

YURARYARARPUP KANGIIT-LLU:  
OUR WAYS OF DANCE AND THEIR MEANINGS

A  
THESIS

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By

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## ABSTRACT

The first purpose of this study is to describe the categories of dance. The second purpose is to describe how *Yup'ik* music and dance has played a functional role in organizing and maintaining various societal infrastructures (kinship, social, political, subsistence/economic, and spiritual) within the *Yup'ik* culture (Fienup-Riordan, 1996; John, 1996; Kingston, 1999; Mather, 1985; Wallen, 1990; Wolf, 1999). This study seeks to further understand this role and how it has evolved over time.

The study utilizes an ethnographic methodology that includes historical and contemporary perspectives to describe *Yup'ik* music and dance categories and to explain how dance serves to organize various aspects of *Yup'ik* culture and societal infrastructure. Data includes interviews from *Yup'ik* elders and adults, fieldnotes, research journal entries, digital recordings, photographs, and observations of *Yup'ik* immersion school performers and rural community cultural events such as the *Cama-i* Festival.

The study suggests that *Yup'ik* dance and categories are important elements of the multiple cyclic rituals. It adds to the present literature revealing that there are twenty different dance types and categories, and many of the rituals are lost except for the *ciuqitet* (common dances), *nangerceciyaraq* (the first dance), and *iluriurucaraq* (teasing dance) dances.

The study also suggests that dancing is an essential part of the *Yup'ik* social infrastructure and that dancing is integral to the social system. This is demonstrated through six themes: Kinship, Physical/Mental Health, Form of Prayer, Spiritual Enlightenment, Leadership, and Teasing.

I also argue that there is connectedness in dance, music, and stories that are part of our *yuuyaraq* (epistemic worldview). *Yuuyaraq* is defined as a way of being a human (Napoleon, 1991) or an absolute unified social web. This web is represented in our social infrastructures of kinship, health/physical and mental, form of prayer/rituals, spiritual enlightenment, leadership, and teasing. There is a relationship in storytelling genres in dance and oral stories that represent people's historical and contemporary accounts, describing their social, cultural, and subsistence lifestyle. Interview participant data suggest these connections still exist in our society today.

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## Chapter 1

### *Ikirun: Introduction*

I have seen hunters when they danced;

the old hunters, the young men, and the boys.

I have heard the songs of the hunters and the beat of the great drums,  
when they danced for the people.

I have seen the ladies when they danced;

the old ladies, the young women, and the girls.

Grave and stately, quick and graceful, their fans like sea grass,  
like wings, like snow, when they danced for the people.

We are the *Yupit*, the *Inuit* of the great river deltas and the sea.

We are the dancing people.

We are the singing people.

We remember the old stories and the great festivals. (KYUK, 1984)



Figure 1. Celebration of Dance by Toksook Bay (John, 2008)

## Introduction

*Wiinga atqa yugtun Arevgauguq. Kangrilnguunkuk Anguyaluk-llu angayuqaqagka. Angayiinkuk Piiyuuk-llu maurluqagka. Qungurkankuk Usugan-llu apa'urluqagka. Nunakauyarmiungunga, Qaluyaaneq kingunengqertua.*

*Ukanirpak Yupiit pakengnaqluteng yurarturluteng-llu yuungnaqpiallruut.* In the continuum of time, the *Yupiit* people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta lived a genuine way of living, practicing cyclic ritual dances and prosperity. We identify ourselves as the *Yupiit*, the “real” or “genuine” people. Our language is called *Yugtun*. *Yupiit* is a plural form of a *yuk* (a person). The post base *-pik* means to be “real” or “genuine.” Historically, the Southwestern Indigenous Alaskans primarily survived by hunting and gathering natural resources. The presence of the traditional leadership helped to keep the social infrastructure self-sufficient with strong governance. People embraced cultural knowledge and compassion in everyday living. While processing food for our families, we essentially think of the elderly, the disabled, the widowers, and the orphanage members who are unable to provide for themselves. The annual cyclic cultural rituals provided us with critical pathways to celebration, honor, dignity, and to administer the welfare for all people.

I grew up in a small peaceful *Yugtun* speaking village of *Negtemiut* (Nightmute) located on *Qaluyaat* (Nelson Island) that is connected to the Bering Sea through the windy Tuqsuk River. The base term word for *Negtemiut* is *negte-* (to push down). It is called *Negtemiut* because the north wind pushes down to the village from hilltop. The village population was 300 in the 1950's, when the Bering Sea provided a variety of

mammals, seal oil, different types of fish, waterfowl, clams, mussels, edible bottom creatures, herring eggs on seaweed, and beluga. The mainland provided us with mink, beaver, muskrat, geese, berries, greens, and edible mouse food. The children learned to *yaaruiq* (storyknife) with handmade ivory, wooden, or metal knives. At an early age, we became young orators like the elders and our parents. Most girls had their own sets of handmade family dolls made out of fur and cloth, which we called *inuguat*. These essential activities helped us with artistic imagery and innovative skills. Family stories and relationships were central themes of the children's playground.

The boys built their own wooden bows and arrows with the help of their grandfathers or fathers. They also made wooden boats, sleds, miniature hunting equipment, slingshots, and various hunting games. Boys sometimes played with girls during *inuguaq* sessions, playing family male roles. Through these specialized games the children began to understand and learn the aspects of family interrelations by imitating real life situations with their toys. In *inuguaq*, for example, the children play the roles of grandparents, parents, relatives, and siblings, and use their voice tones accordingly while imitating characters. These traditional games involved personal developmental growth processes that include critical thinking skills, oratory skills, and multiliteracies. The hands-on games described village life, social events, and, most importantly, developed a sense of cultural identity, ownership, and community responsibility. Through these enactments, we began to understand the roles of village social infrastructure.

*Yuraryarat* (ways of *Yup'ik* dancing) are socially constructed and re-constructed activities that embrace essential core cultural values and principles that are tightly intact

within the *Yup'ik* social infrastructure. These multiple ceremonies have significant forms and functions specific to each cyclic activity that include *Yuraqerraaq*, *Kevgiq*, *Agayuliyararput*, *Nakaciuryaraq*, and *Elriq*. *Qavaruarcuutet* (the ways to pretend to sleep ritual) represented ancient family owned motion dances performed in *Kevgiryaraq* (Messenger Festival).

In my great-grandparents' era, ultimately everyone in the community got involved in some aspects of survival and dancing. The distinguished elders, shamans, hunters, grandparents, parents, and children were part of an electrifying repertoire of composers, choreographers, singers, drummers, and performers. The multi-talented characteristics and intellectual skills of dance members provided them with tools to make extravagant artistic items such as masks, fancy parkas, drum designs, finger masks, and professional music. Like our ancestors, people viewed each day as an opportunity to compose music to honor the loved ones, both living and the dead. We consistently observed everyone's daily personal events looking for opportunities to compose additions to our historic musical curriculum on ontology, cosmology, axiology, and epistemology. As multi-talented people, *Yup'it* embraced innovation, creativity, and compassion to honor and celebrate life. The spirit of life evolved around ever-changing construction and reconstruction of culture through a spectacular ensemble of connections between people, land and spiritual worlds.

I began dancing at the age of three. My grandparents taught me how to dance as a child, from the time that I can remember becoming aware of what was going on in my life. Specifically, my paternal grandmother Al'aq was my inspirational mentor and

trainer. She would sing songs for me everyday and instructed me in the gestures. Al'aq took my arms and repeatedly rehearsed the dances with me until I learned different parts of the music. I became part of the dance group when I was initiated with my first dance ceremony. By observing community performances and by participating, I learned most of the village dances. Today, I still remember the dances that were taught to me as a little girl and those that have been recently composed. The number exceeds over one hundred songs and dances. As a professional dancer and an instructor, I continue to pass on these traditional dances that I have learned from the elders to the students.

As a professional dancer, a community member, a fluent *Yugtun* speaker, and an academic immersed in balanced scholarship between the traditional knowledge system and Western academy, I am uniquely qualified and have the authority to be a *Yup'ik* dance scholar, professional dancer, a community dance member, a fluent *Yugtun* speaker, and for being a community member. My Indigenous knowledge stems from my grandparents, shamans, and local experts who are the village leaders in the social, cultural, spiritual, and political arena. I have a solid understanding of our local history, rituals, social changes, and epistemology. I approach my research as a ceremony where our genuine way of life is respectfully described from the emic point of view. The powerful wise words of our elders seek to explain our genuine way of life. They tell of *Yup'ik* epistemology, ontology, and a critical Indigenous praxis system that has been revered and practiced for centuries. Thus, this study is based on history, epistemology, language, and methodology framed by a worldview unique to the *Yup'ik* people and their culture.

### Need for the Study

The literature and video productions on *Yuraryarat* have been documented by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars including Lynn Ager Wallen (1990) *The face of dance: Yup'ik Eskimo masks from Alaska*, Ann Fienup-Riordan (1996) *The living tradition of Yup'ik masks: Agayuliyararput our way of making prayer* and (1994) *Boundaries and passages*, Deanna Kingston (1990) *Returning: Twentieth century performances of the King Island Wolf Dance*, Marie Meade (1996) *Agayuliyararput: Our way of making prayer*, and Felix Stüssi (1997) *Iqugmiut-Russian Mission: Musical change and cultural survival in the Yup'ik Eskimo community on the Lower Yukon River in western Alaska*. Video documentations include Elders and Kamerling (1988) *Uksuum Cauyai: Drums of winter* and KYUK Productions (1984) *Just dancing* and (2005) *Cama-i dance festival*. The cited literature and video productions will be reviewed and analyzed in my ethnographic qualitative study on dance.

Historical dance accounts have also been written by, Dorothy Jean Ray, H.M.W. Edmonds (1889), E.W. Hawkes (1913), John Kilbuck (1885-1923), Margaret Lantis (1939-1940), E.W. Nelson (1877-1881), and elder John Kassaiyuli's oral story in *Yup'ik Lore*. Kassaiyuli is well known as an expert of the ancient rituals in the region.

The reviewed literatures are lacking essential contexts of dance and music structures, so this study is needed to provide accurate local-based knowledge. These previous studies and documentations have been conducted mostly by outside cultural perspectives, and even the insiders may have difficulties with regional language nuances or may be distanced from the culture because of their absence from the community. My

study specifically fills the need for research in this area as an Indigenous insider and bridges the gap of this pre-existing literature because it is conducted by and from the insider perspective in collaboration with elders and other community members.

### Research Purpose/Questions

The purpose of this research is twofold. The first purpose of this study is to describe the categories of dance from the insider perspective. A review of the literature reveals certain discrepancies about the various types and specific categories of *Yup'ik* dance. Therefore, this study further explores these variances. The second purpose is to describe how *Yup'ik* music and dance has played a functional role in organizing and maintaining various societal infrastructures (kinship, social, political, subsistence/economic, and spiritual) within the *Yup'ik* culture (Fienup-Riordan, 1996; Kingston, 1999; Mather, 1985; Wallen, 1990; Wolf, 1999). This study seeks to further understand this role and how it has evolved over time. Therefore, the study addresses the following research questions:

Research Question One: What are the categories and types of *Yup'ik* dance and their meanings?

Research Question Two: How does *yuraryaraq* (*Yup'ik* way of dancing) relate to the social structures of the *Yup'ik* society? How do the lyrics and choreography of *Yup'ik* dance create meaning and help to define and understand *Yup'ik* society?

The examination of these questions involves conversations and interviews with *Yup'ik* elders, community members, and dancers; review of archival dance performance video,

historical narratives and film; and recording and analysis of contemporary regional and local dance activities and events.

### Definition of Terms

“*Agayuliyararput*” - The Masking Festival is a form of prayer ceremony in which the shamans petition for the subsistence survival needs of the communities. The masks represent the ocean and land food resources that are presented to the spirit world accompanied with drum and music. Shamans compose the music. There are men and women shamans that have supernatural abilities to request seasonal foods and good hunting weather.

“*Ellarpak*” - In *Yup'ik* epistemology the concept of the big world constitutes the interconnected human and non-human spirit worlds, the cosmology, and the creator. The *Yup'it* believe that everything (earth, land, air, water, people, trees, and bones) has a *yua* (spirit) that is to be regarded with respect and dignity.

“*Elriq*” - The feast for the dead is a ceremony in which the families honor the spirit of the deceased. The friends of the deceased are dressed with new fur clothing. A big community feast is associated with this event at which tons of food and gift distributions are presented to the *qasgiq*. The planning process takes up to two decades because of the intensive collaborative communicative action involved in this special ceremony.

“*Kevgiq*” - The Messenger Festival is an invitational ceremony that involves community participation and cooperation to exchange dances, music, and gifts. The villagers invite their neighboring villagers or their opposing counterpart if held in the village. The host and guest dancers compose new songs to request for specific essential community

survival needs like sugar, tea, coffee, hunting tools, *qayaq*, mukluks, and clothing materials. The first dance is part of this ritual when children are initiated to the dance group.

“*Nakaciuryaraq*” - The Bladder Festival is a ceremony to honor and release the spirits of the mammals back to their world. In *Yugtun* epistemology, it is believed that when mammals give themselves to the hunters, their souls enter their bladder to reside there for several months until the spring season. The bladders are hung inside the *qasgiq* and are treated with respect.

“*Qavaruarcuutet*” - Ancient family motion dances are motion dances that are performed during the Messenger Festival. The dances contain family stories that have been passed on for many generations. The stories are about warriors, hunting mammals, gathering for mouse food, or about ghosts.

“*Yugtun*” - The spoken *Yup'ik* language.

“*Yuraryaraq*” - A way to dance that tells stories about the social activities of the people. It is accompanied by drum and music. There are many categories and types of dances that are practiced from fall to spring season. Different dances include the fast standing dances, slow mourning dances, common dances, family sleeping dances, invitational community dances, and healing for the ill dances.

“*Yuraqerraaq*” - The first dance ceremony is to honor the children for their first successful hunting and gathering activity. The ritual involves a yearlong preparation to make regalia and to gather gifts to be distributed. The grandparents ask for permission to present the child from the dance leaders to be held during the Messenger Festival. The

child is presented by his or her grandparents to identify his or her *Yup'ik* namesake and to explain his or her first kill or berry pick. The ceremony is an initiation ritual when the child becomes an official member of the dance group.

### Significance of the Study

The insider perspective that has not been fully given in the present literature includes Indigenous rituals, epistemology, ontology, and the interconnectedness of our worldview. The context includes a *Yugtun* description and structure of music composition method, dance analysis table, cultural thematic graph, category of twenty cyclic rituals, and the music and stories that are associated with them. Also, the situated identities of the participants are defined and how these events are organized and managed by community members. This dissertation includes some information from elders that has never been shared before. Some information was obtained from elders who are now deceased, and this knowledge is now preserved in this document.

The following chapter traces *Yup'ik* epistemology by utilizing Indigenous theoretical frameworks and methodologies to capture the socio-cultural concept of our worldview: *Ellarpak*. *Ellarpak* is discussed as the overarching Indigenous framework to describe the holistic interconnectedness of the *Ellam Yua* (the creator); the human/non-human; and the Universe. Further, I investigate and explain the *Yup'ik* epistemological theories and models that are associated with the development of the mind. In this process, I describe the human psychological development processes and the necessary steps that are associated with the human aspects of learning and behavior as conceptualized by the *Yup'ik* culture.

Chapter 3 contains an overview of the literature and other resources on the Alaskan *Yup'it* (plural of *Yup'ik*), *Inupiat* (plural of *Inupiaq*), and Athabascan cultural dance performances. The literature is examined and analyzed in a narrative dialogical style, where the elders' construction of knowledge merges with the academic scholarship in a conversation presenting the different perspectives. Chapter 4 describes the methodology utilized in this study. Chapter 5 describes the types and categories of *Yup'ik* dance. Chapter 6 provides a description and overview of social categories and presents a framework for discussing and analyzing the relationships between what the participants said about the categories, the related *qulirat* and *qanemcit*, and the related dance types. This illustrates how the social infrastructure's themes, stories, and dances are critically connected in our *yuuyaraq*. Chapter 7 presents conclusions and implications for further research.

## Chapter 2

### *Nutemllarput (Our Very Own): A Yup'ik Epistemology*

*Maaten ellangua yurarlua. My first childhood memory was as a dancer to my paternal grandmother's sled dog song entitled Ayagayaqaqua. I could see my grandfathers energetically drumming and singing in front as the villagers bounced to the beat. Even at the age of three, I don't remember being afraid; it just seemed like a natural thing for me to be doing. The dance was about getting driftwood in a winter blizzard that caused the dogsled to sway back and forth on the ice. By this time, I had already learned the complex structures of music text, dance and movement. I remember the dangling beads of the reindeer headdress hitting against my forehead, I was wearing beautiful carved ivory finger mask fans, and I recall the warmth of my fancy fur regalia.*

#### Introduction

In *Yup'ik* epistemology, the child's earliest memory and awareness critically fits into the "theory" of *Ellarpak* (the big world) because the first photo clip of a person's consciousness is never forgotten. It is said that the individual's self-awareness and the development of his or her mind are sensed in various stages. Even in my adult life, I still find myself enjoying dancing and not being afraid to dance in front of many people. Dancing is part of my soul and my connection to my roots as sharp as my first memory. To date, I can still vividly remember the voices of my grandparents singing in unison and drumming with laughter. I continue to document the traditional ritual dances because

dancing bonds traditional communities, enhances cultural identity, strengthens kinship lineages, and promotes the welfare of the people.

I also remember listening to my grandmother's oral narratives about people who become aware and conscious for the first time in their life. My own story of dancing about dog mushing on the land and being with people and the spiritual world of our ancestors describes the beginning of my higher psychological development process as a child performer. From my understanding of my grandmother's words, I am an integral part of the interconnected complex web of the creator, the universe, and the human and non-human world called the *Ellarpak*. Dance as a way of connecting the past to the present and future embodies the essence of my Indigenous construction of knowledge and the identity of who I am and who my people are through ritual and ceremony. The emphasis of this article is on the idea of *ellangeq* (becoming aware), using my own first memory and its importance as an individual example.

The early non-Indigenous documentation of *Yup'ik* culture, history, cosmology, ontology, and epistemology is based primarily on the researchers' own cultural viewpoint. These interpretations represent field observations, journals, notes, and analysis of Indigenous social norms, leadership, belief systems, ceremonies, and worldview. The early literature on Southwestern Alaskan *Yup'ik* Eskimos includes but is not limited to the works of Boas (1888), Hawkes (1913), and Nelson (1899).

Later Indigenous and non-Indigenous ethnographers, social scientists, and anthropologists, including Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005), Fienup-Riordan (1983, 1994, 1996, 2005), Kawagley (1998), Lantis (1947), Mather (1985), Morrow (1984), Napoleon

(1991), Orr and Orr (1995, 1997), Oswalt (1979) cited these early studies and re-interpreted their scholarly work on *Yup'ik* society. In contrast to the works of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars who wrote about our culture before me, this chapter is an articulation of the wisdom that I learned from distinguished elders, leaders, scientists, philosophers, hunters, and the shaman in the village. The ancient *Yup'ik* traditional knowledge system was shared orally through *qanruyutet* (advice), *qulirat* (personal accounts and stories) and *qanemcit* (oral narratives). My research is a reflection and an expression of who we are as *Yupiit*, how we learn, and how we understand our Indigenous worldview.

In this chapter, I will trace *Yup'ik* epistemology by utilizing Indigenous theoretical frameworks and methodologies to capture the socio-cultural concept of our worldview, *Ellarpak*. *Ellarpak* will be discussed as the overarching Indigenous framework that describes the holistic interconnectedness of the *Ellam Yua* (the creator), the human/non-human, and the Universe. The root *ella-* has many interrelated meanings, and this concept, with various shades of meaning, forms the basis of much of *Yup'ik* epistemology. *Ella* includes the universe, consciousness/awareness, weather, world, and the outside. Within this theoretical framework there is an absolute sense of interconnectedness and co-existence of the three elements that are spiritually unified. I will investigate and explain the *Yup'ik* epistemological theories and models that are associated with the development of the mind as explained by local educators. The primary concern of the chapter is to describe the human psychological development

processes and the necessary steps that are associated with the human aspects of learning and behavior from a *Yup'ik* point of view.

*Upyutlemni (Getting Ready for It)*

When exploring the whole concept of Indigenous epistemologies, I began to read Indigenous authors to see how they approached developing their understandings of their own epistemological frameworks. The works of Foley (2003), Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001), and Kawagley (1998) gave me concrete, critical tools to help me as a *Yup'ik* person to think and trace my own epistemological roots.

Reading about Foley's triangular model that includes the human world, the land, and the sacred world reminds me of Kawagley's tetrahedral metaphor of the native worldview. Foley's triangular diagram is an interpretation of varying positions of the Indigenous Australian standpoint, the philosophy of the Physical, the Human, and the Sacred World, together with the Indigenist "strategy" approach, in which we can begin to understand the complexities and possibly the subject's underlying positioning (Foley, 2003, p.49; see figure 3). His triangular diagram of the three interacting worlds is shown with straight lines that represent their interrelationships. In the center, the Japanangka Paradigm, shown as a box, has lines with arrows going out separately in different directions. In my opinion, the diagram does not truly represent the conceptual theory of the interrelatedness of the Indigenous standpoint, as he uses one-way arrows going out, separating the elements, which does not show the two-way interaction as discussed in Japanangka's own research.

