluki qanellrit. Tanagerluki tamalkuiita maniitellrit. Umyuaqsungngaciiqaten cat tamaita.

Woman: "Listen carefully to what they say. Look at everything they show you. You will be able to remember everything."

White Fox: Elitnaurciqamteggen nallunritarkarpenek

Man: "We will help you to learn what you must do."

SCENE THREE

The **Fox People** dance to turn off the lights. Then, they dance a Fox dance for the audience and the **Man** and **Woman**. Next, the **Fox People** do a ritual preparation for the journey of the **Man** and **Woman**. The **Man** and **Woman** are shown a traveling dance--they dance until they come to their travel/journey masks. They put them on and immediately fall to the floor. A double drumming sound occurs. The **Fox People** bring out the cloth of the underworld, then begin to chant at the fire pit.

SCENE FOUR: THE UNDERWORLD

Slowly, the **Root Woman** emerges from the firepit. From the four corners come the **People from the Underworld** who slowly move in pain towards the center. One goes to the platform, another circles slowly, an expression of earth's pain. Their costumes are covered with garbage. The **Fox People** continue to chant. The **Man** and **Woman** travel through their personal journey.

Video of slow abstractions. Sound of drumming and contemporary media noise.

SCENE FIVE: THE BOW AND AROW CHALLENGE

Two **Runners** appear--their heads, arms and hair painted; wearing red ribbons--and carry bow and arrows with which they point at the audience. They are checking to make sure that the audience members have brought no evil spirits with them. They single out certain audience members. They point to the **Man** and **Woman**.

The **Man** and **Woman** continue to travel on their journey. The **Root Woman** and the **Underworld People** continue to move slowly, witnesses and expressions of global suicide.

SCENE SIX: THE SNAKES

Two **Snakes** enter struggling with breaking out of their life sacks. They are human forms wanting expression. The **Snakes** move through the three gathered **Underworld People** and the **Root Woman** at center stage. As the **Snakes** pass through they lose their shape and immediately become

formless, as if re-born, their new form able to be transformed. They spit out their human bones.

SCENE SEVEN: THE TRANSFORMATION

The **Hand Men** enter with large (traditionally styled) hands. They do their hand dance of welcoming the audience and the **Man** and the **Woman**. The **Fox People** travel and lead the **Man** and **Woman** through the **Underworld/Root Woman** transformation. Once accomplished, the **Hand Men** then go to the audience to bring them out of their seats. They are helped by the **Fox People** and **Man** and **Woman** who guide various (hopefully all) audience members through the **Underworld/Root Woman** transformation. They re-seat them at another place in the theatre. They re-arrange the original composition of the theatre--they have transformed the theatre. Meanwhile, the **Snake People** have been slowly moving in and out of the audience--they attempt to touch and make contact with everyone. The **Underworld Person** that has represented the mountain screams and collapses on the platform--then slowly crawls away. The **Snakes** begin to come from the audience, the **Underworld People** begin to recede to the sides or leave. **Root Woman** descends to her home below. The **Man** and **Woman** watch this, transfixed and still in the midst of their personal journey.

SCENE EIGHT: RETURN TO THE TIME BEFORE TIME

The **Man** and **Woman** continue to dance their journey to the time-before-time. Suddenly, **Blood Woman** enters. She is half-man, half-woman, nine feet tall, wearing large hands and long black hair. Her face is covered with red blood. She stomps into the theatre eyeing each of the audience

members. She is the guardian of the the space and wants to make sure that no one has entered who is undeserving. She spots the **Man** and **Woman** who are uncertain of what **Blood Woman** will do. After she examines the entire theatre audience, the **Blood Woman** goes to center and with her large hands "scrapes" or "rakes" the audience of their bad spirits, or their guilt and lack of balance. She pulls the energy from the audience then directs it to the firepit that is now open and emitting smoke and light. The **Man** and **Woman** are fascinated by the effort and kneel at the firepit and look into it. Then, the **Blood Woman** calls from the spirit world.

Blood Woman: Pungo!

Dog **Pungo**, half-human, half-dog, appears. He has four faces and is the embodiment of all that is evil in the audience and the **Man** and **Woman**. He is also a clown, mischievous and selfish. **Pungo** pulls their journey masks from their faces. Then **Pungo** points to the human bones and offers the couple food and water from bowls that he pulls from the pit. The couple eats and drinks and **Pungo** indicates that they must make an offering to the spirits. A low fire light and smoke emanate through the fire pit as if it were revealing another world. **Pungo** circles the pit and the couple with a circle of teeth. As **Pungo** proceeds, the **Blood Woman** calls for the spirit world to bear witness. **Blood Woman** releases **Pungo** from her direct power.

The lights go to deep shadows. From the audience, eyes appear by way of flashlights to bear witness to this event. There is drumming and guitar music. The fire light vanishes and only the "eyes" illuminate and move. The dance of the eyes as **Pungo** dances and plays with the audience.

SCENE NINE: THE EAGLE MOTHER

The eyes vanish. The fire pit light returns and the couple stares intently into it as if reading it for messages. Then, the feet of an old bent woman appear as she walks slowly onto the stage. **Pungo** becomes quiet and goes to the platform. The sound of the **Eagle Mother's** crying song is heard. The old eagle-woman is fully visible. It seems as if she is ill and it is difficult for her to move. Her clothing is ragged and old; her head is bent. The **Eagle Mother** is close to death. The **Blood Woman** hovers over the scene at center. As if seeing a vision in the firepit, the **Man** and **Woman** continue to stare into it. They understand why the eagle-woman is crying.

Man: I would not have killed the eagle if I had known that he had a home up here.

Woman: We thought we were going to lose our life. We were afraid.

The **Eagle Mother** continues her song and ends with a stomping of her feet. Meanwhile **Pungo** has gone for two benches, which he drags onto the stage. The **Man** and **Woman** suddenly become very ill and stagger as they stand, finally making their way to the benches.

With the assistance of **Pungo** and **Blood Woman**, the **Eagle Mother** begins her shamanic trance. Double drumming occurs.

Video images of natural elements appear: water, clouds, northern lights--all are abstracted and posterized.

The **Bow and Arrow Men** enter with puppets of the **Man** and **Woman**. The actions of the puppets mirror and react what has happened to the **Man** and **Woman**. Sometimes, the puppets are in the audience, sometimes consoling either the **Man** or **Woman**.

The **Snake People** move with undulations--symbolic of their earth rhythm and mind-body connection. Theirs is a dance of the re-birth of the **Man** and **Woman**.

Man: I killed a walrus only for its tusks because I needed money. I left its meat to rot.

Woman: I accepted a necklace from that ivory.

Man: I accepted the ways and beliefs of the Christian missionaries. I accepted that our traditional dances were part of devil worship. Accepted it because that is what my ancestors were told. I know now that it isn't so. It was wrong for me to ignore my own traditions, the traditions of my ancestors.

Woman: I was ashamed to dance traditional songs. I was embarrassed every time I heard them. I thought that life doesn't mean what it used to in the old days.

Man: I accepted that the white man's education was better than what my grandfather wanted to teach me. Now my grandfather is dead.

Eagle Mother: (originally spoken in Greenlandic Inuit by the actor) Return to life, I see you now returning in good health among the living. Name but an instance of the men that you have lain with though you were unclean, all the food you have swallowed, old and new offenses, forbidden occupations exercised, how you lied and cheated others.

Foxes: (in Yup'ik) Pelugcecimavkaqin, Tauva!
Let her be forgiven!

Woman: (eyes the men in the audience) I have left the bars with many strangers. Now one of the men I was with contracted AIDS.

Man: I have thought of taking my own life because I think I am not good enough. I didn't really care what happened to me. I kept telling myself nobody cares about me.

Woman: I smoked marijuana because it made me laugh. I thought hangovers and blackouts were normal.

Foxes: (in Yup'ik) Pelugcecimavkarki, Tauva!

Let them be forgiven! Tauva!

Eagle Mother: (in Greenlandic Inuit) I see an animal with a crooked leg.

Man: That was the time I was really high. I was mad at everyone so I shot at animals for target practice--I hated everyone, even the animals, even myself.

Foxes: Wiitasgu, tangenngaitaput. Pelugcecimavkaqiu. Tauvra!

But never mind, we will not take notice of that. Let him be forgiven. Tauva!

Woman: I put my baby outside because she was crying too much. I didn't know it was so cold out. When I was at the hospital in Kotzebue they said that she was going to die. All I thought was "so what?" Then I will be free to drink some more.

Man: I think about money all the time. I thought that was what really mattered. I thought that the only way to fit in was to have money.

Woman: I was molested by my brother and uncle, and two very old men. This went on for seven years.

Man: I could never talk about my feelings. I always buried my emotions. Even though I hurt so much, I could never get myself to cry. By not showing my emotions I hurt myself and everyone around me.

Woman: I have been wasteful and selfish. Always thinking about myself and not my community. I always felt miserable and that is was somebody else's fault, somebody else's responsibility, not mine.

Dog **Pungo** begins to breathe heavily, pacing the space and talking in reaction to the revelations of the **Man** and **Woman**.

Man: I have not been respectful of my elders, the animals, and myself. I hated my mother for the way she was, for not caring about me. For not hugging me. For always beating me and being drunk. I drank to get back at her.

Woman: I wanted to throw away my village and my past. I've been trying to be like a white person all my life. In my lifestyle and everything. I always thought myself ugly and never as good as white women.

Man: I had no plans at all. Just stayed at home--that's all. Stayed at home and drank trying not to think too much. If there was nothing to do I just watched TV or a video. I didn't do anything I didn't have to do. Seems like that's what I've done with a big part of my life.

Woman: I learned to be ashamed of my relatives. Once I went to college I thought that they were are poor and primitive natives. I didn't want to have anything to do with their honey buckets and with their problems.

Man: I made excuses for my laziness and weaknesses because I felt the white man owed me something.

Woman: I didn't care about speaking my grandmother's language. I thought that our culture had been destroyed.

Eagle Mother: (in Greenlandic Inuit) There is more yet. There is more!

Foxes: Qanrumariut. Pelugcecimavkarki! Tauva!

They have said enough. Let them be forgiven! Tauva!

The **Eagle Mother** listens and breathes in silence, then speaks as if having difficulty eliciting information from her helping spirit; she says:

Eagle Mother: (in Greenlandic Inuit) Many confessions have the patients made, and yet it seems difficult! Can it be that they are beyond cure?

Foxes: Assirivlcarki! Mayurluki! Taugam piscigataten. Assiriqapiyarcigatan, taugam naullutain ilait augartut.

But let them get well, quite well! Raise them up! But you cannot. You are not able to relieve her of her illness though many of the causes have been removed.

Eagle Mother: (in Greenlandic Inuit) It is terrible, it is dangerous, and you, my helping spirits, you whom I believe to be here with us, why do you not raise her up and relieve them of their pain, of their sickness. Raise them up, hold them up. Now one more something appears before my eyes.

Foxes: (in Yup'ik) Pegcimanritut. Ayagceski. Pellugceski nangtequmaagut. Tauva! They are not yet released. Let them be released. Let them be forgiven they have suffered enough. Tauva!

Eagle Mother: (in Greenlandic Inuit) I see a woman over in your direction, towards the audience. It is a man and woman that seem to be asking for something. A light shines out in front of them. It is as if they are asking for something with their eyes. What is it that causes them to fall over, to stumble right into sickness, into peril of death? Can it indeed be something which will not be taken from them?

Foxes: (in Yup'ik) Aviusengaciiqut?

Can they be cured?

Man: My sickness was due to my own fault.

Woman: I must help myself. Because no body can come in from the outside and solve my problems.

Man: I have been lost but that doesn't mean I am hopeless.

Woman: I must heal myself. This is my responsibility to my family and community.

Man: I didn't want to make myself well. But that is the past.

Woman: No longer will I neglect my children or the children of the village.

Man: It is my responsibility to carry on the tradition of my ancestors. The white man's education will enable me to write down our stories and our own history.

Woman: I live in two cultures and I will help other native people get through this time of adjustment and pain.

Man: The ways of my ancestors are still valuable and important. I will help re-claim this past and help non-native people to learn from its wisdom. For they have much to learn.

Woman: Alaska is not the "last Frontier", this is my home and the home of my people. I will be brave in the face of the future.

Eagle Mother: (in Greenlandic Inuit) They are better now, it is better now. Let them get well altogether.

Foxes: (in Yup'ik) Pelugceski. Tangingevkarki assirivkarluki-llu. Tamalkunita assirivkakut. Tauva!

Let them be forgiven, let them understand and be healed. Let us all get well together.

Tauva!

A HERO COMES ALONG: QAYAQ, THE MAGICAL MAN

From Ulysses and Beowulf to Superman, heroes with special powers have been expressions of the virtues most admired by their respective cultures. They undertake quests, face challenges from evil, battle monsters, seek justice and serve as guardians of their people. For the Inupiat, Qayaq is such a hero. Born under magical circumstances in their old age, he was the fifth child of Nunamiu and Qimmiq. His parents grieve for his four siblings who disappeared mysteriously while hunting. Knowing that Qayaq has special powers, his parents ask him to embark upon a journey to find his lost siblings and if necessary, seek justice for their deaths. His journey is a series of challenges and tests from monsters, cannibals and giants, all of which he successfully conquers through the use of his magic powers, amulets and spirit helpers. At times he appears to die, and yet is transformed into animal form and back to a human being as necessary.

The 1991 production of *Qayaq* was the first Tuma performance under Riccio's direction. The core narrative of the performance was derived from a variety of sources, most particularly from Emily Ivanov Brown's (Ticasuk) transcription, *The Longest Story Ever Told*. Fittingly, Brown's granddaughter, Melanie, was a cast member in this production. This production also marked the first implementation of the ritual techniques developed by Riccio. A description of these processes is contained in Part III.

The production was introduced by an involved series of audience participation activities orchestrated by the characters of Raven and Loon, which served as a means to inform the audience as to what they might expect from the evening's performance. Once the Tuma style became more established, these audience preparation activities became less complex in subsequent productions.

The Tuma version follows the traditional story line until Qayaq meets the giant, who now is characterized as a 19th century white trapper. Here the political issues presented within the narrative begin to emerge. The giant befriends Qayaq and manages

to get him to do his bidding, including trapping, hunting and mining. As in the traditional story, this begins a series of challenges for Qayaq. Rather than monsters, he is beset by white missionaries, teachers, anthropologists, The Bureau of Indian Affairs, drugs and alcohol.. He is dressed in western clothes, trades his amulets for alcohol, and falls into a physical and cultural stupor. Ultimately, Qayaq is revived by the sound of the drum and the traditional guidance of his parents. He is embraced by the spirits of the animals and the earth and is transformed into a falcon.

Qayaq was critical to Tuma's evolution because it established performance text development techniques and a recognizable production style. Clearly, the ritual warm ups and culturally based improvisation techniques provided a fertile environment for the cast to develop a text. The dynamic physicality of the acting, the ritualized scenic space, the evocative lighting and traditional/stylized costumes all contributed to a newly emerged ensemble performance based in traditional practices and narratives, yet reimagined to produce fresh, immediate, and compelling theatre.

Dale Seeds

QAYAQ: The Magical Man

Inspired by the Inupiat legend

Devised and directed by Thomas Riccio

Adapted for the stage by the Tuma Theatre Company

First Performance: 26 February 1991 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Production Staff

Set and Lighting Design

Costume Design

Musical Advisor

Hugh Hall

Tara Maginnis

John Luther Adams

Tuma Theatre Ensemble

(in alphabetical order)

Melanie Brown

Wilma Brown

Ann Megan Evans

Irma Hooper,

Sven Holmberg

Donald Johnson

Paul Jumbo

Mike Lane,

Paul Mountain

Anthony Rivard

Geoffery Stauffer,

Joanna Wassile

Josh Weiser

PART ONE

PRELUDE: KUGAN AGALIK (Appearance of the Devils)

As the audience approaches the entrance to the theatre they are approached, taunted, and entertained by several masked characters representing vices frowned upon by Alaska native cultures. The mask each individual character wears are colorful, oversized, twisted, distorted, and appropriate to the vice they represent. The movements, attitude, vocalizations, and language of the performers are likewise appropriate to their vice characterizations. Each of the characters has developed a "vice scenario"--a menu of action and combinations they can apply as they see fit. The audience should feel physically confronted yet amused. The idea behind the use of the vices is to anticipate a different, more interactive performance event as well as to introduce themes the performance will explore. The use of such confrontational masked performers has its origins in a variety of Yup'ik, Inuit, Aleut, and native American ceremonies in festivals. This section is specifically inspired by the Aleut "Kugan Agalik," Appearance of the Devils festival.

Each vice character is enacted by two performers. The vices are: **Greed, Laziness, Disrespect, Dishonesty, and Bragging.**

1 WELCOMING

The theatre space is intimate with seating units on all four sides of a stage 16' x 16'. The Audience is seated on three different levels. Only the top level of the seating units has chairs with backs (for the old people); the other levels, including the floor, are laid with strips of carpeting and carpet padding. The relaxed seating encourages the audience to lounge and in general sit more intimately with others. The space is inspired by the Yup'ik "kashim," also known as the ceremonial house, men's house, or community house.

Traditionally, these houses were where hunters gathered to tell stories; where the men educated boys in hunting, carving, and life in general; where steam baths took place; and where the community gathered to observe rituals, ceremonies, and the healing of the angaqluk (shaman). Above the stage are four hoops arranged in concentric circles--white feathers are attached to the hoops to represent variously the stars, snow, and ancestral spirits. A string coming from the hoops is located near one area where the Drummers are located. At various times during the performance a Drummer attaches the string to his wrist and the hoops move in rhythm with the drumbeat.

At the center of the stage is a trap that represents a fire pit. In traditional kashims such fire pits were connected by tunnel to the main entrance of the kashim. The fire pit was an entrance for the shaman and other performers coming from the "lower world." For this production, no actual fire was lit (fire was simulated with smoke and lights); however, the fire pit was used as an entrance to the lower world. The fire pit is covered with five boards and uncovered, as need arises, throughout the performance. Two other stage traps--to either side of the stage at center--represent "seal" holes and have round entrances. The stage floor is covered with an ideogram, presented in concentric circles, that depicts the story of the performance.

There are three drummers on stage drumming and variously singing and dancing in Yup'ik and Inupiat as the audience enters. Sometimes one drummer will sing and dance as the others drum. **Raven** and **Loon** welcome the audience as they enter and seat them according to their own comic (or is it cosmic) logic. Each audience member is seated in a "special place." Continuously, **Raven** and **Loon** argue and play tricks on one another while deciding where the entering audience should sit. The drummers sometimes play with the two characters (Raven and Loon) mockingly, teasing and participating with the seating of the audience. Each audience member is greeted as if a long lost relative and are seated in each of the four sections after they are given new family names—traditional Yup'ik, Inupiat or Athabaskan names. The names vary each performance. Nothing escapes the attention of the constantly clowning and obstinate **Raven** who is arrogant and thinks he knows everything. **Loon**, on the other hand, is fun loving and goofy, but knows

much. **Raven** and **Loon** make contact with each of the entering audience members, commenting with their bird-human language on audience member's clothing, attitude, discomfort, etcetera. Sometimes, **Loon** steals an audience member from **Raven** or they will argue over where an audience member, especially a pretty girl, will sit. An overall sense of ease and craziness pervades.

2 SONG COMPETITION

As the audience is fully seated, or nearly seated, **Raven** assigns each of the four sections of audience a simple chant to recite. With the help of **Loon** and the drummers, the renamed "families" work their chant. Once each section has their chant mastered, a chant competition between the sections occurs. With drum accompaniment and with the goofy assistance and encouragement of **Raven** and **Loon**, all four audience sections chant to create a song. Once the song is complete, the **Vices: Greed, Laziness, Disrespect, Dishonesty** and **Bragging** invade and pass through teasing, harassing, and disrupting the audience in any way they can. **Raven** and **Loon** do their best to chase them out, and after much comedy, they succeed.

3 CLEANSING

As **Raven** continues to vent his feelings on the Vices, **Loon** lights a smudge pot. **Raven** takes the smudge pot and an eagle feather and with somberness smudges the audience, then the performing space, with smoke. **Loon** encourages and assists **Raven**. The drummers drum softly and chant of purification in a low tone: "**Hiya Aaa Aaa Aaa Hiya Aaa Aaa Aaa**"

This section is inspired by the Yup'ik practice of using Labrador tea to cleanse their kashims of harmful spirits prior to ritual performances.

The lights slowly fade and smoke begins to rise from the fire pit at the center of the performing space. **Loon** notices the smoke and calls **Raven's** attention to it. **Loon** takes the smudge pot as **Raven** removes the boards covering the fire pit. The room is now prepared for performance.

4 NUNAMIU

Raven, with the help of **Loon**, has removed all of the boards from the fire pit. Smoke, light and vocal sounds emanate from the fire pit. A man's voice is heard from within the fire pit and underneath the stage--from the lower world. **Raven** and **Loon** hide in the shadows and listen with anticipation. **Nunamiu** yells from below.

Nunamiu:

(Ahh) Whinga piutellrunritua	I did not become of my own free will.
wangnek taugaam ellam	The universe's person is
Yuyan piucetellruanga	responsible for my being and
(ahh!)	becoming.

Suddenly **Nunamiu**, a Yup'ik man, enters from the fire pit. He is dazed, confused, and has no idea where he is.

Nunamiu:

Nancia natmuntam mavet tuciu	Where am I? To what manner
	of place
eiin tangerecsiiyagakarta.	did I land? Why is the place
	so dark?

Nunamiu sees **Raven** and **Loon**, who greet him, and then tries to jump back into the fire pit but is prevented by **Raven** and **Loon**, who try to calm him. **Raven** comments to **Loon** that he is pleased with his creation, **Nunamiu**. **Loon** replaces the boards over the pit. **Nunamiu** tries to jump into the pit but realizes that the pit has been covered. He accepts his fate.

Raven, to show off **Nunamiu**, attempts to teach him to dance. **Raven** is not very good at dancing but **Nunamiu** gives it a try. They dance the **Athabaskan Twist** (from the village of Minto.)

Athabaskan Twist: (repeated as needed)

Aa...ahaleeya heeya hohee
 ahaleeya heeya ho ho heeya
 ho ho heeyee ahaleeya...ahaleeya heeya
 ho oho heeyee

As **Nunamiu** dances he suddenly notices that both **Raven** and **Loon** are gone. **Nunamiu** calls for the two birds, but there is no answer. He looks into the shadows of the stage, but there is nothing but silence. There is a long silence with **Nunamiu** by himself at center.

Nunamiu, in order to deal with the silence and loneliness, begins to dance the **Athabaskan Twist** by himself. As he dances, the chorus of animals reply with derision. **Nunamiu** stops and listens, there is nothing. When he dances again, animals can be heard laughing. Several of the animals emerge from the shadows and even a few of the animals boldly mimic **Nunamiu's** dancing and singing. He tries at first to talk, then to grab any of the animals, but they evade him, teasing and mocking **Nunamiu**. Many of the animals hide amongst the audience.

The animal performers are all masked. The animals performed are: **Snowy Owl, Grizzly Bear, Red Fox, Wolf, Wolverine, Moose, and Swan**. There are two **Eagles**.

With the encouragement of a male **Eagle**, the drummers begin to drum the **Yup'ik Courting Song**. The male and female **Eagles** teach **Nunamiu** the dance and song. The dancing coaxes the other animals out of their shyness and they dance the song as well.

The animals assist **Nunamiu** in looking for a mate amongst the audience. Each animal has a different suggestion for this mate. The animals call **Nunamiu's** attention from across the stage. Various audience members are offered to **Nunamiu** by the animals, including men. **Nunamiu** is not pleased with any of the suggestions. The **Yup'ik Courting Song** continues under the scene.