Kawagley's (1998) tetrahedral metaphor of the Indigenous worldview represents a circle of the universe or a circle of life. The circle represents togetherness that has no beginning and no end, including the human, natural, and spiritual worlds. There are two-way arrows between them as well as between the worldview at the apex that depict communications between all these functions to maintain balance (1998, p.5; see figure 4). Kawagley's diagram shows two-way interaction among the three elements both horizontally and vertically, where all elements connect with the concept of worldview. In my opinion, Kawagley's model does represent the conceptual framework he discusses fairly well, with arrows connecting everything, including the self and communal mindfulness. I believe that Kawagley's model is similar to my idea of depicting the worldview in a way that uses a circular base and connects all elements equally.

Foley's and Kawagley's diagrams are similar in their conceptual framework of the land/natural, the human, and the sacred/spiritual. Their difference is revealed through how they use arrows in a one- or two-way form to show the interaction and interrelationship among the three elements. Foley's triangular epistemological theoretical framework of the physical, the human, and the sacred world and Kawagley's tetrahedral metaphor of the Indigenous worldview led me to create an alternative organic circular epistemological theoretical diagram, which I feel represents more accurately what I perceive as the transparent multi-layered and multi-dimensional paradigm I call the *Ellarpak* (see figure 2).

My *Ellarpak* organic circular diagram (2009) is different from the diagrams of Foley and Kawagley in that it is multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and shows overlapping

of the creator, the universe, and the human and non-human. The key conceptual theoretical framework of my diagram is the essence of the unified sense of core elements' interconnectedness, interrelationship, and transparency, allowing multi-dimensional dynamic shifting of the layered elements.

I will utilize the ancient *Yup'ik* circular-and-dot motif called *ellam iinga* (the eye of the universe and awareness), the cultural meaning of which parallels the concept of *Ellarpak*, along with the shaman's drum design. *Yup'ik* cosmology can be schematically depicted as successive circles, each one simultaneously closed and enclosed. This cosmological circle is a recurrent theme in both social and ceremonial activities and paraphernalia. The circle-and-dot motif so common in *Yup'ik* iconography is designated *ellam iinga*. The use of this decorative motif is associated with both spiritual vision and the creation of a pathway between the human and spirit worlds. The central dot, accompanied by four outlying dots, has been identified as a means of both depicting and affecting the five-step movement between the world of the living and the dead (Fienup-Riordan, 1996, p. 265).

The shamans' drum design depicts the three interrelated realms. The upper world represents the cosmology, birds, and the homeland of the supernatural spirits called *ircinrrat* (the little people). The middle world is the balanced world where humans and non-humans, including the *ircinrrat*, reside. The lower world is the homeland of sea mammals, fish, and *ircinrrat*. The drum is respected and used in healing and ceremonial practices. Elders say the drum is a place where the ancestors reside who reunite with us during community ceremonies (John, 2008).

My *Ellarpak* graphic presents an organic design that includes a *Yup'ik* motif and a shaman's drum (see Figure 2).

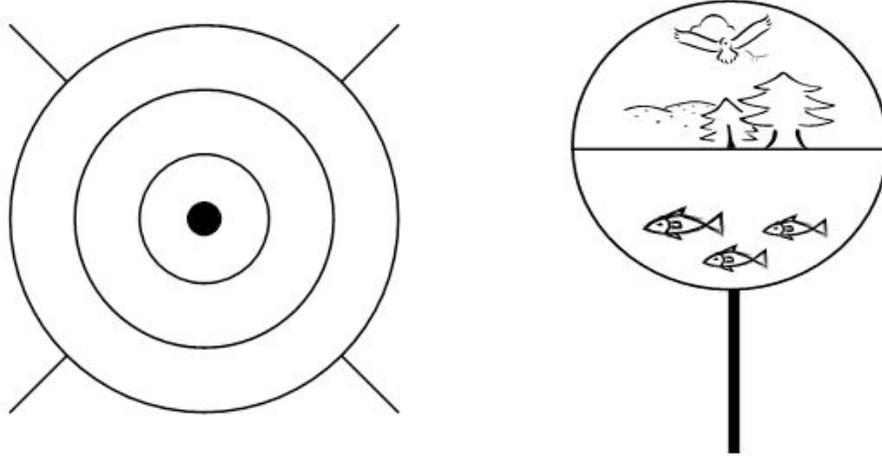


Figure 2. *Ellarpak*

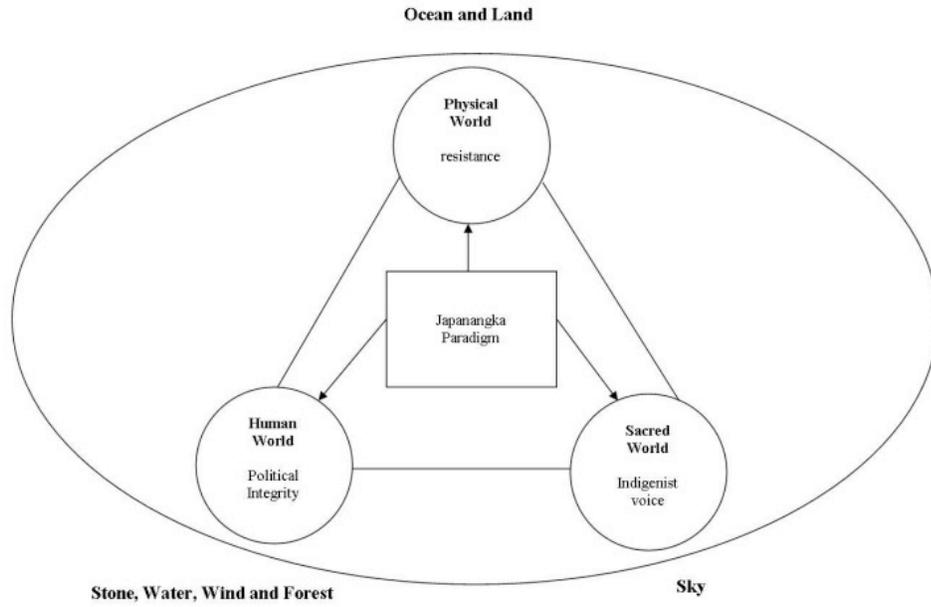


Figure 3. Foley's Triangular Model

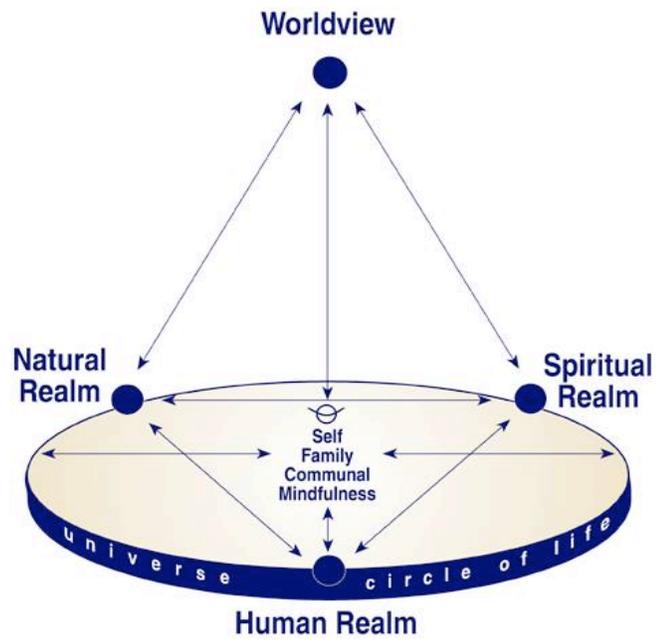


Figure 4. Kawagley's Tetrahedral Model

*Ellarpak* is a culturally constructed and re-constructed comprehensive Indigenous socio-cultural theory and framework that captures the overlapping organic circular diagram that represents the transparency and the fluidity of the three elements to form a unified and balanced spiritual existence.

#### Methodology of the Construction of the *Yup'ik* Traditional Knowledge System

Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo's work (2001) provided ideas to explain the interconnected holistic methodology of Indigenous epistemology. These Indigenous scholars state that epistemology is concerned with who can be a knower, what can be known, what constitutes knowledge, sources of evidence for constructing knowledge, what constitutes truth, how truth is to be verified, how evidence becomes truth, how valid inferences are to be drawn, the role of belief in evidence, and related issues (p. 57). These specific categories provide me with a framework to think about *Yup'ik* epistemology. Education in *Yugtun* epistemology requires multiple conceptual frameworks and methodologies identified as the *qanruyutet* (advice) and *qulirat* and *qanemcit* (oral narratives). *Qanruyutet*, *qulirat*, and *qanemcit* provide the conceptual frameworks used in teaching *Yugtun* epistemology. *Yugtun* can refer more narrowly to the *Yup'ik* language or more broadly as in the manner of human beings/*Yupiit*.

The methodology of the construction of the *Yup'ik* traditional knowledge system involves collaborative activity and joint constructive activity, which reflects socially mediated cooperative participation and learning. In Indigenous communities, a child is raised by the whole community, including parents, grandparents, and extended relatives. *Yup'ik* knowledge instruction involves small group one-on-one scaffolding models that

allow the elders to guide, observe and mediate the learning processes of their students. This procedure of instruction involves intensive gradual and supportive scaffolding that parallels the master/apprentice way of teaching and learning, referred to as *elitnaurista-llu atunem maligtaqulluteng* (Parker Webster and John, 2009).

Another methodology used in the construction of the traditional *Yup'ik* knowledge system is the group interaction, which directly mirrors Vygotsky's theory of human development and learning called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky defined the zone of proximal development as the distance between a child's "actual development level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Wertsch, 1985, pp. 67-68). In villages, the elders tell age-appropriate stories with lessons, morals, and metaphors through the art forms of the *qanruyutet*, *qulirat*, and *qanemcit*, which are mediated with the assistance of adults who guide and work collaboratively to ensure that children understand and grasp essential elements of the educational context and processes. The collaborative efforts of the adult educators ensure that all children understand the story's context through observation and questioning processes before stories are elevated to the next learning plane.

#### Co-Existence with the *Ellam Yua* (the Creator)

The *Yup'ik* Indigenous epistemological worldview starts with *Ellam Yua* (the creator), who is believed to have created all living inhabitants of the earth equally.

*Piliaqesteput* is a *Yup'ik* term that acknowledges and credits our existence to the creator.

Elders state *piliaqestemta anernerkitellruakut* (our creator provided us our own *yua* (soul or a spiritual being)). The idea is that all human and non-human creations have spirits. Individual spiritual beings are created with their own sense of awareness and consciousness. *Ellam Yua* is revered and is believed to co-exist in all human and non-human creations. The theory of the creator co-existing within all creations constitutes absolute connectedness and creates a sense of a holistic web of constructed and reconstructed “truth” in reality. The Indigenous *Yup’ik* concept of the creator is recognized as a non-gendered being, as opposed to the Euro-American Christian belief that God is a male.

As stated above, the holistic concept of the *Yup’ik*/Indigenous world is called *Ellarpak*, the integrated web of the *Ellam Yua*, the human and non-human, and the universe, all of which contain spirits, awareness, and consciousness. Human and non-human inhabitants are regarded as having their own awareness and consciousness in their shared worlds. Non-human inhabitants include the sun, moon, stars, clouds, cosmos, land, trees, rivers, lakes, driftwood, oceans, water, plants, trees, mountains, birds, animals, and the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm of *Ellarpak* is believed to be the homeland of the non-human supernatural beings we call *ircinrrat* (the little people). It is also the home of other types of spirit beings. *Yup’ik* understand and respect how the human and non-human share space and land in harmony.

Within *Yup’ik* epistemology and philosophical beliefs, the three co-existing *Ellarpak* elements are believed to have multiple transparent layers and dimensions that allow them to maneuver freely, without periphery or boundary. The knowledge of their

co-existence helps people (and other creations) in two ways: first, their awareness allows them to enhance supernatural skills, and second, use of those skills helps them relate to each other and develop community. For an example, the shared family narratives reveal supernatural encounters between human and non-human, events that validate the “truth” about the co-existence and social interactions of the past and present. The famous *angalkuut* (shaman’s) narratives of my paternal great-grandfather revealed how people traveled into the future to seek knowledge about their own future. My great-grandfather willed himself to die, but he did not like what he saw, so he decided to extend his life to ensure that his family bloodline would survive for centuries. My maternal great-grandfather, *Angalgaq*, displayed the highest psychological developmental processes when he empowered masks for the *Agayuliyararput* (our way of making prayer). Cultural rituals like the masking ceremony require the highest human psychological processes in order for people to be able to exercise healing performances and negotiate with outer-dimensional spiritual beings away from the balanced earth. My great-grandparent shamans learned the highest psychological ways of interacting with non-human spirits and learned to find the best ways to co-exist with them and *Ellam Yua* in harmony.

*Ella Mamkitellrani* (When the Earth was Thin)

The earliest memory of time in *Yugtun* is referred to as *ella mamkitellrani*. The word *mamkitellrani* (when it was thin) refers to a period of time when human and non-human inhabitants were able to communicate and interact with one another. The created human and non-human inhabitants were believed to have co-existence with *Ellam Yua*. *Ella mamkitellrani* refers to the time when all the world’s inhabitants had the ability to

perform higher psychological processes that enabled them to interact, transform, and reciprocate to one another their thoughts, food, language, music, dance, and gifts. Among many other examples, humans were able to transform into animals or trees and vice versa. There are specific stories in which belugas became wolves and mice transformed into black fish. It is believed that songs were the only communication tools of the human and non-human inhabitants prior to the development of their socio-linguistic skills.

The human and non-human transformations during *ella mamkitellrani* are revealed in traditional stories of *qulirat* (ancient narratives) and *qanemcit* (personal accounts). Historically, *qulirat* and *qanemcit* are primarily believed to be non-fictional accounts of our ancestors with lessons and morals that help listeners reflect on *Yup'ik* epistemology. The *qanemcit* are the stories about personal accounts of what people have experienced and witnessed. The stories include narrations of social activities about hunting and gathering, dancing, becoming aware, and engaging in cultural practices. They are inclusive of the people, the land, and the spirit world. The *qulirat* are stories about our ancestors' activities, the spirit world, and events that have been passed down for many generations. According to the elder orators, the *qanemcit* become *qulirat* with time as they are believed to be non-fictional stories of the time called *ella mamkitellrani*.

The narratives (*qanemcit* and *qulirat*) frequently display electrifying scenes of non-humans transforming into humans right in front of humans. In many accounts of these events, after cultural encounters and dialogue occurred, non-humans told their human counterparts: *Ayakuma kingyarvikekia yug'uyuksuararpenga* (In case you think that I am human, after I leave, turn your head around to see what I really am). On Nelson

Island, reindeer show up as humans in oral traditions. Many narratives of animal transformations are described through ancient *qulirat* story genres.

*Yup'ik* epistemology states that when *kass'at* (White people) migrated into the region, the *ella* became thicker. The concept of the *ella* becoming thicker meant that supernatural human and non-human events and activities would diminish. Thus, the promotion and advocacy of Euro-American culture has negatively impacted the *Yup'ik* traditional sacred world. Many of the human and non-human sacred communication tools were lost, as well as the songs that were practiced as viable communicative tools.

The *Ellarpak* provides a living space for the *Ellam Yua*, the human/non-human, and the universe, all on an equal basis. Their shared goal to have a balanced ecosystem is critically connected to the notions of the continuity of the life of each element or being. Both human and non-human alike rely on each other for common survival. The survival interdependency factor is the reason it is vital to keep the social, physical, and spiritual web intact and *Ellarpak* balanced. It is critical to keep the unity strong because when it is loosened or broken, the survival of the created inhabitants is in jeopardy.

#### *Angalkuut* (Shamans)

The critical goal and effort of survival was in the hands of the *angalkuut* (the shamans). The *angalkuut* were highly respected community members who had ultimate psychological powers to protect the people. It is believed that women shamans had higher powers than men. The Indigenous philosophy is that the creator selected a limited number of shamans to serve as spiritual leaders, healers, and transmediators. Shamans possessed the highest level of awareness and consciousness since their responsibilities encompassed

complex supernatural tasks. It is important to note that the few select *angalkuut* did not always accept their pre-assigned social positions, roles, and responsibilities. The village shamans, being humble citizens, sometimes disguised themselves and opted not to conduct public services. Those who humbly accepted their supernatural gifts and roles adhered to the laws of supernatural activities. It is said that all shamans were formally trained to perform healthy social, psychological, and spiritual practices. There were village members who had some degree of supernatural powers to cure illnesses or to interact with animal or natural spirits but who were not identified as practicing shamans. The shamanistic laws were broken when individuals stepped outside of their boundaries into the harmful periphery of becoming bad shamans. Bad shamans began to exhibit evil supernatural behaviors when they acquired higher psychological powers to harm and kill others. The supernatural law's emphasis was to avoid the evil side of nature.

Shamans represented their communities by traveling to non-human dimensions to negotiate with inhabitants of sacred worlds for food staples, proper weather, and the resolution of conflicts. They created and nurtured the *tuunrat* (their spirit helper/s), such as the wolf, eagle, or loon by maintaining stable relationships with them. For *angalkuut*, the primary goal was to heal the psychological, social, and physical illnesses of the human and non-human. Their objective was to be concerned about the welfare of their people.

In an effort to maintain a balanced ecosystem, the *angalkuut* acquired critical psychological and cognitive skills to enact diverse forms of prayer. One critical ritual that shamans organized and sponsored was the *Agayuliyararput* (our way of making prayer).

The primary purpose of prayer was to ask for natural resources from the sacred world of the fish and game. The base term *agayu-* means “to pray.” The critical function of the ritual was to communicate with the animal worlds to request seasonal natural resources and proper wind and weather conditions. Masks, drums, and music were tools used to intercept and communicate with the sacred world during these rituals.

#### Shaman Masks in *Agayuliyararput* Ritual

*Nepcetat* (powerful ceremonial masks) were empowered by shamans. Shamans wearing masks of bearded seal, moose, wolf, eagle, beaver, fish, and the north wind were accompanied with drums and music. The process of negotiation started with distant travel to various world dimensions of the animals to conduct critical discourses. The purpose of the discourse was to interact with the spirits to ensure specific survival needs of the community. When the discourse was successfully executed and two parties had reached an agreement, the shaman returned to the village. On arrival, everyone was congregated at the *qasgiq* (men’s communal house) to discuss the final negotiated agreement between the sacred world and the shamans. Planning for the *Agayuliyararput* ritual was carried out by shamans, elders and *nukalpiat* (young hunters) and involved the collaborative effort of everyone. Local artists were consigned to make specified masks. Composers and choreographers worked together to produce specific music and dance to present to the humans and non-humans that attended. Shamans continued to organize and manage the planning procedure until the opening event of the *Agayuliyararput*.

The *Yup’ik* philosophy is that non-human inhabitants (including the spirits of ancestors) are part of humanity, and they participate spiritually in the community rituals

although their presence is not visible. The masks are empowered by the shamans during the ritual ceremony with the help of music and dance. The energetic artistic display of *Agayuliyararput* mask dancing was performed to show the participants' appreciation and respect for the non-human inhabitants. After the ceremony, the masks were then burned as a symbolic gesture of presenting them to the sacred world. Burning also disempowered the masks so that they were no longer dangerous to have around. Masks were also buried, rather than burned, in some cases.

Traditionally, it was a common practice for the shamans to take short trips to the moon to seek personal reflective time and to work with the spirits. The Yukon River moon dance, entitled "*Unugaanga, taamlegitaanga,*" is a revealing song about an actual account of an event that took place on the moon. The shaman composer sat on the moon while he enjoyed the beautiful view of the earth. The lyric describes how the descendants witnessed him swinging up on the moon. Elder William Tyson, originally from St. Mary's, taught this song to the *Kicaput* Dance Group in Anchorage. The dance music demonstrates a shaman sharing his personal account of traveling to the moon with the spiritual inclusion of the audience. Today, the song reminds us how *Yup'ik* ancestors traveled in other dimensions and returned with beautiful music and dance as a way to connect the people, land, and sacred world.

The shamans also traveled into the future to check out what it would bring. My paternal great-grandfather was able to do this. First his body was washed and his arms tied with rope. Then, wearing his fur parka, he had his body put inside a frame. He sat down and died peacefully. A short while later, he came back to life and began telling

my family a story about what he had learned about the future death of the family. His time travel revealed that if he had died then, his only son would soon follow his death because of depression. Apparently, his renewed knowledge about the future influenced him to extend his life and also spared the life of his son. His powerful mind enabled him to restructure and reconfigure present life choices which apparently prolonged our family's life on earth. Ultimately, his intelligence and higher psychological abilities are why I am here today to share this phenomenal personal story. Such profound stories as those of my two great-grandfathers exemplify how Indigenous constructions of knowledge serve to strengthen higher psychological powers.

The relationship between humans and non-humans and their physical environment is vital for the purposes of their welfare and survival. The *Yup'ik* theories about the human and non-human development of the mind procedures, processes, and acquisition of awareness, consciousness, and senses are complex by nature. I will attempt to describe *Yup'ik* psychological development theories in detail and explain the interrelated and interconnected vocabulary, concepts, theories, and methods.

#### *Yup'ik* Human Development Processes of the Mind

A unique aspect of the *Yup'ik* view of human development processes of the mind begins at the fetal stage. The *Yup'ik* culture believes in immortality and reincarnation of the soul. That means our ancestors' spirits never die; they are nurtured and maintained within the living population. It is believed that when people die, their souls move on to the newborn. The purpose of the Naming Ceremony is to honor the spirits both inside the womb and the newborn during the Naming Ceremony.