Courting Song: (repeated as needed)

kiaraluanga wiingaurlug	Poor me I am looking
Iaparaulurkamnek	For a companion (wife)
akwarpak pikamnek	That will be with me forever

5 QIMMIQ

The male **Eagle** screams to call **Nunamiu's** attention. **Nunamiu** turns to center to see the female **Eagle**. The male **Eagle** removes her mask to reveal **Qimmiq**. They stand looking at each other from across the stage and fall in love. **Nunamiu** sings the **Yup'ik Courting Song** loudly as he dances towards her. The animals tease and try to distract him—but **Qimmiq** and **Nunamiu** cannot be distracted from each other and meet and dance the Yup'ik Courting Dance at center stage. The animals look on with approval and excitement. They sing and dance in celebration with the song they mocked **Nunamiu** for earlier. **Raven** leads the animals in the **Athabaskan Twist Song and Dance**.

Nunamiu and **Qimmiq** are given gifts by the animals. He is given an Aleut kayaking hat, and she an amulet necklace.

The lights go to night and darkness; **Raven** and the animals vanish.

6 THE WHALE HUNT

In the darkness, there is the sound of waves and ocean. The audience listens to the sounds in an extended darkness. There is the sound of breathing and of ice popping. A low chant and drumming begin. Daylight returns to reveal material representing sea waves extend across the stage with either end of the material operated by the animals. The waves are lit from underneath. A **Walrus** (performed in a mask) appears moving in and out of the waves. A prayer, in Inupiat, is uttered.

Suddenly the waves rise up high and **Whale** sounds are heard. The **Whale**, performed in a spirit mask and with a hand held puppet, moves in and out of the waves. The **Walrus** vanishes. The waves subside and the **Whale** moves easily with the waves as she sings her **Whale Chant**. The animal's chant in accompaniment. **Raven** swims, comically and backstroking, through the waves. Hand operated carved bird puppets fly across the ocean as carved fish puppets move in and out of the waves. The carved puppets are operated by the animals and accompany their movement with bird and fish sounds.

Qimmiq and **Nunamiu** appear at the shore and look out over the waves. The birds and fish vanish. **Nunamiu** operates a puppet of a hunter seated in a kayak.

Qimmiq:

Siisuit, asqqisut.

Whales are coming.

Nunamiu:

Gayamnun lavngalunyk

We will run together in a bent-over

aquaqurniartukuk	position to my kayak
Arveq pugkan arulairniartukuk	When the whale surface stop!
Anglluqan'llu aquaqunqigglunuk	When the whale submerses we will run again
Qanavkerak	No talking
Kitaki	Now!

Nunamiu with his puppet paddles in the waves. One drum beat accompanies the hunter, **Nunamiu**. Another drum beat symbolizes the heartbeat of the hunted **Whale**. The vocalized sound "tacoom" also accompanies each time the puppet paddle dips into the waves. **Nunamiu** stops and looks then continues to paddle looking for the **Whale**. The **Whale** moves through the wave eluding him.

Qimmiq waves and shout instructions and guidance **Nunamiu** from "shore." She continues to call to her husband encouraging him. On occasion Nunamiu talks to his puppet as if giving the puppet instructions and encouragement. **Nunamiu** and the puppet stop riding the waves and listen for the **Whale**.

Meanwhile the **Whale** moves amongst the waves in the distance. **Nunamiu** spots the **Whale** and sings to her. The **Whale** emerges from the waves and offers herself to **Nunamiu**--they are face-to-face. **Nunamiu** is given a harpoon by **Raven**--then **Raven** takes the puppet. **Nunamiu** harpoons the whale. There is silence except for the sound of the fading heartbeat drum of the **Whale**. The heartbeat drumming stops. There is sound of wind as the waves disappear leaving **Nunamiu**, **Qimmiq**, and the **Whale** on the stage. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq**, with arms raised the sky sing and their song of thanksgiving as they motion to "Silam Inua" (the owner of the universe)

Song of thanksgiving: (repeat) Quyana Hey ya Quyana Hey ya Quyana Hey a Heya hey ay.

When they sing the **Whale** spirit rise and gives the couple the **Whale** puppet, symbolic of its body. The **Whale** performer, representing the spirit of the **Whale** dances and vanishes as **Qimmiq** and **Nunamiu** watch and continue to sing.

Loon uncovers the boards from the fire pit. **Raven** instructs **Qimmiq** to offer the body of the **Whale** to the fire pit. **Qimmiq** kneels at the fire pit, **Nunamiu** stand behind her and she lowers the **Whale** puppet into the fire pit. There is a long silence until smoke arises.

Nunamiu:

Silam Inua. Quyana.

Owner of the Universe. Thank you.

A single drum begins to sound like a heartbeat. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** embrace and dance around the fire pit. Raven goes to the fire pit and calls into it.

7 CHILDREN

The heartbeat drumming continues and is joined by the birthing rhythm: rattle, rattle, hitting stick, hitting stick. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** repeat movements from their **Courting Dance**.

A tree of masks descend from the sky--the upper world. They are masks inspired by those traditionally worn by the Inupiat to represent the first and prototypical man and woman.

Nunamiu and **Qimmiq** reach into the fire pit and pull out their first child. She is the East and represents the spring. **Loon** takes a mask from the tree and gives it to **Raven** who in turn puts it on the face of the performer. The mask of the first child descends. The first child is born from the fire pit. The child becomes animated with the mask. The **First Child** is female/spring/north. A **Goose** appears to be her protecting spirit. The parents teach her a fishing dance. She continues the dance until all of her siblings are born.

The **Second Child** is born. Life comes with a mask. An **Eagle** appears to be the protecting spirit of the child. The second child is male/summer/east. The parents teach him to use a bow and arrow. He continues the dance until all of his siblings are born.

The **Third Child** is born. Life comes with a mask. Another **Goose** appears. The **Third Child** is female/fall/south. The **Geese** fly from north to south repeatedly. The parents teach her to pick berries. She continues the dance until her siblings are born

The **Fourth Child** is born. Life comes with a mask. A **Wolf** appears. The **Fourth Child** is male/winter/west. The parents teach him to seal hunt. He continues the dance until the parents go to the fire pit.

With **Nunamiu's** call of "Katahke" (come) the four children turn to the center.

Family Thanksgiving Dance. The family dances together. **Nunamiu** calls: "Kitahke". The dance/song transforms into the Inupiat **Good-bye Dance.**

The Drummers play: drum, stick hitting, stick hitting, rattle, rattle in a repeated pattern.

The **Raven** and the **Geese, Wolf, and Eagle** join them in the song. One by one the children embrace and then leave their parents; each child leaves in their respective directions and are followed by their spirit animal. All the children are gone. Low drumming. Qimmiq and Nunamiu stand quietly and are very alone. They watch a powerful sunset.

8 DEATH

The sounds and movements of night surround and come from the semi-darkness. There is a mysterious light and shadows. The parents sense danger for their children. **Greed,**

Laziness, Disrespect, Dishonesty, and Bragging swarm the stage and taunt **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq**. Then the characters of chaos disappear.

Qimmiq asks **Nunamiu** to search for the children. **Nunamiu** calls the **Wolf, Eagle, and Geese**. When they have all come he asks the animals to look in the world for the children. They look through out the audience and the darkness. **Nunamiu** searches, calling for his children. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** drop their theatricality and become human. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** ask the audience questions variously in English and Yup'ik.

Nunamiu and Qimmiq

Inipukqa Tangellruaten	Have you seen our children?
Aka uternarillruyaqai	They were to have returned long ago.

Qimmiq remains at the center of the stage, pacing, searching the distance. There is a low red light and then silence. There are four "hoots" from the Snowy Owl. The bird, performed in mask, dances across the stage. The Yup'ik believe the hoot of an owl brings news of a death. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** are silent.

Nunamiu moves suddenly, he refuses to believe their children are dead. He calls to each direction quickly. The **Wolf, Eagle, and Geese** come. Each animal comes with slow, sorrowful movements. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** now know their children are dead.

Qimmiq:

Pissullran Kinquani atakuani	After hunting one day our children
getunrarput Utertekquiltut	did not return
Nuam yuit uptellruut Kiarnaluki	For days and nights they did not
	return
Kiartellret tekitellrut camek	The animals looked all over
unanqevkenateng	

Natmunpicitellnuit	The searchers came back without them
Yuigumi piukenani	There was no clue or trace of them
Tapat akuliitni piukenani	Not on the wide tundra
Allrakumliqelruukuk	This was a sad time for Nanamiu
Nunamiug-lla	and me

Qimmiq kneels and chants her sorrow. **Nunamiu**, as is Yup'ik custom for men, does not cry. He stands silently looking into nothing. Two sticks are hit with a plain rhythm which is the custom when singing to the dead.

The **Tall Uncle**, enters, singing an Athabaskan mourning chant. He moves with a mourning shuffle particular to the Athabaskan.

Tall Uncle: (repeated chant)

Sidin-'akkaa ha ha
 Yuh kkaa dist'aa ha ha
 Sidin'a kkaa ha ha
 Yuh kkaa dist'aa eehu hu hu

hee hee hee he yee hee hee he
 Eey ho sagooga kkaa ha saggaoya kkaa hodee hee heeya
 hee hee heey hee hee hee hee heeya ho hee hee hee

The daylight comes.

9 GROWING OLD

Raven and **Loon** appear with bowls containing white and gray and give one each to **Qimmiq** and **Nunamiu**. The **Tall Uncle** continues to sing the Athabaskan Mourning song. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** face each other kneeling. They paint each other's hair with white streaks. They make each other's face with lines of age. The Yup'ik believe the parents wear their children on their face.

Nunamiu and **Qimmiq** face each other as old people. Loon takes the bowls and Raven raises them both up, bending their bodies--neck, legs, arms, shoulders-- into the shape of old people. **Tall Uncle** continues to sing as **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** walk off slowly.

Led by the **Eagle**, several bird totems, carved of wood and attached atop sticks enter being carried by several masked performers who do Inupiat bird dance movements with a stick in each hand. **Tall Uncle's** song fades and the song of the **Whale** spirit, heard earlier, is heard in the distance.

Nunamiu, as an old man, enters and the birds swirl and talk to him. He talks with them in Yup'ik. The birds disappear and two waves (material) appear around **Nunamiu**. Unseen by **Nunamiu**, the **Whale** spirit returns and sings to him. The **Raven** plays a magical song on his bone flute. **Nunamiu** becomes full of hope and is inspired to sing the **Yup'ik Courting** song. The **Whale** and **Nunamiu** dance. Filled with joy, **Nunamiu** dances and sings a **Thanksgiving Song**.

The **waves**, **Eagle**, and **Whale** vanish. **Nunamiu** calls for his wife excitedly and **Qimmiq** as a old woman enters. He cannot hold his happiness and sings the Yup'ik Courting song. **Qimmiq** thinks he is being foolish and tells him as much.

Qimmiq:

Usviirututer qaa?

You have gone crazy.

Nunamiu:

Qimmiq, maliigesnga Imarpiim ceniinun	Qimmiq, come with me down to the sea
Qanrutniamken Tekiskumegnuk	There I will tell you something.
Wangkugnek	Something between you and me.

Qimmiq:

Ii-i	Yes
------	-----

Nunamiu:

Canegnek Kinertellrianek avurniartukuk	You and I will gather dried grass
Quyurrlukii-llu wavet	We will lay a pile here
Amellriikata aciiliniartuten	Where you can form it into the shape of a bed
Qanetlqa maligtaqukiu	Whatever I ask you to do
Narunteksaunii	Please do it willingly

Qimmiq:

Il-i	Yes
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The **Geese** enter with a spotted seal skin and lay it down for **Qimmiq's** bed.

Nunamiu:

Renkutpuk maniiairpuk	We will show our love every morning
Setamani ernerni	For four days
Kitaki aciiliarpenun Inarten	Now lie down on this bed

She lies down. The **waves** re-enter and surround the man and woman. As the **Geese** exit the **Wolf** runs through and then stops to observe the scene. The drum beat of the Yup'ik Courting song continues underneath. The Eagle enters and gives Nunamiu two stones who raises them to the sky striking the flints in the darkness four times over her belly. The waves swell and a drum beats accompany each striking of the flint.

Nunamiu:

Waten Kiingan pikuumegnut	This is the only way another son
allaamek qetunrangciguukuk	will be conceived
Iam yuan Irayureiqakuh	Silam Inua will help us.
Qimmia nuliama	Qimmiq, my wife.

In total darkness **Nunamiu** calls out: "Silam Inua!"

10 BIRTH

The day appears and **Qimmiq** is asleep on the sealskin. Low chant and drumming. The **Crane** appears and awakens her and then tells her through sounds and chant that she is pregnant. **Qimmiq** calls out to **Nunamiu** excitedly. He comes hobbling in thinking something is wrong. He stops and realizes that she is pregnant from the look on her face.

Qimmiq:

Nunamiu! Nunamiu!	Person from the inland, person from the inland.
Ellam Yuan kenkakuk	Silam Inua is good to us!

They embrace and the **Birth Song of Qayaq** begins to play. The Drummers tap the rims of their drums to keep the rhythm. The parents walk and position themselves, seated together, at one end of the stage. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** sing the **Birth Song**.

Birth Song: (repeated as needed)

Yugni ellangici	People wake up
Kenkuyutput maniluki	Show our love
Yuunaurtuku Ilakluta	Let us live together
Yugni renkutelta	People let's love one another
Ciuliamta ganeryarait	Our ancestors wisdom
Maligluki egilranaurtukut	Lets follow the path
Yugni yuuaurtukut	People lets live
Yuratauta nunanirugluta	Dancing being happy
Ilaput Ilakluki	Together with our friends
Yugni Yugni	People People
Ellam yaun qayarakut	The universe's person is calling us
Maligceskelluni nunakegtar minun	To come with him to his wonderful and
Yugni yugni	People People

Raven and **Loon** enter from the fire pit, removing the boards from within. **Loon** is doing all the work and **Raven** is supervising taking all the credit. **Loon** accidentally on purpose hits **Raven** in the head with a board.

Smoke comes out of the pit, and **Raven** descends into the pit pushes up and out of the hole, **Qayaq**, a boy of ten years old. The child **Qayaq** crawls first then **Loon** lifts him up onto his shoulders taking him around the stage as if “flying”. **Raven** dances taking credit for the boy. **Loon** introduces the boy to the animals that have appeared.

The parents continue to sing throughout; drumming underlines the scene.

The boy stands on his own and goes to each animal who in turn gives the boy a special power. From **Bear** he is given the amulet of strength and they dance together. The **Bear** paints the boy's arms with marks to symbolize strength. **Eagle** gives the boy vision and paints the boy's forehead. **Wolverine** dances and gives the boy the dance of fierceness and paints the boy's chest and stomach. Two birds, the **Sandpiper** and **Swan**, dance with the boy and give him balance, grace, and beauty. They paint his shoulder blades and neck. Fox goes to the boy and dances, giving him slyness and cunning and paints around the boy's eyes and cheeks. Finally Wolf appears, going to the Drummers and instructs them to change the rhythm, and the boy dances with him. Wolf gives the boy family and loyalty and paints the boy's nose. They do a dance of power together. To end the dance the boy and Wolf howl together.

Throughout the scene **Loon** has been helping and encouraging the boy as **Raven** has been directing things and in general enjoying himself, using a rattle to accent the giving of power to the boy.

Raven and **Loon** go to the boy after the **Wolf** is finished and they dance with him. They have something to impart to the boy as well, it is the power of humor and kindness. With the last amulet the parents and animals look to the sky. When the dance finishes the animals vanish. **Qimmiq** and **Nunamiu** finish their singing.

The **Raven** and **Loon** try to make the boy get bigger. They pull on his arms and legs to make him taller. Laying him on the ground and pulling him, they also ask the assistance of audience members. Finally **Raven** and **Loon** have an idea. **Loon** gets into the pit as **Raven** holds the boy over the pit. **Loon** pulls to stretch the boy, pulling him fully into the pit. **Raven** reaches into the pit, pulling on the boy's hand. **Raven** pulls an adult **Qayaq** out of the pit. **Raven** is at first shocked, then plays it off that he expected as much.

The adult **Qayaq** wears all of the amulets that were given to the boy. He dances and sings the Power Dance shown him by the **Wolf**. The **Wolf** is heard howling from off-stage. His parents now go to him and embrace him. As they exit the Eagle brings Qayaq the bow and arrow of his lost sibling.

Qayaq calls to his parents to return and asks them who the bow and arrow belonged to.

Qayaq:

Aat kia pikau una

Father, whose is this?

Qimmiq:

Tekiitellritwaq mauet katagaqlikaiit Maybe some travelers dropped these.

Tall Uncle sings the **Athabaskan Mourning Song** underneath the scene and from off stage.

Nunamiu:

Ganga, nallunriragkaugaa

No, now he must know the secret.

iirumallpuk

Tuquceciullrit an'ngai all'qaiallu

The death of his brothers and sisters

Nalkumaurituralullrat Imna

And the mystery of their loss.

Qitunrama, yaquanunqa

Son, do you think you can travel

aqayugngaciiquten

far and long.

Uniskuvkuk mavet

When you leave us you may never

utertenqigngaicugnarkuten

return.

Nunamiu goes to each direction and recites the name of the children in turn. **Qimmiq** echoes their names. **Qayaq** kneels overcome with the emotion of loss and suffering.

Qimmiq:

Nallunrirakaugan an'ngavet,	You must know what happened to
al'gavet-llu tumyarallri	your brothers and sisters.
Piniutekluku-llu tamana	Become stronger with this knowledge.
nallunriqngan	

The parents comfort one another as **Qayaq** kneels. The day turns to night. The **Birds** pass through (performed with mask and with bird sticks), dancing around him. Low vocalizations of bird sounds. The night turns into day. **Qayaq** stands. He has made his decision.

Qayaq:

Aat, aanaqllu yuulma	Father and mother, if it takes me all
taktaciatun piarkaukuma	my life.
Akiunaurciqanka aningama	I will revenge the killers of my
alqama-llu tuqucetellri	brothers and sisters
Arulaarngaitua taugaam mana	I will never rest until this is done.
pimarikumku	

Qimmiq:

Tumyarqmek pitiatuk	There will be no paths to follow.
Qailun nallunriciisq	How will you know which way to go?

Nunamiu:

Nallunriciiqa upcimami

He will know because he is prepared.

Qayaq:

Unisvikciqam tek neqnek
allrakuni arvinelget
ataucinek amllertalriainek.

I will leave you with enough food to
last seven years.

Qimmiq:

Taqualgirciqamken tuknilriamek
akutamek

I will give you my potent mixture of
Eskimo ice-cream.

Nunamiu:

Ayananerpeni atatan pairciiqan

Somewhere on your path you will
meet your uncle.

Asirluku ciuinqu

Treat him well.

Nallunriciqan egturiqellrakun

You will know him because he will
be brushing mosquitoes

Cumikluten pikiñq qetunramaa

Good luck my son.

Neruniukciiqamken

I will miss you.

Qimmiq:

Mulngakina

Be careful.

Umyuaqiikuk

Remember us.

Ircaqumegni uitarrlainarciquten

You will always be in our hearts.

Ellam yaun malikurqiliten

Ellam yaun travels with you.

Qayaq raises his bow and arrow to the sky and calls three times to Silam Inua, his resolve to avenge his siblings.

Qayaq:

Tuqullrit akinaurciqanka	I will avenge their death! (x3)
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He then calls the **Wolf** who comes to sit beside him. He instructs the **Wolf** to watch over his parents.

Qayaq:

Aulukesciigatagka angauqagka	You must do what I cannot for my
pingnaquskikek	parents.
Cumikekek, auluklekek cali	Watch over them, protect them, and
nerengnaqullukek	provide for them.

The **Wolf** moves to his parents. The parents give their blessing. **Raven** calls the parents to come away. The **Wolf** and **Qayaq** howl with good-bye to one another. The parents have vanished and the **Wolf** follows in their direction.

Qayaq stands alone. The **Eagle** dances through as if in flight and takes the bow and arrow from **Qayaq**. Another **Eagle** dances through to give him a large tambourine-style Inupiat drum and drum stick. **Qayaq** begins slowly then becomes more confident and forceful in his singing an **Inupiat Travel Song**. He sings, dances, and drums as he exits, following in the direction of the **Eagle**.

END OF PART ONE
INTERMISSION

PART TWO

12 THE JOURNEY

Qayaq enters singing, drumming, dancing his **Inupiat Travel Song**. **Birds** (carved birds on sticks) fly by operated by masked performers. **Qayaq** sits at the fire pit and continues to sing until he hears the distant sound of **Caribou**. He stops to hear the sound then resumes drumming. The **Drummers**, using sticks only, hit the floor with the rhythmic pattern of **Caribou**.

Two **Caribou** enter. Using sticks as front legs, the performers hunch over as if walking on four legs and travel with a rhythmic hitting of the floor, though the space. The light is low and only reveals the performers from the knees down. **Qayaq** is delighted by the appearance of the **Caribou**.

There is a loud snort and then several other **Caribou** appear and travel and forage through the space. **Qayaq** watches them and talks to them and continues drumming the rhythm of his travel song.

There is a howl of **Wolves** (the **Drummers**) and the **Caribou** pause with stillness then start off wildly in several directions--exiting and entering and circling the stage in fear of the **Wolves**. There are many snorting and grunts coming from the **Caribou**. The **Drummers** portray the heartbeat and fear of the Caribou with their drumming. The **Caribou** gather at the center of the stage before they enmasse exit. **Qayaq** stops drumming.

Seagull suddenly appears and is sitting across the fire pit from **Qayaq**. He tries to talk to **Seagull**, but the bird is rude and not interested in pleasantries. To make a friend **Qayaq** takes food from his pouch and offers it to **Seagull**. **Seagull** gets excited and grabs the food. **Qayaq** offers him more, **Seagull** takes it then circles excitedly and when **Qayaq** is

not looking, steals the drum and drum stick. **Qayaq** chases the "camp robber" but it is too late.

When **Qayaq** returns to the fire pit **Wolverine Man** is sitting and eating what food remains in Qayaq's pouch. **Wolverine Man** is eating savagely. **Qayaq** tries to talk to him. **Wolverine Man** is very rude and even mean. **Qayaq** wants him to save some food for him so he will not starve. Suddenly the **Wolverine Man** stands and with curiosity goes to **Qayaq** to ask him a question.

Wolverine Man:

Canek putuguin nertua

What does your big toe eat?

Qayaq cannot tolerate any more insults and attempts to chase the obnoxious man away but the **Wolverine Man** eludes him every time. After several attempts the **Wolverine Man** disappears and **Qayaq** finds a tooth left by the visitor. He realizes that the visit was a test. He calls to the distance thanking the **Wolverine Man** and attaches the tooth to his necklace.

Qayaq is tired and stretches out next to the fire pit. As he is about to fall asleep the **Fool** appears. What food is left in the pouch the **Fool** eats like a pig--his eating sounds are so loud that it awakens **Qayaq**.

Qayaq attempts to talk to the **Fool** but the **Fool** speaks his own language and **Qayaq** does not understand. The inability of **Qayaq** understanding what the **Fool** is saying increasingly frustrates the **Fool** who becomes angry with **Qayaq**. He makes fun of **Qayaq**.

Qayaq tries to chase the **Fool** away, he is tired of such intrusions and wants to sleep. **Squirrel** and **Fox** enter and uncover the fire pit as the two chase around the stage. When he grabs hold of the **Fool**, the **Fool** pulls a knife. **Qayaq** pretends to speak the **Fool's**

language and they converse about nonsense for sometime. Finally **Qayaq**, in Fool's language, asks the **Fool** for the knife. He is given the knife, then he asks the **Fool** to throw himself into the fire pit. The **Fool** agrees, thinking it is a good idea, then jumps into the fire pit and is heard screaming like a fool.

Qayaq reflects on his curious night. He is reluctant to sleep fearing something else will occur. He lays down to sleep and the light fades to night.

During the night **Fox** and **Squirrel** cover the fire pit. The howl of the **Wolf** is heard in the darkness as are the sounds of **Greed, Disrespect, Dishonesty, Laziness, and Bragging**.

The sounds of the night transform into the loud sound of the **Giant** snoring. The snoring is loud and echoes. During the night **Qayaq** and the entire stage are covered with a large ground cloth that depicts a map of Alaska, circa 1880. There are pictographs on the map, symbolic depictions of "mining, lumber, fur, oil" and "gold."

13 THE GIANT

Daylight comes and **Qayaq** finds himself beneath the map struggling to get out. The commotion **Qayaq** makes wakes the Giant. The **Giant**, wearing a large headpiece/mask speaks in a big booming voice and in English. He speaks so loudly that his voice echoes.

Giant:

Look at the little man!

You're a cute little man.

I'm glad I discovered you.

Little man, you can help me.

I'll put you to work.

Full time employment with three square meals a day.

What do you say?

The **Giant** waits for an answer but there is none because **Qayaq** does not understand a word the **Giant** is saying.

Giant:

Good, I knew you would agree!
You're in charge of my wives.
One wife is an Indian and the other is an Eskimo.
Your job is to prick them in the heels when they fight.
Got that?!
Good. Here's a pocket knife.

The **Giant** gives him a very oversized knife. **Qayaq** struggles to pick it up. He is confused by everything the **Giant** has said and meant. He tries to imitate the words and actions of the **Giant**.

Giant:

Boy ole boy do I have to take a mean piss.

There is a loud "Sssss" sound and **Qayaq**, looking up, runs to avoid being urinated upon. The **Giant** finishes with a satisfied "Ahhhh."

The Yup'ik two beat drumming of the **Eskimo Wife** is heard--her footfalls are like earthquakes.

Giant:

I hear one of them coming.
Now remember what I said.

The **Eskimo Wife** appears and does an Eskimo dance for the **Giant**.

Giant:

I hear the other one coming.

Remember what I said.

You understand what I said?

What's the matter, cat got your tongue.

Speak up boy, Speak English.

Qayaq

English?

English?

The **Indian Wife** appears and her drumbeat, a rapid, Athabaskan beat, takes over. She dances in front of the **Giant**. He is pleased. The wives then see each other and begin to fight. They cry and sounds of anger are loud and echo.

Giant:

Do it now!

Now little buddy!

Qayaq pricks their heels with his large knife. The wives go howling and limping to sit down.

Giant:

Shut up! I hate that crying stuff!

Shut up!

Qayaq: (imitating the Giant)

Shut Up! English!

Shut Up! English!

The **Eskimo Wife** tries to take the map. The **Indian Wife** resists her and they start to fight again--a tug-of-war with the map. The **Giant** finally get between them.

Giant:

Shut Up!

Qayaq:

Shut Up!

Giant:

Now go and clean my house! Go!

The two wives, crying, and with antagonism for one another, exit. The **Giant** straightens the large ground cloth map.

Giant:

Good work little buddy.

Boy, do I feel like a little hunting!

Com'on!

With big steps the **Giant** exits. **Qayaq** takes double steps to keep up. Two **Caribou**, frightened and frenetic run through the space. The **Giant** re-enters and takes aim at the **Caribou**. Loud drum beats represent the shots of the rifle. **Birds** (carved on sticks) fly anxiously through the space. More **Caribou** run wildly through and then out. **Bear** appears and is shot. **Raven** and **Loon** run through and are looking for cover. **Loon** helps **Bear**.

The **Giant** runs in and out always trailed by **Qayaq** who is trying to keep pace. Off stage there are many bird sounds and anxious animal sounds.

A lone **Caribou** enters and meets the **Giant** who takes aim and wounds the **Caribou**. The animal staggers off.

The **Giant** runs off after the **Caribou** then returns with a large pick-ax in hand. **Qayaq** is exhausted.

Giant:

We've got all the furs we need!

(pointing to the map) Com'on lets go mine some gold in Nome!

The **Giant** runs off into another direction. **Qayaq** follows. Off stage there is the sound of machinery and metal hitting metal. The **Giant** re-enters with a large ax in hand.

Giant:

That's enough gold for now!

(looking on the map) Now how's about some timber down on the Kenai!

Yeah, that sounds like money.

Let's go chop down a forest!

The **Giant** runs off and is followed by an exhausted **Qayaq**. Off stage there is the sound of chopping wood and large trees falling. The sound is joined by the sound of mining and gun shots. **Caribou** and **Birds** run and fly through the space.

The **Giant** strides proudly and very pleased with himself, through the space, the ax over his shoulder. **Qayaq** is weak with exhaustion. **Raven** and **Loon** are panting and dizzy with all the activity.

Giant:

Well, little buddy, thanks for all your help.

You sure do have a beautiful land up here.

Next year I'm goin' to do some drift netting and crabbing, some moose

hunting.

Heard there's oil farther up north. I'll get that too!

Well, I'll be seeing ya.

I got a wife and family in Seattle that I'm missin' something terrible.

See ya here next year.

Qayaq:

Natmun aqykatarcit?

Where are you going?

Callrusiiki ungunssit

What have you done to the animals?

Nuna atam tangerqeru

Look at the earth.

Giant:

Gee, little buddy, you gotta learn English.

Bye!

Qayaq:

English! English!

Shut Up! Shut Up!

The **Giant** takes up a corner of the map and pulls it from underneath of **Qayaq** who is upended. **Qayaq** staggers and then falls into unconsciousness.

14 NIGHTMARE

It turns to night and **Qayaq** has a nightmare that twists and turns his body. It is quiet. There is a chorus of low sounds coming from all directions off stage. They are sounds of vowels: "Ah, Ee, Ii, Oo, Uu."

The **Drummers** begin a low chant of "He ahhhhh" that is accented with an occasional rattle.

There is an abstract blending of sound: timber being chopped and felled blends with the sound of mining. The wounded, panting **Caribou** enters and falls over. The voice of the **Giant** is heard: "Hey, little buddy!" **Bear** enters wounded. In his nightmare **Qayaq** shouts: "English." The **Caribou** and **Bear** are startled and limp off.

The **Birds** (carved birds on sticks) enter, along with **Raven** and **Loon**, and fly around **Qayaq** trying to calm his sleep. The sounds from off stage increase in volume and intensity until **Qayaq** shocks into wakefulness. The **Birds** startle off and the sounds still increase more.

Qayaq, gathers all of the powers within himself and rises up. Slowly he does his power dance. The nightmare sounds increase as if to compete with him, to challenge his power. **Qayaq** howls at the sounds. Then howls again.

Three **Wolves** enter, passing through and circling the stage. Before turning **Qayaq** knows the **Wolves** are present. He turns to notice the Wolves and they howl together. The noises fade.

Two **Wolves** reveal themselves to be **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq**, his father and mother. Taking a drum from the Drummers, Nunamiu drums Qayaq's **Animal Power Song** as **Wolf** dances with him. **Qayaq** and Wolf howl. **Qayaq** is restored. **Nunamiu** and **Qimmiq** join the **Drummers** to watch, protect, and guide their son.

Nunamiu, with the guidance of Raven, changes the drum beat and sings a **Happy Travel Song**.

15 BUILDING A KAYAK

Fox, Eagle, and Squirrel enter with material to form a kayak. Two long strips of material about 18 inches in width and about nine feet long are painted with traditional designs. **Wolf** joins the animals and surround **Qayaq**. The material forms the shape of a kayak around him. Each end of the material is held by an animal.

Raven and **Loon** demonstrate how to paddle the boat. **Loon** corrects **Raven**. Moving in place, **Qayaq** begins to paddle. The animals and **Drummers** make the sound of a paddle hitting the water: "Ta Koom."

The kayak moves with the actions of **Qayaq**; the animals give the material movement to suggest travel in water. At first the water is moderate river traveling; then rapids, then calm waters.

The word kayak is derived from this Inupiat mythical figure, **Qayaq**. It is said the animals helped him make the first small boat for travel on this journey.

16 TALL UNCLE

Tall Uncle appears and is surrounded by mosquitoes (sticks with wire extensions and operated by performers). The **Mosquito** performers and **Drummers** make appropriate insect sounds. **Qayaq** does not know what he is seeing and slows his boat to a halt. The Kayak and that four animals the operate it disappear as **Qayaq** "steps on shore."

Qayaq is curious about this man being chased by **Mosquitoes**, then realizes that it is **Tall Uncle**. **Qayaq** rolls up a magic ball--Raven watches and sprays the ball with magic--then throws the ball at the **Mosquitoes**. The insects disperse with sounds of agony.

Tall Uncle has been too busy to notice **Qayaq** still thinking he is being pursued by mosquitoes. He is about to run off, batting the imagined insects when **Qayaq** tells him they are gone.

Tall Uncle suddenly realizes there are no more mosquitoes and becomes very happy. He is startled and curious to find **Qayaq** who suddenly embraces him as his long lost uncle.

Qayaq:

Waq aataka!

Hello Uncle!

Tall Uncle:

Kina atataunek pisiu

Who are you calling uncle?

Qayaq:

Ataat! Wii Qayayaqua ,
cumikumallruamken

Uncle! I am Qayaq, I have been
expecting you!

Tall Uncle:

You look like somebody I know.

Tall Uncle manipulates **Qayaq's** face with his fingers and hands, molding it into different shapes. **Qayaq** responds by doing the same.

Qayaq:

Aetunraqaagna nunamiunkuk
qimmiqillu

I am the son of Nunamiu and
Qimmiq.

Tall Uncle:

AHDA! You know you look just like your father and mother.

Qayaq:

Quyana! Ilukegeiunga

Thank you! I am honored.

Tall Uncle:

How is my brother and your mother?

Qayaq:

Kegglunrem qanrutellruanga
catairutenilukek tangaam.

The Wolf has told me that they are
gone, but they are still with me.

Tall Uncle:

What are you doing here?

Qayaq:

Ayagtua nalluniqrignaqluki
an'ngagma alqagma-llu
catairutellrat aka imumi.
Yaquanun egil'rallrunga.
Maligesnga ataat
piyaunartukuk.

I am on a journey to find out what
happened to my brothers and
sisters that were lost long ago.
I have traveled far. Come my Tall
Uncle, share this journey
with me.

Tangramken alqunaq angningaartua Seeing you has made me suddenly
happy

Tall Uncle:

You know, I too am happy all of a sudden.

The animals appear and the kayak re-formulates around **Qayaq** and **Tall Uncle**. The Uncle sits with his back to **Qayaq** and sings happily, but not very well. **Qayaq** paddles and the boat travels across the stage. **Qayaq**, the kayak, and the animals exit. **Tall Uncle** takes the opportunity to say and sing loudly. Suddenly the **Mosquitoes** return and surround, then pursue **Tall Uncle**. It is because of his bad singing that the mosquitoes have gone after him.

The **Drummers** begin to rattle and chant into the drumhead to create a distorted sound. **Fish** (carved on sticks) appear at either corner of the stage and wait silently.

The **Magic Fish Woman** enters wearing a mask and performs her creation dance with rattle rhythms. As she claps the individual fish enters the water--the stage area--and exits at the opposite side of the stage. Each fish has its own particular way of moving and makes its own individual sound. Inupiat and Athabaskan mythology holds that fish are created by a magical woman who lives along a riverbank. She creates fish by carving bits of wood from birch and spruce; when the wood chips hit the water they turn into fish and swim away.

The rattling continues beneath the scene. **Qayaq** and **Tall Uncle** appear and speak from one of the corners of the stage. All of the fish performers enter as a school of fish and dance behind the **Magic Fish Woman**. Then they kneel giving thanks. With her signal, the fish swim into all directions.

Qayaq and **Tall Uncle** step on to the stage and the animals formulate the kayak around them. **Qayaq** paddles over to the **Magic Fish Woman**.

Qayaq:

Quyana Iillanarqellria neqet atanrat, Thank you Magic Fish Woman for
neqkegtaarauteunek. all the wonderful fish you have
given us.

The **Magic Fish Woman** dances off and the rattles fade. The kayak moves with the waves.

Tall Uncle:

I'm hungry, let's get something to eat.

Qayaq:

Camek neryugcit ataat. What would you like Uncle?

Tall Uncle:

How about some seal, they come up river sometimes.

Qayaq:

Taqukaq neqniqciquq. Seal sounds delicious to me.

Qayaq and **Tall Uncle** paddle off with a few hard strokes. **Raven** disperses the animals and the kayak as the two traveler's exit. Off stage **Tall Uncle** is heard complaining about **Qayaq** going too fast.

18 SEAL HUNTING

The wave/water material appears to establish the river water. **Seal** (performed with mask and a seal puppet in each hand) emerges through one of the seal holes and moves through the waves dancing a Seal dance.

Qayaq enters--he is in the "water" and dances in search of the Seal. **Qayaq** dances a hunting dance. **Qayaq** see the **Seal**, and still dancing, with a spear movement strikes one of the seal puppets. The waves move wildly then subside with the spearing of the puppet. The puppet goes limp and **Qayaq** takes the puppet.

The **Seal** continues to dance as **Qayaq** continues to dance his hunting dance. **Qayaq** strikes the second puppet with a spear movement and the second puppet goes limp. The waves move wildly then subside with the spearing of the **Seal**. **Qayaq** takes the puppet.

The **Seal** continues to dance. **Qayaq**, with puppets in each hand, and the **Seal** are at opposite ends of the stage. **Qayaq** thanks the **Seal** spirit.

The **Seal** replies to the thanksgiving then taking off his mask the **Seal** reveals himself to be Nunamiu. The waves move wildly then subside with the revelation of the Seal. **Qayaq** falls to his knees. The waves go quiet and low.

Nunamiu:

Qetunramaa murilkekina	My son you must be careful.
Tuknilriit piarkat tekitarkaurttaatgen	Powerful events will soon come to you.
Kitucin keqakiu	You must remember who you are.

Putting the mask back on the **Seal** spirit, followed by the waves, disappear. **Qayaq** is left in deep contemplation. He touches his black fish amulet around his neck.

Tall Uncle enters singing and dancing a bright Athabaskan song. He goes to **Qayaq** and takes the seal puppets.

Tall Uncle:

Thank you Qayaq. These look like delicious seals.

Happily **Tall Uncle** dances off with the seals. When he is about to exit the stage he turns to notice that **Qayaq** has not followed him.

Tall Uncle:

What is wrong Qayaq?

Qayaq:

Callugtelliartiatuq.	Nothing is wrong.
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Tall Uncle:

I will be expecting you.

Tall Uncle dances and sings as he exits. **Qayaq** holds his black fish amulet and calls on its power. **Raven** and **Loon** enter, concerned for **Qayaq**. They sense something is happening to the atmosphere and become worried.

19 CANNIBALS

Immediately the day changes into night and the fire pit boards are knocked open by the **Cannibal Child**. Frightened, **Raven**, **Loon**, and the **Drummers** scurry for safety and exit.

The **Cannibal Child** is very noisy and violent and does not notice **Qayaq** who stays in the shadows watching events. A large globe is lowered and rests over the pit that emits colored smoke. The globe is about five feet in diameter and is a patchwork of modern images and words. It is representative of the new world that **Qayaq** has found himself in.

The **Cannibal Child** dances a violent, punk-like dance, then exits.

Alone **Qayaq** approaches the globe that seems to be hissing. He is fascinated by the globe. When he gets closer to the globe the fragmented sounds of modern culture are heard via a chorus of voices off-stage.

TV and radio sound fragments are heard. They grow in intensity and **Qayaq** becomes increasingly excited and pleased by what he hears. He is drawn, yet frightened by the globe.

Qayaq becomes increasingly fascinated with the globe and finally touches it, goes limp, and falls to the ground, unconscious. The off-stage chorus produces an "EE" sound. The vowel chorus transforms into the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Priest enters wearing a priestly robe and with a march-like step in the rhythm of the song. From the opposite direction enters **Teacher** who in her own way keeps in step with the hymn.

The hymn continues to underscore as the sound of a **Preacher** is heard off-stage. His words are echoed variously by the chorus. The words of the **Preacher** are taken directly from the writings of Christian missionaries in Alaska at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Preacher:

Barbarians!
 Degraded aborigines!
 They live in heathen darkness.
 Devil worshippers!
 Shrouded in darkness and gloom.
 They will perish from the face of the globe unless they are Christianized.
 They are low in the scale of humanity.
 Renounce paganism!
 Cannibals!
 Come to god; try his way!
 Receive the word!
 Repent!
 Turn away from your degrading superstitions and revolting human depravity.
 Give up the old way and learn the new.
 Give up heathen practices.
 Adopt the religion of the white man.

The **Priest** and **Teacher** stand **Qayaq** up--he is unable to resist them--he is like a passive witness to his own fate. The hymn ends. The **Cannibal Child**, representing violence and chaos lurks in the shadows throughout the scene commenting and making mischief. The

following dialog of the **Teacher** and **Priest** is derived or verbatim from anthropological texts from the early 20 th Century. They treat **Qayaq** as an object of curiosity.

Teacher: (taking notes)

Indian?

Eskimo?

Name? What is your name?

Cannibal Child: (whispers)

Kojack

Teacher:

Kojack!

A Kojack Eskimo.

That's a new one for our anthropological study.

Priest: (with a pointer)

Eskimo physical type unlike the 'classic form'

Teacher:

The Eskimo is polymorphic stock. We need hair and blood samples.

Priest:

Eskimos have large brains, full foreheads, large faces and lower jaws.

Northern east Eskimos are low group stature, with narrow heads and noses.

Teacher:

The Aleuts are short-statured, long-trunked, short legged, and roundheaded.

Don't you just love mission oriented research?

Priest:

The majority of Eskimos are round-headed! All subjects must be identified.

Teacher:

Round-heads and long-heads are found on Kodiak Island!

Priest:

Genetic composition of Eskimos...Lexical domains and indigenous perception.

Teacher:

Blood type of the polar Eskimo is 100% 'O.' All subjects must be fully identified.

Priest:

Aleuts and Greenland Eskimo remain within mating range of each other. This suggests territorial organization.

Teacher:

Secondary characteristics...Color vision.

Priest:

Congenital absence of lateral incisors.

Teacher:

Let's teach it to dance!

The 'Virginia Reel' is played on kazoos by the off-stage chorus. **Priest** and **Teacher** dance with **Qayaq** who is like a sleep-walker. Their spins and turns spin him around the stage. As they dance with him they put jeans on him, a shirt, and a baseball cap.

Priest: (singing)

Meet your honey, pat her on the head.
 If she don't like biscuit, feed her corn bread,
 Ace of diamonds, jack of spades,
 Take your own promenade.
 Barbed wire fence and broken down gate,
 Walk your girl till you come straight.

As they are dancing and dressing him in Western clothing and **Priest** is singing, an **Official** is heard over the PA system, the words underscore the scene.

Official:

The provisions of this section shall be enforceable by the United States for the benefit of the Natives for the benefit of the disposition of oil and gas when computing the final payment into the fund the respective shares of the United States and the State with respect to payments of a royalty of 2 per centum upon the gross value (as such gross value is determined) however the Native residents of each Native village entitled to receive lands and benefits under the act shall organize as a business for profit or nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State so the provisions of this section shall apply to all minerals that are subject to disposition under the Mineral leasing act of 1920.

The 'Virginia Reel' builds in intensity of movement then ends abruptly.

Priest:

Let's teach it to read and write!

Priest gives **Qayaq** an oversized pencil.

Teacher:

Repeat after me: 'M' is for money!

Qayaq repeats as he is told. With the announcement of each new letter a performer carrying an oversized letter mentioned by the **Teacher** enters and dances around **Qayaq** who in turn writes the letter in the air.

Teacher:

Good! Now 'U.'

'U' is for unemployment!

The letter 'U' enters and **Qayaq** writes it in the air.

Priest:

Making commendable progress! 'L' is for law.

The letter 'L' enters and dances through and around. **Qayaq** writes the letter in the air. Once the letters enter they remain in the space to dance.

Teacher:

Excellent progress! 'R' is for regulations! Write that now!

Qayaq obeys, and beginning to get the hang of writing, and is almost enjoying himself.

Priest:

Not bad at all. You'll be writing and reading in no time! 'S' is subsistence!

Again **Qayaq** is obedient.

Teacher:

That is not an 'S' that is a '5.'

Teacher slaps **Qayaq's** hands with a ruler. He writes in the air again, repeatedly and frantically. The letters dance around him, bump into him and push him around.

Words on banners drop from the air and are like a forest that has trapped **Qayaq**. He tries to escape, he becomes desperate, but everywhere he turns there is a letter or the **Teacher**, **Priest**, or word banner. He is lost and confused--there is much noise. Each letter repeats its sounding. The Teacher keeps repeating things she has said before. Priest sings and from off-stage the **Official** recites game regulations.

Priest:

Swing your partner high and low
Swing her till she hollers whoa.
Then promenade around the row,
Scratch you heel and save your toe.
Join your hands in a great big ring,
And make your feet go wing, wing, wing!

The word banners read: 'ANSCA Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act'; 'ANWAR Alaska Native Wildlife Area Refuge'; 'BIA Bureau of Indian Affairs'; US Fish and Wildlife Agency.

The **Letters** pursue **Qayaq** though the space until he falls into the fire pit. The **Letters** exit humming the 'ABC song.' The banners disappear as do the **Teacher** and **Priest**.

The **Cannibal Child** 'nails' the boards onto the fire pit. As he nails he sings the 'ABC song' sarcastically and with grotesque, rude gestures. He is delighted by the turn of events.

20 **TODAY**

A flashing neon beer sign is lowered over one section of the audience. Its illumination gives way to a murky bar. Smoke, actions, words, and changing lights make the scene into a nightmare-like, disorientating swirl of events and images.

The **Four Siblings of Qayaq**, wearing their masks, stagger across the stage and exit. Immediately **Laziness, Dishonesty** appear as **Singers** and sing non-stop country western songs. They sing underneath and throughout the scene.

Two **Greed** performers and **Disrespect** enter and stretch a piece of green felt with gambling markings between them. One **Greed** performer throws dice.

At the same time another **Disrespect** performer and **Lazy** performer dance a close and drunken dance around the stage.

At an upper level, behind the top row of the audience, **Loon** as a human appears as a **Bartender**. Raven, despondent and downtrodden, shuffles exhausted then sits and sobs quietly.

Another **Dishonesty** performer appears as the **Waitress** and asks the others in turn for their drink order.

All of the action is a swirl and simultaneously occurring. Each group of characters has a sequence of words specific to their actions. They use language or sing as improvisationally deemed appropriate. The scene is a collage of words and blur of actions.

Singers:

There's a salmon colored girl
who sets my heart awhirl

she lives along the Yukon far away

She's got skin you'd like to touch
but you can't touch it much
because her furlined parka's in the way.

Ogla Ogla Moshki
which means that I love you
If you will be my baby
I'll Ogla Ogal Moosh-ka you.

I'll place her hand in mine
set her on my knee.
The squaws along the Yukon
are good enough for me.

Carry me back to Old Alaska.
Squaws along the Yukon
are good enough for me.

Bartender:

Step right up to the bar.
What ya havin' tonight?
Whiskey?

Gamblers:

Seven come eleven! Yeah!
Com'on lady luck love me tonight!
Yeah!

Waitress:

Can I have your order?
What you drinking big guy?
Will that be on the rocks?
You want what kind of beer?

Distorted Man and **Distorted Woman** enter. They both have very long arms and distorted faces, hair and clothing. They are owners of the bar.

Distorted Man:

Welcome to our palace!

Distorted Woman:

Come in!

Distorted Man:

Games, women, pleasures. Anything you need.

Distorted Woman:

Whatever you desire you can hire.

Distorted Man:

Forget who you are, where you are.
Forget your past and future and satisfy yourself for now.
Before it is too late.

Nunamiu and **Qimmiq** appear at an upper level behind the audience—opposite the side where the Bartender appears.

Distorted Man and **Woman** move around and offer drugs, sex, gambling, drinks to the audience. **Tall Uncle** enters and staggers across the stage--he is blind drunk and dressed in contemporary clothing. The **Distorted Man** and **Woman** offer him a liquor bottle.

Note: Everything used in the scene is a stylized wooden cut-out of glasses, dice, guitar, liquor bottle, etc. **Distorted Man** goes to the gaming table.

Distorted Man:

How much you bring in, Harry?