*Yup'ik* Indigenous parental methods for raising a proper child with a sound mind are believed to begin at the fetal stage. The *Yup'ik* concept of a proper child essentially applies to the mental, social, and physical welfare of the child in the community. Parents are instructed to treat all children with the utmost level of respect, called *qigcikluku*. The fundamental *Yup'ik* parental theory is to view the child as a gift from *Ellam Yua*. The gift is considered a jewel because of the notion that parents earn the right to have their children. Children are regarded as symbols of wealth in hunting and gathering societies. Living in a harsh subsistence environment with a constant demand for hard labor, having more children is a top priority. The children, regarded as gifts, are to be nurtured, respected, and raised with proper preparation for prosperity. Importantly, respect for the child is also for the person whose name-soul is in the child. Ceremonial cyclic rituals such as the Naming Ceremony, first dance, and initiation rituals serve to honor ancestral spirits.

The traditional theory of reincarnation prompts the responsible family members to prepare the mind of the fetus prior to birth. The preparation process involves talking or singing to the fetuses in the morning to greet them or interact with them because we believe that they have ability to listen and hear us. The words contain vital cultural values and principles that are the integral tools and methods to guide a person toward the proper way of life. Family songs with rhythmic sounds energize and enlighten the fetus. There are personal accounts and narratives our relatives share about being aware inside the womb as examples that spirits never die. When a woman is pregnant, she is encouraged to educate her child at the earliest stages of his or her psychological development by

visiting elders to ask for advice. The concept of reincarnation in *Yup'ik* is not the same theory as, for example, in India because the latter suggests some things that are not the same as *Yup'ik* beliefs described above.

### Awareness or Consciousness

*Elpengqellriit* in *Yup'ik* epistemology are humans and non-humans that have shared senses. These include the acquired senses of the mind and feelings, as well as sight, sound, and smell. The shared senses demonstrate that there is indeed an understanding and a relationship between realms of existence and that all beings have the capacity to interact, associate, and resolve conflicts.

Kangrilnguq Paul John, my father, discusses the senses of the fish bone as follows:

Our ancestors took great care of everything around them as they lived their lives because they fully understood that everything had awareness. They knew that even fish bones were conscious and perceptive. There is a story showing the awareness of fish. As a couple approached a fishnet in the water, they told their [human] guest that they came to that net every year since they cherished its owners, their [human] hosts, for their courtesy and care. They told him that the hosts took care of their bones and always made sure they were not stepped on by people and had good place to stay. They told [their guest] to watch them both and said, “Look at us for a moment for you might think we are humans.” The husband was in a kayak paddling with his wife sitting behind him. As soon as his kayak bumped the net two fish got caught and began to splash. (2003, p. 44)

*Ellaka* in a psychological sense means “my” awareness or consciousness.

*Ellangua* is when “I” successfully become aware. In contrast, an unsuccessful effort is called *ellangenritua*. The gradual process of “my” becoming aware or conscious is called *ellangengiinartua*. For example, a person who has a mental or social issue and wishes to make positive social changes can testify by stating *ellangcaartua* (I am trying to become aware) to his family. The action is a self-internalization process and a reflection, a gradual step-by-step progression toward the acquisition of becoming aware and conscious. *Ellangumauq* means that a person has indeed acquired some level of psychological development or awareness of self and the effects of one’s actions and thoughts. Elders, parents, or community members can identify a person who has reached this level by character observation.

*Ellavut* means “our” (the people’s and the land’s) sense of awareness or consciousness. The inclusive term describes the interconnection between the human world and the sacred world where characteristic descriptors are interchangeable.

Like a nuclear family, the humans and non-humans in a shared world naturally encounter power struggles, situated identity issues, expectations of reciprocity, needs for compromise and compassion, and knowledge between themselves. There is a notion of interdependency among those involved to maintain a balanced ecosystem without unresolved issues and with harmony.

*Ellangcaarluten* has two meanings in the process of the child’s psychological development: 1) to ask one to make an effort to acquire awareness and consciousness, and 2) an instruction for a person to become psychologically aware or conscious in life.

The *qanruyutet*, *qulirat*, and *qanemcit* are psychological conceptual analytical procedures and tools for making someone aware or conscious. For example, a mentally ill person may be asked to spend time in the wilderness to quietly think and seek appropriate behavioral changes that will restore a healthy mental state. The wilderness is a place to re-establish relationship to and balance with the wider shared world.

*Ellangcarluten* is a command for another to become aware or conscious. This term is used when one needs to be instructed to make characteristic or psychological progress. *Ellangyarturtua* is one's gradual acquisition of awareness or consciousness. In this process, the mind slowly opens up to make positive changes. The gradual effort to acquire awareness or consciousness is called *ellangengnaqua*. *Ellangcarturtua* means one persists in using analytical thought processes to become a better person. My father, Kangrilnguq Paul John (personal communication, 2008), explained the *Yup'ik* philosophical theory of the mind, "*Yuum umyugaa allamek ayuqaituq, kiingan tauna yugni ayuqenrilutekarput*" (A human's mind is unique, and that is our only difference). He emphasized that our mind is our inner voice representing consciousness and awareness.

### Senses

A child's earliest signs of physical and psychological development in the *Yup'ik* construction of knowledge are called *elpengyaraq* (the process of developing the ability to acquire human senses). The base term *elpenge-* relates to the acquisition of senses or feelings that are directly associated with the development of the mind. *Elpenguq* is when a child acquires human senses. *Elpengengnaqi* is an encouragement to gradually seek

acquisition of the senses, feelings, and the mind. *Elpengua* means “I have acquired my senses.” *Elpengcarluku* is when a person alerts or warns another person about an event or an action. *Elpekaqa* is the internalization or the realization of one’s senses. Elders emphasize knowledge about the essence of human and spiritual senses and the process of internalization and self-awareness, especially in events where physical and psychological developments are relevant, such as in education about parenthood.

Elders say that when children learn to roll over on their own is a critical time to educate them about awareness and consciousness. It is time for the child to learn the Indigenous knowledge system, absorb the profound words of wisdom, develop observational skills, gain hands-on activity experiences, taste food, and learn about discipline management. The child’s early learning environment has to be quiet, gentle, pro-active, and filled with traditional music and dance. The welfare of the child’s psychological development requires careful planning, along with intense education, organization, and stability.

### Raising a Proper Child

The critical traditional knowledge instruction about a child’s proper way of living is called *ellangpervkenak* (do not be undisciplined and unaware). A proper child is a well- disciplined individual who listens and follows the laws of human nature that include social, physical, and psychological processes that are passed down through the oral traditional knowledge system. The base term is *ellangperte-* which means to be in a state of chaos, without discipline, and confused. The goal of traditional education is to provide a child with proper manners, discipline, and cognition.

In contrast, when parents or educators model loud, disorganized, and dysfunctional life, children will imitate what they experienced into adulthood. In *Yup'ik*, we call this *ellangperrluni* (the one who lives dysfunctionally, without order and discipline). The mind remembers the precise characteristic methods and applications of its earliest psychological development; therefore, early education is critical. The traditional knowledge system emphasizes a quiet, concise, orderly environment in which a child can become well behaved and intellectual.

The essence of developing children's awareness is that the older the children get, the more difficult it is to change their inner disciplinary system. I remember my grandmother constantly reminding us to be kind to our siblings and friends every day. We were taught to reflect each night when we went to bed to think of how we behaved that day. We were also instructed that if we had made a mistake that day, such as being mean to kids, we should think about not repeating those actions the following day. When we woke up in the morning, we were instructed to think about behaving well all day. This is the practice that I remember as most useful for me as a child who grew up with eight other siblings and played with many other children. We learned to contemplate our own inner voices and to analyze our behaviors into adulthood.

#### Examples of *Qanruyutet* (Advice)

Encouragement was emphasized for all children in our village. We also were given many daily chores that we had to finish before we could go outside to play. My grandmother watched when I had to wash dishes or scrub the wooden floor. She would not let me quit, even though I was lazy, saying that I had to learn to be a good hard

worker in life. She emphasized that if I left the chores undone, I would learn to wait and things would pile up on me. We were encouraged to be prompt when we were asked to do chores. The boys hauled ice water, and the girls took care of food brought into the house by the hunters. I had to dump the honeybucket, wash dishes, take care of babies, and help my mother inside the house. I also had to learn to cook at an early age. I remember standing on a chair making sourdough pancakes early in the morning for the spring seal hunters. The children were taught to get up early to begin chores at home. We did not complain because we were taught to help with household chores every day. I remember one day specifically when I tried to do homework. My grandmother told me that paper would not feed us. I had to help out with the food staples first before playing or doing school assignments. This was the proper education we gained at the youngest stages of our lives. When parents or caretakers wait to discipline or teach children these proper behaviors at a later stage, they will have a more difficult time because the mind system has already been set and openness is tougher to regain in later stages.

Distinguished elders and parents taught us about the essence of Indigenous cultural identity awareness specifically when outsiders began to arrive in the region. As a naïve village girl, I wanted to look, behave and speak like the teacher because she looked very different. She had white skin, spoke a language we could not understand, dressed in bright-colored clothing, and wore high heels and heavy make-up. The teacher put make-up on us, and I felt so proud to look like my non-Indigenous teacher. During a family meal, my father took one look at me and immediately asked me to go wash my face. As a young girl, naturally, my feelings were hurt as I went to wash up. When I returned to the

table, my father said, “The creator provided us with our genuine ways of being, living, looking, and behaving. You must always remember who you are as a *Yup’ik* person and never be ashamed of how you look, how you speak, and what you eat.” This was the critical moment when I realized how important it was to be aware, to honor, and to respect our Indigenous identity. It is critical to maintain and sustain our genuine Indigenous sense of awareness and consciousness, as my father stated.

This is one Indigenous family illustration of how our parents taught us with strict *qanruyutet*. My father was not concerned about how his words of wisdom could hurt my feelings. His key goal was to *qanruyun* the point that I will always be *Arevgaq*, who was raised a fluent speaker of the *Yup’ik* language, and with multiple *qanruyutet* to use as my cane in my everyday life’s journey.

Another critical lesson I learned while living in the two segregated worlds of the traditional village culture and the school culture was that I needed to be able to adapt and adjust my socio-linguistic skills at an early age. My parents, who never experienced Western education, did not have a clue as to what we were being taught in school. So it was basically up to me to learn to live in two different worlds, one at home and one at school. Each featured different languages, activities, and values. Ultimately, I learned about cultural clashes that I could not share with my parents because they have never experienced such incidents before. I quickly learned that I could act like my teacher—speak like her and behave like her—only in the school environment and not at home. When I left the school, I switched hats to always remember to be a genuine *Yup’ik* person with a strong cultural foundation, identity, and values and principles to live by. The

tension between an epistemology that's all about interdependency of different “worlds” and the social experience of negotiating two different cultures that are difficult to integrate are human issues that require intellectual checks and balances.

The multiple complex *Yup'ik* conceptual/theoretical frameworks and methodologies in *Yugtun* are called *qanruyutet*, *qulirat*, and *qanemcit*. The *qanruyutet* are traditional educational frameworks that include but are not limited to the *qaneryarat*, *ayuqucirtuutet*, *inerquutet*, *alerquutet*, *elucirtuutet*, *piciryarat*, and *yagyarat*. The *Yup'ik* tools of *qanruyutet* (advice), *qulirat'* and *qanemcit* (oral stories) are categorized below to explain how these are part of the traditional knowledge construction system.

Table 1. *Qanruyutet*, *Qulirat* and *Qanemcit*

<b><i>Qanruyutet</i></b>	<b><i>Qaneryarat</i> <i>Ayuqucirtuutet</i> <i>Alerquutet</i> <i>Inerquutet</i> <i>Elucirtuutet</i> <i>Piciryarat</i> <i>Yagyarat</i></b>	Words of wisdom that inscribe proper ways of living
<b><i>Qaneryarat</i></b>	<b>The ways with words</b>	Instructional terminologies used in giving advice
<b><i>Ayuqucirtuutet</i></b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	Instructions on ways of living
<b><i>Alerquutet</i></b>	<b>Words of wisdom or “how to”</b>	Instructions and advice about proper ways of living
<b><i>Inerquutet</i></b>	<b>Warnings or the “do nots”</b>	Warnings about improper ways of living
<b><i>Elucirtuutet</i></b>	<b>Directions or instructions</b>	
<b><i>Piciryarat</i></b>	<b>Ways of performing critical social practices: <i>Ukvertaryarat</i>: ways of believing <i>Niisngayarat</i>: ways of following directions and words of advice <i>Pingnatugyarat</i>: ways of surviving by constant hard work</b>	

Table 1 continued...

<i>Yagyarat</i>	<b>Traditional abstinence practices: Examples concerning childbirth and illness and some other conditions: Avoid mixing of human scents between female and male, specifically during puberty: A girl's menstrual cycle cannot mix with hunting equipment, land and spirits Death: families cannot use sharp objects (<i>uluq</i>, axe, needles) while spirit journeys home for a few days</b>	
<i>Qulirat</i>	<b>Oral traditional stories of ancestors' accounts: Animal and human transformational accounts</b>	Instruction on the Traditional Knowledge System
<i>Qanemcit</i>	<b>Personal accounts of events and activities</b>	Instruction on the Traditional Knowledge System

*Qanruyutet, Qulirat, and Qanemcit: Yup'ik Pedagogical Tools Used in the Construction of Traditional Knowledge*

*Qaneryarat* (the ways with words) are the instructional terms employed in giving advice to people. The base word is *qaner-* which means “to utter” or “to speak.” The word is related to the mouth or the *qaneq*. The literal translation of *qaneryarat* is “ways of mouthing” that pertains to the critical words of wisdom in the instructions on how to live properly.

*Ayuqucirtuutet* is a complex concept that can be translated to mean the wisdom in the traditional construction of the *Yup'ik* knowledge system. The core definition is related to the concept of educational methodology. The base term is *ayuqucirtur-* which means “to show a person how to understand values, chores, and to conduct proper ways of

living.” The term *ayučucirtuutet* applies to multiple social situations in life. For example, the educator training a woman to be a good caretaker will *ayučucirtuq* that person about proper parental skills, starting at a very young age. Or when an individual misbehaves, the knowledgeable person will *ayučucirtuq* that person on how to live properly. In relation to artistic skills, master artists will *ayučucirtuq* apprentices how to make a quality *qayaq* or fancy parka.

*Inerquutet* are aspects of the traditional knowledge system that contain words of wisdom about proper ways of living. To *inerquq* a person is to give him or her advice about an action that needs to be changed. The core focus is on people who need guidance and direction in life. For example, when a youth or an adult breaks the *qanruyutet* or traditional values and principles, a local expert will approach that individual and set him or her aside in private to address the behavior that needs to be changed. The rule is not to embarrass the person but to kindly point out his or her weaknesses in life. Or if a couple are misbehaving, such as yelling in front of their children, an adult can approach them to discontinue that kind of a behavior and give them proper advice.

*Alerquutet* are a part of the traditional knowledge system or the core social and cultural values and principles used in directing and guiding humans to a proper way of living. The base form *alerqur-* means “to show how to.” The *alerquutet* are the key tools and signs employed in teaching a person or a group of people how to live properly following the core values and principles of life. The methodology can be one-on-one on a personal basis or face-to-face group interaction. For example, the youth *alerquutet* include how to behave properly, how to raise good children, and how to have a happy

marriage. An artist who needs education could seek for a master artist to *alerquq* him or her about better ways to improve art or dance. It is a way to advance or enhance a person's psychological and social skills in living properly.

*Elucirtuutet* are directions in the traditional knowledge system. They are concrete sets of psychological and social ways of doing, ways of behaving, and ways of knowing things in life. The base term *eluciqeg-* means "to be outstanding or perfect." The responsible *elucirtuutet* in villages were the professional Indigenous psychologists, sociologists, and psychiatrists who were the ultimate leaders in education of proper ways of living. For example, *elucirturistet* are those who stand in front of people to convey vital social messages and meanings about living properly as a community. *Elucirturtet* are leaders in communities who do not hold back in addressing the right and wrong ways of living. Their role is to guide, counsel, and direct humans to proper ways of living.

*Piciryarat* are essential social ways of living. Included are the traditional values and principles, rituals, and arranged marriages, along with ways of speaking, eating, emoting, dressing, thinking, and processing. They are the traditional social/cultural ways living people practice. The *piciryarat* are embedded in *yuuyarat* (the ways of being a human).

*Yagyarat* are ancient cultural rules or the laws of life. There are multiple *yagyarat* that apply to different genders, ages, and life stages or conditions (such as death, the menstrual cycle, and aging). These are the critical rules that apply to the relationship between humans, the land, and the sacred world. For example, when a girl becomes a woman, it is traditionally believed that the spiritual impact of the menstrual cycle could

affect the survival effort of the community because the belief is that a woman's aroma is extremely powerful in the sacred world. This is the reason why a woman who began menstruating was secluded in her hut for a year before she could participate in social activities.

The whole community of the elders, parents, shamans, and relatives bonded together to carefully create individual, family, and whole-group psychological development based on shared ideology, ontology, worldview, knowledge, compassion, and epistemology.

The traditional knowledge system emphasized the importance of pleasing those who cannot provide for themselves. The belief was that the powerful minds of the disadvantaged will push us to prosperity and welfare in the future. The instruction was specifically targeted to the youth. Frank Andrew discusses the mind of orphans and disabled this way:

“Dancing should not have been removed from our traditions. I saw that *yuraryarat* [ways of dancing] helping people in my village-orphans, widows, and those who didn't have anyone to provide for them. When they danced, they presented goods for them to use, tools for fishing, kayaks for those who didn't have anyone to take care of them. They gave them away and didn't ask for payment. That is how dancing took care of people. They did not let them desire things out of deprivation. They especially took care of orphans and widows who did not have men to take care for them more than they took care of their friends. We had an *alerquin* regarding orphans and widows to make sure they had

everything, including water and wood during the winter. They especially have responsibilities to us young boys during wintertime and to the young women inside the houses. That is why they watched over them closely. ‘*Makut akqutengqertut. Tamakut-gguq quyallagallermegteggun assilriamek umyuamek cikituit ikayuasteteng.*’” [“These good deeds have rewards. The people who are grateful for their specific gifts will reward the providers prosperity through the power of their minds.”]. (Fienup-Riordan and Rearden, 2005, p. 62, translation mine)

### The Powerful Mind

The notion of the mind being powerful was highlighted in the traditional knowledge system for the reason that, without a powerful mind, one might lose a sense of connection with one’s psychological realm. The mind has feelings, senses, awareness, organization, and the ability to travel even into other dimensions of the world.

It was traditionally believed that humans and non-humans can hear each other’s minds and can identify emotional states. Because they have developed the highest psychological processes, they can converse silently without words. Shamans have a more highly developed ability to do this than other people. The mind is considered to be vulnerable because one does not know who is listening out there. This is the reason our parents and elders warn us not to think negatively or gossip about anybody, even in the silence of our own thoughts. The mind is considered to be alive like a human, with senses and vulnerability. In the past have been events wherein silent negative thoughts have caused emotional and mental pain that resulted in negative actions. For an example, a

villager who talks negatively about a shaman's family condition or situation can be cursed for years down the line. I know of a distant relative who criticized the marriage of the sibling of a shaman, and later her children were cursed to have dysfunctional marital situations so long as the bloodline exists. The curse remains true today, as the children still experience more problems than other families. This is the reason for the warning not to hurt powerful minds of the people.

The whole community of elders, parents, shamans, and relatives bond together to build the essential individual, family, and group psychological foundation with shared ideology, ontology, worldview, knowledge, compassion, and epistemology.

#### Educating a Child's Awareness

The teaching of a child begins when the child reaches a certain level of awareness, including those who become aware at the fetal stage. The attainment of this level of awareness is different for each individual. The method of Indigenous/*Yup'ik* construction of knowledge begins with teaching a child how to be attentive, how to listen carefully, and how to internalize lessons and morals. Children are taught once and are expected to remember the lesson at the end of one instructional session. Children are taught to use their ears conservatively and not to waste valuable information. I remember the metaphor told by my grandparents: listen with the right ear and close the left ear so that the information remains internalized and will not escape out the left ear. Certain teachings like *inerquutet* and *qanruyutet* are repeated frequently. That way, it is said we will remember them automatically in situations in which we need them, such as falling through the ice when we have to react correctly without thinking. The educators

articulated that if we listened by way of remembering the *Yup'ik* methodology, we would not forget what has been taught to us once.

The philosophy behind the Indigenous listening method is that children will learn from their first observation and experience. Listeners are taught to hear and internalize critical Indigenous knowledge from the first lesson, and children will remember the one-time lesson from their experience. This means that in the next instructional lesson their psychological memory clock will automatically be set to the second clock to internalize the new information. Essentially, it is not necessary to repeat Indigenous knowledge lessons to children. For children who required constant instructions, relatives and elders outside the family provided these instructions. Elders emphasize conservative Indigenous educational methodologies to develop higher psychological processes. This is in contrast to the Western educational method, which encourages educators to repeat lessons more than once in the school setting.

Memory skills are part of the essential methods of instruction to the youth. The internalization process in the construction of knowledge was emphasized through *qanruyutet*, *qanemcit*, and *qulirat* (the stories that have lessons, morals, and metaphors). The narrative images of events, accounts, and principles and values were used as tools to validate the truth about the Indigenous knowledge system through stories and examples.