Get that Indian, he just got paid.

Qayaq enters. For a moment the entire scene falls still and the entire room focuses on **Qayaq**. Then the room resumes its previous action. **Distorted Man** points to him with his long arms.

Distorted Man:

A first-timer!

Distorted Man and **Woman** are excited by **Qayaq**, an easy mark. **Distorted Woman** goes to **Waitress**, then points to **Qayaq**.

Distorted Woman:

Go on now, Honey. There's one for you.

Waitress approaches **Qayaq** and dances with him, seducing him. **Distorted Man** and **Woman** exit and then return with wood carved symbols on sticks of "Mastercard, Visa", a money sign \$, and a snow machine. They try to entice the audience with the benefits and pleasures of materialism. The action and language continue with occasional lines popping out.

Distorted Woman: (to the dancing Dishonesty)

Hey, you gotta buy drinks if you're gone hang out here.

Qayaq is having a good time with **Waitress** and is beginning to get drunk.

Qayaq:

Bartender, more whiskey!

Bartender:

Let me see your money first, Eskimo.

Qayaq:

I gave you everything I have. You want some walrus ivory?

Waitress pushes him away, **Qayaq** and **Waitress** start to argue and shove each other.

Distorted Man and **Woman** are counting oversized money. **Tall Uncle**, who has been gambling and is drunk, staggers across the stage and bumps into **Qayaq**. In his drunkenness, **Qayaq** recognizes his Uncle and is overjoyed to see him. He embraces **Tall Uncle**.

Qayaq:

Uncle! It has been so long.

How did you like the seal?

Tall Uncle frees himself from Qayaq's embrace. He does not recognize **Qayaq** and is put off by the annoyance.

Tall Uncle:

I don't know you.

Stay away from me.

Qayaq:

Yes you do, you are my Uncle!!

Tall Uncle:

You are drunk you stupid Eskimo.

Qayaq:

And you are drunk too, you stupid Indian.

Lice eater!

Tall Uncle:

You are a stupid, stay away from me you slobbering fool. Go back to your village where you belong.

Qayaq:

You go back to your village.

They shove each other until **Tall Uncle** is pushed to the floor. The action in the bar stops as Waitress goes to **Tall Uncle** to help him up.

Distorted Man and **Woman** descend on **Qayaq**.

Distorted Man:

Hey, he's a regular with money. What do you have? You are worthless, you can't even buy a drink. What do you have?

Distorted Woman: (with credit card)

If you had a credit card you would be somebody.

Distorted Man:

Hey, what's that around your neck? I'll trade you a drink for that amulet.

Qayaq gives him the amulet.

Distorted Woman:

How's about the other one, too?

Qayaq gives her the second amulet.

Distorted Man:

Bartender, two drinks, doubles, for our Inupiat friend here. (to **Qayaq**) Hey friend, you don't need that last amulet, now do you?

Qayaq gives him the last amulet and the **Distorted Man** raises it to the sky. Suddenly, through his drunkenness, **Qayaq** realizes what he has done, he screams and falls to his knees in despair. The bar scene becomes frozen and quiet. **Qayaq** is at center, alone.

21 TOMORROW

The sound of two sticks is heard, like a heartbeat, slowly beating. The hoot of the **Owl** is heard, then the **Owl** dance/flies onto the stage moving in and out of the other character. **Qayaq** knows that the appearance of the **Owl** means his own death and is frightened.

Nunamiu calls from above the audience and the sound of a booming traditional Inupiat box drum is heard. The Inupiat believed that the box drum was the heartbeat of the Eagle Mother, and to beat the drum was to bring youthfulness back to the Eagle Mother, the creator of the world.

Nunamiu and **Qimmiq** sing the Birthing Song--the same song they sang at **Qayaq's** birth. **Qayaq** slowly rises, gaining in confidence, and dances the song of his birth. The other performers come to life and are frightened by **Qayaq's** dancing.

While dancing **Qayaq** chases **Distorted Man** and **Woman** off. The others in turn flee. **Qayaq** strips his Western hat, pants, and shirt off. The steady beat of the box drum and the singing of the parents underscore the scene.

Tall Uncle comes to **Qayaq** transforms into a **Lynx** (with mask), says good-bye to **Qayaq** and exits.

Nunamiu:

Qayaq!

Qimmiq:

Qayaq!

There is a momentary silence as **Qayaq** recognizes his parents in the distance. The **Drummers** return drumming a strong traditional Yup'ik two-beat. **Qayaq** continues to dance going to each corner of the stage where, in turn, each of his **Siblings** appears. As **Qayaq** goes to each corner the **Siblings'** protecting spirits, **Wolf, Eagle, and Goose**, appear to announce the **Siblings**. Each of the **Siblings** appear in masks and dance in place, with **Qayaq**. In turn **Qayaq** says good-bye to each of this lost siblings. Upon saying good-bye, they each disappear.

Qayaq returns to center stage and howls his wolf call. **Qayaq** sings and dances his Power Song. The drumming accompanies him strongly.

Raven and **Loon** appear pulling from a hole, the **Whale**. The same Whale that had originally appeared to Nunamiu earlier in the performance. The **Whale** dances with **Qayaq**. Within the dance she transforms into a beautiful woman. They continue to dance and incorporate courting dance movements and gestures. Both are pleased with what they see in each other.

The Power Song builds as **Qayaq** and the **Whale Woman** circle each other and transform into **Falcons**. Dancing and making the soundings of **Falcons**, they dance/fly off.

Raven and **Loon** follow the two **Falcons** out. We hear their **Falcon** call from off-stage. They embrace and chuckle. All of the lights go dark except for that which comes up from the fire pit and **Raven** and **Loon** go to the fire pit. Smoke begins to rise from the pit. **Raven** and **Loon** watch apprehensively as the boards covering the pit begin to move as if someone is trying to get out.

Raven:

Not Again!

BLACKOUT
END OF PLAY

NATIVE AUTHORSHIP: UTETMUN

Tuma's 1992 production of *Utetmun* marked the premier of an original, native-developed performance text. The script was developed from an original short story written by Paul Jumbo (Yup'ik) of Tooksook Bay. The Jumbo's original text, which was published in *Arts Fairbanks*, described the conflicts between a young native man and his grandfather. Despite his grandfather's urging, the young man continues to reject traditional ways. That is, until he is visited by four animal spirits who show him the path back to harmony and balance.

Utetmun was, in western terms, essentially a one-act. In performance, it was paired with the Inupiat-based *The Child From The Sea*. As the performance begins a modern Native man is confronted with energetic, almost confrontational, drumming and wolf spirits. Grandfather Wolf emerges (played by Paul Jumbo) and exhorts the young man " *Utetmun maligesnga*" (Homeward, come with me). Despite his resistance, the boy enters a trance and is visited by powerful animal spirits, each teaching him: Bear (Giving Patience), Whale (Giving Love) and Raven (Giving Respect). Slowly the young man acknowledges the value of these traditional virtues.

At this point, the performance takes a darker turn as the Tuma cast skillfully weaves second, almost parallel plot line into the production. The young man is transformed into Nalqik, a thirteen-year old Native boy in the early twentieth century. Nalqik is alone and afraid, his family and most of his village have suddenly died. As he says, " It started happening when they came, those people from another place." Ironically, church bells chime, and Grandfather Wolf is transformed into human form by the same painful memory. He speaks in English now, describing with a simple, moving eloquence, the devastating effect of the "The Great Death." Families, tradition bearers, shaman, and indeed, whole villages were wiped out by deadly outbreaks of influenza, contacted from white traders, whalers and missionaries. In his book, *Yuuyarqa: The Way of the Human Being*, Harold Napoleon describes the Great Death and its effect on the Yup 'ik people in

terms traumatic shock to the culture, causing guilt a sense of falling from grace, out of balance,

Ultimately, it is the words of the past that are the key to future survival as the Young Man, Grandfather Wolf and the animal spirits dance together.

Dale Seeds

UTETMUN

(Homeward)

By Paul Jumbo

Adapted for the stage by the Tuma Theatre Company
First Performance: February 26, 1992

Production Staff

Directed by	Thomas Riccio with Paul Jumbo
Set Design	Betsy Sinkola
Costume Design	Brenda Nelson
Lighting Design	Hugh Hall
Stage Manager	Jeannine Patané
Prop and Mask Design	David Apple

Cast

Drummers	Ransom Armarantal Robert Aranow Marvin Lee Geoffery Stauffer
Boy	Paul Asicksik
Wolves	Ringo Jimmy Don Johnson John Harpak Karl Kalen
Granfather Wolf	Paul Jumbo
Bears	Karen Kielson Anthony Rivard
Whale	Georgia Berry
Raven	Josh Weiser
Whale Voices	Melanie Brown Wilma Brown Priscilla Douglass Sandi Keith

OPENING

Drums begin in darkness. Then, one **drummer** comes out from behind the audience, drumming as he goes. He sits down stage right and continues to drum. Another **drummer** begins to beat behind the audience. He moves on stage and sits opposite the first **drummer**. This continues until there are four **drummers** sitting in a circle facing each other.

THE ENTRANCE OF GRANDFATHER WOLF

A Native (Yup'ik) **Boy** in modern dress walks on from down stage right into the middle of the **drummer's** circle. With a loud bang on the drum, the **drummers** stop. The **drummers** stand and immediately begin intense double drumming, enclosing the **Boy** in the circle. The **drummers** stop and sit down. A wolf howl is heard up stage behind the translucent backdrop, followed by the entrance of four **Wolf Dancers**. The drums resume as the **Wolves** begin to dance, surrounding the **Boy**. They disperse and are replaced by the **drummers**, who move in closer, placing their drums over his head as he is forced to the ground. While on the ground, he puts on a faceless mask and slowly stands as the drummers move up stage, still drumming.

Drumming stops as **Grandfather Wolf** enters slowly from up stage to center, where **Boy** remains, temporarily blinded by the faceless mask. The drumming stops as **Grandfather Wolf** begins his story to the audience.

Grandfather Wolf:

Yugni ellangici	People wake up
Ayaguani niicugnici	Young people, listen
Camek Taiyima ellicuartuci	You may learn something

Yugni ellangici	People awaken
Ungungssit qayagaurakut	Animals are calling us
Ikaiyusqelluteng yullermegni	To help them while they are alive
Cikiuteklerkarteng pitekluki	So they can give themselves to us
Ungungssit qayagaurakut	Animals are calling us

Grandfather Wolf removes the mask from the **Boy's** face, which is grabbed by one of the **Wolves** who returns to a corner of the stage.

THE BOY AWAKENS

The **Wolves** remain in their corners as **Grandfather Wolf** sings a song that awakens the **Boy**.

Grandfather Wolf:

Qangiama niicugninga	Grandson listen to me
Ciuliavet qaneryarai	What your ancestors tell you
Maliggluki yukina	Follow them while you live

Boy: What are you trying to tell me?

Grandfather Wolf:

Qangaima niicugninga	Grandson listen to me
Utetmun maligesnga	Homeward come with me
Utetmun maligesnga	
Maniciiqamken nunamek	I will show you land
Tanrumaksailng urmek nunavni	Land that has never been seen where
Utetmun maligesnga	Homeward come with me

Utetmun maligesnga	Homeward come with me
Maniciiqamken nunamek	I will show you land
Tanrumaksailng urmek nunavni	Land that has never been seen where
	Homeward come with me

The **Boy** tries to run away, but the **Wolves** keep him in. He starts to remove his clothing, offering it to each of the **Wolves** in turn until he is left in his underwear. **Grandfather Wolf** stops singing and sits center stage, facing the **Boy**. He speaks as they sit.

DANCE BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS

Grandfather Wolf begins a story. (Yup'ik dialogue here)

He and the **drummers** begin a vowel sound and the **Boy** joins them. **Grandfather Wolf** goes up stage, sitting in front of the **drummers** as the **Boy** goes into a trance.
(trance dance?)

THE BEARS (GIVING PATIENCE)

Drummers continue the beat by tapping on the floor, slowing to a stop as two **Bears** enter and scratch their backs. The **Boy**, still deeply immersed in the trance dance, does not notice them until they are standing next to him. Facing down stage, the **Bears** begin a dance. Two **Bears** enter to transform the **Boy**. Using transformational costume, the **Bears** coax the **Boy** to change into an animal. The **Boy** tries to follow the **Bears** but because the **Boy** doesn't understand he does not change. The **Bears** try to make the **Boy** understand the animals so he can help and understand the **Grandfather**.

Note: the **Grandfather Wolf** is always among the animals--literally or drumming.

The **Boy** joins them as one of the **Bears** attempts to knock him down but is prevented by the other **Bear**. At the end of the dance, they return to the corners of the stage and sit down, leaving the **Boy** alone in the center.

BEAR SONG

Aqumgeciurlua uraqalrianga	Sitting I stay here
Uitaurlua yagiralrianga	Staying here I raise my arms
Aya iya anga iyha	Aya iya anga iyh
Kuigemi-gaa ellangearluanga	In the river I want to be awakened
Unugkumi alakumi-llu	In the morning and in the evenings
Aya iya anga iyha	Aya iya anga iyha
Uksuarmi Inarnarianga	In the fall it is time to sleep
Upnerkami-llu maknarilua	And in the spring it's time to get up
Aya iya anga iyha	Aya iya anga iyha
Nerurlua Unuaquaqaan	Eating everyday
Uqurilua kangangnatuglua	Fat, I try to walk
Aya iya anga iyha	Aya iya anga iyha

Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Nauga nauga nauga nauga	Where where where where
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Imna Imna Iman Imna	The Person, The Person, The Person, The Person
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga	Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga

Apaurlua apurlua apaurlua
apaurlua

The Grandfather, the Grandfather,
the Grandfather, the Grandfather

Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga

Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga
Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga

WHALE (GIVING LOVE)

Grandfather Wolf comes down stage and calls in the whale. Whale sounds are heard off stage.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qangairqa nicugi nikia ciuliaten My grandson, listen to the words
spoken
Cumikiki callermegtegun qanatutet Though the actions of your elders
Anirtullerkan tegumiaqaat miicugniki They hold the key to your survival,
hear them.

Boy: What is this?

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Kinguliavet nepkai They are the sounds of your
decedents.

Boy: I don't understand.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qaruqurluki litnuqiki Teach them well.

Grandfather Wolf then moves up stage as **Wolves** and off stage people continue to make whale sounds in an attempt to call the **Whale**. The **Whale** does enter from the down stage fire pit and "floats" around the stage as the **Boy** follows her. The **Whale** exits, the **Wolves** return to center stage and chase **Boy** off.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qangiarqu taiciu!

My grandson!

Tangrarkangqertuq piurtarkanek

Bring him back, there are visions he must see!

The **Wolves** then chase him out down stage right. **Grandfather Wolf** moves down stage and calls them back. They return, bringing the **Boy** to center. **Grandfather Wolf** sings to the sky.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Ayia ahr anga ah Iyhar anga

The **Boy** and the **Wolves** look up and see the wooden raven cut-out flown in amidst stage fog.

RAVEN (GIVING RESPECT)

Sound of drummers as **Raven** comes out of the fire pit as the raven cut-out is flown back out. **Raven** stops the **drummers** and **Wolves** retreat to their corners. **Grandfather Wolf** gives **Boy** a gas mask. He begins playing his Game **Boy** (hand-held computer game) gotten from a member of the audience. The **Boy** then begins to play it. **Raven** then takes out a basketball and proceeds to do a basketball dance. The **Boy** joins in. **Raven** gets books from fire pit. The **Wolves** are curious and move on stage. The **Boy** finishes the

basketball dance and the **Raven** stops the drums. Also curious, the **Boy** begins to read each book the **Raven** pulls out. The third book the **Raven** pulls out is a dirty magazine. The **Boy** opens the center fold and notices the women in the audience. Drums start up again. **Raven** clowns with the audience and the **Boy**, making suggestive comments. The **Raven** then pulls a mirror out of the fire pit, hypnotizing the **Boy**. **Raven** makes the **Boy** lie down up stage of the fire pit. He then pulls out a smudge pot and smudges the **Boy**. **Grandfather Wolf** moves down stage to the **Boy** and removes the spell from him, howls. Revived the **Boy** gets up and begins his monologue as Grandfather Wolf translates.

Boy: I'm so cold!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)
qerukacagarpakar

Boy: It's so hot!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)
Kitrcecsiyaqpaqta kiicec

Boy: I feel strange all over.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)
qailiquakar

Boy: I'm Nalqik, I'm thirteen years old. I'm alone.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)
Ganruskut! tell us!

Boy: They stopped shivering yesterday--my four brothers and my three sisters. They stopped sweating this morning . . . All of my cousins, my family,

friends, the chief of my village, and our medicine men--they all started shaking and shivering--stopping.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik—sharing the boy's memory and fear)

Tuqulutqa nanikuyallrunga I did not know where to turn

Boy: Those people, those people came here from another place during break-up. (Sound of church bells tolling.) Since they came here, everyone began shaking and shivering, up -chucking and stopping.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Kenkamken I love you
Qangairqa My grandson

Boy: Yesterday my parents were healthy, then it happens, they stop.

Grandfather Wolf and Boy embrace.

Grandfather Wolf:

I'm alone, I'm so alone. Yesterday, there were 95 living them. They, those people from another place, told me, "Cave in your sod houses, leave them where they lie, then get away from the smell." Our people, our medicine people, our families, our way of life, all gone...overnight. Where do I go, who will take care of me? [Sound of church bells]

Boy: No

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qanga! No!

Boy: It's not my fault.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Quii aualitingunritua

Boy: You cant say that about us

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qanatkarkaunritarpekut tauten

Boy: It's not right.

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Nalqinrituq

Boy: Our world is good!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Yuicirput asirtuq

Boy: Our tongue is good!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qaneryararput asirtuq!

Boy: Our Masks are good!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Kesgiinaquput asirtug!

Boy: Our dress is good!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Aturaput asirtug!

Boy: Our Language is Good!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qanaryaraput asirtuq!

Boy: Our dances are good!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Yuraryarput asirtuq!

Boy: You can't blame me

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Aualitekngaitarpenga.

Boy: Get Away!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Ayii!

Boy: Let me Go!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Pegesnga!

Boy: Leave us!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Unikuk!

Boy: No-o-o-o!

Grandfather Wolf: (in Yup'ik)

Qangaaa!

As if in response, the animals begin to enter. First the **Bears** enter quickly from their up stage seats as if to eat the **Boy**. Just as quickly, they return to their seats. The drums begin and the **Wolves** enter, and paint the **Boy**. **Grandfather Wolf** sings from upstage.

The **Bears** return and the **Boy** dances with them. Simultaneously, the **Whale** enters and sits down stage of the fire pit. **Wolverine** enters, moving down stage to dance with the **Boy**. **Wolverine** exits as **Seal** enters and moves down stage to dance with the **Boy**. **Seal** exits and **Salmon** enters, moving down stage to dance with the **Boy**. **Salmon** exits and **Eagle** moves to dance, followed by **Whale** who moves up from her down stage position by the fire pit. Finally, it's **Raven's** turn, who enters from the fire pit and dances with the **Boy**. The **Wolves** run in and dance as **Raven** goes over to the fire pit and helps a very tired **Grandfather Wolf** into the pit. Once the pit is covered, the **Bears** sit around it. (fog cue) **Raven** exits down stage left as the **Wolves** join the **Bears** and the drums stop.

THE BOY FINDS THE SPIRIT

The animals begin to sing (in Yup'ik) quietly, the song listed below. The **Boy** enters, and begins to dance around the fire pit and sing **Good Bye Song** with vigor, all animals dance.

GOOD BYE SONG

Piura, piura

aya, aya
Tangerciqamken
aya, aya
tarirngciiqan
aya, aya
niicugnikiki

As animals begin to dance with the **Boy**, **Grandfather Wolf** enters from up stage left and moves to the **Boy**. A wolf mask is flown in and **Grandfather Wolf** puts the mask on the **Boy**. They dance together, now transformed as **Wolves**, they howl, and walk off stage. The **drummers** return to center stage forming a circle as a guest enters, beginning the cycle again.

Then a quick black out.

“Now You Are Part Of Our Story:” Naam/Gen eehu, 1996

The lights fade up on the canvas tent located center stage as elder and tradition bearer Evelyn Alexander takes her slow, dignified walk to center stage. The setting suggests an Athabaskan fish camp, essentially unchanged for centuries. She pauses, turns to the audience, and welcomes them in Athabaskan. Her niece, Ruth Grant, who Alexander describes jokingly as “an elder-in training,” follows her, translating her greeting into English. Both women sit on traditional mats of spruce boughs as the evening unfolds the significant moments of the elders’ lives and culture. Performed by native and non-native students at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, these stories offer us a both a past and present view of the Athabaskan world. At the end of the evening, the audience is invited on stage to dance as Evelyn and Ruth drum and sing. The circle is complete once more as a new story, the story of this performance, is created.

Time and the modern world have seriously threatened the traditions of the Indian, Eskimo and Aleut peoples currently existing in Alaska. Previously, the cultures of these peoples were transmitted orally for thousands of years, sustained by elders and tradition bearers. Since the beginning of this century, however, concerted efforts by missionaries and government officials have focused on absorbing traditional peoples into the dominant culture. These activities included forbidding the practice of traditional religion, healing, and some subsistence activities, outlawing potlaches in some areas, forbidding the use of native languages and the relocation of people from their traditional homelands.

Perhaps the most devastating of these practices was the forced separation of children from their land, their communities and their families, which resulted in an entire generation of adults with little knowledge of their native language and only scattered and fragmentary understanding of their culture and history. Indeed, it was not until 1972 that the Alaska State Legislature passed the Bilingual Education Bill, insuring that native children had the right to use and cultivate their respective languages in the public schools. Despite this, oral traditions, sustained primarily by elders of the previous generation,

continue to exist in various villages in Alaska. Unfortunately however, many of today's native elders are in their 70's and 80's, and as result, a variety of efforts are currently underway to preserve their stories.

Since first contact, white explorers and missionaries have attempted to collect, translate, and chronicle the oral traditions of Alaska's native peoples. The resulting written narratives were often problematic at best, owing to when and from whom the story was transcribed. More recently, however, Alaskan native peoples have assumed this responsibility themselves. This is particularly true of the preservation activities of various Native corporations formed by the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

Tuma Theatre of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks also took up this challenge, not in the form of collections and transcription, but rather through performance. Accordingly, Tuma co directors Thomas Riccio and Theresa John wanted to forge a more direct connection with the oral narratives. As a result, two Tanana Athabaskans, Evelyn Alexander and Ruth Grant of Minto, Alaska, were contracted by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks to serve as "elders in residence" and to assist Tuma company members in the development of their February 1996 production. The resulting performance, *Naam/ gen Eehu*, presented here in script form, was developed through story telling, improvisation, song, and dance, and not only related the events of Evelyn and Ruth's lives, but the dubious value of encounters with white culture, its inventions, its education and its alcoholism. This uncertainty and wariness, inherent in both Yup'ik and Athabaskan contact with the dominant culture, is evident in the production title. Naam means "I don't know" in Yup'ik and gen eehu means "whatever" in Athabaskan.

The sessions began with Evelyn and Ruth telling "old time stories about the way things used to be." Often Evelyn would tell part of the story in English, and the rest in Athabaskan, with Ruth, translating. As with many cultures, Alaskan Native oral narratives fall roughly into four categories: advising stories, hero tales, origin, or "how things came to be" stories, often with Raven or Crow as major characters, and personal narratives which may include elements of the other three, often liberally laced with humor. They serve the dual function of teaching and entertaining, both important to the survival of a culture in such a harsh environment. Among Alaskan Native peoples, many

of the stories are shared, with regional and cultural differences accounting for the variations of the narratives. Others, particularly of the Tlingit and Haida of southeast Alaska, are specific to and indeed, may be the property of a specific clan.

As the rehearsal period progressed the scope of the stories gradually widened to include a variety of advising tales, origin stories and Crow (Raven) tales. The students in the class then used these stories as a basis for creative improvisational exercises. The result of these exercises often met with gales of laughter from both Evelyn and Ruth as they alternately praised them for accurately recreating the story or playfully admonished them for becoming too creative with the stories. Gradually, however, the performance text evolved into an episodic series of personal narratives, advising stories and origin tales, intermixed with traditional song, dances and drumming.

Appropriately enough, the performance begins with a story which describes, in Evelyn's words, how "Many years ago, before our time, elders used to know what's gonna happen. This old man he went to sleep for a long time." The old man had a vision about the future, including the coming of the white man, the train, the steamboat, the airplane, the telephone, and the radio.

This story segues neatly into the first advising story told to young boys and girls as Evelyn reminds us that beauty is only skin deep as the cast recounts "The Ugly Woman Story." The cast assumes the characters and the dialogue of the story as Evelyn serves as the observing narrator, often adding her own humorous commentary. No attempt is made to disguise the fact that the actors are both Native and non-Native students. The popular young man's mother has blond hair, and the pretty girls he admires are from Bethel as well as Detroit. The young man is initially skeptical of the wisdom of his father's words. However, the new moccasins, her bountiful gifts at the potlatch dance, including the moose hide shirt decorated with porcupine head quills and the tasty lunch of dried fish in moose grease convinces the young man that his father was indeed right. The young man and the ugly woman build a canoe together and sail off into wedded bliss.

"The Starvation Story" underscores both the need to share in hard times and the importance of heeding the wisdom of elders. In this narrative, an old woman gives away all the food from her cache, to share with everyone in the camp. In a humorous turn of

events, Evelyn and Ruth play the grandchildren of the old woman as she prays for the salvation of her people. Because of her prayer and self-sacrifice, she is rewarded with a large king salmon in her cache the next day. Later, she has a vision that leads a hunting party to fourteen caribou and her people are saved from starvation.

Native contact with the white man starts innocently enough with a mime scene that depicts the meeting of the first white man and the Indian. Both characters walk to center stage mirroring each other's movements and comments. In the background, Ruth and Evelyn shake their heads, chuckling to themselves, as Ruth says "That white man he just get up and walk away mad. This is how it was when white man first met the Indian. He got upset because Indian just copy."

The narrative intensifies through tales of alcoholism, airplanes, the steamboat Yukon, white tourists with cameras and Ruth's experiences in school. The irony of these experiences in the government schools are not lost on the audience, as the actors portraying Native children awkwardly recite The Pledge of Allegiance and sing "Ten Little Indians." Appropriately enough, the evening culminates with the introduction of the trickster, Old Crow, a mischievous character alternately known as Raven among various Alaskan Native peoples. The Crow stories include "Raven and Goose Wife," and "How Crow Killed the Whale."

"Crow and Goose Wife," while an entertaining tale told by the Han as well as Tanana people, underscores a variation on the traditional wisdom that "birds of a different feather cannot flock together." In this tale, Crow is smitten with love for Goose. The summer romance flourishes but as Fall approaches, a problem arises. The winters are too severe for goose wife to stay north, and Crow is not strong enough to fly south. Goose wife and her relatives try to carry Crow on their backs, but the fidgety bird proves to be too difficult to carry. Unfortunately, like star-crossed lovers in all cultures, their relationship is destined for failure.

"How Crow Killed the Whale", a story shared by the Tanaiana (Dena'iana), Tanana, and Koyukon Athabaskans, as well as the Tlingit and Eyak, of the southeast and south central Alaska is of particular interest. The narrative, which includes Whale as a major character illustrates how stories are shared and re-told among various peoples. The version that Evelyn tells is from the Tanana, whose traditional lands do not border the

ocean. The story was obviously re-told through at least two different peoples, some of whom have distinctly different languages. Here, Crow shows his penchant for both mischief and gluttony, as he tries to convince Whale that they are related. "I'll prove it," says Crow, "Open your mouth and show me your tonsils!" Curious, Whale opens his mouth and Crow hops inside. Once inside, the ravenous Crow begins to consume the whale from the inside. The whale eventually dies, but before he does, Crow convinces him to beach himself on the shore so that Crow can safely return to land after Whale expires. Once on land, two boys discover Crow and the whale carcass. Crow plays an additional trick on the boys and continues to eat the Whale. After eating so much he is unable to move, he decides to have a potlatch and share the food with the people. At the potlatch, Crow names the various clans of the Tanana and invites them to dance together. While this story is certainly entertaining, especially in this performance, it also shares characteristics with advising tales ("be careful when you open your mouth") and origin tales (creation of the potlatch, and the naming of the Tanana clans).

Crow's naming ceremony and invitation to dance provides a natural opportunity in the performance for members of the audience to dance with the cast. First, Crow invites Eskimos down to dance, as Inupiat and Yup'ik students, complete with skin hoop drums, suddenly materialize from the audience. Once these dances are shared, the cheer leading Crow, assisted by the cast, invites everyone down on the stage to dance. In much the same manner as the invitational dance at a traditional potlatch, everyone shares in the fun.

The performance was significant for a variety of reasons. Both women viewed the performance as a unique chance to share their stories with a broader audience, with the additional benefit that the performance provided a means for Evelyn to pass her stories on to her niece. Second, despite the scenery, lighting and sound effects, the dynamics of traditional story telling were maintained. The storyteller occupied a privileged place in the performance process, knowledge was transferred and the audience was entertained. As a public performance, it was culturally reaffirming for native people. Moreover, the healing potential of the production was apparent in the episodes that dealt humorously with subjects such as first contact, alcoholism and incursions from the modern world including the radio, movies, the steamboat and the airplane. Indeed, these

became almost allegorical explorations into the conditions in which Alaskan native peoples of today find themselves--situated between two worlds, where the reimagining of the past is critical to facing an uncertain future.

Finally, there is a note of inclusiveness here for native and non-native people alike. In her conclusion, Ruth Grant states:

Thank you. It is good that we share our stories with you. Many people ask that we tell old time and new time stories again. It is important that we remember these. Many years from now people will be telling the story about when we came to the University and when we were there how we met these students and they helped turn our stories into a play. You will be in the story as the people who came to listen to us.

As I scanned the faces of the audience, the value of this performance was obvious. Smiles emerged and eyes sparkled on the previously immobile faces of a group of wheelchair-bound Native elders, shy children ran on-stage to tease Crow. A young Athabaskan man sitting next to me in tennis shoes, a leather jacket and a Chicago Bulls ball cap, stood up and flashed me a gap-toothed smile saying "Jeez, aren't those two old ladies great?"

Dale E. Seeds

(Originally presented at the national conference of the Oral History Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1998.)

NAAM-GEN EEHU

(I don't know/Whatever)

A performance based on Athabaskan stories as told by elders

Evelyn Alexander and Ruth Grant of Minto, Alaska

Developed into performance by Thomas Riccio and the Tuma Theatre Company.

First Performance: 29 February 1996 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Direction and Choreography	Thomas Riccio & Theresa John
Costume Design	Tara Maginnis
Lighting, Set, & Sound Design	Kade Mendelowitz
Stage Manager	Jason Chapman

Story Tellers

Evelyn Alexander Ruth Grant

Ensemble Cast playing Multiple Roles

(in alphabetical order)

Gayle Booth
Tony Evans
Ivan Heffner
John Pius Henry, Jr.
Jeannine Patané
Amy Poser
Juliano Siqueira
Stephanie Stowman
Charlene Zappa

INTRODUCTION

Evelyn and **Ruth** (Athabaskan elders) enter DOWN STAGE RIGHT. **Evelyn** walks before **Ruth** and says the following in Athabaskan. They both sit on the mat in front of the tent.

Ruth: Welcome everybody to our play. Thank you for coming. Now we are going to tell you old time and new time stories. We are going to tell you stories about what life use to be like and what life is like today.

PROPHECY

Evelyn: Many years ago, before our time, elders used to know what's gonna happen. This old man, he went to sleep for a long time.

Enter **Old Man** and **Wife** from DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Old Man** stops CENTER STAGE, **Wife** continues to CR.

Old Man: I'm going to sleep for three days.

Old Man begins to lay down. **Wife** kneels next to him.

Wife: Unnhuh.

Old Man: Tell everybody do not wake me. Don't worry about me.

Wife: Uhhuh.

Evelyn: The old man went to sleep for three days. Everyone came from the village to make sure he was okay.

All the people at the camp enter. Sit in circle around **Old Man**. All are restless but eventually sit in a defined circle around the **Old Man**.

Evelyn: They were afraid he was going to die. On the third day he got up.

Old Man wakes up slowly and painfully.

Old Man: Unnngh. I'm hungry. Get me some fish soup.

Wife gets fish soup from campfire and then returns.

Old Man: How long did I sleep?

Wife holds up three fingers with palm facing her.

Wife: What happened?

The **Old Man** sits up to tell the story.

Old Man: I had many dreams. There will be people with white skin, and white women with blonde hair. Dark complexion people and light complexion people will be all mixed up. We all will go along with them.

Old Man stands. As he speaks all agree with “Unnhuhs” and repeating phrases.

Wife: You, me?

Old Man: You too. There will be a box that can roll around on ground like little house, and you can turn right around, and it have wheels go around under it. There will be long thing that crawl on ground. Carry baba. Wheel under it gogogo. When it going to start it say "whoowhoo." When engine start go "lollolllol." When you look up see big bird. Fast it make lotsa noise like geese when land on ground. And something you just put in ear and somebody from far away talk to you, Unana States. And there will be a small box that with people talking in it. We won't know where the voices come from. And then we'll see people in big box. They'll be moving around and they'll be moving around and they'll talk. They'll talk, they'll sing, they'll dance. Won't be long before it happens. Person will come from Unana States. Then he'll talk to people, try to make them understand what's going on.

Light cue. Everyone exits while **Evelyn** speaks.

Evelyn: That's the way the old people used to be before. Used to see things, used to have visions, about the way life is going to be.

Old Man and **Wife** exit UP STAGE RIGHT. Connect Music.

UGLY WOMAN STORY

Husband: Tell them the story about the Ugly Woman.

Evelyn: Long time ago, this story came out like this. There was a boy who was very popular. All the pretty girls liked him.

U. Husband flirts with female audience members, bringing him to DOWN STAGE RIGHT and then CENTER STAGE. **U. Dad** enters from the tent.

Evelyn: His dad didn't like this.

Dad: Son, what are you doing?

Husband: Looking at all the beautiful women.

Dad: No good. I find you good woman.

Husband: Why do that?

Dad: I find you a good woman. You need a good woman to make your home and take care of you.

Husband: Where is she?

Dad: She is coming.

Dad grabs the **Ugly Wife** when she enters from offstage UP STAGE LEFT, and presents her to CENTER STAGE. **Husband** inspects **Ugly Wife**, walking from one side to another and back, then steps back.

Husband: Why don't you marry her? I want a pretty wife.

Husband walks to DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Dad** pats **Wife** on back.

Dad: Pretty woman do not do lotsa things. Ugly woman do lotsa things. Make good home for you.

Dad takes **Wife** to tent. Only **Wife** enters.

Evelyn: The ugly woman went to bed before anybody else.

Dad: Son, time to go to bed.

Blackout. Sounds of night-wilderness.

Evelyn: Before anyone up, before even the sun came out, the Ugly Woman woke up.

Ugly woman wakes up and begins to work on the fire.

Evelyn: She started the fire so that when the father told his son to start the fire in the morning, he poked his head out from the tent to see it was already done.

Husband peeks out of tent.

Evelyn: She did this for five day straight, and then the son realized maybe father was right.

Blackout. **Mom** enters UP STAGE LEFT during blackout.

Evelyn: The son then wore out his moccasins.

Husband gets out of bed and walks to CENTER STAGE, as well as the **U.Mom**. The **Husband** is carrying his moccasins which are badly torn. **Husband** handing **Mom** the moccasins.

Husband: Here, patch these moccasins before morning because I can not go hunting without them.

Husband goes DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Mom** gives the shoes to **Wife**.

Mom: Here, sew these for your husband.

Wife places the shoes on the ground, and crosses to DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Mom: How come you don't sew?

Wife: I'll fix them in the morning.

Mom: You gotta get up early.

Wife: Don't worry I will sew in the morning.

Blackout. **Mom** exits UP STAGE LEFT. **Wife** exit DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Evelyn: That morning the Ugly Woman woke up early to make fire.

Wife gets up and makes fire, sits Fire L. **Husband** wakes up and comes out from the tent and sits Fire R. **Wife** stirring bowl.

Wife: Want something to drink?

Husband: Please.

Wife gives him a warm drink.

Wife: You need something warm.

Husband: Thank you. Did you mend my moccasins?

Wife: No, I will mend them later.

Wife walks back to tent and gets her bag. She pulls a brand new pair of moccasins from her bag.

Wife: Today wear these.

Wife throws the moccasins across the fire to him.

Husband: New moccasins. Thank you.

Wife: Unnhuh.

Putting on moccasins.

Husband: Just fit.

Husband: (To the audience) How she know my size?

Husband: (To **Wife**)Thank you. I gotta hunt.

Prepares to leave, walks to DOWN STAGE LEFT. Stopped by **Wife's** voice.

Wife gives pack to **Husband**.

Wife: Here, take this for lunch.

Husband: Good that's what I need. Bas ce.

Wife exit UP STAGE LEFT. **Husband** walks to DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Evelyn: A few hours later, man out hunting is gonna have lunch.

Husband DOWN STAGE RIGHT, spot light and sits down at campsite.

Husband delighted, opening pack.

Husband: Dried fish and moose grease. I wonder where she get it. Dad might be right.
Good food.

Mom enters from UP STAGE LEFT. **Mom** admires moccasins as both her and husband walk to CENTER STAGE.

Mom: What did you have for lunch?

Husband: Dried fish and moose grease. It was pretty good.

Husband gives **Mom** bag and exits DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Mom** exits to UP STAGE LEFT.

Evelyn: Soon they moved to another camp.

All actions are mimed as **Evelyn** explains them in this section starting from UP STAGE LEFT to DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Evelyn: The man go ahead to the next camp. He catch porcupine along the way. Leave this on trail for his girlfriend.

Other women and **U. Wife** enter DOWN STAGE RIGHT. Porcupine Slide.
Other women crossing to CENTER STAGE, then exit DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Evelyn: Other girls came and picked all the quills, just leave the head quill for boy's girlfriend. This lady, they don't mind what they do to her. She go pick up the head quill. The head quill is the worst part, but she don't mind.

U.Wife exits DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Evelyn: Month of April start building a canoe at the new camp.

Dad enters from tent. **Husband** enters from DOWN STAGE LEFT. They walk to CENTER STAGE.

Dad: Son, you should build a canoe.

Husband: I have nothing ready for a canoe. I could begin the frame but I have nothing else.

Dad: Just build it.

Dad exits through tent. **Husband** begins work on canoe frame: sits down Fire DC, and carves. **Wife** enters DOWN STAGE LEFT. Looks at **Husband** working. Pause.

Wife: Here I have everything ready.

Wife signals to offstage DOWN STAGE LEFT. Both exit.

Ruth: And nobody know where she got all that stuff for the canoe from. They made the canoe together and in the end the boy gave the canoe to her. Spring come and they go out in their new canoe to get something to eat for the potlatch.

Canoe Slide projection.

TRAVELING SONG

U. Wife and **Husband** enter DOWN STAGE RIGHT, paddle with circle at CENTER STAGE, crossing to DOWN STAGE LEFT.

Evelyn: And then the potlatch start. All the ladies hang up homemade things-- all the pretty girls did.

Pretty girls enter from DOWN STAGE LEFT. Three spots CENTER STAGE. Each mime hanging something. Homemade Slide, one for each (3 all).

Evelyn: Then the ugly woman didn't hang up anything—yet. Then last night of potlatch there was a big dance. Here come ugly woman and her husband. She make all fancy stuff with head quill. This ugly lady dancing before her husband, both had fancy costume all beaded with head quill. Then the lady had a song about the head quill. She dance in front singing:

PORCUPINE HEAD QUILL SONG

Wife and **Husband** enter DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Wife** carries sack. After dance, **pretty girls** look at the ground in shame.

Evelyn: When it was time to give stuff away the Ugly lady bring in two sacks, dance them in. All potlatch stuff to give away that the ugly woman had made. She gave her father-in-law a new moose skin coat. And the father was happy then.

Wife mimes giving **Dad** moose skin coat. Slide Moose Skin coat. **Wife** then mimes giving **Mom** gift. Slide **Mom's** gift.

Evelyn: And she got the Mom a gift too. The father was right when he got the lady with his son. That's how used to be long time ago.

Husband and **Wife** exit UP STAGE LEFT holding hands.

Evelyn: This is an advising story for young girls and boys.

STARVATION STORY

Evelyn: This is an old time story. Long time ago peoples used to move around, keep on moving the camp around. Pretty soon, they end up where they don't catch nothing. They had nothing to eat until they put up in the last camp. Then this old lady...

Enter **Old Woman** from tent and mimes the following. Sled is flown in DC. Slide of cache.

Evelyn: Had dried fish in her sled on top of the cache. She got the fish and cut it up into slices and give it to everybody that was in that camp.

While the **Old Woman** is passing out fish pieces **Ruth** says:

Ruth: Now, pretend we're her grandchildren.

Drumming music as they pass out fish.

Evelyn: And when she empty her sleigh then she was going to put sleigh back on the cache. She lift it up and then say: Traditional Athabascan prayer as Old Woman translates.

Old Woman: God the father. You see my sleigh it is all empty. Now my grandchildren will have nothing to eat now. Me I have my life, it's okay if I don't eat nothing.

Blackout. **Old Woman** returns to CENTER STAGE, U of sled.

Evelyn: That next morning she was going to take the sleigh down.

Old Woman exits the tent and crosses to center.

Evelyn: She was going to take her sleigh down off the cache, only she found it was real heavy. When she took her sleigh down in it she found a King Salmon. That was her answer for her prayer.

Old Woman: A na bas ce, my god thank you very much. A na bas ce, Noktok.

Old Woman takes down the sleigh and kneels to cut the King Salmon. She passes it around to everyone.

Evelyn: Elders knew things. Long time ago elderly people use to know ahead of time. Have visions in dreams, that way they know what going to happen. One day one man say to the Old Woman:

Hunting Party enters DOWN STAGE LEFT. Approaches the **Old Woman**.

Man: We should move while we have fish. Get something to eat. There is no more baba at this camp. We should go this way to spring camp.

Man points to DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Old Woman: No. One more camp. We go forward this way.

Old Woman points to USR. **Hunting Party** turns around in silence and exits DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Old Woman** sits SL of Fire. Light Cue.

Evelyn: They listen to that old woman and then they move to the next camp. Then the Men went out, the men went hunting.

Slide of open wood. **Hunting Party** enter DOWN STAGE LEFT crossing CENTER STAGE.

Evelyn: Then they spot caribou.

Hunting Party, alert and stalking, exit USR.

Evelyn: Come back later in the evening.

Evelyn and **Old Woman** sing the Caribou song. **Hunting Party** enters from USR and stand right of Fire.

Old Woman: You catch anything?

Man: Unnhuh.

Old Woman: What did you catch?

Man: Fourteen Caribou.

Old Woman: A na Bas ce. Praise god. Now we can move back to spring camp.

All exit except for **Man**.

MIMIC SCENE

Ruth: This story came from this man. This Indian came out ...

Enter **Indian** character from DOWN STAGE LEFT.

Ruth: ...and then this white man came.

Enter **White man** character from USR. Both characters walk to CENTER STAGE.

White man: Hello.

Indian: Hello.

White man: How are you?

Indian: How are you?

White man: What's your name?

Indian: What's your name?

White Man about to leave, when asks:

White man: Do you speak English?

Indian: Do you speak English?

Ruth: You just go like this...

Ruth throws up her hands.

Ruth: ...and walk away. This was how it was when white man first met the Indian. He got upset because Indian just copy.

Both characters exit the way they came.

STEAMBOAT STEAMER YUKON

Sound of Steamboat Whistle. Steamboat slide projection, circa 1920.

Ruth: Hey, tell them about the steamboat.

Evelyn: I remember when I first saw a steamboat, just like this one. I don't know how old I was. We all got excited.

Charlie, Agnus, and Young Evelyn enter DOWN STAGE LEFT. They walk to CENTER STAGE, facing UP STAGE CENTER and wave to the Steamboat slide.

Evelyn: When the steamboat landed I heard the whistle and it scared me

Sound of steamboat. **Young Evelyn** runs behind an audience member and **Charlie** begins cutting wood.

Evelyn: and I ran behind a little tree and there was a man named John Snaddie. My father cut wood so this man would pay my dad. My dad cut a lot of wood during the summer at fish camp and sold the wood to the steamboat. My father's friend John Snaddie...

Enter UP STAGE LEFT crossing to CENTER STAGE and greets **Charlie** extending his hand which **Charlie** shakes.

John: Hey there Little Charlie. How you doin'?

Charlie: All right. Do good.

John: Hello Agnus. Charlie they miss you up there at the gold mine. There was never a better horse driver in all of Livengood. I have something for Evelyn.

Agnus leaves and gets **Little Evelyn** DOWN STAGE LEFT. **John** gets the box with the blonde haired doll that has eyes that close USSR. **Little Evelyn** hides behind **Agnus** when John comes back to CENTER STAGE. **Little Evelyn** is crying.

Evelyn: I remember I was scared because I had never seen a white man before. But John gave my mother the box for me.

John gives box to **Agnus**, who gives it to **Little Evelyn** while reassuring her. **Little Evelyn** opens the box to find the doll inside. She is delighted.

John (to Little Evelyn): Do you like it?

Little Evelyn nods excitedly.

Little Evelyn: Bas ce.

Evelyn: I was so happy to get that doll I couldn't even say thank you. But I always looked forward to seeing the white men because they always brought gifts.

John: Good-bye little Charlie.

Charlie: Good-bye John.

Evelyn: We all waved good-bye to the steamboat. The tourist used to throw oranges, apples, and candy from the boats.

Orange thrown from USSR.

Evelyn: Yeah, just like that.

Tourist enter from USR.

Tourist: How you doin' little Charlie? Are you working hard? How's your wood pile? Smile.

Agnus, Charlie, and Little Evelyn stand rigidly on SL of campfire and pose for the camera. Sound of camera is heard and a flash of light is seen. Slide of photograph of young Athabaskan children circa 1920.

Tourist: What a beautiful girl Evelyn is? Evelyn do you like your doll?

Another flash and Camera sound. Slide of photo. After the **Tourist** take the second photograph then they take photos and pass out candy to other kids in the audience. And exit USR. Family stays stationary by campfire. Sound Steamboat whistle. **Tourist** leave USR.

Evelyn: We got through with steamboat. I guess you can go.

Agnus, Charlie, and Little Evelyn exit DOWN STAGE LEFT.

ALCOHOL

Evelyn: This next story is about drinking and how bad drinking is.

Man enters DOWN STAGE RIGHT, walks DOWN STAGE LEFT to sit Fire R, not acting "drunk". **Wife** enters from tent when the **Man** sits down Fire R. **Wife** goes L of tent and crossing R.

Wife: What happened? You told me you were going to the fish camp to pick up snowshoes.

Man and Wife both enter the tent.

Man: I don't know. I drank something like tea. I got dizzy in the head. I paddled hard up stream. I feel strong.

Wife: What did you drink?

Man: What the white man gave me. I stopped at the white man's tent. He gave me tea with something in it. I felt like dancing around. (Pause) When I look at you, there are two of you.

Woman enters USR.

Wife: Something's wrong. You'd better lie down.

Man sings, laying down--passes out. **Woman2** both begin slowly enter DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Woman** is in front of tent.

Woman: What happened to your husband?

Wife: I don't know what's wrong. Maybe he got sick.

Man passes out.

Woman: We've got to let people know what's going on. We don't know what's gonna happen to this man. I'll go tell people.

Wife: Go ahead.

Woman crossing DOWN STAGE LEFT and is joined by **other Women (2 & 3)**.
Brings them back to tent, sits.

Woman: He's out.

Woman2: He's gonna die

Woman: Somebody's gotta stay up with the wife to watch him.