The mind of humans and non-humans is regarded as a living being with diverse characteristics. The characteristics of the mind include power, spirit, cognition, creativity, intellect, imagination, stubbornness, and maneuverability. These are the domains of the inner speech. Elders remind us to explore and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of

our minds in our daily lives. The critical responsibility of the individual is to nurture, monitor, analyze, modify, and process the conditional and unconditional activities within the inner speech of the mind. The essential Indigenous theory is that the mind is powerful.

The mind, being powerful and spiritual, has unlimited capacities. It is up to the individual to determine how the unlimited capacities are thought out and applied in his or her lifelong journey. People can develop their own higher psychological processes through methods of education, creativity, exploration, experience, and trial and error. In *Yup'ik* epistemology, the shamans, with their supernatural powers, can expel psychological and physical illnesses of other human and non-human beings. The mind, being powerful, can challenge the spirits of illness, conflict, and curses and empower material objects they use as mediators in other-dimensional situations. The mind is believed to be compassionate and knowledgeable when it is nurtured properly. In contrast, shamans who break tribal laws can lose their sense of compassion and turn around to become envious and rebellious. When shamans advance beyond their safety limits, their actions become evil to a point at which they can begin to kill other humans. As I have noted earlier, shamans have the ability to negotiate with outer spirits, resolve conflicts, and compromise on behalf of themselves and communities.

The natural world is the tool that is used by people who elevate themselves to the development stage of higher psychological processes. The first inhabitants were able to talk with non-humans and other beings to heal their physical, mental, and inner spirits. Shamans are gifted with the highest knowledge and capability to be used to heal and

improve the welfare of their communities. The breath, land, wind, greens, woods, and wind are essential objects and tools that can assist the shaman to connect to and interact with the social, physical, and psychological processes of human and non-human beings of the *Ellarpak*. The language, drums, music, smudge, and pathways are objects and tools needed by the shamans to execute their job. *Ellam Yua* has created the *Ellarpak* with *elpenqellriit* human and non-human inhabitants that share their space and land harmoniously.

The traditional *qanruiyun* (advice in the psychological development of the human, the land, and the sacred) in *Ellarpak* highlights the awareness of the metaphysical ecosystem. In the ecosystem, these integrated elements are inseparable and dependent upon each other for survival. For this reason, it is critical to act with compassion, knowledge, and respect at all times. As in a family, elements that depend on other people's survival skills have to be concerned about a balanced *Ellarpak*.

Elder John Phillip emphasizes how *qanruiyun* is beneficial for those who pursue higher education: "The teachings are like something that pushes one to a good life. The one who does not listen will not live a good life. Those who listen and apply the teachings will live good lives" (Fienup-Riordan, 2005, p.12).

My father, Kangrilnguq Paul John thoroughly describes the methodology of educating youth and adults about epistemology:

Back then they taught them thoroughly, even though they did not have books, no holding anything back. They did not fail to mention things because they thought they were embarrassing to bring up. They did not make the excuse that we were

young, and would tell us if we did something wrong. These days, if elders feel that it is uncomfortable to bring up, they don't talk about it. Once I scolded them, saying that there is nothing that is embarrassing to talk about while we are teaching. . . . [A person I knew] was yelled at by the person who instructed him, and he wanted to do the opposite of the *inerquun* that he was given and experience what he was yelled at about. He did not want to adhere [to the *inerquun*]. Once he broke a kayak during the night by stepping on the bottom of the frame. He wondered, "To what extent will that person yell at me when he realizes what I have done?" The next day the person who usually yelled at him, his uncle, whom he usually ignored, spoke to him gently and hit his feelings right on the spot: "Gee, you should not break things that people would like to use." From that moment on, he vowed to follow his instructions because he had told him in a loving way." (2003, p. 15).

My *qulicungaq* (older brother) Miisaq Mark John discussed the importance of traditional oral education by stating, "Only those who are given instruction will understand what to do. Those who don't have anyone to instruct them will not know what is good and what is bad" (Fienup-Riordan, 2005, p.11).

Distinguished elder Frank Andrew argues that *qanruyutet* are the key to leading a good life:

"If we follow and listen to teachings, everything that we work on is finished in a good way. That is what a person's disposition is like. They will not become beautiful by themselves, but the instructions will cause them to become beautiful.

Even though their clothing is dirty, they will be attractive by the way they behave.” (Fienup-Riordan, 2005, p.11)

He continued, “These instructions are especially important for our younger generation. A child who is not given instructions cannot grow healthy. A plant cannot grow if it is not watered. That is what people are like” (Fienup-Riordan, 2005, p.12). Elders state that advice can change people’s behavior in life to make them become better community members if they listen and follow instructions. People that commit to live by abiding cultural principles and values can become beautiful inside. Epistemic advice is like tools in life: “*Qanruyutet* were tools that could change one’s world. *Qanruyutet* change people’s behaviors. All of our material belongings can be fixed with our arms. But a person’s nature can only be fixed by *qanruyutet*, only by *ayuqucirtuutet*” (Fienup-Riordan, 2005, p. 12).

Andrew equates words of advice to the walking stick:

“The walking stick was vital. It showed the safe and dangerous spots on the person’s path. But the walking stick would only work if the owner used it according to traditional teachings. A person would not be helped by the walking stick if he didn’t know how to use it properly. *Qanruyutet* work exactly like the walking stick does. A person who merely hears the teachings and does not live by them is only holding them and has no idea how to use them properly on his path. Such a person was as one who merely heard superficially and forgot. When a person masters the teachings by listening and observing and applies them to his

life, they will work like the walking stick for him. By holding on to *qanruyutet* he will know the paths he can travel on.” (Fienup-Riordan, 2005, p.12)

Everything discussed in this article was passed on to me by my parents, grandparents, and extended relatives through the oral traditional knowledge system that enhances self-awareness and embraces a holistic, interconnected understanding of the human, the land, and the sacred world.

All my life, I have experienced the classical traditional village lifestyle, listening to *qanruyutet* (advice) and *qanemcit* and *qulirat* (oral traditions) from distinguished elders, parents, grandparents, shamans, and cultural educators who emphasized and encouraged the importance of leading a genuine *Yup'ik* way of living. Later, when federally operated schools were introduced in conjunction with Christianity, I realized that our village lifestyle experienced drastic social and psychological changes within a short period of time. Our way of life was swept away and flipped upside down. The western school and Christianity that were implemented in the community introduced advanced technology and increased modern commodities to the village. The elders slowly lost interest in passing on the *Yup'ik* epistemology that includes critical behavioral advice that our ancestors valued and humbly practiced.

Fortunately, despite the negative outside forces, my family has opted to maintain the Indigenous pedagogy and epistemological practices that provided us the sense of cultural resiliency and the fundamental survival tools from which we have benefited and which have guided us since our earliest awareness. As a result, the Indigenous

epistemologies, our ancestors' ways of knowing, ways of behaving, and ways of living are the integral tools I use as I live in two worlds with bilingualism and biculturalism.

The question is how much of the *Yup'ik* traditional knowledge system remains, knowing that I have been affected by the impact of the outside influences of the Catholic boarding school, the church, and Western culture? What and how much *Yup'ik* is left with me? I honestly believe the elders' words of wisdom and critical cultural dance meanings have a role as a solid and absolute *Yup'ik* principles in my life that serve as the vital semiotic tools to know who I am as a *Yup'ik* professional dancer, scholar, and woman today. In the next chapter, the literature review will be described using a narrative dialogic method as told by my grandmother Al'aq.

### Chapter 3

#### Literature Review

##### Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of literature from a variety of sources on the Alaskan *Yupiit* (plural of *Yup'ik*), *Inupiat* (plural of *Inupiaq*), and Athabascan cultural dance traditions. Historically, the Alaskan *Inuit* (*Yupiit* and *Inupiat*) had shared ritual practices called *kevgiq* or *kivgiq* (the Messenger Festival). Athabascan literature was included to explore the connections Alaskan Indigenous groups associate with dance and their meanings. The scholarship primarily written by the early non-Indigenous ethnographers and explorers began at the turn of the century. These narratives were shared by the Indigenous dance leaders, singers, drummers, composers, choreographers, performers, artists, and elders, where their memories contributed to dance Discourse (Gee, 2007). In addition, two dance video documentations were reviewed: *Uksuum Cayyai: Drums of winter* and the *Cama-i* Dance Festival tapes from 1977 to 2006.

This chapter contains a review of various perspectives relating to Indigenous dance-epistemology, theory, and methodology, including those scholars writing from the western academic research perspective and scholars from the Indigenous “academic” perspective. The dance literature will be examined and analyzed in a narrative dialogical style, where the elders’ construction of knowledge merges with the academic scholarship in conversation. Carspecken (1996) states that reconstructive analysis always contains an element of uncertainty, or indeterminacy, but boundaries exist on the possibilities,

boundaries that the researcher must discover and elucidate...the idea is to begin conversing intensively with the subjects (p. 42). An approach that allows participants to tell their stories in their own way (Swadner and Mutua, 2008, p. 41) in *Yugtun* is called *nutemllarput* (a *Yup'ik* epistemology). Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) articulate, epistemology is concerned with who can be a knower, what can be known, what constitutes knowledge, sources of evidence for constructing knowledge, what constitutes truth, how truth is to be verified, how evidence becomes truth, how valid inferences are to be drawn, the role of belief in evidence, and related issues. (p. 57)

While I was conducting my fieldwork, an elder Jacob (personal communication, 2008) from Bethel provided me with encouraging advice: “*Yuraryaramta kangiiit taringnariluki nalqigutekniaraten*” (Make sure that you provide an explicit comprehensive description of our ways of dance and their meanings). His voice is an empowerment and a blessing to seek accuracy and balance in my documentation that will be accomplished by using a dialogical analysis method.

My paternal grandmother Al’aq, who was influential in revitalizing dance on Nelson Island, has always wanted to be an author. Everyone called her Al’aq because of her leadership, balanced education in epistemology, counsel, pedagogy, art, cultural dignity, and integrity. Today her lifelong dream is granted because she will be the counterpart of the discussion with scholars in this literature review. With Al’aq as a scholar, this review is presented as a “conversation” among scholars, the ones in the literature review and Al’aq. Elders that are proactive in pedagogy, conceptual theory,

and methodology are regarded as the elder “academy.” They participate in ongoing theoretical and methodological discussions and are involved in member-checking information and building knowledge. As such, their “work” is peer-reviewed and “published” in the oral traditional (Parker Webster and John, 2010).

The process elders used to discuss the issues of epistemology, methodology, pedagogy, etc. in the *qasgiq* include the idea that things are discussed from a variety of perspectives, yet, in the end, coming to an agreement is based on the collective negotiation of meaning through presentation of a rational argument that is similar to Harbermas’ (1981) theory on communication oriented toward understanding.

First, the literature representing various authors’ voices is summarized. Next, the strengths, weaknesses, and the missing gaps of each literature as well as specific issues relating to the selected literature are presented through the perspective of Al’aq (my Al’aq) and are narrated in her voice.

#### Wallen’s Perspective

The literature by Lynn Ager Wallen (1990) entitled *The face of dance: Yup’ik Eskimo masks from Alaska* is a detailed description of Tununak masks that were used in the pre-contact era. Wallen spent several years in the community as an educator and became interested in studying local traditional cyclic ceremonials. The literature defines *Yuraq* (regular dance), *Yurapik /Yurapiaq* (inherited dance), music, costume, ceremonies, and lastly the masked dance. *Yuraq* is concerned with “animal behaviour and hunting of animals, or with ridicule of individuals (ranging from affectionate teasing to punishing public embarrassment)” (p. 9). *Yurapik/yurapiaq* is a dance style that relates to “dance

sequences that have no associated song [and] are owned by individuals and passed down through family lines” (p. 10).

### Al’aq’s Perspective

In analyzing Wallen’s definitions, the first term *yuraq* stands out; for us it means to enact any type of dancing. The ceremonies have variable dance style associations with specific music, rhythm and movement. The multiple dance styles represented in our dance repertoire included fast, slow, classic, and ancient family-owned dancing. With this notion in mind, I would argue that Wallen was defining what we call *ciuqitet* (common dances) as *yuraq*. The *ciuqitet* functioned to display music and dance styles that fit her description. Wallen’s categorization of *yuraq* does not truly represent multiple dance styles, and therefore, it can be stated that it is not an efficient way to define our ways of dance. The fact that we have *puallaryaraq*, *ingularyaraq*, and *ciuqiyaraq* dance types shows that Wallen’s documentation needs to be corrected.

In reviewing Wallen’s Messenger Festival dance types her documentation must be further examined and explained. In reference to family motion dance styles (*Yurapiat*), *Yupiit* call them *qavaruarciutet* (to pretend to sleep). The term *yurapiat* to us means the “real” or “genuine” dances. For example, the common dances we perform today are considered to be authentic practices. In analyzing how she categorizes the Messenger Festival as a real or genuine performance style, the question that arises to my mind is “How would she then categorize multiple ritual ceremonies such as the *Agayuliyaryararput* (Masked Dances) or the *Nakaciuryarat* (Bladder Festival)?” The fact is there are diverse sacred dance styles that are claimed to be real and genuine. Another

question is “How would she categorize these rituals if they are not real or genuine in her perception?” The way she calls dance styles as common and real or genuine in my perspective is a limiting way to define the multiple diverse dance forms and styles. I would argue that it would be appropriate to embrace Indigenous conceptualizing theories and methodologies to efficiently define dance styles and categories. It is true that song texts are not associated with gestures in the Messenger Festival dance. Each dance has a specific family story that has been practiced for centuries. For example, my family has three or more *qavaruarcuutet* that include the whale hunt, gathering mouse food, cleansing of the seal gut, ghost dance, and the warrior.

The strength of Wallen’s work is the organization and chronology that embraces historical knowledge on dance, detailed description of ceremonies, and the purpose of masked dance. The holistic view in dance parallels with our *yuuyaraq* (Napoleon, 1991 and Kawagley, 1995) or *Yup’ik* epistemology that defines the interconnectedness of human, land, and spirits. I agree with Wallen when she states,

The drum beats are song specific.... Newly composed dances are fairly easy to understand because the song words are known to all.... Someone who has composed a song can ask a choreographer (an expert in the grammar of dance) to create a dance for it.... Dance sequences that have no associated song are owned by individuals and passed down through family lines.... The major ceremonies reported in ethnographic reports are the Asking Festival, The Bladder Festival, The Messenger Feast (sometimes called the Trading Festival), the Inviting-In

Festival, and the Feasts to the Dead (both annual and the Great Feast held in intervals of several years). (pp. 9-12)

The limitations that I identified in Wallen's literature pertain to the following statements: "There was no formal training of dancers" and "Yup'ik dance was true folk dance in that it was not restricted to anyone who was interested in dance" and "The chorus is a series of mimetic pantomimed movements performed to a specific pattern of irregular beats that is unique to each song/dance" (pp. 7-8).

The dance styles were to be performed with dignity and professionalism. There were expert choreographers that conducted intensive training sessions for all dancers. Dance as forms of prayer was not carried lightly in the minds of the people, specifically the shamans. The arms were tools to portray critical ancient and contemporary social event stories in dance. The trainers spent hours rehearsing one on one with youth and adults. The family songs were restricted to individual families and the audience understood that only related members could partake in that particular dance.

The chorus of the music reveals important messages about daily human and non-human social interactions. The music structure is designed to repeat the chorus over and over again, with the repetition process allowing time to internalize the meanings of the dance. The drumbeat coordinates with the flow of asymmetric gestures.

The limitations of Wallen's perspective demonstrate that she is an outside researcher looking in. In masked dancing, shamanism plays a vital role. I would recommend that she incorporate details of their mask use and music style. The book provided confusing documentation about dance structure, format, staging, and

symbolism. I would encourage her to go back to the village, learn the language, and work with the local experts to acquire a better understanding of the people. This recommendation would benefit the context of her research and give her an opportunity to conduct member checks.

Fienup-Riordan's Perspective: *Boundaries and passages*

Fienup-Riordan's (1994) book entitled *Boundaries and passages* is an overview of the *Yup'ik* people's cultural morals, values, rituals and rules, as well as the collections of elder narratives on ceremonial exchanges.

The 1985 and the 1988 projects, *Yup'ik Nation Yup'ik Law and Governance Research*, provided an avenue to document the regional elder recollections on cosmology and rituals. Fienup-Riordan states, "I focused on ceremonial exchanges--especially the exuberant seal party or *uqiquq*, the midwinter exchange dance or *Kevgiruaq*--the cycling of names gifts, and persons that these events elaborated and embraced" (Fienup-Riordan, 1994, pp. xiii-xiv). This study includes *alerquutet* (prescriptions) and *inerquutet* (prohibitions), narratives *qulirat* (legends and tales) and *qanemcit* (historical narratives), and the rituals *Nakaciuq* (The Bladder Festival), *Elriq* and *Kelek* (Living Spirits and the Souls of the Dead), and *Keviq* and *Petugtaq* (Ambiguity and Renewal). Her research attempts to describe the *Yup'ik* social life, values, and rules that are unique to this culture in contrast to the contemporary social rules. Elders are the sole contributors of the data, which were transcribed, translated, and re-told by the regional anthropologist Fienup-Riordan.

The strength of the literature is the comprehensive presentation of the traditional cultural values and principles shared in *Yugtun*. The construction of knowledge on the values and principles were described using the words of the elders.

### Al'aq's Perspective

I remember listening to my grandparents' stories in the *qasgiq* telling us about important cultural metaphors, symbols, messages, and morals that we can use in life. These are clearly described in the literature as I have heard them in the past. Elder Nuyarnerillenguq Billy Lincoln used to say "*neq'akarkarpenek qanemcitqataramken*" (I am going to tell you a story that you will remember). At the end of the story, he told me that when I do remember the story's moral, he could already be dead and buried under the ground. The point here is that stories last for a lifetime and they are useful forever. It is clear that the younger generation will gain valuable knowledge from reading this text. We are told that we need to be reminded of these things into adulthood.

However, the translations and analysis can be questioned as the literature represents an "emic" point of view, where a non-speaker could misrepresent essential meanings. For example, Fienup-Riordan states,

The consequences of following one's mind were often incorporated into Yup'ik oral tradition as stories or *neq'ayarat* (devices that help one to remember or call something to mind):

Those kinds of stories, they call them *neq'ayarat*.... When this action is done, they say that it is *neq'ayaraq*--they say that it is something they keep in mind with consideration....

But whatever action a certain individual has done, they try to use that as an example, to remind people of the ensuing consequences if one does something.

That is what they mean by *neq'ayaraq*....

If a person does something so that it merits to be told, it is *neq'ayaraq*. If one is haughty, [that person] is *neq'ayaraq*. These people that are so bad, one becomes a *neq'ayaraq* by their pitiful state only...those things that people have actually done. (Fienup-Riordan, 1994, p. 57)

In our worldview, I understand the *neq'ayaraq* as “a way to recall something.” It is not an appropriate term to classify a narrative style as a *neq'ayarat* as referenced above. Elders do not say, “I am going to tell you a *neq'ayaraq* story.” Instead, stories are introduced as “*una wani qanemciq, quliraq or qanruyutnguuq...*” The appropriate time to use this term could be at the end, when the narrator explains the related metaphor, symbol, and meanings to assist the listeners with understanding the hidden messages. As shown with this case, it is essential to conduct member checks with participants to avoid misinterpretations in analyzing complex cross-cultural concepts.

Another limitation of this literature relates to translation. The fact is that by the time data is written it becomes third-hand information (first is the elder account, second is translated data, and third is the researcher’s analysis). This process requires meticulous work. The tension in translations is the possible loss or misinterpretation of data. For example, Fienup-Riordan defines the purpose of the seal party as to mark the boy’s eligibility for marriage. The honoring includes six-year-old children. The essence of the seal party in our epistemology is to show respect to the animal spirits in hope that they

return to this child in the following season. My concern is that outsider readers might assume that marriage is the only reason why hunters are honored, which could be misrepresentation of our honoring system.

Fienup-Riordan's Perspective: *The living tradition of Yup'ik masks: Agayuliyararput our way of making prayer*

The book by Ann Fienup-Riordan entitled *The living tradition of Yup'ik masks: Agayuliyararput our way of making prayer* contains comprehensive research that demonstrates the purposes, uses, and reasons of the traditional masks and related artwork, presented through the narratives, photos, and accounts of the elders.

The text eloquently describes multiple ceremonial masks and artifacts that were collected by traders and collectors on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Rivers. The Coastal-Yukon Mayor's Association organized by the late Andy Paukan of St. Mary's and former Mayor Tim Troll originated and inspired the idea of bringing back the relics of the past. Paukan emphasizes the need for a traditional knowledge system: "One of the ideas was that the generation after me is the one that is not really educated in our culture, and therefore they don't have much understanding of what our ancestors did. Their heritage has been forgotten" (Fienup-Riordan, 1996, p. 14).

The Mayor's Association sponsored the dance festivals and exhibit and, according to St. Mary's Mayor Tim Troll, hoped to achieve three things: to bring *Yup'ik* people into contact with the tools of their past; to gather information from elders viewing the exhibit about how tools were used; and--perhaps most important, yet most difficult to obtain--to

“help offset the plague of alcohol-related deaths and suicides in the region by instilling in the young people pride in what they have been and assisting them in understanding the essence of what it is to be Yup’ik. Just possibly the exhibit can give them a vision of a future in which they can remain Yup’ik and survive in a changing world.” (Fienup-Riordan, 1994, p. 14)

The advocacy of the Yukon leadership to provide the youth with Indigenous epistemology and a critical traditional knowledge system prompted the elders, educators, community members, churches, and the school to bond together to make their dream become a reality. That vision to instill in youth a sense of cultural identity, pride, and prosperity was made possible through the process of regional dancing. Al’aq’s son Kangrilnguq Paul John wrote:

“The tradition of dance in its many forms was a uniting force in bringing people together from villages together in the larger Yup’ik community. It was supportive of the extended kinship system of the people. Gathering for dances often enabled distant family members to meet each other, in many cases, for the first time. For a long time this tradition, based on our long-standing value system of compassion and love for each other, has been a system for perpetuating kinship ties.” (Fienup-Riordan, 1996, p. 11)

### Al’aq’s Perspective

The strength of this work relates to the descriptions of the variety of *Yup’ik* masks, drums, wands, regalia, and other items associated with rituals. The narratives,

morals, symbols of the specific items were eloquently unraveled through the process of the ethnographic collaborative analysis procedure by translators and anthropologist.