Wife: We don't know what will happen by morning.

Woman2: Be ready.

Evelyn: And those woman stay with that man's wife until four in the morning.

Woman and **Woman2** sleep. **Wife** wakes them up.

Woman2: Early in morning

Wife: You can go home now. If something happens, I'll let you know.

Women from tent crossing exit DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Man** slowly wakes up.

Man: (waking up) ABASSTIK! Oh, my head!

Man and **Wife** exit to Fire R.

Wife: You need something.

Man: You got any kind of fish soup?

Wife goes to fire, gets soup and brings to husband.

Wife: What's the matter with you?

Man: My stomach hurts.

Man runs off USSR to vomit. **Wife** chases him till he is off. Then pause till **Man** returns.

Wife: What makes it hurt?

Man: I don't know.

Wife: What happened?

Man: I went to the fish camp. I stopped at the white man's tent. He gave me tea. He poured that in the tea. Pretty soon my eyes started to get dizzy. Before it got worse I got in my canoe and started home.

Wife: Don't you go down there no more. You hear me?

Man: I won't. It's bum. It's up to me to say no, but I took it. Now, today it made me sick.

Man and **Wife** exit USSR, the **Man** getting sick again. **Man** takes bottle with him.

WHISKEY SONG

Evelyn and **Ruth** talk about drinking.

AIRPLANE

Slide projection of an Airplane circa 1935.

Evelyn: This is the story about when they first saw the airplane.

Sound forest nature. Various cast members gather around the campfire. **Agnus** is in the tent and **William William, Evelyn's** grandfather, is carving a paddle.

Evelyn: When they first heard the airplane people were scared, all of a sudden here was something up in the air make all kinda noise.

Sound airplane. **All**, except **William** and **Agnus**, hides offstage looking up.

Evelyn: Here came four airplanes. Then my grandfather he call out:

William William: Agnus. What's that I hear? eeeoow. How could big bird just flyin make all kinda noise that's up in the air? What else the white man going to do?

Agnus: Everything.

William: Its a something. It just fly in the air like a geese.

Agnus: Daddy, they are going to make something like that. They already tell us.

William: How am I to know? They never tell me.

Agnus: If they told you, you wouldn't understand them.

William exits DOWN STAGE RIGHT in fervor. **Agnus** follows.

Evelyn: And that is what my mother said to my grandfather when they first saw airplanes.

AIRPLANE SONG

TANANA VALLEY CHIEFS

Slide projection of The Tanana Valley Chiefs, circa 1928. **Jeannine** and **John** enter UP STAGE LEFT. They help **Evelyn** and **Ruth** stand up to look at the slides.

Jeannine: Hey tell us about this photograph.

Evelyn and **Ruth** explain slides. Slide of school.

Jeannine: Hey Ruth, why don't you tell us about when you went to school.

Evelyn: I can sit down because I didn't have the opportunity to go to school. But now I teach at the University.

Evelyn sits down on mat.

EDUCATION

Ruth: This is the story were gonna do, when I was a student in old Minto. This is the story of when I was in school. We were in a one-room school house for the first through eighth grade. Come on out everybody.

Students enter to join **Ruth** in school set up, facing DC and class in ordered rows.
Ruth joins the **Students**. **Ruth** and **Students** stand DSC.

Ruth: So I'm going to be going back to school.

Teacher enters from DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Students** sit down. **Teacher** takes attendance with her ruler.

Teacher: Good morning class.

Class: Good morning Mrs. Holland.

Teacher: Everyone please rise. Thomas, will you lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Students stand and face DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

All: I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the republic, for which it stand, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Teacher: Very good class. Now, today's lesson is going to start with spelling. Theresa John, will you please spell "Mississippi" for us?

Cora John: M-I-S-S-I-P-P-I.

Teacher: Thank you Theresa John. Okay, now, Ruth would you please spell "Halloween"?

Ruth: H-O-L-O- oh, I could never spell it right.

Class sits in circle, while teacher exits DOWN STAGE RIGHT with one student.

Ruth: We had a Halloween party. The kids all looked forward to ice cream. Everyone made Halloween masks.

Class: (sings)

Three Blind Mice, Three Blind Mice,
See how they run, see how they run,
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with their carving knife,
Have you ever seen such a sight in your life,
Three Blind Mice

The Itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider out
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
The Itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout.

One little, two little, three little Indians;
Four little, five little, six little Indians;
Seven little, eight little, nine little Indians;
Ten little Indian braves

Teacher and **Student on Stilts** enter DOWN STAGE RIGHT. As **Student on Stilts** reaches **Class**, the exit UP STAGE LEFT in panic and fear except for **Ruth**.

Teacher: What happened to everybody?

Ruth: Everybody was scared. A few of us older ones who knew better had to get the kids back from the village. Everybody just ran home, they were so afraid.

SILENT FILMS

Ruth: Tell them the story about when they showed the movie during the potlatch.

Evelyn: They said that they were going to show a movie during a potlatch. They told this old man this and he said:

Old man and another Man walk to Center.

Old man: Why don't they do the picture show after the potlatch.

Man: It's white man's law. That's their movie time. Their time is their time. That's the way it is. Everybody is going to the picture show.

Old man: That's okay, let them go. My time is my potlatch too, you wait.

Clip from Charlie Chaplin's movie, Gold Rush. All enter to watch the movie except the **Old man**.

Evelyn: Everyone go the movie and the next night was the potlatch again. The old man did not go to the movie, but he wrote this song that he sang at the potlatch.

PICTURE SHOW SONG

All exit UP STAGE LEFT, after dancing with the **Old man** to Picture Show.

RADIO

Girl enters DOWN STAGE LEFT with radio and sets down at center, **Old man** approaches the radio cautiously. Sound cue of the radio playing with announcers voice over it as **Girl** tunes it in.

Girl: There's little people in there dad and they make these noises.

Old man looks curiously behind radio. **Old man** and **Girl** exit DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

RAVEN STORY

Evelyn: Well, that's the end of the stories. That's all the stories we are going to tell you tonight.

Raven enters UP STAGE LEFT in a furor. He approaches **Evelyn** and **Ruth** squawking. He pesters them.

Ruth: Okay, everybody. Raven want us to tell you his story. This is an old time story from way back.

Raven crosses to center.

Evelyn: This story is about that Old Raven. Old Raven fell in love with the Goose Lady.

Goose Lady enter from DOWN STAGE RIGHT. Flirts with **Old Raven**.

Evelyn: So this old Raven, he want to fly back to Unana States.

Raven: Unana States. Unana States.

Evelyn: The Raven wanted to go back in the states with geese. But she didn't want him to go because she tell him long way to go. The Raven want to go.

Goose Lady: No. It's too far.

Raven: When I get tired I can fly backwards too.

Raven mimics flying backwards, DOWN STAGE RIGHT crossing DOWN STAGE LEFT.

Goose Lady: Go Ahead.

Light cue. **Old Raven, Goose Lady,** and **Goose Brother** (who enters) all pantomime migrating CENTER STAGE. The following words are also mimed.

Evelyn: Pretty soon on their way back, their way out to the states, he get tired. The started pack him and everything. Finally the Goose Lady's brother he say to the Old Raven:

Goose Brother: I thought you say you was gonna fly backwards. You a long way to go.

Goose Brother throws **Raven** off his back. **Brother** and **Lady** fly off DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Raven** falls.

Evelyn: And see, he just went backwards and fell 1,000 mile up.

Raven dance in spiral to imitate falling. **Leaf Lady** enters from UP STAGE LEFT to envelope **Raven**.

Leaf Lady: I'm the leaf lady.

Leaf Lady places the leaf underneath **Raven** who falls on it. **Leaf Lady** remains UP STAGE LEFT. When **Raven** is off leaf, she returns it to exit UP STAGE LEFT.

Leaf Lady: I'm "leaf-ing" now.

Evelyn: Raven he land on a leaf in a lake. Then he pick up a bunch a little sticks, like that. These he put in his bundle. And then he sees his old friend the whale.

Whale enters from DOWN STAGE RIGHT crossing to CENTER STAGE.

Raven: Hey, it's my old friend whale. Come here whale. Want to play a game? Let's look at each other's tonsils. I'll go first.

Whale opens **Raven** mouth in various torturous ways at center stage.

Raven: Okay, now it's my turn to see your tonsils.

Whale opens her mouth. **Raven** jumps inside. Light change. Inside, **Raven** is delighted and begins to eat the meat inside the **Whale's** stomach.

Evelyn: And that Raven, inside the Whale begin to eat. But then he's going to kill the Whale.

Raven: Go up the bank. I'm going to cut your heart. I wouldn't like it if your bones rot in the river here.

Evelyn: Then this Whale went up on bank. This Old Raven he come out and start flying around. Then people from that camp they wonder what Raven is up to. They think he killed a caribou. They send two strong boys to find out what happened.

Two boys enter DOWN STAGE RIGHT.

Raven: I got an idea. Quick. You have to get little willow.

He gives the **Two Boys** each a willow and takes one himself to demonstrate.

Raven: You have to hit the Whale like this.

Two Boys imitate the **Raven**.

Boy: Why do we do that?

Raven: If you don't do it in a short time one of you is going to die.

Two Boys imitate the **Raven**, only faster. **Raven** stands off and laughs SL of Fire.

Evelyn: The Raven he just do this for fun. Soon the people from the village come and cut up the Whale to make fat. They take it back to the camp with them.

Villagers enter and cut up **Whale**. All, excluding **Raven**, exit DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Raven** crossing to USR.

Evelyn: That Old Raven he eat to much grease and he get sick.

Raven crossing to CENTER STAGE, sick. Lies down CENTER STAGE with his legs prone.

Evelyn: Then the people going to move and they ask that Raven:

Two boys enters crossing to CENTER STAGE.

Boy: We're going to move to the next camp.

Raven: I cannot move.

Two boys attempt to correct **Raven's** prone position twice.

Raven: Just put brush around me.

Two boys put brush around the **Raven**, leaving a space for him to breathe. **Raven** kicks both boys in the butt so one exits UP STAGE LEFT, the other DOWN STAGE LEFT. **Raven** wakes up laughing, grabs bowls and starts making noise.

Evelyn: That old Raven, he just trick everybody. He started making lots of noise and eating all the fat left. That's when he started making his potlatch. He put little things here and there.

RAVEN POTLATCH SONG

Villager's return, enter DOWN STAGE LEFT. They sneak in curious.

Boy: Is that why you stay behind and you pretend you was sick.

Raven: I was sick.

Villagers sit in a half circle surrounding **Raven**.

Evelyn: At this potlatch Old Raven made the tribes.

For each tribe, **Raven** grabs a bowl from the Fire. And gives it to them.

Raven: An you be Caribou tail, you be Middle Tribe, you Fish Tail tribe, and you are Rabbit Tail tzeche, which means "red paint," tribe.

Evelyn: And he made all the tribes. And we dance because we are all one people even though we belong to different clans. That is why today we all get together and dance for that old Raven.

RAVEN POTLATCH SONG

Everyone Dances. Dance to be determined each night by **Raven**. **Raven** invites Eskimos down from audience, they lead a dance. Then cast members invite members of the audience to dance on stage for a traditional invitational dance.

CONCLUSION

Ruth: Thank you. It is good that we share our stories with you. Many people ask that we tell old time and new time stories again. It is important that we remember these. Many years from now, people will be telling the story about when we came to the University. And when we were there how we met these students and they helped us to turn our stories into a play. And you will be in the story as the people who came to listen to us.

Yup'ik Arnaq: Personal Path to the Yup'ik World

Contemporary dramatic literature is abundant with examples of one-person shows, most of which re-create historical figures or portray the personal insights, observations, and virtuosity of their creator/performers. Theresa John's *Yup'ik Arnaq* (Yup'ik Woman), however, provides us with something more. Here, the performer becomes the medium, creating a pathway to our understanding of the Yup'ik worldview.

For the Yup'ik Eskimo people, all things, animate and inanimate, have an Inua, or spirit that is part of Ellam yua, the owner of the universe. *Yup'ik Arnaq*, which premiered in May of 1997 at The University of Alaska Fairbanks, is a journey through Yup'ik culture told from the point-of-view of a Yup'ik woman. It is also the story of the spirit that exists in all things.

John, along with director Thomas Riccio, created the performance by utilizing her personal recollections, her traditional knowledge, and through improvisational performance techniques. Once the performance was sufficiently developed, it was transcribed in the form found in this text. Like all oral performance, however, the text was subject to change. Subsequent performances varied somewhat in both content and order.

The performance opens with a mask dance purification and blessing. For the Yup'ik people, Agayuliyararput, or mask dances, are a way of making prayer. The mask, dance and songs used in performance are those of Theresa's great-grandfather, a noted shaman, who last presented the same mask dance in the 1930's. The story she tells is also, in part, the story of her people. Like a traditional Yup'ik storyteller, she weaves stories, songs, and dances, into a fabric that re-creates the Yup'ik world. Through the gentle humor associated with the Yup'ik people, the performance is presented as a series of narratives ranging from marriage proposals to the tensions of being caught between two cultures. She describes the use of the story knife, the tradition of the parka, shamanism, the mischievous little people, ghosts, self-sacrifice and the long labor of fish camp.

Performer and creator Theresa John was one of the original founding members of Tuma. During her tenure as an Assistant Professor of Alaska Native Studies at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, she served, along with Thomas Riccio, as co-director of Tuma (1995-97). She was born and raised in the traditional Yup'ik Eskimo village of Toksook Bay, Nelson Island, on the southwest coast of Alaska. She has performed extensively with a number of groups as a traditional dancer and performer and has traveled throughout the United States delivering presentations and workshops on Alaska native culture at numerous museums and universities. The Smithsonian Institute has recorded her songs, and numerous anthropologists have documented her traditional knowledge and stories. Because of this knowledge of traditional lifestyles and her formal Western education, Theresa is uniquely qualified to provide a bridge between the two cultures, expressing the Yup'ik worldview in terms others can understand. *Yup'ik Arnaq*, is a personal and cultural oral history that celebrates and sustains a unique indigenous culture striving to reimagine itself in today's world.

Dale Seeds

YUP'IK ARNAQ

(Yup'ik Woman)

Produced by Tuma Theatre
First Performance: May 2, 1997 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Written and performed by
Theresa John

Directed by
Thomas Riccio

Musician and production assistant
Set and Production design

Matthew Berlin
Alvin Amason

Production coordinator &
Lighting design
Mask Design
Costume Assistance
Technical Assistance

Michael Grogan
Michael Croskrey
Tara Maginnis
Kade Mendelowitz

Special Thanks to Phyllis Fast and James Rupert

OPENING SCENE: PURIFICATION

Use Ayuq (tundra tea) to purify the performing area before performing. The Yup'ik would burn tundra tea inside a parka or quspeq in a kneeling position. The smoke comes out through the neck as part of a prayer believing that the body ailments or anything negative in an individual's life would be pulled out of the person.

NEPCETAQ MASK:

- Song:** Tarvarnauramkan; composed by my grandmother Brentina Chanar
- Chorus:** Let me heal you through the power of a song, cleansing the body by motions and as the motions intensify the healing process becomes stronger and stronger.
- Verse 1:** Prayer for the hunters so that they may have a successful seal hunt as they go out into the ocean and battle with weather conditions.
- Verse 2:** Prayer for the women who collect land resources that Mother Nature provides so that they may have luck with plentiful resources.

SPIRIT MASK:

This is the spirit mask similar to what my great-grandfather wore during the last mask ceremony on Nelson Island. An elder, Mike Angaiak from Tununak, told me that the last mask ceremony he witnessed was held back in the 1930's, sponsored by my ancestors from Nightmute. In those days, they believed that the spirits of the animals lived in their world, just like we live in our world here. Shamans were gifted with supernatural powers. They consigned artists to make masks, which they used to pray to animal spirits seals, walrus, salmon, caribou, or birds. Masks varied according to the seasons. They composed songs to communicate with the spirits using their tuunraqs to assist them. The people, the Yup'ik, used drums and drew circles to represent unity. During the spirit masks, people drummed while they sang. They prayed for the food, they prayed that they may hunt for food in the upcoming season. Our creator brought us here with our own language, with our own culture, with our own helpers, with our own way of prayer.

(speaks in Yup'ik).

The oceans have spirits... the mountains have spirits... the birds have spirits... the animals all have spirits. (Mimics animal noises while dancing). And then They [the white man] came. They came. The shamans could no longer practice their mask ceremonies. Then they came. We could no longer sing or dance. Then they came. They took away our culture and our language. They came and told us that what we believed in was evil... that the land did not have spirits.... that the animals did not have spirits.... that the mountains did not have spirits. The sky did not have spirits. They came and said we were heathens. They came and took us away to boarding school. They took us away from our families. They took us away from our culture. They took us away from our language. They took us away from our people. They came and they brought disease and junk food. Why do so many of our people die from cancer? They brought alcohol and drugs. Why do so many of our people get into trouble? They brought poverty and grief and welfare . And they brought suicide. Why do so many of our young people commit suicide? And they brought sadness.

She cries. Lights dim. She dances in place with fans, but does not sing.

Lights come up.

This is how our ancestors prayed before the missionaries changed our ways. Missionaries misunderstood our traditional ways of prayer. They banned the most powerful shamans, healers that were granted powers by our creator, Ellam yua. Ellam yua sent us to earth with our own language, culture, and way of life. We believe that everything has spirits which should be treated with respect. People, animals, rivers, land and cosmos. They are all interconnected. Ellam yua listens to all our prayers and grants us our needs. Missionaries neglected our traditional ways of praying and replaced them with Western religion.

In the 1950's, my grandmother approached the village priest to ask for permission to start dancing again in Nightmute. She told the priest, "We are getting too lonely, could we please dance again?" The priest replied, "Yes, only if you promise not to sing spiritual shaman songs." Singing and dancing are healing processes. When death occurs, spirits are healed through songs. At the end of the performance, women would motion through their bodies to shake off bad spirits and body ailments.

The new religion had a severe impact on our culture. They viewed our traditional religion to be paganistic. I attended St. Mary's High School and, there, we were taught only Western culture. We spoke the English language, and we could not eat our own food (unless it was done outdoors). Today, some elders are asked to talk about old ways of praying. They do not want to talk about mask ceremonies, or even think about reviving them. The Yup'ik worldview has been shattered, now we believe in Heaven and Hell. Instead, our masks hang in the museums. We have lost the most powerful gift we had from our creator Ellam yua...

Now, I will purify the past. This is dedicated to my great-grandfather and my ancestors so these things are not forgotten.

Sing: Tarvarnauaramkan (sung in Yup'ik)

Chorus: Let me heal you through the power of a song, cleansing the body by motions and as the motions intensify the healing process becomes stronger and stronger.

Verse 1: Prayer for the hunters so that they may have a successful seal hunt as they go out into the ocean and battle with weather conditions.

Verse 2: Prayer for the women who collect land resources that Mother Nature provides so that they may have luck with plentiful resources.

FIRST AWARENESS

Ellangartua. First awareness. I was standing on the stage. My ancestors were drummers. (Drumming heard from off stage.) I see my grandparents, my great grand parents, and all my ancestors drumming. I was just two or three years old and was standing all by myself and looked around. No one was there with me. My legs started shaking and my hands-my heart started beating... I looked around and there I saw my grandmother. (speaks in Yup'ik and puts on different costume down stage left).

My grandmother was a strong woman. She would sew and carve earrings. She was also a matchmaker and a healer. She was also a midwife and delivered over 100 children in her life. One story she told me was about a river, when the ice was floating.

She waded very high. Her legs, hands, and feet were freezing. (Demonstrates motions of swimming and frozen body parts) She had a beautiful parka like the one I am wearing. This is made of different animals... 100 squirrels, wolverines, and wolves. There is a story about a wolf that was caught one time. A dead wolf was covered with a headdress, and the people began to drum and sing in front of the wolf. Those animals, the wolf and the wolverine, are the most powerful and spiritual animals that we have. (Quiet drumming from behind stage) In those days, when the earth was thin, humans and animals were able to transform into each other. (Drumming reaches a crescendo and dancing shows human transformation into an animal. Drumming stops.)

Our colors. The blood of our ancestors... the black represent time. And the white represent the daylight. The blue represent the blue sky. Those are the important meanings behind colors. We could tell stories of our time. We had great warriors. One warrior saved the people of Nelson Island. One time, an arrow hit him in one side on his spine and came out on the other side. That's is why I have this certain part of fur attached to my costume. And you can tell by the design where people are from. We pass on the design. This parka is given during weddings. The men bring the parka and the woman accepts them. This means you accept the wedding plans. I, myself, was proposed in this traditional way five times. Once, from a very old man from a neighboring village proposed for four years. (She hunches over acting out the old man's role.) He asked my grandparents, who asked my parents, who then asked told me that he wanted me as his wife. But I didn't want to marry him. The message was passed on in the same way. That was my experience. My grandmother, when she got married, was nine or ten years old. She was playing outside when her mom called her to come. "You can no longer go out and play but must stay home and learn how to sew. You must stay home and learn how to cook." She cried and cried. My grandmother had her own bounty. She was out in the wilderness and was caught by the wind and danced with the wind. This dance is the one she did then. And in those days, when women did not like their husbands, there was no [opportunity for] divorce. (She changes into dance costume.) Tonight, me and my grandmother, we will dance for you. (Drumming, singing, and dancing.) (speaks in Yup'ik) Remember when you dance, you are to stretch your arms far, so the audience can

understand the story you are talking about like this...

My grandmother died in the late 1970s. I held her hand for 12 hours. My family selected me to hold her hand and sit next to her while she was unconscious. I remember calling out, "Al!...can you hear me?" She had a beautiful journey. She would laugh, sing old songs, call out her mother's name, and finally, she slowly and peacefully quit breathing. I was her first granddaughter and she taught me everything she could. She was big, with a wrinkled face and beautiful gray hair. She lived a rich life. She was a loving grandmother, giver, composer, drummer, teacher, hunter, matchmaker, and a midwife. One of her wishes was to be remembered. I remember one day she said, "A person who came to our village wanted to write a book about me but they haven't written it yet." I thank my grandmother and all my ancestors for everything they have passed on to us. The knowledge and wisdom she shared came from our ancestors.

STORYKNIFE:

What's inside the house

Story 1: As I came out: Anqalrianga

She demonstrates story knife technique on an overhead projector.

As I came out from the house...(start with spit) [note: the story knife was often cleaned with saliva before being used in the mud or snow]...This is a symbol of woman, Arnaq, before and after she talks. This is a man is a man, Angun. Also, a Maurlaq, a grandmother, Apourlaq, a grandfather. The grandchild, tutgan, is here. This is a house and village, the river and the grass. Where the women sit on the porch to describe the activities of the people inside the house...as I came out from the house...there is the house and the door is right here, the wood stove is here, and these are the wood stacks next to the stove. Here is the grandparent's bed, the grandmother's bag is placed on her bedside. In the corner, Grandmother is sitting on the floor sewing a grass basket, while the grandfather sits on the bed watching her. No one else is in the house. The

grandmother wonders what the grandchild is doing at this moment. Grandfather said, "Oh he's probably hunting birds outside with his new bow and arrow that I made for him this morning." This was a description of house activities. And this is end of the story.

Story 2: Neighbors invite grandparents for dinner

(Starts again with spit on story knife) ...A story about a grandmother and child. As I came out from the house...there is the house and the door is right here, the wood stove is here, and these are the wood stacks next to the stove. Here is the grandparents bed, the grandmother is sitting on the floor sewing mukluks or the grandson, and the grandfather is sitting right here making a fish trap. Soon the grandchild of the neighbors came in and said, "Grandparents, my grandma invited you to come over to our house for dinner." And the grandmother replied, "Yes, yi-yi, we will come over." So the grandparents went out and entered the neighbor's house. The grandmother said, "Waqaa! I am very happy that you are here to join us for seal dinner." They ate fermented seal flippers and liver. This is the end of the story.