This study adequately presents multiple authentic dance relics and attires that were used in rituals. I remember witnessing the shamans designing intricate drums and wands and singing petition songs. The petition masks were designed and used by the men and women shaman in sacred rituals when we relied solely upon natural products. Masks represented the food we depended on from the sea to the land. Shaman music empowered these masks and they became living petition icons. This is the time when the human and non-human spiritual worlds merged together to communicate through compassion and dance. People respected everything that had spirits including the animals, drums, *qasgiq*, and the powerful words.

The psychological issue in Fienup-Riordan's study relates to the notion of the elders' memory loss and their capacity to articulate cultural practices that we have lost in the past. The banishment of rituals by Christianity at the turn of the century has eliminated our role as educators.

The study-related issues include memory loss, inability to speak the local language, and in-depth knowledge of the ways of knowing bring concerns to the table. As our cultures reconstruct with changing times, our roles and traditional educational schedules change with time. We have lost our storytelling hours due to the academic calendar. Because of these changes, our sharp memory status that requires frequent practice time is minimized. Today, I often forget the story details especially when I have not told them in a long time. My own grandparents cautioned me to examine and analyze

the truth in education and advice I hear from people. They advised me that elders do make mistakes too because they are humans themselves. The educational point here is to be aware of the truth in words that is exercised through constant comprehensive analysis.

Another concern that relates to Fienup-Riordan's study pertains to her lack of knowledge in the language and cultural ways of knowing. This issue comes especially to bear on the translation of the narratives. In data collection the elders speak to the translators, where the information is translated into English and put into text. My concern here pertains to data analysis of the researcher that may not practice member check or may produce insufficient findings due to misconceptions.

It is critical that every scholar make an effort to learn local dialects and to embrace people's culture. Our ancestors advise us to respect other cultures, which means that we do not speak on their behalf unless we are given permission by their leadership. The cultural principle is to select intellectual representatives that will accurately represent people's ways of knowing.

### Kingston's Perspective

The Inupiaq ethnography by Deanna Kingston entitled *Returning: Twentieth century performances of the King Island Wolf Dance* is a comprehensive documentation of the traditional cultural ritual that is still practiced by the islanders. Kingston regards herself as a community member of the King Island people who grew up outside of the state.

The story of the Wolf Dance is a description of historical dance. The Polar Bear and Eagle Dance are no longer practiced in the region. The Wolf Dance was chosen over

the Polar Bear because this ritual required killing of a bear. Kingston selected the Wolf Dance because people still remember the songs and dances.

Research participants include the elders, adults, and the youth that live across Alaska in urban villages of Nome, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and a select few from outside of the state. The people of King Island were relocated to the main land to seek for better economic and living conditions. Although the community members have been separated for years, their dancing has served to bond social kin connections.

The research data represent the historical ritual accounts and videos of the ancient rituals recorded by the early ethnographers. The videotapes include the recording of the well-known late elder Paul Tiulana who described the details of the Wolf Dance. In analyzing the data, Kingston identified reoccurring themes of returning, reciprocity, friendship and enmity, and danger in the Wolf Dance. The themes of returning and reciprocity were described by Agnazunaaq's Wolf Dance myth, documented by Rasmussen that reveals the "real" recollection of the authentic ritual.

The relocation caused societal impacts that include the Catholic Church, the land claims, education, and social ills. Kingston's mother was raised on the Island and moved outside to raise the family. The research participants are the extended relatives of the scholar. Kingston conducted seven months of fieldwork in Alaska to interview participants.

#### Al'aq's Perspective

The strength of Kingston's dissertation lies in the elders' recollections describing the functions of the Wolf Dance that resembles the *Yup'ik* spiritual dances such as the

shamans' *yuarullugyarat*. The research reveals the essential spiritual, cultural, and epistemological aspects of the dance. The meanings of dance and music were carefully presented by using elders' first-hand accounts. I have learned from our elders that *Inupiaq* and *Yup'ik* people have similarities in how they relate to their way of dance with respect and compassion. The rituals we practiced in the past that involved music, dance, and spirituality apply to the *Agayuliyararput*, *Elriryaraq*, and the Messenger Festival. I agree with Kingston's finding that rituals involved community cooperation, politics, social changes, and symbolisms of the ritual.

The video documents that described the authentic ritual elder narratives as resources are an efficient ethnographic research theory and method. The traditional knowledge system enriches data and analysis to capture the important elements of our history. In this case, the elders become partners in the study that enhances the concept of working with the people in using their own voices. Another important aspect of this research style is how the memories of the past are connected with the present, which enriches the context.

The research issue that applies to Kingston's dissertation relates to the tensions in her situated identity. Although she regards herself as an Islander, she only spent seven months in the field. The fact that she grew up in an urban area constitutes that she is an outsider looking in. She also claimed a feeling of discomfort in interviewing elders with limited English, which caused tension. The closeness and selection of her collaborators may also raise a reasonable question. The reason this issue is addressed here is that some

Island residents informed me about how they felt a sense of alienation and dissatisfaction with the research method and analysis.

Again, it is important for the researchers to immerse with the local culture, language, history, and worldviews in order to understand how they live, think and perceive their world to be. I argue that the construction of knowledge on people's ways of knowing takes about a year at minimum. It is essential to learn the language and to understand the kinship system, survival methods, and holistic social web. In our epistemology, we are informed not to represent other cultures until we really know and understand their holistic conceptual theoretical frameworks and methods. The reason for this is that cultures have their unique ways and it is unacceptable to misrepresent them in public events. In small communities the same rules apply to family stories, epistemology, music, and dances.

#### Mather's Perspective

Mather's text entitled *Cauyarnariuq: A time for drumming* is a document on Southwest Alaskan ceremonies that were practiced before contact with Western culture. The ethnographic literature is exclusively written in the *Yup'ik* language. The prominent elder contributors are Martha Mann, Jimmy Paukan, Mary Mike, Andy Kinzy, Mary Friday, Thomas Moses, Kay Hendrickson, and Mary Worm. Mather describes five rituals that include *Petugtaq*, *Nakaciuryaraq*, *Elriq*, *Kevgiryaraq*, and *Kelek*. These cultural practices have been discontinued primarily due to the influence of Christianity. The references include historical accounts by E.W. Nelson (1877-1881), Margaret Lantis (1939-1940), Dorothy Jean Ray, H.M.W. Edmonds (1889), E.W. Hawkes (1913), John

Kilbuck (1885-1923), and Elder John Kassaiyuli in the book entitled *Yupik Lore*.

Kassaiyuli is a well-known expert on the ancient rituals.

### Al'aq's Perspective

The strength of Mather's ethnography relates to the first-account narratives as described by the elders I know who have witnessed the cyclic rituals. The stories they shared on dancing presented visually in pictures and drawings include *qasgiq*, regalia, drums, masks, and ritual accompaniments. The participants provided rich details of ceremonies that relate to the interrelationship between the human and non-human worlds. The complex ceremonies are interrelated and functioned as forms of prayer as articulated by the participants.

The weakness of the literature relates to the limitations of the researcher as an outsider researcher. I personally know that Mather grew up in a non-dancing village, where dance discourse was not part of their construction of knowledge. She studied the historical interpretations of early explorers, collectors and anthropologists. Mather claimed that she had a problem deciphering and analyzing ancient ritual data.

Her outsider status and use of outside resource interpretations brings no surprise to problems she experienced in deciphering and analyzing ritual data. The complex ceremonies require years of education and comprehension to give concrete picture of various dance styles and categories. I commend Mather for challenging herself and for providing an adequate overview of complex rituals.

I remember witnessing these rituals as a young person. The literature reminded me of the time when everyone in the community bonded in preparation and celebration.

The epistemology that was enforced was that all people were to partake in gathering gifts, composing, choreography, regalia, drum making, providing food, and in ensuring balanced harmony. The literature included these essential aspects of dance accurately.

#### Meade's Perspective

The book by a *Yup'ik* scholar Marie Meade entitled *Agayuliyararput: Our way of making prayer* is a documentation of the masks. The regional elders provided first-hand accounts. The text is written in the *Yup'ik* with English translations describing the essence of masking.

*Agayuliyararput* is an ancient ritual defined by the elders as “a form of praying.” The elders described the *Agayuliyararput*, The Messenger Festival, The Bladder Festival, the first dances, drums, and regalia. *Agayuliyararput* was presented as an essential core of our epistemology, cosmology and spirituality. The missionaries banished the practice in the early 1900's because it was associated with shamanism or paganism. The shaman's role was to consign an artist and empower the masks.

#### Al'aq's Perspective

The strength of Meade's book is that it is written in *Yugtun* with translations and it is easy to comprehend. The words of the elders empower the literature, bringing in many memories from the past to the present. Shamanism was vital in masked dance. My late relatives were shamans who participated in petitioning rituals. The shamans first traveled to far away animal spirit worlds asking for food and good weather. They empowered masks with the music and the performance. After the ceremony, we received

food from the animal spirit worlds. This is how we celebrated and honored this ceremony.

The weakness of the book relates to the issue of data translation for delta-wide research. The Yukon/Kuskokwim elders speak different dialects even between small villages. The research requires knowledge of language differences where Meade is an expert of the Kuskokwim dialect. For example, there are many types of rituals with specified dance styles and categories.

In relation to data translation, I would recommend selecting a regional translator who is familiar with the local dialect and culture. This practice will promote accuracy in data collection. For example, the word *piyalrianga* means “I would” in the coast, and in the Yukon the word means “I did,” contrasting definitions. Another example, the word *wiinga* has different meanings for Tununak and Toksook Bay, which are only seven miles apart. The word means “me” for Tununak and “her husband” for Toksook Bay. For this reason, I would advocate for local linguists in translation and analysis.

*Agayuliyararput* was the critical ceremony that provided a way to honor the relationships between human and non-human in our history. The elders eloquently formulated the construction of knowledge by defining specific details of our forms of prayer.

### Stüssi's Perspective

The Master's thesis by Felix Stüssi entitled *Iqugmiut-Russian Mission: Musical change and cultural survival in the Yup'ik Eskimo community on the Lower Yukon River in western Alaska* is about the *Yup'ik* musical change and cultural survival in the Lower

Yukon. The document focuses on how dance is associated with people's traditional survival system as they transform with time.

Stüssi examines how the Yukon River music and rituals had changed recently in comparison to the traditional style. He says, “the rituals of the traditional ceremonial cycle with all its singing, drumming, dancing, were indispensable for the survival of the community in the universe that needed constant recreation” (1997, p. 2). The research study identifies the changing forces and the importance of continuity of the *Yup'ik* cultural imagination. The sources also include reports and journals of Zagoskin and Netsvetov and Ann Fienup-Riordan.

His theoretical framework attempts to capture what life was like in the old days when life revolved around annual dance cycles and to bring it into contemporary times. How has music changed, and have people changed with music?

#### Al'aq's Perspective

The strength of Stüssi's literature is the historical and contemporary overview on how identity plays a role with social trends. He examined Alaska ethnomusicologists' perspectives, analyzed the cultural changes, identified ceremonies and categorized the songs and dances. I have witnessed significant social changes that transformed generations as described by Stüssi. In this process, I quickly learned to adapt and adjust with evolving social cultures as we construct and reconstruct our way of life. In analyzing research, music has definitely changed and people do change with the music.

The limitations of Stüssi's work relate to fieldwork that is too short (three months). I already made my argument on this case.

In reference to his study timeline, my question is “How can a person begin to capture the essence of the ceremonies in few months?” In my opinion, it is impossible to produce balanced comprehensive research if one studies for less than a year. In our epistemology, it is said that if one hurts people by making false statements, that behavior could return in bad health.

In my observation, music does change with people and it is a natural part of our culture because music provides stories about the contemporary way of life. For example, in the old days people danced about using *qayaq* and today we dance about boating. I agree with Stüssi’s claim that some social changes occur and other parts of the culture remain the same. This is an accurate representation of our social system because I also compose music stories about students going to school. The music rhythm remains the same while the music context changes.

### Wolf’s Perspective

The ethnography by Elise Scott Wolf (1999) entitled *Dancing identity: Gwich’in Indigenous dance as articulation of identity* eloquently describes the role of dance as an essential aspect of community identity. The literature documents how dance functions rhetorically in community identity, core cultural values, and in expressions that assert identity.

The ethnographic research investigates how the Alaskan Netsai’ Gwich’in Indigenous dances function rhetorically both within the community and geopolitically. The study investigates the complex rhetorical meanings expressed by the dances, the performers, and their context. The two primary villages of Netsai’ Gwich’in are Venetie

and Arctic Village, which are part of the Venetie Reservation in Alaska. Indigenous dance forms encounter the larger issues involved in the theoretical interpretations of identity. Wolf says the phrase “indigenous identity articulation” encompasses three rhetorical functions that are sought in Indigenous people’s cultural performances, embodiment, avowal, and assertion. He finds that the Gwich’in’s Indigenous dances function rhetorically, first, as a virtual embodiment of the cultural identity of the community, embodying core values from their Indigenous heritage while simultaneously constituting those cultural elements they choose to maintain in their present and future. Second, they function as articulations that avow or affirm critical components of the community’s cultural identity. Finally, these dances function as rhetorical expressions that assert (versus resist) an identity that is compelled by dominant forces to be otherwise (1999, p.8).

Wolf examined the American Indian rhetoric and performance scholarship in which the studies explored the American Indians as subjects. The theoretical analysis takes discourse or oratory as its object. The studies in social movement theory involving American Indians take rhetorical scholarship beyond the speech act, or oratory, and into more contextually oriented analysis. His role as a participant-observer utilized methods such as personal interviews, conversations, and observations that occurred between 1988 and 1999 (Wolf, 1999, p.12).

### Al'aq's Perspective

The strength of Wolf's study is on the emphasis of the rhetoric in Netsai' Gwich'in dances. The three Gwich'in dances he examined and explained exemplified the cultural, social, political, and spiritual identity of the community.

The weakness of this thesis pertains to the lack of description of dance choreography and structure. The choreography and structures are important because the choreography presents the images of human and non-human lifestyles that can be internalized by the audience as real-life daily activities. The dance structures provide sequences of social actions. The description of Athabascan dance choreography and structure can help the audience to connect and relate with human or non-human ways of living.

In our epistemology, communities transform to one body in celebrations. The traditional rituals bond leadership, cultural bearers, and spiritual educators, enemies and regions. From the stories and the meanings of music and dance emerge images of how people relate to their environment, describe family interactions and their spirituality. I commend his effort to work with the community and government agency and the simplicity of his writing that can be read by all people.

### Elders and Kamerling's Perspective

The video entitled *Uksuum Cauyai : Drums of winter* is an outstanding culturally resilient living documentation of the Emmonak traditional *Kelgiq* or the Inviting-In dance ceremony that was recorded in the 1970's by ethnographic videographers Sarah Elders

and Leonard Kamerling. The film is about the last ancient ceremony that was held in the old sod community center, the *qasgiq*.

The ethnographic film text is locally based research with *Yup'ik* conceptual framework and methodology. The ceremony defines the true cultural interrelationship between Emmonak and Alakanak villages located near mouth of the Yukon River. The document uses a multi-literacy research design that includes the *Yup'ik* and English spoken and written text of spiritual messages, footage of the old village mask dance, and letters of early Catholic priests that describe the banishment of village rituals. The highlights of the film are the personal testimonies expressed by elders, adults, and youth discussing the living historical and contemporary meanings of dance as they are applied to the community and changed overtime.

The late elder William Tyson said,

It was our belief that this is spirit that has power overall. Because nobody know what it was. And this is spirit for villagers and when the priest says, "time has come, they condemned our way of living." It is all wrong. Everything is from the devil, everything is wrong. We thought we were doing right. And I think we were doing okay. But when they start condemning us, something keep in mind, you know how something in our heart, they are trying to pull it out, they were trying to take it away. We were kind of hurt. We live by what we believe, what we thought was true. (Elders and Kamerling, 1988)

The long-lasting emotional pain in the loss of community spiritual functions left behind questions about people's own belief system and practices.

The essence of gift distributions was shared:

Remembering their dead ones, people go the *kashim*...and give gifts to everyone there. At that time, they think their dead ones are there with them. That's what people say. They also say when strangers come, the spirits of the dead comes with them. For that reason we try to bring good gifts to the *kashim*.... The people are never stingy. As long as they have food, they won't let anyone starve. My wife's father used to give away lots of food during ceremonies so much that it made that old *kashim* seem small inside. People wondered how he would feed himself. And yet, he never went hungry. The wilderness would give everything back in a short time. (Elders and Kamerling, 1988)

*The drums of winter* was dedicated to the late Stanley Waska, a leader and a village deacon who described the spirit of dance: "On good nights, on some evenings, the drummers and singers are at their sharpest. Everyone is together and right on key. Those nights make you want to dance from way inside, to sing from way inside" (Elders and Kamerling, 1988).

#### Ala'q's Perspective

The strength of the ethnographic document pertains to the revelations of *elriq* (ceremony for the dead), *Yuraqerraaq* (first dance), *aruqucetaat* (gift distribution), essence of *kevgiq* (Inviting-In ceremony), and *kumegyugyaraq* (love for the children/grandchildren). Their stories include the banishment of dancing, loss of rituals, *qasgiq* life, and child honoring.

The weakness of the video documentation pertains to identification of the contributors. The film showed elders speaking who were not properly identified and credited. In line with our oral traditional rules, the documentation contributors have to be recognized and credited properly. This film represents our culture, and people must be informed about historical events in order to be able to connect people with stories.

The film represented true knowledge about song structure, music context, explanations of gestures, and the reasons why rituals are practiced. The quote, “Dance was the heart of *Yup’ik* Eskimo spiritual and social life. It was the bridge between a person’s own power and the greater powers of the unseen world. At the heart of dance was the drum in which could be heard the cadence of the universe,” truly expresses the core of *yuraryaraput*.

#### KYUK *Just dancing* Perspective

*Cama-i* Festival tape 2006 contains the 1986 documentation entitled *Just dancing* by Bethel KYUK Production, featuring nine Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta villages. The video contains an accumulation of Delta dancers from Mountain Village, Kotlik, Stebbins, Toksook Bay, Kwethluk, Chevak, Nightmute, Tununak, and Emmonak.

Raphael Mike, an elder leader of Mountain Village, specifically defines the meaning of dance as a way to tell stories about the *Yup’ik* way of living. Dances presented the authentic ancient style of music and dance, where songs are started slowly in the beginning and gradually escalate to a highlight at the end. The drummers and singers were unified in tone and rhythm. The young children dance with graceful motions with humbling emotions and poise. For an example, Vernon John, four-year-old child

from Toksook Bay, danced by himself without the assistance of an adult. The adult dancers expressed proficient gesturing with unison body movements. Their neck dances are coordinated with their gestures and knee bends in tune with each drumbeat. The teasing cousins danced together, expressing their teasing exchanges in public. The audience responded with laughter encouraging the drummers, singers, and dancers to excel in their performances.

### Al'aq's Perspective

The strength of the video document is that it captures our modern dance styles and spirit. In dance our families reunite with relatives that come from far away places. Our children are well trained to know their family music and dance styles. For example, I taught my great-grandchild Vernon how to dance with enthusiasm, proficient motions, and poise. Today he is a composer and a drummer in our village because he was trained from the earliest stages of his life.

The video document reveals the fact that we have lost our dance etiquettes. Dance leaders have forgotten to give proper credit to the composers and explain the meanings of the dance. In the old days leaders ensured that all follow the accreditation procedures and introductions as their ancestors practiced.

In old days, the dances were properly introduced and explained to the audiences. As revealed in this film, the introduction protocol is no longer honored by the dancers, and I believe that we need to bring it back sometime soon in respect to our ancestors. The *Cama-i* Festival video documentation is a comprehensive presentation of dance stories

from diverse Delta villages. The dance narratives represent our ancient ways of living and modern day social events.

### Summary

In the examination of the dance literature the common strengths identified relate to the implementation of elder narratives or the first-hand accounts of the historical and social cyclic rituals. The inclusion of the culturally relevant educational knowledge system defined the indigenous concepts, metaphors, symbols, and spiritual relations. The common strength in relation to the Indigenous scholars was their own community documentations recording the elders' recollections and reflections through narratives. The authentic narrations described the community language, local involvement, social changes, symbolism of rituals, pictures, images, and visuals. The organization and identification of the Indigenous dance categories, rhetoric, and depth of research presentations revealed the richness of the cultural knowledge system. The overview of cyclic rituals discussed from pre-contact to post-contact and transition into living performances provided important information that describes social changes overtime.

The common patterns found in the limitations of the literature reviewed pertain to the issues that are associated with cross-cultural studies. The patterns fall into four primary categories:

- Outside researchers that approach research from the etic point of view
- The use of methodologies that may not be relevant tools for studying Indigenous elders
- Transcription, translation, and transmission issues

- The classification and organization of dance group, categorization of dance, music structure, dance types and drum patterns, and terminologies

In examining the literature limitations, the first pattern identified relates to the notion of the outsider researchers' etic point of view, which means looking inside with outsider lenses. The etic may cause limits in areas of the language barrier, cross-cultural communication styles, and tensions between the Western and Indigenous knowledge systems.

The second limitation pattern identified pertains to the use of the Western methodologies and data collection techniques in Indigenous studies. For example, there are differences in the interview styles and etiquettes in protocols specifically in questioning. The Western method allows researchers to question the participants at any time. On the other hand, the elder interviews are conducted uninterrupted until the orator is done. The way to frame a question to the elder is to ask "*taikaniriugngarpenga-qaq*" (can you explain in detail what you meant by this statement?).

The third pattern of limitations relates to the issues of transcription, translation, and transmission of the Indigenous knowledge system. The issue in transmuting knowledge from one system to another could cause loss of meanings in cultural context. For example, in this process, the first stage contains the raw data collected. The second stage relates to the process of transcription, translation, and transmission to the second language. The third stage is the data analysis that is conducted by a non-Indigenous ethnographer. The problem results from loss of knowledge when data is transferred from the first stage to the third stage. Specifically, an inaccurate transcription could mislead

the reader in definitions of cultural concepts. The word transcriptions relate to regional language differences such as Yukon and Kuskokwim dialects. The transmission of the word to the second language could cause problem when one is not familiar with local concepts and methods because this could become compounded along the way. For example, masking was *agayuliyararput* (our way of making prayer). A translator lacking sufficient knowledge might choose *agayuyaraput* (our way of praying) when discussing the mask ceremony. These are closely related concepts and terms that could easily be mistranslated and mis-communicated when the translator is not proficient in the subject area.

The fourth pattern of research limitations relates to the proper classification and organization of dance, music, structure, styles, drum patterns, and terminologies. Of primary note is the absence in the descriptions of dance structures and the role of choreographers. The choreography provides the audience the imagery of the song story. A detailed category of dance music and style classifications needs to be developed that will provide leaders reference guide to appropriately define specific music and dance.

In summary, this chapter has reviewed a variety of perspectives relating to Indigenous dance epistemology, theory, and methodology. The review included those scholars writing from the Western academic research perspective and scholars from the Indigenous “academic” perspective where the research attempts to fill these gaps and mis-informations. In the next chapter, I will describe the Indigenous research methodology that I selected for my study.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### Introduction

The first purpose of this study is to describe the categories of dance. The second purpose is to describe how *Yup'ik* music and dance have played a functional role in organizing and maintaining various societal infrastructures (kinship, social, political, subsistence/economic, and spiritual) within the *Yup'ik* culture (Kingston, 1999; John, 1996; Mather, 1985; Wallen, 1990; Wolf, 1999; Fienup-Riordan, 1996). This study seeks to further understand this role and how it has evolved over time.

The study utilizes an ethnographic methodology that includes historical and contemporary perspectives expressed by the participants. This chapter describes research methodology categorized as

- ethnography as an Indigenous tool,
- challenges in the Western construction of ethnography,
- *Yup'ik* Indigenous perspectives on the narratives,
- connections in *Yup'ik*/Indigenous and Western narrative ethnography,
- overview of the study,
- setting,
- participants,
- frameworks for data analysis and interpretations, and
- limitations of the study.

### Ethnography as an Indigenous Tool

The Western construction of ethnography in reference to the literature is the study of “other” people and their cultures (Geertz, 1973). Ethnography as a scientific study of people and their cultures involves an ongoing attempt to describe specific encounters, activities, and understandings into a concrete meaningful context. This kind of ethnographic research combines design, fieldwork, and methods of inquiry to produce historical, political, social, and personally situated accounts, interpretations, and representations (Tedlock, 2000). The Indigenous construction of ethnography is unique in that it involves authentic narratives of the elders, shaman, great hunters and local experts. In the next section, I will explore and argue how Indigenous scholars can ensure and embrace traditional knowledge system methodologies in Indigenous ethnographic research.

### Challenges in the Western Construction of Ethnography

Western theoretical frameworks and methodologies of ethnographic research as study designs for non-Indigenous scholars have recently been challenged by the Indigenous researchers/scholars who seek to find more appropriate and applicable conceptual theoretical research frameworks and methodologies (Villenas, 1996; Kawagley, 1995; Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 2001). The Western construction of ethnography originated from and is based on Eurocentric theories and frameworks that were developed over time by the social and natural scientists of non-Indigenous societies (Leonard, 2007). Thus, in recent academic research, many Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have recognized the limitations

that exist in the Western education system, which includes research methodologies and techniques. Specific examples of research limitations directly relate to issues in theoretical and analytical models and methods and conflicting epistemological perspectives.

According to Parker Webster and John (2010),  
conducting research in Indigenous contexts has been an ongoing topic of discussions centering on a variety of ethical, epistemological and methodological issues... In the Alaska context, many of these discussions are underscored by ethical concerns stemming from historical as well as very recent accounts of research conducted in Alaska Native villages. Researchers faced with confronting the history of exploitive research that contributed little to no benefit, or worse, research that caused damaging effects for Indigenous peoples and their communities can meet with resistance and even barring from communities whose histories include such experiences. (p.3)

These dilemmas in conducting research are not unique to Alaska and have been addressed by various Indigenous scholars and researchers. Smith (1999) provides Indigenous research theories and methods for scholars. In discussing colonizing knowledge, Smith argues that previously the First World academics used the term “authentic” as an oppositional term in at least two different ways. First, it was used as a form of articulating what is meant to be dehumanized by colonization, and second, for reorganizing “natural consciousness” in the struggles for decolonization (1999, p. 73). The movement to decolonize research methods such that it is utilized authentic

knowledge in the second example described by Smith empowers an authentic decolonized ethnography. Thus, in such a methodology, alternative techniques such as elder stories are included.

In reference to Indigenous knowledge and heritage research Battiste (2000) stated that

heritage is broadly defined as the collective heritage of Indigenous identity of the people and which is theirs to share, if they wish, with other peoples. This broad definition includes all those things that international law regards as the creative production of human thought and craftsmanship, such as songs, stories, scientific knowledge and artworks. However, the definition also includes inheritance from the past and from nature, such as human remains, natural features of the landscape, and naturally occurring species of plants and animals with which a people has long been connected. (p. 65)

The works and leadership of Smith and Battiste seek to further develop the Indigenous ethnographic scholarship that will benefit contemporary research transformation.

In modern research, there are other research issues concerning insider/outsider positions of scholars that belong to local communities. The article by Parker Webster and John (2010, p. 16-18) stated that Brayboy and Deyhle's (2000) response to Hammersley and Atkinson's (1996) notion that an insider conducting research in his or her own culture can be little more than the autobiographical account. For Brayboy and Deyhle, the idea that conducting ethnographic research in one's own community and the

ability to conduct rigorous research are not mutually exclusive. They argue that all ethnographers are part of the fieldwork and part of the data. Rather, in their view:

We must reconceptualize what it means to collect and analyze data as an insider from a marginalized group using methods that are predominantly based in an academy and style that begs some type of distance and perspective. Studying and researching issues in American Indian communities from either the “inside” or “outside” are always framed from an ethnohistorical set of relations between and among Indians and Whites—relationships that are politicized and cannot be viewed in a distant manner. (166)

In terms of *Yup'ik* epistemology, the notion of putting oneself in a state of marginality, would be asking someone to distance oneself from *Yua*, one's ancestors and the spiritual, cultural, and physical connectedness with the environment, which is something that is not possible to do as a *Yup'ik* person (Parker Webster and John, 2010, p. 16). In fact, all members of the community are encouraged to view themselves as members of a larger kinship tie that is an integral part of the community web.

New approaches have emerged to better understand the Indigenous ways of knowing and those associated with Western ways of knowing and their educational system (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005). Educational systemic change is essential in order to incorporate new approaches to both the formal educational system and the Indigenous knowledge system. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2010) argued that the culture of the education system as reflected in rural schools must undergo radical change, with the main catalyst being standards- and place-based curriculum grounded in the local culture.

In addition, the Indigenous knowledge systems need to be documented, articulated, and validated, again with the main catalyst being place-based curriculum grounded in the local culture (p. 206).

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN), at the University of Alaska, has developed curriculum resources that support both formal education and the Indigenous knowledge system for the last decade. The ANKN-initiated organizational change under the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) to implement Statewide Cultural Standards was adopted by the Alaska Department of Education. The elders, Indigenous educators, college professors, and local experts conducted workshops to identify these needs for organizational changes. This agency has developed Alaska resource system initiatives that are focused on particular domains of activity through which specialized resources are brought to each region that include culturally aligned curriculum and an Indigenous science knowledge base. The regional resources identified these shared themes:

- documenting cultural/science knowledge,
- Indigenous teaching practices,
- standards/culturally based curriculum,
- teacher support systems, and
- culturally appropriate assessment practices

(Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2010, p. 208.)

These AKRSI themes support a culturally based educational framework that can be used by both formal and Indigenous educational systems in Alaska. In addition, the

spiral pathway for integrating rural Alaska learning (SPIRAL) curriculum identified twelve broad cultural framework themes that include family, language/communication, cultural expression, tribe/community, health/wellness, living in place, outdoor survival, subsistence, ANCSCA, applied technology, energy/ecology, and exploring horizons (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2010, p. 209). The combined themes developed by AKRSI and SPIRAL can be used by educational systems to improve the reform needs of all schools in Alaska.

According to Barnhardt and Kawagley (2010) the educational reform strategy will foster interconnectivity and symbiosis between the formal education system and the Indigenous communities being served in rural Alaska based on current concepts, principles, and theories associated with the study of complex adaptive systems. This reform design has produced an increase in student achievement scores, a decrease in the dropout rate, an increase in number of rural students attending college, and an increase in number of Indigenous students choosing to pursue studies in fields of science, math, and engineering (p. 212).

The educational reform effort and strategy described here is an impressive model that provides a comprehensive educational curriculum for students that is accountable with positive student outcome.

#### *Yup'ik/Indigenous Perspectives on the Narratives*

Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars provide descriptions of how the *tegganret* (elders) relate to the historical and personal account narratives as critical non-fictional representations of their lives. A. O. Kawagley (1995) in his book *A Yupiaq*

worldview: *A pathway to ecology and spirit* describes the conditions in which the *Yup'ik* worldview works with efficiency, economy, and purpose:

As young children the traditional *Yupiaq* were given specially grounded lenses through which their language, myths, legends and stories, science and technology, and role models form the community. This oral orientation and learning by observation worked for their advantage. To hear stories being told in the *qasgiq* (community house) allowed children and other hearers to savor the words and visualize the events. For the duration of the story, they become part of the imagery.... The children learn and the grown-ups are reminded of who and what they are, where they come from, and how they are to interact with others, with natural things and with spirits. This is truly living history. (p. 17)

Historically, prominent elders eloquently transmediated life historical and personal narratives to the next generation by using traditional educational oral art forms of storytelling genres, in *Yup'ik* called *qulirat* and *qanemcit*. *Qulirat* are legends and tales that are the narratives about the first inhabitants' social events, activities, and interrelations that include humans and non-humans alike (Paul John, personal communication, 2009). Fienup-Riordan, an anthropologist of the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta defines *qulirat* as "legends or tales told by distant ancestors" (2005, p. iii). Orr and Orr (1995) in their *Yup'ik* narrative book entitled *Qanemcikarluni Tekitnarqelartuq: One must arrive with a story to tell* stated that *qulirat* contents were perceived by the orators and audiences as fictional and later made a point about how the collective view of the

authentic myths are perceived to be true stories. In *Ellangellemni: When I became aware* Orr and Orr (1997) derived an alternative classification described as follows:

A *quliraq* is a traditional narrative that has a framed and formulaic introduction (“A long time ago there was a village which was situated on the banks of a river, which flowed out into the ocean. On the far extremity of the village there were a grandmother and a grandchild...”). A *quliraq* is perceived as being fictional and therefore the actuality of events and characters is not predicated. On the contrary, a *qanemciq* tells of events and characters that are perceived as actually having occurred. (p.214)

Parker Webster and Yanez (2007), in the article entitled “*Qanemcikarluni Tekitnarqelartuq* [One must arrive with a story to tell]: Traditional Alaska Native Yup’ik Eskimo stories in a culturally based math curriculum,” a *Yup’ik* elder storyteller Annie Blue of Togiak stated that “some *qanemciq* can become *quliraq* overtime” (p. 121). Fienup-Riordan stated that the *qulirat* and *qanemcit* are not mutually exclusive according to how Paul John introduces ancient stories as “*Una-wa qanemcikaqa quliraulria apqiit*” (This *qanemciq* I’m going to tell is a *quliraq*) (2003, p.iii-iv). This quotation does seem to demonstrate how Indigenous narratives actually serve as the living thread that overlaps and connects the bridge between the past, present, and future as generations transcend time.

In the Indigenous sense, the “narrative is always about the past” (Ellis & Brochner, 2000, p. 750). The following quotation emphasizes the notion of how narratives convey experiences and reveal meanings.

“Well, yes, if you viewed your project as closer to art than science, then your goal would not be so much to portray the *facts* of what happened to you accurately, but instead to convey the *meanings* you attached to the experience. You’d want to tell a story that readers could enter and feel a part of. You’d write in a way to evoke readers to feel and think about your life, and their lives in relation to yours. You’d want them to experience the experience you’re writing about—in your case, breast cancer”.... [W]riting has to be engaging and evocative. (Ellis & Brochner, 2000, p.751-757)

*Yup’ik* orators inform us that our ancestors’ *qanemcit* are historical or contemporary narratives of personal accounts that later become known as *qulirat* as stories transform with time. *Qulirat* and *qanemcit* are the profound words of wisdom or *qanruyutet* that embody traditional values and principles that serve to direct human ways of being that include sharing, humor, spirituality, family, hunting traditions, knowledge of the language, respect for nature, humility, compassion, resolution of conflict, cooperation, love and respect for our elders and one another.

Fienup-Riordan provides the definition for *quli’ir* (legends or tales told by distant relatives) or *qanemcit* as “historical narratives related known by persons” (2005, p. iii). With this demonstration that the socially constructed narratives transform over time, I argue that the *qulirat* are the actual accounts of our ancestors’ historical, cultural, and social accounts in *yuuyaraq* (our way of life). These narratives function to construct the traditional *Yup’ik* knowledge system.

The elders' role as orators serves to transmute the critical traditional knowledge system. Transmuting is a process that involves transition from one sign system to another sign system. Thus, ethnography as a study of culture must also be a methodology that focuses on the cultural processes, interpersonal communication, the production of the social relations and activities, told through methods that reflect these important aspects. In terms of ethnography from an Indigenous/*Yup'ik* perspective, these aspects are framed by an epistemology as told through *qulirat* and *qanemcit*.

#### Connections in *Yup'ik*/Indigenous and Western Narrative Ethnography

The notions of *Yup'ik*/Indigenous narratives are related to the Western notions of narrative ethnography as theoretical frameworks, which make social connections to the people. Narrative ethnography can provide methods and tools to paint pictures of people's historical and personal accounts. When the narratives are scripted into a construction of knowledge, then the contents will serve to connect the past to the present and the future.

#### Overview of the Study

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the categories of *Yup'ik* dance and their meanings?
2. How does *yuraryaraq* (*Yup'ik* way of dancing) relate to the social structures of the *Yup'ik* society? How do the lyrics and choreography of *Yup'ik* dance create meaning and help to define and understand *Yup'ik* society?

Table 2. Overview of the Research Design for the Study

Research Questions	Elements of Data Set	Analysis/Interpretation
1. What are the categories of <i>Yup'ik</i> dance and their meanings?	Video/Audio-taped transcribed/translated formal/informal interviews; Research field notes; Research field journals;	Coding categories: Gee's d/Discourse (2005) defines socially situated identities the "who" and the "what"
2. How does <i>yuraryaraq</i> ( <i>Yup'ik</i> way of dancing) relate to the social structures of the <i>Yup'ik</i> society? How do the lyrics and choreography of dance create meaning and help to define and understand <i>Yup'ik</i> society?	Video/Audio-taped transcribed/translated formal/informal interviews; Research field notes; Research field journals;	Coding categories: Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (1995) as a tool to construct a picture that draws from, reassembles, and renders subjects' lives that will define descriptive emerging social infrastructure themes

### Setting

The rural and urban research settings that I selected in Southwestern Alaska include Anchorage, Bethel, Emmonak, and Toksook Bay. Anchorage is the largest village in Alaska with a *Yup'ik* dance group called *Kicaput* Dancers in which the participants are migrants to the city from diverse *Yup'ik* towns. Also in Anchorage is located the Alaska Native Medical Center where villagers travel from villages to consult for medical care. In Anchorage I interviewed the *Kicaput* dance drummers, singers, dancers, and composers as well as the villager performers who went into town for medical check-ups.

### Bethel

Bethel, located along the Kuskokwim River, is the hub of *Yup'ik* villages in Southwestern Alaska, a place where the annual cultural dance celebration called *Cama-i* takes place. *Cama-i* is a cultural celebration that started in the mid 1980's with a goal to

gather outlying village Eskimo dancers to share their music and dances. Bethel Council on the Arts sponsors and organizes this celebration where many village dance groups are unified to perform together. In this event village dancers and diverse international performers are bonded together for a three-day celebration that also serves to develop networks. The city has a local road system with hotels, restaurants, public schools, Kuskokwim community college and municipal, corporate and traditional community governing agencies.

#### Emmonak

Emmonak is a *Yup'ik* village located at the mouth of the Yukon River where 500 people depend on a subsistence and commercial fishing economy. It is one of the oldest villages in the region, where scholars Elders and Kamerling (1988) filmed *Drums of winter*, documenting the dance ceremony. The villagers sponsor an annual dance celebration in which neighboring villagers are invited to participate at the dance with gift distributions. The distinguished elders remember oral narratives about the ancient Messenger Festival where the first catch of the children is still honored and celebrated.

#### Toksook Bay

Toksook Bay is located along the Bering Sea Coast on Nelson Island. The population of mainly *Yup'it* is estimated around 500 who predominantly rely upon subsistence lifestyle. The cultural language, history and oral stories are still practiced by the elders, parents and children. Each year the villagers compose and choreograph new dances for their annual *Kelgiq* invitational dances.

Both Emmonak and Toksook Bay are the hub villages of surrounding villages where the regional health clinic, laundry facility, airport, and sewer systems are in place. There are public schools up to high school with local stores that provide daily necessities where surrounding villagers stop by to shop. People can visit by land, water, and air. The essential Indigenous context and purpose of the annual dance festivals, organized and managed by the local residents, represents an ancient event that bonded everyone together to celebrate in sharing and exchanging their historical and contemporary dance rituals and gift exchanges in the way their ancestors have practiced for many years before them.

### Participants

I interviewed fifty dance group members that included elders, adults, and youth. First, the participants signed Institutional Research Board consent forms written in both *Yup'ik* and English. Second, the research goals and questionnaires were presented that define the goals of the study. Third, the participants were provided interview preference options for *Yup'ik* or English questionnaires. I noticed that the experienced elders preferred the unstructured interview style, while the younger generation opted for the structured format. The interviews provided data about the meanings of dance and the participants' roles as dance leaders, educators, composers, choreographers, drummers, singers, and dancers.

The interviews of participants in Bethel during the *Cama-i* Festival were conducted in one-on-one sessions. Anchorage residents were interviewed at home, while hospital guests were interviewed in *quyana* house, a temporary residential shelter.

In order to identify generational differences of the fifty participants, I categorized three age groups where five participants ranged between 18-30 years old, eight between 30-60 years old, and thirty-seven between 60 and 100. Interestingly, the participant category review reveals most participants happened to be the eldest generation.

The following participant table is categorized into five groups that describe participant identity, gender, age, their roles, and their current and original homes.

Table 3. Research Participants

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Village</b>
Peter Jacob	Male	80's	Educator	Bethel
Ben Snowball	Male	50's	Leader, singer, drummer	Anchorage/Stebbins
Sophie John	Female	60's	Dancer	Newtok
Phillip Kairarak	Male	40's	Leader, composer, choreographer, dancer, drummer, singer	Chefornak
Martina John	Female	73	Educator, dancer, choreographer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Rita Angaiak	Female	78	Regalia artist, dancer	Tununak
David Chanar	Male	60's	Drummer, singer	Anchorage originally from Toksook
Theresa Abraham	F	70's	Choreographer, dancer, regalia artist, educator	Chefornak
Elena John	F	20's	Dancer	Toksook Bay
Anna Anayiq John	F	20's	Dancer	Toksook Bay
Marie Meade	F	60's	Educator, dancer, linguist	Anchorage/Behtel
Vernon Chimigalrea	M	50's	Drummer, singer, dancer, educator, linguist	Anchorage/Bethel
Elena Pavilla	F	30's	Educator, dancer, drummer, singer	Bethel/ <i>Akula</i>

Table 3 continued...