Grandma's Starvation Story

Long time ago, I remember when I was a little girl, there was shortage of food and many people starved. One day, three people came to our house. They had not eaten for a long time and they were skin and bone. My mother cooked food and gave them broth using a tablespoon. My parents knew not to let them eat too much food. One of the starving people said, "No, I want to eat all the food." He did not listen and ate all he wanted. He died that evening but the other two who had the broth survived. We survived because of the small inch-long needlefish. Needlefish are tiny but they can survive in harsh conditions. That is why some survived the famine.

It is important to listen to the old ways. We learned in this story that a person who didn't listen, died. Oral traditions survived because people listened to the stories and they learned how to retell them accurately. Oral stories passed on traditional morals and values. Telling stories requires lot of patience, memorization and imagination. We also listen to learn songs from the animals and nature. I remember the time when I first went to the restaurant. People talking reminded me of bee's, buzzzzzz....it was painful to my ears. Once my mother said, "Aling, these people never run out of things to talk about. I

wonder why they have to talk all the time.”

In Yup'ik conversations, timing is different too. Thinking is important. I remember attending BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] school, the school teachers expected us to speak in class. They would ask us questions, but never seemed to give us enough time to answer. While we were thinking, they would already be speaking. That is why we had bad grades too. Because our teachers didn't understand our communication styles.

Western education literally took over the role of traditional teaching. Our parents and elders used to teach us at home but the schools took over. We were sent to schools all day long and when we went home, we did our daily chores. Traditional teachers were forgotten and with them we lost our stories, morals and values. We must give that responsibility and pride to our people. Today, they are starting to incorporate traditional knowledge into the classrooms, and it will take time. We will never retrieve everything, but it is a good start. We still have knowledgeable resources available, and at the same time we are fighting against the time. They are dying and we must pull all our force into saving what is left.

My grandmother was born in a fish camp town. Captain Vancouver even wrote about this town. I was also born when there were no doctors, no hospitals, no nurses, but midwives. The midwives could study at this time. A midwife helped to give birth to me. Anyway, the mountains are beautiful. Sea birds fly there. Underneath the cliffs, were the great markers...the place where we kept the belongings of our people. The people had sod houses near where they fished. The seals, whales, and walrus swam. The men had nets for catching, and digging holes. The men brought lots and lots of food. (She begins to act out a typical hunting and preparation scene.) The women make fire and dry the food and wait for three days for the men to come for food. The women take two pans: the guts and the grass. One by one, animals are cleaned and eggs are removed from them. For hours and hours, the men watched and do different work. Next, they take grass and braid the animal meats. And when they are all done, the animal meats are brought to be hung and tied. So many strands of animals or animals are hung and prepared. Fifty strands here and there. This is to make sure that they do not rot. This

takes a long time to make -- like taking care of babies. Everyday, the animals are checked and turned to be properly dried. Turning them prevents them from rotting. After four weeks, they are dried and done. Every fish is then put on the ground. Cloth is placed on top of the fish and then stomped on to save space for storage. But the work is never done. When there is daylight, we go home. If there is more time, women sew baskets with the elders and tell stories.

Stories are told about ghosts in the tundra. (Lights dim.) Come see in the dark. She moans and (speaks in Yupik). And some ghosts in the tundra...And there are types of ghosts. One is when the body is lost and wondering. When the body of a dead person appears, there is a way to be rid of them. Hands are put on top of your head and using the weight of your hand, slowly push their body down. You must be patient, because if you push down too fast, the ghost will appear again. And also if a person comes in, the ghost will disappear then re-appear. In the mean time, if you scream, no one will hear you, because you are inside the house.

There is a story about my grandfather who saw a dead person's body in the house. He went outside to go to the bathroom and on the way back, he saw a dead body spirit. He was frightened and didn't want to see it. He thought, "How can I trick him? How can I challenge it? I can run as fast as I can to get rid of it." He ran as fast as he could and the ghost disappeared.

Another time he was hunting a caribou. When he was ready to carry the caribou home, he saw the body of his friend, a hunter who had killed himself. The ghost said, "I'm so hungry. Will you give me something to eat?" You're a dead person, he thought. I will die if I give you food." The spirit said, "You won't die, I won't make you die." Grandfather thought this would get worse next time, so he must do something about it now. Grandfather wanted to get rid of the dead body once and for all. He shot the caribou and he fell down and puked black. This is a sign of a real ghost. He woke up and thought nothing though and went to the caribou and took it home. Sometime later, there was a shaman and he sensed that something was not going right. (She chants.) People came up to the shaman one at a time and looked in between his legs. But nothing happened. My grandfather thought, "nothing has ever happened. I never saw a ghost in my life." The shaman said, "didn't one of you see a ghost?" (speaks in Yup'ik). My

grandfather didn't think it was him but started to shake. He could not move from where he was. The shaman said, "Ahh, it is you. You have seen the great ghost." The spirit in my grandfather said, "I would've died sooner if it weren't for you." And my grandfather was saved. (speaks in Yup'ik)

In 1963, the people were thinking about moving. The little people or dead bodies showed them lights of a nearby village. So, at this time, they started moving the houses and building large rafts to put the houses on top to drift over the river. The houses were then transported one by one in two pieces. People got together and named the two different people Toksook Bay people and the others. When you look at the bay now, you can see lights similar to those that we were shown. The little people showed us something about the future.

We believe the little people live under ground. When the mountains grow each year, they see that the population is increasing around us. The elders say not to go there. The little people are always a part of our lives. Like today, my grandmother saw a small bird's nest where tiny people were singing and dancing. (She chants.) My grandmother couldn't believe it. (Chants again.) She came home and taught the village what the small people showed her.

She sings and dances.

Last year, there was a sighting of the little people. A truck driver was driving over the frozen river when his engine quit. The door opened and two little people came in and closed the door. (speaks in Yup'ik and pantomimes scene). He tried starting the truck but nothing was working. They brought him under the ground to their land. He came out and started his engine. He looked and saw that the little people were gone. When he arrived home, people wondered what had took him so long. He told of their magic and their land. An old women said that they looked very small and were magical. "You," they said, "are also like little people and have magic."

And we do, we have snow machines and telephones and television. We also have matches, lights, electricity...good magic. It's magic that we have teachers. We tried to be

like them by coloring our faces and taking their books. We are in the books and our stories are too. This is wonderful magic. There's so much that we can learn about ourselves. Big museum books bring things from all over the world and bring us to them. This is magic. We need money for these things, some magic costs money. Once I heard an elder say that he would tell me a story, but "where's the money?"

These stories tell about ourselves. We believe that when we kill animals, the animals go into us, into our bladders. So we take their bladders and hang them. We believe that they are visitors, but in their home, they are human beings just like you and I. All the animals, seals, bird, etc. must be fully eaten and not wasted. When they come, they are visitors and when they go home, they transform into their human bodies. They can say to the others, "Don't go into that village. They have wasted some of my meat."

They [the animals] take care of us well. Through their homes, through the ocean, rivers, and lakes, with the help of people, we send back their bladders to their own land. So, their bladders can go back so that next year they can come back to our people. And that's how the Yup'ik are in balance with the spirits of the animals. You can learn about this, and our people can re-learn. Sometimes we become unbalanced. But we can live in peace and harmony. We can sing and dance to bring this back. When we go out, we must share this with your people.

Sing: Ayagayaaqaqua with chorus

She puts on her spirit mask and dance off stage behind screen. All that is seen is a dancing silhouette.

Fade to black out.

Appendix 1

RITUAL PREPARATION

AROUND THE FIRE

Sticks are placed at the center of space. The participants gather around the sticks--“Around the Fire”--kneeling, heads bowed, eyes closed. The drum(s) are placed on top of the sticks. Silence and stillness. Beginning with a low voice the chant begins:

NEW-KNUMB NAH-LLUN-GHIT-DAH MA-KNEE MA-KNEE MA-
KNEE WEE-DALL-BUT (Yup’ik for “The Earth Knows That We Are
Standing Here.”)

The chant builds in volume. When inspired the drum leader(s) pick up the drum and begin to hit the beat. Slowly, and in their own time, participants retrieve two sticks from the center and join the beat. The beat is group unified and grows in volume and pace until it can build no further and the group flies into birds. The drum beats rapidly until all of the participants are up.

TRANSFORM INTO BIRDS AND FLY

Each participant rises up quickly with sound and movement to perform their bird dance in the space. The drum settles into a Yup’ik two-beat. The bird dances are with sound and may be as a song. The dance, developed by the participant, tells the story of their bird. Movements are coordinated with the two-beat.

THE BIRDS RETURN AND LAND IN A CIRCLE

With a signal from the drummer (vocal or drum beat) the bird dancers circle again and land in a circle still with their bird actions. The birds talk and make funny with one another. With a signal from the drummer the birds stand and return to human form.

THE NECK DANCE

With a signal from the drummer the participants move their necks forward, to the right, to the front, and to the left coordinated with the two beat of the drum. This movement is used extensively in Yup'ik and Inupiat dance and recalls the neck movements of seals, birds, and walrus. The circle of neck movements is repeated for however long the drummer chooses--usually three to four circles. The movement is accompanied with the vocalization of the following chant which in coordination with the two beat of the drum:

AYA AYA YII AYA AYA AYA YII AYA

ANIMALS DANCE ACROSS THE CIRCLE

With a signal from the drummer (vocal or beat) the participants begin to join the drum beat with their sticks and the following chant is vocalized by the circle and repeated:

UNGA NA YAY AH
 UNGA NA YAY AH
 UNGA NA YAY AH
 AH YAY YAY AAH

In turn each participant, together with the person directly across the circle from him or her, comes to the center of the circle to perform the dance of their mammal. Whoever is across the circle from them is who they dance with--their dancing partners will change each time the preparation is performed. For instance, a participant dancing as a bear will dance with a seal. Accordingly their animal dances will adjust to take into consideration whom it is they are dancing with. Humor and originality of interaction is

applauded. The dance continues until all of the participants have had their turn. If a participant is shy the drummer may tease them into dancing.

Sticks are used stylistically by those dancing--they are used variously as claws, fins, tusks, and antlers. Participants in the circle maintain the beat with hitting sticks and chant.

PRAISE TO THE DAY

With a signal from the drummer the participants bring their sticks to point to the 1) earth-lower left side of the body, 2) sky-upper right, 3) sky-upper left, 4) earth-lower left, 5) sky-upper left, 6) sky-upper right, 7) earth-lower left, 8) air-upper right. Each movement is coordinated with the two beat of the drum and with the following chant--the "Ho" happening on the 4th and 8th part of the movement.

HE YA HE YA HE YA HO

When the set of eight is completed the participants hold the sticks above their heads and to the sky/day and repeat the chant, with praise, in its entirety as they stomp their right foot (as per Inupiat dance).

The sequence is repeated for as many times as the drummer likes. It may also be sped up which is a tradition in Yup'ik dance.

BOW AND ARROW

The previous exercise ends with the participant's arms in the air. With a signal from the drummer the participants transform their sticks into a bow and arrow pointed into the sky at the left. The stick in the left hand becomes a bow, the stick in the right hand becomes an arrow. With the two beats the participant draws the "arrow" stick across the "bow" stick as they utter:

PIN IQ

Letting the arrow go they, in one motion, point/extend both sticks in the upper left direction, sweeping across to the upper right direction as they utter:

TAUQ

On the right side the participants reverse the orientation of “bow” and “arrow” sticks. The right stick becomes a “bow”, the left an “arrow.” The same sequence is repeated in coordination with the beat and chant. Again, the sequence may be repeated for as long as the drummer deems necessary.

With a signal from the drummer, after the letting go of the arrow on the right side, the participants let the right stick fall to the ground and outside the circle. The left stick is extended into the air and into the circle. The left leg is off the ground.

RAVEN CIRCLE DANCE -- COUNTER CLOCKWISE

The participants transform into ravens and with a hop step move counter clockwise around the circle. The two beat coordinates their hop step and the hitting of their sticks on to the ground. As they hop around the circle they alternate hopping on the right to left foot, also alternating which arms are towards the ground and which are towards the sky. This movement is similar to how an actual raven moves and also echoes an Inupiat and Tlingit dance step. The movements are accompanied with raven sounds:

KAH KAH (when facing and leaning outside of the circle)

CALUP CALUP (when facing and leaning inside the circle)

As with other aspects of the preparation the raven hop continues at the discretion of the drummer. It should be noted that the drummer performs comparable sounds and movements throughout the preparation that tease, provoke, and stimulate the action.

With a signal from the drummer the ravens land in a circle making raven sounds and actions--the raven is a vivid and somewhat mischievous-comical character.

BERRY PICKING

Landing as ravens the participants transform back into humans. Using their sticks alternating as a berry picking scoop and a basket they scoop imagined berries from ground and deposit them into their basket--alternating each time for the first set of two beats. For the last set of two beats they open their mouths and make as if popping berries into their mouth.

Each action is in coordination with the drum's two beat and the following chant--on the "RAA" is when their mouth is open.

ANGA-YANGA-RAA
 YANGA-YANGA-RAA
 ANGA-YANGA-RAA
 YANGA-YANGA-RAA

On the fifth two beat set the participants look at one another in the circle and joyfully proclaim:

YU-RRU-RRU

The berry picking continues and usually speeds up until several participants can no longer keep up with the action. Ending with all participants hitting the floor with their sticks.

FISHING -- SALMON

With a signal from the drummer they go into a sequence of eight (two beat coordinated) movements. The participants are still kneeling and in a circle. They use their sticks throughout the sequence--beginning with the right stick extended. Each movement

represents fishing salmon with a line. 1) right--two beat jerk of the line, 2) left--two beat pulling the line to the left with two beats, 3) right-- two beat hitting the right on the left as if hitting the head of the salmon, 4) left -- two beat shaking off the salmon.

The sequence continues beginning with the left stick and follows the above using opposite sticks. The eight beats of the movements are coordinated with the following chant:

NU GU
YI AH
HE AH
HA HA

The sequence is repeated several times and may increase with speed.

FISHING -- HALIBUT

With a signal from the drummer the participants stand up to fish halibut--a very large, deep water fish. Being a larger fish the movements are slightly adjusted but still follow an eight beat (in two beat sets) movement sequence. Beginning with the right: 1) Right - Pulling the line with large movements with the right stick, using the shoulder, 2) Left -- Pulling the line with large movements with the left stick, using the shoulder, 3) right and left sticks indicate the great length of the halibut and using the shoulders the halibut is hauled over the left shoulder, 4) Right -- twisting to the right side and clubbing the halibut on the head--the right stick hits the left stick for accent.

The same sequence is then repeated beginning with the left stick. The same chant, coordinated with the two beat of the drumming, accompanies this section of the preparation.

CUTTING THE FISH

With a signal from the drummer the participants stand facing into the circle with a stick, placed horizontally, in each hand. Imagining the left stick is a codfish, the right stick a knife, there are five, two-beat sequences. 1) 'knife' chops fish head and pushes off with a forward motion, 2) with two long strokes the "fish" is scaled, 3) with two beats the 'fish' is flipped to its other side, 4) with two long strokes the 'fish is scaled, 5) with two beats the knife is wiped clean on the right pant leg. The sequence begins again with the right stick being the 'fish.'

The following vocalization accompanies each two beat sequence of cutting the left 'fish' is accompanied with: II-RRI.

Cutting the right 'fish' is accompanied with: II-YA

The following vocalization accompanies the 'knife' being wiped: HE YA.

The sequence is repeated several times.

HANGING THE FISH

With a signal from the drummer the participants hold a stick as a 'fish' in each hand and reaching/stretching alternating left and right, hang the fish to be dried. The hanging is accompanied with the two-beat and the following Inupiat words said with two beats: PANIQTUQ (dried fish).

The sequence is repeated several times and is often sped up.

CLIMBING THE CACHE

With a signal from the drummer the participants hold their sticks horizontally as if climbing a ladder to a food cache. With a two-beat the participants also coordinate a climbing a ladder motion with their legs.

A vocalization accompanies the movement over four beats: PALLIQNITTUNA (I won't fall)--Pal/li/qnit/tuna.

The sequence is repeated several times and sped up until the participants are nearly running in place.

TRANSFORM INTO RAVEN AND AROUND THE CIRCLE

With a signal from the drummer the participants “fall off of the cache” and when they do so transform into raven. Moving clockwise around the circle they hop (with feet together) on two-beats, then wag their tail on the next two beats, then hop again, and so on. On the hopping two beat part they vocalize: KAH KAH. On the wagging of the tail they vocalize: CALUP CALUP

They travel a few times around the circle.

GETTING A KAYAK READY and KAYAKING

With a signal from the drummer the participants position their two sticks parallel and at knee level outside of the circle. They are holding either side of a kayak opening. In four, two-beat movements they 1) lift the ‘kayak’ over their head, turning in the opposite direction, 2) position their hands on either side of the kayak, 3) step into the kayak, 4) bring the two stick together (end-to-end) and as the two beat continues they paddle their kayak. Legs are bent and paddle strokes are strong and coordinated with the two beat. Strokes begin on the inside then outside of the circle.

Variously and in their own way the participants vocalize: IA IA IA HE AAY to indicate their joy of kayaking.

The Kayaking continues for a few full travels of the circle.

HUNTING THE SEAL

With a signal from the drummer, the kayakers stop and in dead silence they lift their right stick as a spear and eye an imaginary seal outside of the circle. The stick in their left hand is a float attached to a line that is in turn attached to their spearhead as per traditional Eskimo hunting technology.

The drummer makes sounds of wind and weather across the drum as the hunters remain poised for the right moment to throw their spear.

With a signal from the drummer the following sequence of six (single) beats occur: 1) the spear is thrown and strikes its target, 2) the “float” in the left hand is thrown into the water, 3) the line is wrapped around the shoulder of the hunter (the left stick becoming the line), 4) a sequence of three strong tugs with the left arm/stick to pull the seal on to the ice.

The same sequence is then executed using the left stick as a spear. Again there is dead silence and anticipation before the strike. The sequence is only performed twice.

ROWING HOME

With a signal from the drummer the participants, with stick in each hand, move in the circle backward with a rowing motion. The sticks become oars and the rowing motion emulates the rowing of either a rowboat or umiak--a walrus skin covered boat used by the Inupiat for whale hunting. The movement is coordinated with the two-beat and with the vocalization:

YA-AYA

DANCE OF THE HUNT

With a signal from the drummer the participants stop their rowing and face into the circle. With the lead of the drummer and with mimetic dance movements they tell the story of their hunt. All movements are coordinated with the two beat and are repeated a few times until the drummer leads them to the next movement. The story movement sequence is as follows:

LOOKING

KAYAKING

ICE RIDGE

SEAL

HUNTING

All of these movements are performed with the vocalization: RRI-YA

CELEBRATING

The dance movement sequence continues with:

CELEBRATION

PRAISE TO THE SKY

The movements are sung with the following “thank you” verses:

QUYANA HEY YA

QUYANA HEY YA

QUYANA HEY YA HEY YA HEY YA HEY YAA

MUSHING

With a signal from the drummer the participants bring their sticks together in front of them at waist level as if a handle of a dog sledge. With the drummer’s call they twist their feet (which are together) to the right for GEE and then to the left for HAA. The drummer may call this many times.

With the drummer’s call the participants, as dog team mushers, push off, lifting their right foot behind them while remaining in place and balanced on their left foot. The push off and balancing is to the drummer’s eight count, which they may speed up or slow down or pause as to suspend the musher on balance. After the eight count then they push off with the opposite leg.

With the drummer’s call the mushers jump to their right as if to the side running next to their sledge. They take their right stick and as a whip snap it at their dogs yelling “Hyi.” The left stick is still horizontal as a handle. As they yell “Hyi” they run in place as if

next to their sledge for eight counts. After eight they snap again and run, this time behind the sledge, yelling “Hyi” and running for eight counts. Then to the left of the sledge with the right stick as a handle for eight counts. Then behind the sledge running for eight counts.

After the final eight counts the participants take off running their dogs in the space, both sticks are together and as a handle in front of them. They bark as dogs as they run.

STALKING

With a signal from the drummer the participants go to a crouched position with their sticks in front of them as if moving through bush. They are stalking game.

With another signal from the drummer they hit their sticks in coordination with the two beat drumming. As they stalk they sing the following two lines:

LAGUMA, CAGUMA

ALU-GU, ALU-GU

The drummer signals and the women go into their animal dance as the men continue to stalk. The men and women intermingle freely in the space.

The drummer signals again and the men go into their animal dance as the women stalk.

With another signal all of the participants go their animal dance and return to the circle.

SHARING THE CIRCLE

Once in the circle the participants hold their sticks along with the sticks of the persons standing next to them. In unison vocalize an Athabaskan song chorus:

AK KA HA

AK KA HA

HA HA HA

The circle pulls and leans backwards as the participants hang on to one another's sticks. It is a test of the circle's strength.

The drummer teases the participants as they strain to hold on to their sticks.

The drummer signals and the circle comes together at the center. With the sticks of their partners still held, they interweave in and around one another, inverse the circle until all are with their backs to the center, and then restore the circle with everyone facing in. Always with their sticks firmly holding the circle together.

PULSE AROUND THE CIRCLE

With a signal from the drummer a pulse is sent around the circle. The person identified by the drummer gives whatever movement pulse they choose to the person next to them. The person receiving the movement says TAKU (thank you.) The person receiving the movement replies with HOOVA (you are welcome). And so a movement passes through and around the circle being transformed as it goes. The giving and receiving movement increases in energy and speed.

BLANKET TOSS

With a signal from the drummer--who goes to the center of the circle--the group begins the blanket toss. As if holding onto a large walrus blanket the group in unison moves back and forth on three counts then jumps into the air. Each preparation movement for the toss is accompanied with the following words:

ATAUSIQ (one)

MALQUK (two)

PINASUT (three)

When the group jumps up with the toss they cheer. The drummer in the middle of the circle leads the count and jumps as well and usually acts funny as they do so.

BRINGING EVERYONE TOGETHER

With a signal from the drummer the group comes to center into a close circle and return to the chant that opened the preparation.

NEW-KNUMB NAH-LLUN-GHIT-DAH MA-KNEE MA-KNEE MA-
KNEE WEE-DALL-BUT (Yup'ik for "The Earth Knows That We Are
Standing Here.")

The chant builds quickly and ends with a cheer.

Appendix 2

ELEMENTAL FORMS

Derived from Yup'ik and Inupiat dance performance

Note: All movements are coordinated with either the Inupiat or Yup'ik two beat.

TRAVEL

HAND WALKING: Palms down at waist and stepping forward with hands rigid and alternating in front as if feet. Performer walks forward with a measured pace. Neck movement with beat.

EASY WALK: As in Hand Walking, hands forward at waist, but hands are limp like a duck paddling. Performer walks forward with a measured pace. Neck movement with beat.

POLAR BEAR TRAVEL: Palms down and in front, as with Hand Walking, but raising and lowering hands top above shoulder level as if taking large steps forward. Performer walks likewise with large steps forward as a polar bear across the ice. Large neck movement with beat.

HIGH STEPS: Similar to above but with large, exaggerated steps. Knees high as if traveling through deep snow; arm movements alternate but rather than high and large they reach forward.

BIG WALK: An exaggerated and playful walk. Arms swinging to either side of the body and up and down with a forward motion. Upper body and neck reflect the beat.

Performer moves forward with exaggerated, but not necessarily large steps. Meant to be a character or comic attitude walk.

GENEROUS WALKING: Palms up, as if giving. Movement sweeps with large movement to alternating sides to ‘give.’ The performer moves forward with a measured pace; the head alternates to either side in coordination with the beat.

HAPPY TRAVEL (The Jumbo Walk): Arms at either side, palms down, rising above and below the waist alternating; the hands ‘float’ with happiness. The performer moves in a measured pace forward. Neck moves with the beat.

HAPPY TRAVEL, TOO: Same as above but with palms up.

STORY TRAVEL: One hand extended forward in a specific direction, pointing. Other arm cocked at hip or brought tight to chest. Extended hand reflects the beat. High extension of hand signifies distant travel; chest level extension of hand signifies local travel. Extended hand moving in front and across the performer signifies travel. Arms may alternate to signify two different travelers (human or animals) for dance story telling. Performed in place. Neck movement accents the beat.