Vernon John	M	20's	Leader, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer	Toksook Bay/Anchorage
M. Nanaluk	M	20's	Leader, educator, drummer, singer, dancer	Bethel
Pauline Asuluk	F	60's	Educator, choreographer, singer, drummer, dancer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Joe Asuluk	M	60's	Leader, educator, singer, drummer, dancer, composer, choreographer	Toksook Bay
Susie Moses	F	40's	Dancer	Toksook Bay
Theresa Moses	F	80's	Elder, educator, choreographer, leader, singer, dancer, drummer	Toksook Bay
Diana Therchik	F	40's	Dancer	Toksook Bay
John Alirkar	M	78	Leader, educator, composer, choreographer, singer, drummer, dancer	Toksook Bay
Lizzie Chimiugak	F	80's	Leader, educator, composer, choreographer, singer, dancer	Toksook Bay
George Nevak	M	70's	Singer, drummer, dancer, composer, choreographer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Julia Nevak	F	70's	Dancer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Sophie Agimuk	F	80's	Educator, leader, composer, choreographer, singer, dancer	Toksook Bay
Josephine Asuluk	F	95	Educator, leader, composer, choreographer, singer, drummer, dancer	Toksook Bay
Mary Felix	F	60's	Dancer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay

Table 3 continued...

Joseph Felix	M	70's	Leader, educator, choreographer, composer, drummer, singer	Toksook Bay
Martina Chagluak	F	80's	Leader, composer, choreographer, educator, dancer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Theresa Charlie	F	80's	Leader, composer, choreographer, educator, dancer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Nick Therchik, Sr.	M	70's	Composer, choreographer, drummer, dancer	Toksook Bay
Laura Therchik	F	70's	Dancer, regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Joseph Bill	M	40's	Leader, composer, choreographer, singer, drummer, dancer	Toksook Bay
Andy Charlie, Sr.	M	80's	Leader, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer	Tununak/Bethel
Paul John	F	80	Chief Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), leader, educator, composer, choreographer, singer, drummer, dancer	Toksook Bay
Neva Rivers	F	80's	Elder, educator, choreographer, dancer, singer	Hooper Bay
Lucy Arnakin	F	98	Elder, educator, composer, choreographer, dancer, singer, regalia artist	Tununak/Bethel
Lucy Spark	F	60's	Educator, linguist, dancer	Chevak/Bethel
Agatha John	F	30's	Educator, principle Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, drummer, dancer, leader, singer	Toksook Bay/Bethel

Table 3 continued...

Mark John	M	50's	Educator, Ex. Dir. CEC, dancer, singer, drummer	Toksook Bay/Bethel
Mathias James	M	90's	Elder, leader, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer	Tununak
Peter John	M	60's	Educator, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer	Newtok
Norma Andy	F	70's	Leader, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer, regalia artist	Newtok
Ben Tucker	M	80's	Elder, leader, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer	Emmonak
Norma Westlock	F	70's	Leader, composer, singer, dancer, regalia artist	Emmonak
Margie Harpak	F	40's	Dancer	Emmonak
JoAnne Abraham	F	30's	Leader, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer	Chefornak
Albert Therchik, Sr.	M	100	Elder, composer, choreographer, drummer, singer, dancer, leader	Toksook Bay
Agnes John	F	42	Dancer, singer and regalia artist	Toksook Bay
Chuna McIntyre	M	55	Leader, composer, singer, drummer, dancer, educator, choreographer and regalia artist	Eek
Total F and M 50 participants				
Female 30				
Male 20				
Ages 18-30 5 participants				

Table 3 continued...

Ages 30-60 8 participants				
Ages 60-100 37 participants				

The participant table reveals the multiple situated identity roles each one plays in the dance academy and also provides a perspective of their original and secondary physical locations. The table provides to us a broad visual dichotomy and analysis of how each has a functional role in dance.

#### Frameworks for Data Analysis and Interpretation

The two research analytical frameworks draw from Gee's d/Discourse Analysis Theory (2005) and Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory (1995). These two analysis methodological tools are appropriate in my ethnographic research for the notion of d/Discourse(s) as socially constructed phenomena (Gee, 2005) and the emic notion of themes emerging from the data (Charmaz, 1995).

#### Gee's d/Discourse Theory

Gee (2005) categorized two discourses as a little "d" and a big "D" Discourse. The little "d" discourse is the language-in-use that enables actors to enact activities and identities. The big "D" Discourse is defined as crucially involving a) socially situated identities; b) ways of performing and recognizing characteristic identities and activities; c) ways of coordinating and being coordinated by other people; d) things, tools, technologies, symbol systems, places and times; and e) characteristic ways of acting-interacting-feeling-emoting-valuing-posturing-dressing-thinking-believing-knowing-

speaking description of social languages including listening as well as reading-writing (Gee, 2005, p. 33).

There is a relationship between *Yup'ik* dance and oral narratives as being the essential constructive methods to reveal people's history, society, and culture. Gee's (2005) *Discourse* category will help to define the socially situated identities in dance and stories. These socially situated identities involves the "who" and the "what" of the person in a particular social situation. The key to Discourses is "recognition." When you put language, action interaction, values, beliefs, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others *recognize* you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity), here-and-now, then you pulled off a Discourse (and thereby continued it through history, if only for a while longer) (Gee, 2005, p. 27). Discourse theory directly applies to stories in narrative and dance as both involve the "who" and the "what" in each social event.

Dance repertoire and storytelling have specific situated identities that are presented in the graph below.

Table 4. Situated Identities in Dance and Storytelling

<b>Categories (Gee, 2005, pg. 33)</b>	<b>Discourse of Dance</b>	<b>Discourse of Storytelling</b>
Socially Situated Identities	Composer Director/Conductor Drummer Dancer Singer Educator Participant/Audience	Storyteller Participant/Audience Characters in Story Other Elder Storytellers

Table 4 continued...

Ways of Performing	Types of Dances: <i>Nangercelluku</i> : First dances <i>Yagirat</i> : Motions dances <i>Cukaqautet</i> : Fast beat dances <i>Ciuqitet</i> : Contemporary dances <i>Ingulautet</i> : Slow dances	Types of Stories: <i>Qulirat</i> <i>Qanemcit</i> <i>Qanruyutet</i> <i>Alangrut</i> —scary stories Warrior stories Chants, Songs
Ways of Coordinating	Drummers must coordinate with Dancers/vice versa Directors must coordinate all membership Directors must coordinate with Dancers, Drummers, Singers	Storyteller set the stage and maintained till story was complete—listeners cannot ask questions or interrupt Storytellers coordinate with other orators present
Ways of Interacting	Expert Dancer/Singer in audience can request for repeats for different reasons Audience—Energy level of drum beat can connect everyone into one consciousness “Silent” communication Singers look to the audience for the songs they are going to sing/dance	Storyteller can call on other Storytellers for validation or accuracy Storyteller—looks at who is in the audience and decides/knows which story they will tell
Valuing	Dancing bonds kinship ties and ties between different group Everyone is encouraged to become a dance member Must develop good visual and listening skills Knowing the importance of performance ethics and understanding constructive of knowledge through art	Storyteller—only those that acquire skills can become a Storyteller Everyone should learn to become a good listener
Dressing	Regalia: Headdress, beaded hat, beaded ivory and necklaces, vest, belt, mukluks and <i>qaspeq</i> . <i>Qulirat</i> : Great Warrior ( <i>Apanuugpak</i> ) included on my family fancy dance vest symbolized by wolf or wolverine tail on both sides of parka Parka: Family social identity marker: reveal family and kinship lineage Regalia design: colors, shapes, social stature Fancy regalia: recognized as a symbol of prosperity	Consume the energy of that character—internalizing the character; putting on the persona

Table 4 continued...

Gesturing/Acting	Each song word reveals a story that has an action. Gestures illustrate social action through form of expressive motion.	Storytellers exercise intensive whole body movement including head, arms and sometimes the whole body: illustration
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### Multiple Situated Identities in *Yuraryaraq*

The ethnography in dance requires an understanding of the complex multiple situated identities that exist within the organized and operational dance repertoire. These identities are interconnected and imbedded within the complex social web. For example, members can play multiple overlapping roles such as being a director, singer, drummer, dancer, educator, and regalia artist. This means that one can have authority to select music, identify dancers, direct order of dances, perform, drum, and sing throughout the ceremony. For instance, my grandmother Al'aq and grandfather Teddy Moses were exemplar members who practiced all of these roles as leaders in the community.

The member identities in dance are drummers, dancers, singers, trainers, directors, audience, and spiritual leaders that work together to create ancient forms of prayer through dance. Participants have knowledge and understanding of the dance, music, song, gesture, protocols, organization, structure, leadership, hierarchy, protocols, and laws that each member is expected to follow. Group leaders ensure professionalism, while the song leaders are immersed into song text and rhythm. Drummers collaborate with the singers, dancers, and directors to present aesthetic artistic ritual expressions. *Angalkuut* (shamans) advocate for spiritual connections with human and non-human worlds through the use of drum and dance.

The dancers take on personas of their characters equivalent to what orators enact with their characters. The dance participants awaken the characters in the dance stories by mimicking the actual personal accounts depicted in the composition. For an example, for the gesture for pulling in the seal, the dancers would portray a man with exaggerated grimaces and exert grunts to show the struggle of pulling a heavy carcass to the land. Song conductors use *niirarautet* (dance wands) to inspire and enlighten performers by yelling out phrases such as *pikanirluten* (dance harder) or *anglanaqvall'* (this is joyful).

The audience plays a critical role in dance because they are the recipients and associates of dance Discourse. Discourse that creates the construction of knowledge about old and new family and community life stories expressed through dance literally becomes part of the living society. When the audience consumes and understands the messages of dance, they leave the ceremony with new stories to share with their family and friends.

#### Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory Method

I utilize Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory (1995) method that specifically focuses in the construction of descriptive emerging conceptual themes as voiced by collaborative participants from the ground up. Data contains Indigenous words from the elders, adults, and youth that frame, inform, and help to construct my writing. The ethnographic key is to articulate the participants' stories as Charmaz describes the functional process, the way that "constructs a picture that draws from, reassembles, and renders subjects' lives" (p. 522). Specific Indigenous conceptual themes and definitions

draw the lines, curves, and colors to construct dance ceremonies and their meanings as elaborated by the villagers themselves.

### Research Data Collection

The narratives in dance as described by participants in *Yup'ik* words and images were collected, transcribed, translated, and synthesized. While I gathered data, I kept field notes and research journals of various community and regional cultural events that I experienced and witnessed.

The authenticity of data was checked and validated by Indigenous contributors, university administration personnel, and academic scholars who have knowledge and understanding of the *Yup'ik* language and culture.

### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are (1) inter-generational cultural ritual/language loss, (2) the non-transmittable Indigenous conceptual theoretical framework, and (3) limitations in transcription/translation and transmission of data.

In viewing the data collection, the first limitation is the inter-generational cultural/language loss that is prevalent in the Y/K Delta region. Elders identified ceremonies with specific song categories and types. Today only limited numbers of events are practiced yearly in the region. This implies that there are ancient ceremonies that can be revitalized both at the community and academic levels. The problem may be that elders have forgotten details for special composition styles and lyric.

Elders reveal that the language loss has escalated in the last twenty years. Language is a critical component of composition. The implications of this situation may

cause inter-generational miscommunication, a reasonable problem that could hinder the effort to create healthy community performing groups. The data also reveals that elders are concerned that if the youth continues to lose their language, the dance music could be in jeopardy.

The second limitation is the non-transmittable Indigenous conceptual theoretical framework. There are sacred words, concepts, and ways of knowing that cannot be translated, transmitted or understood by non-local people. For an example, in our village dances, there are socially constructed cross-cousin teasing events where only local people will understand the history, depth, and humor of this relationship. For instance, the teasing cousins re-create songs and actions that are continuations from previous years' incidents that can be remembered by those who have witnessed events from the past.

The final limitation is in transcription/translation and transmission of data. The ancient terms, concepts, epistemologies, and worldviews at times cannot be transmitted to another language. For example, the shamans who play major roles in dances had phenomenal supernatural gifts that cannot be described, defined or explained to the general public. For instance, when a shaman empowers a mask through song and dance, the mask begins to fly and sticks to the face without appendages. This kind of spiritual ritual cannot be articulated in words or be visually transmitted to the outside world.

### Benefits

The benefits of this ethnographic research are that it can be utilized by the community and regional dance groups, academic multicultural and bilingual curriculum development programs and by the tribal leaders. The future research recommendation is

to expand the ceremonial categories to develop a comprehensive overview to capture broader knowledge, language, and the conceptual framework of cyclic rituals.

In this chapter, I have described my ethnographic research methodology in detail that includes the ethnography as an Indigenous tool; challenges to the Western construction of ethnography; *Yup'ik* Indigenous perspectives on the narratives; connections in *Yup'ik*/Indigenous and Western narrative ethnography; an overview of the study, setting, and participants; frameworks for data analysis; and interpretations and limitations of the study. In the next chapter, I will discuss social infrastructure themes of *yuraryarat*.

## Chapter 5

### ***YURARYARAPUT: Our Ways of Dancing***

“*Angalkuut yuarutait tua-i pissuutekluki, kaigassuutekluki pillruut, angalkuut pikait*” (The shamanistic songs functioned as ritual tools for petitioning and they owned them). (Tucker, personal communication, 2008)

#### Introduction

*Yuraryaraput* (our ways of dancing) in Yukon/Kuskokwim (Y/K) Delta were eloquently articulated by distinguished *tegganret* (elders) to be the central focus in *Yupit* socio-cultural conceptual theory, ontology, cosmology, epistemology, Indigenous pedagogy, and significant to our spirituality (J. Alirkar, P. John, B. Tucker, A. Bird, T. Moses, J. Asuluk, J. Asuluk Jr., J. Asuluk Sr., A. Therchik, T. Charlie, S. Agimuk, M. Chagluak, and P. Jacob, personal communication, 2008). *Yuraryaraput* embrace six fundamental key entities identified as *ciuliat* (ancestors), *angalkuut* (shamans), *cauyaq* (drum), *yuaruciyaraq* (song structures), *yurarcuutet* (regalia) and *yurarvik* (dance location). Key entities will be described by utilizing elder narratives to define their meanings as the core aspects of the ceremonies.

In this chapter, I will identify and define the ceremonials and their associated music based on data analysis and existing dance literature. First, I will explain and define the socio-linguistic dance terminologies. Second, I will describe the six fundamental key entities in dance. Third, I will focus in depth on three ceremonial types: *kevgiryaraq*, *yuraqerraaq* or *nangerceciyaraq*, and *ciuqitet*. The reason I chose to focus on these

ceremonies is that research reveals each ceremony to function to connect the people's social, cultural, and spiritual web from the past to the present and into the future.

*Yuraqerraaq* or *nangerceciyaraq* function to initiate children as official dance members, acknowledge their first catch, and importantly to define their cultural identity.

*Kevgiryaraq*, a complex ancient ritual, functions to bond diverse genders; unite local and regional communities; and exhibit genuine family owned historical, social, cultural, and spiritual dance narratives enacted by *qavaruarcuutet* (ways of pretending to sleep).

*Ciuqitet* originally functioned to welcome Messenger Festival guests but recently has been re-defined as common dances.

#### Socio-Linguistic *Yup'ik* Dance Terminologies

The Y/K delta socio-linguistic conceptual terms for enacting dances are referred to as *yuraryaraq*, *nayangaryaraq*, *ellugcaraq*, *arulayaraq*, and *kass'ikegcaraq*.

Kuskokwim delta people call their way of dancing a *yuraryaraq*, while Yukon villagers refer to it as *nayangaryaraq*. *Ellugcaraq* is an ancient form of prayer dance, a way of cleaning a body from physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses. The dance motions depict stroking the body with both arms starting from top of the head down to the feet and repeated on the left side. Mather (1985) defined it in *Yugtun* as “*carrluirauruluku qaini tarmernek tangrraarluni; carrluk qaimek aug'aruarluku qimugtemun-llu naivnguarluku*” (p.100). *Arulayaraq* is defined as a way to enact a motion story where each gesture is connected to specific song text. *Kass'ikegcaraq* is defined as an over-stated body movement in dance that includes the head, neck, arms, body, and legs. It is an elaborate exhibition of exaggerated and unified body movement that awakens the characters and

actions of the song text such as a flying bird, swimming seal, cutting a fish, or a caribou hunt dance.

The accompanying music is called a *yuarun*. Dancers are called *yurartet* while specific multiple forms of gesturing are referred to as *yagirayarat*. Newtok elder Sophie John defines the rule of gesturing as “*nall’artaarluki yagiraciit yuarutet maligtaquluki*” (the rule of gestures is to make articulated arm movements to each song text) (personal communication, 2008). Mrs. Josephine Asuluk explains the motioning process as “*tallirpik ciumek yagterrlainararkauguk*” (right hand is always the first arm to use in all dance gestures) (personal communication, 2008). The women dancers have to *uyungsuaq* (bend knees with each drum beat), *agqerceta’ar* (express keen neck movement), *yagpagtaa*q (articulate arm motions), *kiartevkenateng* (focus eyes on one spot), and *yurakegtarluni* (perfect dance). Male dancers normally *ciisqumiggluteng* (kneel) on the floor as they dance. The exceptions where there is no kneeling are in *puallaryaraq* and *kevgiryaraq*. The composers are called *yuarucistet*, while choreographers are known as *yagiracistet*. *Yuraq* orchestrators known as *agniurtet* or *apallirturtet* specifically ensured unison in song text, drumbeat, music, gesture, and audience response.

#### Six Key Entities in *Yuraryararput*

The six key entities in dance will be defined and discussed in the following order *ciuliat* (ancestors), *angalkuut* (shamans), *cauyaq* (drum), *yuaruciyaraq* (song structures), *yurarcuutet* (regalia), and *yurarvik* (dance location).

Ciuliat (Ancestors)

The ancestors are regarded with respect and believed to be part of the living in our epistemology. The feasts sponsored by the deceased family members were conducted for the purpose of sharing and feeding the dead. Maggie Harpak of Emmonak states:

we believe in namesakes coming back very, very much cause when my nephew died my mom asked us to make handmade items like little socks, gloves, hats, and bags for hunting. We believe that when we give away gifts, we are giving gifts to the loved ones that passed on by giving to their namesakes and their best friends. We get things they loved in life. For example, my sister and brother-in-law bought cigarettes and snuff cause my late nephew liked to smoke. (personal communication, 2008)

The Emmonak documentary film entitled *Uksuum Cayai: Drums of winter* (1988) reveals a conceptual framework that pertain to the dead. An unidentified woman shared:

remembering their dead ones, people go the kashim... and give gifts to everyone there. At that time, they think their dead ones are there with them. That's what people say. They also say when strangers come, the spirits of the dead comes with them. For that reason we try to bring good gifts to the kashim.... Everytime I cook something, I think of my parents cause they leave me. When I have fresh food I wish they could eat it. Now the little one is named after my mother. Me and my sister, we make *akutaq* and bring it to the *qasgiq*. These people know what we

mean. So we have to do something to show how glad we are to have that baby.

(Elders and Kamerling, 1988)

An Emmonak male elder shared a similar perception when he stated,

We bring gifts to the Kashim in remembrance of our dead relatives. We give to our dead by giving to each other. Our flesh, because it is of the earth, will return to the earth. And the things we give away will decay like our flesh. But after death, all that is given will reach our spirits. And our spirits will live on through the giving of others. (Elders and Kamerling, 1988)

The *Yupiit* socio-conceptual theoretical framework conveys a perception that life is immortal. The ancient belief system in the continuum of ancestors' lives brings to our hearts the notion of an intertwined holistic spiritual social web. The term *ciuliat* defines the functional role of ancestors as the leaders. The base term *ciuliaq* means "the leader."

Elders Andrews, Alirkar, and Tucker (personal communication, 2008) stated that when the drum is used in rituals, the spirits of our ancestors join us in dance. Nunakauiaq Traditional Council in Toksook Bay developed a dance theme entitled *Ciuliat Uyangtaakut* (our ancestors look over us), inscribed on a banner that hangs in the gathering hall. The spiritual essence of unity with the ancestors empowers people to embrace celebration and provide welfare for all.

#### *Angalkuut (Shaman)*

The *angalkuut* (shaman) played a functional role in dance. Emmonak elder and leader Tucker eloquently describes the critical role the shamans played in dance:

*makut maani nutarat imkut angalkuut yuarutait tua-i pissuutekluki ,  
kaigassuutekluki pillruut, angalkuut pikait. Watua piciatun atungut watua ski-  
doo-urluteng tuaten tengaurluteng tuaten. Tamaani taugken ellmeng angalkuut  
kaigassuutaitnek, tua-i canek unaken-llu imarpigmek piyukuneng, imarpik  
ciukluku. Kan 'a (arm pointing toward ocean) apalluqluku camek kaigaluni  
pugmek-llu (mammal), imarpik ciukerrlainarluku. Tua-i-llu apalluan kinguani  
nunam ping 'um tamaaken kaigaluteng (first verse focuses on the ocean, while the  
second pertains to land resources), naunrarnek-llu (berries). Tua-i tamaani  
tamakut agayuliyugluteng pitullruut agayulirtet tekpailgata. Agayuliqatarluteng  
tua-i kegginaqirluteng pilallruut tamakut ayuqeliluki tamakut kaigassuutet.  
Cauluteng piciatun kaviaruluteng. Maniluku aperturluku. Cali tua-i kegginaquq  
tauna ayuquciatun nallunrilkemegtun qanrutekluku yugnun taringevkarluku.  
Tauna tauten tamakussuutekniluku, kaigassuutekluku Agayutmek-llu piyunaki.  
(example—paralleled the masks to church pictures today). Tua-i takaqluki pillruit  
kiingita tamakut ukveqellruit Agayutemek taringvailegmeng.” (personal  
communication, 2008)*

In syntheses, Tucker describes and defines the role of shaman as the primary leader, petitioner, and a trans-mediator between the human and non-human spiritual worlds in association with music, dance, and masks. The shaman's professional responsibility was to enact ancient forms of prayers to request for the survival needs of the people. The specified masks depicted survival essentials requested in ceremonies. Tucker argues that in masked dancing, the consecutive verses in music functioned as

tools in human/non-human spiritual mediation. The first verse specified ocean products that include mammals, fish, seashells, and waterfowl. The second verse specified the mainland natural resources such as moose, caribou, mink, wolf, berries, vegetables, and driftwood. Tucker states, “This ancient form of prayer enacted by shamans was a central part of the *Yupit* cultural, social and spiritual way of living long before Christianity taught us about GOD” (personal communication, 2008).