STALKING: Leading forward with one side of the body on a diagonal, one arm outstretched and attention/eyes focused on imagined prey. The outstretched hand signifies the location of the prey. Other arm cocked at side or close to chest. Performer moves with a shuffle step. Neck alternates with beat either side-to-side or forward and back.

UNCERTAIN TRAVEL: Palms pushing outward with cautious arms in front and sweeping alternately across the face as if trying to clear away the darkness, fog, brush, or to protect from harm. The performer bends at waist, moving cautiously with a small, forward movement. Neck and shoulder movement with the beat are likewise more cautious.

DIFFICULT TRAVEL: Same as Uncertain Travel but with performer hunched lower down and bent at knees, as moving slowly forward. Neck and shoulder movements are with every other beat rather than with the beat.

TRAVEL TURN AROUND: Can be used in combination with many of the above walks. Arms outstretched in front at waist, palms down, then one hand ‘steps’ over the other as the performer turns around.

TRAVEL & CARRY: Both hands are held close together (but not touching) at the abdomen. Performer moves forward with neck and shoulder accenting the beat.

WALKING IN PLACE: Arms bent at elbow, palms down and hands rigid. Alternate opposite up-down movement and coordinate with up and down leg movement. Performer walks in place. Neck and shoulders with the beat.

WALKING ON ICE: Arms and hands low and close to body, palms down. Legs slightly bent. With the beat the performer moves forward with an uncertain shuffle as if walking on thin ice. Neck and shoulders reflect the beat and uncertainty.

AKIMBO WALKS (four attitude variations):

- 1) Arms akimbo, palms on hips, forward movement with head beat forward-back. Forward movement of performer.
- 2) Arms akimbo, back of hand on hips, forward movement with head beat forward-back.
- 3) Arms akimbo at ribs, thumbs forward, forward movement with head beat forward-back.
- 4) Arms akimbo at ribs, back of hands at ribs, palms outward, with head beat forward-back.

FACING DESTINY: One arm outstretched and diagonal, palm upwards, other arm cocked with hand close to chest; both hands are straight. Alternate outstretched arms/hands and combine with forward motion. Maintain beat in arms or hands. Attitude of facing with courage what is ahead.

OLD PERSON TRAVEL: Hands behind back, back slightly hunched over as if old. Performer take small, fragile steps forward. Neck accents the beat forward-back.

SEAL TRAVEL ON ICE: Hands together, alternating to either side of body at waist as if clawing forward. Variation: both hands in front of body.

BIRD TRAVEL: Arms (chest level) to sides wide, as if wings then into chest as moving forward; chest expands outward as arms are to the sides. Performer moves forward with light steps and beat is accented in shoulders and neck.

ADD: combine or separate from Bird Travel: arms above head, palms outward, back of hands touching, then to sides. Variation of bird flapping wings.

ADD: Increase speed of the above and add head beat to either side; arms and feet go wider and higher.

CARIBOU TRAVEL (three variations):

1) Arms above head and slightly to either side of the body, slight bend at elbow. Hands spread wide and bent downward and rigid perpendicular to arms and as antlers (hands are not limp.) Hands alternated up and down to accent the beat. Performer moves with a shuffle step as if foraging.

2) Fists up, turned inwards towards forehead. Elbows down as if hooves moving forward alternating, walking, stomping, scratching the ground foraging.

3) Arms extended, bent at elbow with hands outstretched (fingers wide as if antlers) with one hand in front of the other. Spread wide hands ‘pulse’ with the beat as performer moves forward.

HIGH FLYING BIRD: Arms outstretched wide to sides, slight beat movement in arms or head; as if a bird riding the high air currents. Generally used for story telling and performed in place.

GOOSE LANDING: Arms wide to sides below the waist. As if wings, slightly bent at the elbows and moving with the beat. Arms push forward as if a bird landing. Performer moves slowly forward or performed in place.

DUCK DIVING and SWIMMING: Head stoops low as if diving underwater then hands clap as hitting the water. The hands then go to behind the back to become the feet of the bird as it paddles forward, with hands alternating behind back. Performer moves with a 'waddle' step. Hands with neck accent the beat.

TRANSFORMATIONS

BIRD TRANSFORMATION: Pointing to a bird in the sky with one finger or full hand, then arms outstretch wide to move as a bird flying.

ZIG ZAG TRANSFORMATION: Transition from animal or bird, with both hands flat and in front of body, elbows slightly cocked, begin upper right (slightly above head) then zig-zag across the body to left (neck level), then right (chest level), then left (stomach level). As if coming from the spirit world and entering the human world again.

ANIMALS

WALRUS: Arms close to body, cocked at elbow, hands at face with fingers pointed straight down as if walrus tusks. Emphasis and beat with the hands. Performed in place.

WALRUS or SEAL LOOKING: Hands at diagonal in front of the body and below the waist as if seal or walrus flippers. Stretching, looking upward and leaning slightly back

with head as if to see better above the surface of the water. Entire torso moves with the beat of the drum. Performed in place.

EAGLE-WOLF DANCE: Arms down in front, body slightly bent at waist. Beat expressed in the shoulders with an up and down movement of arms. The arms alternate, moving up and down towards the ground.

RAVEN DANCE: For two people facing each other. All moves to the beat and with comic enthusiasm.

- 1) Knees bent, arms outward as if wings flapping and dancing for one another,
- 2) Raven hop: performers hop towards one another and pass one another.
- 3) Turning, with arms wide, hop turn on one leg. Raven sound of “Kaw Kaw.”
- 4) Raven hop for one another.
- 5) Hands together at lower back as if tail feathers.
- 6) Raven hop for one another with Raven sounds of “Kaw” or “Calup.”
- 7) Hands behind back as if tail feathers. Neck and upper body undulate with beat.
- 8) Hop and pass one another with the beat undulation.
- 9) Raven hop-dance with "Kaw-Kaw" sound.

HUMAN ACTIVITIES

LOOKING: Straight hand to forehead (left and right alternate), looking into the distance and with beat in the hand and neck. Performed standing in place.

EATING: One hand or both hands are brought to the mouth. The fingers move with beat, as if eating; (mouth movement optional).

TALKING: One hand, with first two fingers together. Bring close to mouth, circle with the two fingers then extend hand outward to another performer, a spirit, element or animal, as if the two fingers are holding and passing the words.

HEARING (two options):

- 1) One hand at one side of the head at the ear. Fingers move with the beat. Head tilts and moves with the beat as if listening.
- 2) Begin with either hand open at ear as if hearing, then extend arm on a diagonal into the opposite direction giving full attention and pointing in that direction as if hearing a bird or something in the distance. Performed in place.

HEARING BOTH SIDES: Arm and hand "carry" words from each side of the head then combine the words in front of the face as if hearing an argument and bringing the two opposite sides together at the middle. Performed in place.

POINTING (three variations): Either arm extended; pointing with:

- 1) One finger,
- 2) Full hand with fingers straight palm down,
- 3) Full hand, fingers straight palm upward.

IN THE DISTANCE (two variations):

- 1) Either arm in front, hand flat, palm down, arm rises and falls as if tracing mountains and landscape in the distance.
- 2) As above, but using both hands/arms, with one on top of the other. Performed in place.

BLINDED: Both hands about 6 inches from eyes and moving with the beat. Palms inward. Performed in place.

DENIAL: Like blinded, but with palms outward as if ignoring, avoiding, refusal, or denial of what is seen. Performed in place.

DISCOVERY: Hands in front of eyes, palms inward and moving with beat, then hands separate to either side simultaneously with fingers going wide with discovery. Performed in place.

BIG SURPRISE: Moving down slowly into a haunch then holding there, then with a signal or impulse, a big surprise up and out. Arms wide and emphatic. Performed in place.

COME HERE: Either arm, slightly cocked, using either finger or full hand to beckon someone or something to come. Beat in hand.

NAGGING: Pointing with one finger and emphasizing beat with foot and finger. Performed in place.

MOURNING: Beginning with a standing position, arms cross the torso, legs bend and sink into a slight haunch. Move with the beat.

THINKING: Using the beat, one arm, with hand into a fist, is brought up underneath, but not touching the chin. Head and neck hold the beat.

A THOUGHT: Neutral face then suddenly showing a discovery of a thought. Performed in place.

FACE POINTING: Using mouth and/or eyes only point in a specific direction. Performed in place. Beat is shown in the mouth or neck.

BOO: Pull face and head back with beat then push face gently out as if making faces to an infant.

PATIENCE: Kneeling as if at a seal hole. Beat in the neck.

WAITING: Sitting on heels, beat in the neck and waiting as if for a seal to surface.

BAD NEWS: Head averts to one side simultaneous with extended arms clapping in the direction of aversion.

STOPPING: Hand stiff, arm fully extended in front of body to stop self or something/someone. Beat in the hands.

SHAKING HANDS: Extended hand, using beat, to indicate shaking hands at waist level. Performed in place.

DESCENDING or ASCENDING:

Ascending: Both arms above head, shoulder width apart, hands are shaped to identify a hole opening. Arms move back and forth slightly all the way down the body as if ascending up into a hole.

Descending: Opposite movement of the above, beginning at the knees and working way up the body.

PADDLE: Arms cocked in front of body, hands shaped as if holding a paddle, movement to either side of the body. Paddle with the beat. Emphasis and beat in the hands and the shoulders. Performed in place or moving with knees slightly bent.

KAYAKING: Hands in front of body, arms slightly cocked, then with beat and as if kayaking. Movement to each side of the body. Move forward with knees slightly bent.

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

GATHERING: Arms wide to either side (one side at a time) bringing in and forward to stomach as if gathering. Performed in motion or in place.

SHARING: Combine with Gathering or by itself. Two hands in a circular movement in front of stomach then opening of hands (palms upward) and extending arms forward to give. Performed in place. Beat in the neck and hands.

PULLING IN: To either side of the body. Arms extended with hands gripping as if rope or net line in hand. Pulling (starting from away then to the body) in with the beat. Emphasis of beat in shoulders.

NATURE and EARTH

NORTHERN LIGHTS: Looking upwards, either arm extended upwards and pointing with one finger to tracing the dancing of the northern lights. Performed in place with beat in the finger and neck.

WIND AND CLOUDS: Both arms/hands upwards and swaying with the beat as if moving with the wind; emphasis on floating of hands. Performed in place with beat in the hands.

PRAISE: Both arms upwards and moving slightly upward with beat in praise of the universal being; emphasis on hands.

NOTES

Chapter One

1 The Wolf Dance has last been performed by the King Island dancers of Nome in 1984. The regalia of that performance held true the tradition of their elders by using masks made of the skinned animal in addition to arm length seal skin gloves with puffin beaks serving as rattles. The performance itself was in strict following of the Wolf Dance's long tradition. The knowledge of the Wolf Dance lives only in a few elders and it is doubtful if the Wolf Dance will ever be performed again. King Island is an island of rock outcroppings, which Inupiat Eskimos inhabited until the late 1950's when they were forced to leave by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Since that time King Islanders have lived as small communities in Nome and Anchorage. However, with the passage of time even the tight knit King Islanders are losing their performance heritage in their new surroundings.

Chapter Two

1 The word "Kivgiq" means "Messenger's Feast" in Inupiaq. In this essay I use the word Kivgiq to identify specifically the recent Barrow presentation. Messenger's Feast is used to refer to the tradition and mythology of the Feast and all of its derivations. Kivgiq is a Messenger's Feast and is of that tradition. A note on the use of Inupiat: Inupiaq is singular and refers to the language of the Inupiat people. Inupiat is plural and refers to the people and culture. Inupiak, used seldom, refers to two Inupiat people.

2 Competition events are integral to the Inupiat cultural tradition. In addition to foot races and some ball games, the Inupiat and Yup'ik Eskimo of Alaska developed several games that would develop and keep hunting skills sharp during the long, cold winters when they could not hunt. Most of these games evolved from subsistence activities. Several evolved from the animals. For example the head pull would have two hunters face off, like locking tusks, with a hide strap around their heads and try to pull each other out of a circle. Other games, like the ear pull, were for endurance and pain and would see how far a contestant could carry a weight suspended from an ear. High kicks with a stuffed sealskin ball were evolved from the signals used to identify a successful hunt from a distance. Many traditional competitive games used by the Inupiat are still practiced today. Each summer Fairbanks hosts the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, which gathers athletes from throughout the arctic region for five days of competitive, social, and cultural events.

3 The 1982 presentation of the "Wolf Dance", a derivation of the Messenger's Feast that still lives with the King Island, included the use of the wolf holes and a near verbatim performance of the Eagle and Wolf dances as noted in this chapter.

Chapter Three

1 A note on the use of Yup'ik, Inupiat, and Eskimo. When Yup'ik is used it is referring to what is linguistically defined as Central Yup'ik rather than Siberian Yup'ik that is spoken only on St. Lawrence Island and the eastern coast of Siberia. I have chosen not to use Yupitt, which is the correct plural form of Yup'ik, opting instead for the more widely used and accepted plural form: Yup'ik. On Inupiat: Inupiaq is singular and refers to the language of the Inupiat people. Inupiat is plural and refers to the people and culture. Inupiak, used seldom, refers to two Inupiat people. On the use of Eskimo: the Yup'ik an Inupiat people of Alaska also refer to themselves as Eskimo. The use of the word Eskimo is accepted without political or cultural antagonism. The indigenous

coastal people of northern Canada and of Greenland, however, have taken exception with being called Eskimo and prefer being called Inuit. For these people to be called an "Eskimo" is an insult--not so for Alaska's Yup'ik and Inupiat people. For general knowledge: Yup'ik, Inupiat, and Inuit, all mean "The real people" in their respective languages.

2 Because this essay deals with events that exist both as past and current events there is sometimes a disagreement of tense. There is an inherent difficulty in portraying a non-linear, traditional worldview context with a language that is linear and time ordered. Within the traditional worldview of the Yup'ik and Inupiat people past and present, traditional and contemporary are often porous boundaries.

3 The fruits of the explorations were incorporated into the continually developing Ritual Preparation. The development of the Preparation occurred concurrently with a variety of performance and training explorations. The Preparation itself took the entire fall semester 1989 to develop into satisfactory form and was over thirty minutes in length. The Ritual Preparation, however, is never finished. In the years since its initial development, the Ritual Preparation has been adjusted and shaped to reflect each subsequent Tuma group, their backgrounds, experiences, and creativity.

4 Out of the necessity of space this essay focuses on an overview of Tuma Theatre explorations that occurred during the period of 1989 to 1997. References to Tuma Theatre productions from 1991 to 1995 are presented in passing to illuminate how the explorations related to public performance. A separate essay, detailing the process and methods specific to Tuma Theatre performance development, needs to be written.

5 For further information regarding this performance event the reader may refer Chapter Two in this volume.

6 Unfortunately Tuma Theatre, being limited by the schedules of its undergraduate student participants and University setting context, could not fully embrace or explore the Shamanic performance model. Although the Ritual Preparation explored elements of Shamanic performance paradigm, a fuller examination of Shamanic methods and techniques needs someday to occur.

7 In 1993 Theresa John became an assistant professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and co-director, along with the author, of Tuma Theatre. Theresa John has since accepted a position at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage.

8 Traditional Yup'ik spirit masks are world renowned for their variety, artistry and detail and provided much inspiration for Tuma Theater work. Tuma used masks extensively in its developmental work and in public performance. This essay can only suggest the extensive use of masks.

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INDEX

A

- Abrams, David 66, 100
Agayu x, 95
Agayuliyararput See mask
Ahamaogak, George 22
Aiken, Martha 24
Alaska Native Studies .. viii, ix, x, 59, 60, 64,
70, 243
Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act... 205
Aleut..... viii, 5, 68, 135, 141, 204
Alexander, Evelyn..... iv, xiv, 203, 205, 210
Aluska, Nellie 57, 58
Amasungag 37
Anaktuvak Pass..... 39, 45
angatkok 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 101, 102, 105
Apple, David..... 122
Arnasungag 32, 36
Athabaskan... viii, ix, xiii, 68, 69, 72, 86, 89,
93, 98, 103, 104, 137, 139, 140, 141, 147,
153, 161, 169, 171, 203, 205, 209, 210,
211, 227, 267
Athabaskans See Athabaskans.
Ayagarak, Linda..... 60

B

- Barrow Dance Group 24
Bladder Festival 8, 19, 98
Brown, Melanie..... iv, xi, xii, xiii, 104, 117,
134, 191
Brown, Wilma..... iv, x, xi, xiv, 88, 103, 117,
134, 191
Bureau of Indian Affairs .. 68, 133, 178, 252,
279

C

- Chekhov vi
Cleveland Playhouse..... vi
College of Wooster iv, vi
Crosby, Steveiv, viii, xii, 59
Curtis, Edward 64

E

- Eagle Mother. iii, vii, xiii, xv, 17, 32, 33, 34,
37, 44, 51, 53, 96, 115, 117, 125, 126,
127, 129, 130, 131, 186
Eagle-Wolf Dance..... 44
Edmonds, H.M.W. 19

- Ekowana, Roxy 42
Elemental Forms iii, 82, 84
Eliade, Mircea 78
Ellam yua 242, 247, 248
Ellanna, Frank 52
Emily Ivanov Brown..... See Ticasuk. See
Ticasuk
Emmo 73, 75, 76
Epchook, David 57, 58
Evans, Ann Megan..... 88, 134
Eyak 207

F

- Fairbanks... v, vii, xiv, 23, 57, 59, 60, 61, 99,
111, 117, 134, 188, 204, 205, 210, 242,
244, 245, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 287

G

- Gaffney, Michael iv, ix
Gaffney, Mike 64, 66
Giddings, J.L..... 27, 30
Grant, Ruth..... iv, xiv, 204, 205, 209, 210
Great Death 189
Great Eagle Mother..... 23, 32, 33, 34, 51, 53

H

- Haida 68, 206
Hall, Hugh..... iv, 108, 109, 134, 190
Hooper, Erma 104
Hopson, Flossie..... 31

I

- Ibsen..... vi
In the Beginning..... 59, 60
Inua .. x, 4, 97, 103, 105, 108, 143, 150, 155,
242, 283
Inupiat iii, vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xiii, xv, 5, 6, 22,
23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35, 38,
43, 44, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56,
59, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72,
73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87,
89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 103,
105, 106, 108, 109, 111, 115, 116, 118,
132, 134, 137, 141, 144, 145, 148, 156,
157, 166, 169, 185, 186, 188, 208, 257,
258, 259, 262, 264, 269, 279, 280, 285,
286
Inviting-In Feast..... 9, 96, 98, 284

J

- Jimmy, Ringo xi, 103
 John, Theresaiv, viii, x, xiv, 57, 82, 103,
 105, 110, 117, 205, 210, 233, 242, 243,
 245, 281
 Johnston, Thomas 80, 83
 Jumbo, Paul iv, ix, xi, xiii, xiv, 94, 103, 104,
 134, 188, 190, 191

K

- Kakinya, Elijah 52
 kashim 5, 6, 12, 15, 108, 109, 136
 Kauwerak 35, 40, 42, 47, 49, 286
 King Island..... vii, 18, 43, 52, 279, 280, 283
 Kivgiq 22, 23, 26, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39,
 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 54, 55, 56, 96,
 279
 Kotzebue 30, 32, 42, 51, 52, 53, 127
 Koyukon See Athabaskans. See Athabaskans

L

- Lantis, Margaret 37

M

- Maginnis, Tara ... iv, 108, 117, 134, 210, 245
 Mahabharata..... 114
 Mann, Cory xii
 Martha Aiken 26, 47, 48
 mask . 9, 13, 18, 19, 59, 71, 88, 92, 101, 109,
 135, 141, 144, 145, 146, 154, 159, 169,
 170, 171, 186, 192, 197, 202, 243, 246,
 247, 248, 255
 McIntyre, Drena & Chuna 57
 Mendelowitz, Kade iv, 108, 117, 210, 245
 Messenger's Feast 43, 45, 46, 47, 51.
 Mountain, Paul..... iv, 89, 103, 104, 117, 135
 Murdoch, John 53

N

- Naam/ gen Eehu x, xiii 205
 Nageak, James. 23, 25, 27, 31, 39, 47, 55, 64
 Nageak, Vincent..... 27
 Napoleon, Harold..... 189
 Nelson, Edward..... 64
 Nilsson, Reidar..... 67
 North Slope Borough . 21, 22, 23, 29, 36, 37,
 38, 42, 45, 48, 54, 56, 284, 285, 286, 287

O

- Okakok, Rex .. 22, 23, 28, 29, 32, 35, 37, 38,
 39, 44, 45, 46, 284, 286
 Oquilluk, William 35

P

- Pegliruk 27, 37
 Point Hope 6, 9, 10, 36, 45, 46, 48, 92
 Potlatch 98
 power animal..... 94, 100
 puppets 3, 10, 11, 64, 109, 125, 142, 170,
 171

Q

- qalegi..... See kashim
 qasgi See kashim
Qayaq .iii, x, xiii, 90, 93, 103, 107, 108, 109,
 111, 112, 132, 133, 150, 151, 152, 153,
 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161,
 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169,
 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 176, 177, 178,
 179, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 282
 Qopaqagiq..... 10
 qusiaq See kashim

R

- Raven ... xii, 59, 93, 107, 133, 137, 138, 139,
 141, 143, 144, 145, 147, 148, 151, 152,
 156, 162, 163, 165, 166, 170, 172, 179,
 187, 189, 191, 197, 202, 205, 206, 207,
 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 274, 275,
 286
 rhythm reality..... 86, 99
 Ritual Preparation . iii, 73, 74, 75, 76, 81, 85,
 86, 90, 92, 93, 94, 105, 280, 281
 Rivard, Anthony..... 90, 135, 191
 Rural Student Services..... x, 70

S

- Saka, Marie 95
 Salisbury Theater 107
 shaman.. vi, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 25, 35, 40,
 51, 94, 101, 102, 105, 108, 136, 189, 243,
 248, 254
 Silamuit Theatre..... x
 Sitting Festival See Qopaqagiq
 Sophocles 7

St. Lawrence Island..... 65, 68, 69, 279, 280,
287
Stauffer, Esther 103
Stauffer, Geoffery 104, 117
Stick Dance 89
story dancing..... 78, 82
Story Knife..... 58

T

Tanana people 207
The Bow and Arrow Challenge 43
The Child From the Sea 90, 103, 108, 188
The Eagle's Gift... x, xii, 96, 103, 104, 108,
115, 116, 286
The Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast..... 47
The Smithsonian Institute 244
The University of Alaska, Fairbanks iv, vi, x

Thespis 114
Tlingit..... viii, xii, 68, 205, 207, 259, 284
Toksook Bay 66, 82, 94, 244
Toolik 35, 40, 48, 49, 50, 51
Tuma . iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii,
xiv, xv, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 66, 70,
71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 80, 82, 84, 85, 89, 90,
93, 94, 95, 96, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105,
107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 115,
116, 132, 133, 134, 188, 189, 190, 205,
210, 243, 245, 281

U

Uetmun..... See

Uiniq 43
umilek 10
University of Alaska .iv, vi, vii, ix, x, 23, 57,
59, 70, 107, 111, 117, 134, 204, 205, 210,
242, 243, 245, 281, 282, 283, 284, 287
Utetmun.....iii, xiii, 95, 103, 104, 107, 108,
188, 193

W

Wallen, Lynn Ager 82
Weiser, Joshua4, 58, 71,72, 93,107,121,
149
Wingeruk 9

Y

Yearly Festival of the Dead 11, 12
Yukon River..... 14, 106
Yup'ik iii, vi, viii, ix, x, xi, xiii, xiv, 5, 18,
57, 58, 59, 61, 65, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74,
75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89,
90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103,
104, 106, 109, 110, 111, 193, 196, 197,
198, 201, 202, 205, 208, 242, 243, 244,
247, 248, 249, 250, 254, 256, 257, 258,
268, 269, 287
Yup'ik Doll Festival 14

Z

Zagoskin..... 11