### *Cauyaq* (Drum)

The only instrument in *yuraryararput* is a *cauyaq*, a drum that is accompanied with a *mumeq* (hand-carved wooden drumstick). The drum is made with a round bentwood frame crafted with a designed handle. Traditionally, the *eciq* (drum cloth) was made out of fine mammal/animal stomach lining. In modern days, the material is a store-bought synthetic nylon material. The drum was to be treated with respect and used for ceremonial purposes. In 1982, the late elder Charlie Steve of Stebbins described the impact of bursting the drum as:

“This drum is so sacred when they gather for celebration (*kassiyurqata*). They try especially hard not to burst it. And they tell a person not to go out in bad mood. If a person bursts a drum, it will be like bursting the whole village. If he does not exchange that drum, whether he may be rich or bad, they will treat him as on who has been rejected.

“He will not watch it while he is drumming. And he will not be aware of how the drumstick is. Though he may burst it, it is all right. But if...you were drumming

and you put it down awhile, if I rushed over and punctured it or burst it, I would shatter all the people's minds." (Fienup-Riordan, 1996, p.193)

In relation to this subject, two elders Thomson and John (personal communication, 2008) shared a story with me about a Yukon village elder who was banished from the group for kicking the drum while he was irresponsibly in an irate mode. He quickly became a focal communal subject for breaking one of the cardinal laws of dance.

Emmonak elder Westlock (personal communication, 2008) also remembers witnessing a little child who picked up a drumstick and struck the drum on the floor. The parents immediately went home and brought food to the *qasgiq* because this child had not been formally initiated to the group with a first dance ceremony. The parents were embarrassed and belittled by the mistake of their child.

Elder Alirkar states,

The only instrument used in dancing was the drum that symbolizes love for all inhabitants. And because it's an expression of love, when it is struck, it is like a leader. It is imperative to dance when it is struck. You know that they do not dance without a drum. But they always had a drum when they dance. Food stock was distributed by the means of the drum especially for the disabled. This drum was a tool to petition for food. (personal communication, 2008)

My father, Kangrilnguq Paul John, supported his viewpoint by stating, "When people come in using the drum and singing songs, they bring things from their houses to the

middle of the *qasgiq*. They no longer belong to anyone when they are placed in the middle of the *qasgiq*” (personal communication, 2006).

*Yuaruciyaraq (Yup'ik Dance Song Structures)*

People are respectful of the old songs because the songs have power. Some are afraid of the songs because of the meanings. They say some songs are good because their meanings are good. These songs give strength to our wellbeing and are helpful to our feelings. Our songs assure success in hunting and some in fishing (Elders and Kamerling, 1988).

*Yup'ik* dance song structures in ceremonies are composed and choreographed differently. The ceremonies are accompanied with music and must adhere to specific composition formalities as practiced by our ancestors. The songs vary in text, length, rhythm, drumbeat, and melody. As late elder Akagualria Martina Chagluak from Toksook Bay clearly stated “*Yuarutait ayuqevkenateng*” (ceremonial songs are different) (personal communication, 2008).

Description of the *Yup'ik* Dance Music Structure Table

The *Yup'ik* dance music structure table that I developed provides a detailed composition diagram. I developed this table because it represents a comprehensive descriptive documentation in a format that has not appeared in other literature. The table also illustrates the semiotic nature of *Yup'ik* dance, such that gestures are viewed as sign symbols that operate syntactically and semantically. The table also provides a useful model for analysis. The first column is inscribed in *Yugtun*, and the second column is in English. The table describes a step-by-step composition format from the *ayakata'aryaraq*

(warm-up) stage on to *pamyua* (the encore). The base word *ayag-* means “to go.”

*Ayakata'aryaraq* defines the notion of embarking on a slow journey. The gesture depicts motioning someone to come. The motion begins with the right arm that transforms to the left with each consecutive chorus. While the music leader softly sings the song while tapping the rim of the drum, designated performers migrate to the performance stage. When the warm-up formality is finalized, music starts with the chorus.

After the warm-up, the music structure continues from *agnera* (chorus), followed by *apalluan ciuqlia* (verse one), *agnera* is repeated followed with *cauyarialngua* (voiceless section). I have developed an English term for *cauyarialnguq* as a “voiceless section” because it is all drumming and independent from song context. The orchestrated drumbeat has a narrative that depicts an event that has no relevance to the music text. For example, the motion context could depict a dog howling, a running land animal, flying bird, swimming seal, or killing wild game. The *agnera* is repeated followed by *apalluan kinguqlia* (verse two) and ends with a voiceless section. The *agnera* is repeated prior to the *pamyua* (encore), which is a repeat of the chorus with faster rhythm and energetic melody. The encore is a dance extension requested by the song leader or an audience member.

The *agnera* (chorus) is sung twice in the first section. The second part of the chorus is sung one time right after each *apalluq* (verse). The *agnera* is repeated again in the end of the song text. I highlighted the segregated interludes of the song structure in bold to clarify major song parts. These are the *ayakata'ar*, *agnera*, *apalluan ciuqlia*,

*cauyarialnguq*, *akuliik*: repeat *agnera*, *cauyarialnguq*, *apalluan kinguqlia*,  
*cauyarialnguq*, *pamyua*, and *cauyarialnguq*.

Table 5. *Yup'ik* Dance Music Structure

<b><i>Ayakata'aryaraq</i></b>	<b>Warm-up Chorus</b>
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<b><i>Agnera</i></b>	<b>Chorus</b>
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<b><i>Apalluan ciuqlia</i></b>	<b>First Verse</b>
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<b><i>Cauyarialnguq</i></b>	<b>Voiceless motion</b>
<b><i>Akuliik: repeat agnera</i></b>	<b>Chorus</b>
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<b><i>Cauyarialnguq</i></b>	<b>Voiceless motion</b>
<b><i>Apalluan kinguqlia</i></b>	<b>Second verse</b>
<i>Apalluan kinguqlia</i>	Second verse
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<b><i>Cauyarialnguq</i></b>	<b>Voiceless motion</b>
<b><i>Pamyua</i></b>	<b>Encore</b>
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<i>Agnera</i>	Chorus
<b><i>Cauyarialnguq</i></b>	<b>Voiceless motion</b>

To exemplify the functional role of the dance music structure table, I have transcribed, translated, and identified the gestures to my father Kangrilnguq Paul John's composition entitled "*Anuqenguuq*." In order to define the gestures, I have developed a dance analysis table (shown below) that describes movement positions.

The three-by-three block diagram is equally divided into nine blocks. Each of these blocks has a specific positional gesture descriptor, divided into three separate layers. The first layer represents upper right (UR), upper middle (UM), and upper left (UL). The second layer represents the middle right (MR), middle middle (MM), and middle left (ML). The third layer represents the lower right (LR), lower middle (LM) and

lower left (LL).

The imaginary image of a person stands in the middle of the graph with head located at Upper Middle (UM), torso in Middle middle (MM) and legs in Lower Middle (LM). The dance directions are from the viewpoint of the dancer standing in middle of the diagram.

Table 6. *Yup'ik* Dance Instructional Diagram

Upper left (UL)	Upper middle (UM)	Upper right (UR)
Middle left (ML)	Middle middle (MM)	Middle right (MR)
Lower left (LL)	Lower middle (LM)	Lower right (LR)

To exemplify the usage of the song structure table, I have transcribed, translated, and identified the gestures to my father's composition in full text. First column is *Yugtun* song text, the second column is the English translation, and the final column is the description of the song gestures.

Table 7. Lyrics for Kangrilnguq Paul John's Bristol Bay Wind Song: *Anuqenguuq*

<b><i>Yup'ik</i> song text</b>	<b>English translation</b>	<b>Gesture</b>
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL

Table 7 continued...

<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM

***Apalluan Ciuglia: First Verse***

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Gestures</b>
<i>Nanimi-lli</i>	Where is it	Right arm: MM to UR left arm: MM to UL
<i>Anuqengu-tanga-a?</i>	Wind is blowing at me?	Sway both arms: UR to UL
<i>Ilgayaam</i>	Bristol Bay's	Both arms: LR to UL to LR
<i>Paingani</i>	Upper mouth	Both arms make circular motion at MM
<i>Yaani</i>	Over there to the left	Right arm makes circular motion at MR
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM

Table 7 continued...

<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Anuqengu-tanga-a?</i>	Wind is blowing at me?	Sway both arms: UR to UL
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Anuqengu-tanga-a?</i>	Wind is blowing at me?	Sway both arms: UR to UL

Table 7 continued...

<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rrri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rrri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL

***Cauyarialngua: Voiceless motion to drumming***

<b>Description of voiceless motion</b>	<b>Gesture</b>
Look to right	Right arm on forehead: MM to MR
Look to left	Left arm on forehead MM to ML
Take gun from right	Both arms: MR to MM
Aim to left	Right arm MM, left arm UL
Shoot from left to right three times	Tilt to right, shoot three times from UL to MM

***Akuliik: Middle chorus***

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Gestures</b>
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture

Table 7 continued...

<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM

***Cauyarialngua: Voiceless motion to drumming***

<b>Description of voiceless motion</b>	<b>Gesture</b>
Look to right	Right arm on forehead: MM to MR
Look to left	Left arm on forehead MM to ML
Take gun from right	Both arms: MR to MM
Aim to left	Right arm MM, left arm UL
Shoot from left to right three times	Tilt to right, shoot three times from UL to MM

***Apalluna kinguqlia: Verse two***

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Gesture</b>
<i>Nanimi-lli</i>	Where am I	Right arm: MM to UR left arm: MM to UL

Table 7 continued...

<i>Nunaniryugcianga?</i>	Feeling happy?	Both arms at MR, stretch open outward Both arms at ML, stretch open outward
<i>Pacamqaa</i>	At the tenders	Swing both arms from both sides of hips to UM and back down
<i>Alularviani-ya-a</i>	Steering wheel house	Both arms make circular motion at MM
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM

***Cauyarialngua: Voiceless motion to drumming***

<b>Description of motion</b>	<b>Gesture</b>
Look to right	Right arm on forehead: MM to MR
Look to left	Left arm on forehead MM to ML
Take gun from right	Both arms: MR to MM
Aim to left	Right arm MM, left arm UL
Shoot from left to right three times	Tilt to right, shoot three times from UL to MM

Table 7 continued...

*Agnera: last chorus*

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Gestures</b>
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM

Table 7 continued...

***Cauyarialngua: Voiceless motion to drumming***

Description of voiceless motion	Gesture
Look to right	Right arm on forehead: MM to MR
Look to left	Left arm on forehead MM to ML
Take gun from right	Both arms: MR to MM
Aim to left	Right arm MM, left arm UL
Shoot from left to right three times	Tilt to right, shoot three times from UL to MM

***Pamyua: Encore***

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Gestures</b>
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM
<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM
<i>Anuqenguuq</i>	Wind is blowing	Both arms together: UR to UL to UR
<i>Kayunguriuq</i>	It is beginning to blow harder	Slide right arm : UR to LR to UR Slide left arm: UL to LL to UL
<i>Tua-llu</i>	This is the situation	Both arms: UM

Table 7 continued...

<i>Taivkarauq</i>	Wind is gusting	Right arm: sway from far MR to MM Left arm: sway from far ML to MM
<i>Ungalamaak</i>	From the North	Stretch both arms to ML, make cyclic gesture
<i>Yaakaan</i>	Over there	Stretch right arm to MR, making cyclic gesture
<i>Aya-yi-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Stretch both arms out and bring them together in MM
<i>Ava ya-yii-rri-ya</i>	Chant	Right arm: MM to UP, left arm MM to UL
<i>Ya-a-a-a</i>	Chant	In unison, rotate both arms perpendicular from right to left: Right arm starting LR and left arm starts from UM

***Cauyarialngua: Voiceless motion to drumming***

<b>Description of motion</b>	<b>Gesture</b>
Look to right	Right arm on forehead: MM to MR
Look to left	Left arm on forehead MM to ML
Take gun from right	Both arms: MR to MM
Aim to left	Right arm MM, left arm UL
Shoot from left to right three times	Tilt to right, shoot three times from UL to MM

The examination and evaluation of the functional use of my dance music structure table as a research tool provides an applicable method to describe the organization, complexity, and extensiveness of dance music. Also, my dance analysis method is an appropriate tool to explain the gesture positions and their meanings. In sum, the combined functions of the *Yup'ik* dance music structure (see table 6) and the dance analysis method demonstration (see table 7) provide an understandable way to grasp music context and meaning.

### Yurarcuutet (Regalia)

The dance regalia includes *qaliq* (fancy fur parka), *nasqurrun* (wolf/wolverine/caribou beaded headdress), *uyamik* (beaded necklaces), *tegumiak* (finger mask or woven grass caribou dance fans), *piluguuk* (decorated boots), and ivory/beaded earrings. Men wear round wooden fans with waterfowl or owl feathers. Today, both female and male dancers wear designed *qaspeq* (hand-sewn calico pullover clothing). The late elder Teresa Moses (personal communication, 2008) of Toksook Bay described women's dance regalia as fancy fur parkas and boots made with their very own decorations and emblems that originated from their ancestral family tree. *Yurarcuutet* in dance have essential significance as they identify family stature and associated historical information. The fancy mink, otter, squirrel, and muskrat parka represent traditional designs, colors, and historical stories that are associated with their ancestral history.

### Yurarvik (Dance Location)

The *qasgiq*, a large sod community center, is where people danced in ancient times. In the 1990's, Elder Nick Charles of Bethel defined what *qasgiq* meant for him:

The *qasgit* (plural word for *qasgiq*) were revered, and they were not places to fool around and engage in physical activities without purpose. People never got rowdy inside it. *Qasgit* were respected and honored because they were inhabited by elders.” (Fienup-Riordan, 2007, p. 33)

The *Yup'ik* belief is that the creator and human and non-human spirits reside amongst the people inside the *qasgiq* when they gather to dance (S. Agimuk, personal communication, 2008). Elder Dennis Panruk of Chefnak stated, “*Ciuliat Uyangtakut*. Our ancestors

joined us, looking down at us from the *qasgiq* window” (personal communication, 2008).

This is how he defines the *yuraq* conceptual theme that has been passed down by the ancestors. The *egaleq* (*qasgiq* window) is believed to be the spiritual entranceway that was kept clean of snow or dirt at all times. The window was designed in a rectangular shape and was crafted to be removable. The elder’s philosophy is that when the first drumbeat is struck, the ancestors immediately join in dances.

*Ciuqiyaraq* is the only ceremony that survived the dance banishment. Rituals were consecutively practiced with music and dance. For example, in the *Kevgiq* ceremony the following events were consecutively performed: *tekiqata’aryaraq*, *nernerlugcetaariyaraq*, *ciuqiyaraq*, *iluriuryaraq* and *kingullugciyaraq*. Four out of fifteen ceremonies, the *aaniryaraq*, *qaariitaaryaraq*, *petugtaaryaraq*, and *it’rukaryaraq* were practiced without music.

#### *Yuraryaraput* Table

The *Yuraryaraput* table is an overview of a conceptual framework of cyclic ceremonials that includes these columns: *yuraryaraput* (our ways of dancing), *yuarutait yuraryarat* (ritual music), *piluugutait* (purposes), *yurartet* (performers), and *iralua* (calendar), *yuraqerraaq* or *nangerceciyaraq*, *kevgiryaraq*, and *ciuqitet*. With knowledge provided by the elders, I have identified 21 different cyclic ceremonials and music. The table represents a new comprehensive knowledge and an overview of the cyclic rituals compounded into one framework that is different from what the established literature conducted by non-Indigenous researchers reported. The knowledge as demonstrated by the elders Agimuk, Charles, and Alirkar (personal communication, 2008) reveals an

overlap in interrelated rituals. As an example, the Messenger Festival encompasses five fundamental consecutive activities that are sequentially practiced. These hierarchal processes will be explained in the following section. The functional purpose of the table is to reveal the complexity and richness in social cultural activities most of which are no longer practiced.

Table 8. *Yuraryaraput* (Our Ways of Dancing)

<b><i>Yuraryaraput:</i></b> <b>Our ways of dancing</b>	<b><i>Yuarutait piciryarat:</i></b> <b>ritual music</b>	<b><i>Piluugutait:</i></b> <b>Purpose/s</b>	<b><i>Yurartet:</i></b> <b>Performer/s</b>	<b><i>Iralua:</i></b> <b>Calendar</b>
<i>Cingarturiyaraq</i>	<i>Cingarturissuun</i>	<i>Kumkiyaraq,</i> <i>tegganrem</i> <i>piyugvikengyaraa</i> <i>tutgarminek</i>	<i>Mikelnguut</i> Children	Winter season
<i>Kevgiryaraq</i>	<i>Kevgircuutet</i> <i>Qavaruarcuutet</i>	Genuine traditional Family motions	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Everyone	
<i>Tekiqata'aryaraq</i>	<i>Tekiqata'arcuutet</i>	<i>Kelgimi</i> <i>tekiqata'aryaraq</i> Entrance dances during Messenger Festival	<i>Malruk yurartek</i> Select two dancers	
<i>Ciuqiyarat</i>	<i>Ciuqissuutet</i>	<i>Ciuqlirmi pingayun</i> <i>yurat kevgimi</i> First three dances in Messenger Festival	<i>Malruk wall'u</i> <i>pingayun</i> <i>yurarluteng</i> Select two or three performers	
<i>Qavuaryaraq</i>	<i>Qavaruarcuutet</i>	<i>Arnaungualriit</i> <i>yurartet</i> <i>qavaruarluteng:</i> Women family dances	<i>Atauciq</i> <i>arnaungualria:</i> Female dancer	
<i>Kingullugcissuutet</i>	<i>Kingullugcissuutet</i>	<i>Piarkani</i> <i>kingulluggluku:</i> Teasing cross-cousin during <i>Keviq</i>	<i>Ilurqellriik:</i> cross-cousins	
<i>Kevgiryaraq</i>	<i>Kevgircuutet</i> <i>Qavaruarcuutet</i>	<i>Kelegluki allat nunat</i> <i>yuramun</i> Inviting neighboring dancers	<i>Nunalgutet</i> <i>Tekitat-llu</i> Community and other villagers	
<i>Yuraqerraaq</i> or <i>Nangerteqerraaq</i>	<i>Yuraqerra'arcuun</i> <i>wall'u Nangercecissuun</i>	<i>Pitqerraqan wall'u</i> <i>canrarqan mikelnguq:</i> First catch/event	<i>Mikelnguut</i> <i>yuraqsailnguut-</i> <i>llu</i> Children or adults dance initiation	Yearly

Table 8 continued...

<i>Agayuliyaraq</i>	<i>Agayuliyarcuutet</i>	<i>Agayuliluteng</i> <i>Kegginaqurluteng:</i> Forms of prayer	<i>Angalkuut</i> Shamans	
<i>Nakaciuryaraq</i>	<i>Nakaciurcuutet</i>	<i>Neqkat nakacuita</i> <i>utercetellrit:</i> Return fish and game bladders	<i>Angalkuut</i> <i>nunalgutet-llu</i> Shaman and community	
<i>Elriryaraq</i>	<i>Elrissuutet</i>	<i>Tuqullret umyuaqluki</i> <i>aturirluki,</i> <i>nerevkariluteng-llu:</i> Honoring the dead	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Community	
<i>Ingularyaraq</i>	<i>Ingularcuutet</i>	<i>Ak'allat cukailnguut</i> <i>yurat</i> Ancient slow family dances	Single male or female performer	
<i>Puallaryaraq</i>	<i>Puallarcuutet</i>	<i>Nangermiarcuutet</i> <i>cukalriit yuraryarat</i> <i>qagkumiutaat</i> Fast standing dances, Inupiaq style	<i>Nunalgutet</i> <i>tamarmeng</i> Everyone	
<i>Cukaqautet</i>	<i>Cukqerrsuutet</i>	<i>Cukaqerluteng</i> <i>yurarcuutet</i> Dances with quick segments	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Community	
<i>Cayurcaraq</i>	<i>Cayurcessuutet</i>	<i>Cukalriit yuraryarat:</i> Fast dances	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Community	
<i>Iluriurucaraq</i>	<i>Iluriurcuutet</i>	<i>Ilurani wall-u</i> <i>nuliacungani-llu</i> <i>iluriurulluteng:</i> Teasing cross-cousin	<i>Yuut tamarmeng:</i> All communities	Year round
<i>Yuarulluut</i>	<i>Yuarullugcuutet</i>	<i>Tuunriaqameng</i> <i>angalkuut yuarutait:</i> Specific songs for healing/helping rituals	<i>Angalkuut,</i> Shamans	Yearly
<i>Aaniryaraq</i>	<i>Aanirrsuun</i>			
<i>Qaariitaaryaraq</i>	<i>Qaariitaarcuutetaituq</i>			
<i>Petugtaaryaraq</i>	<i>Petugtaarcuutetaituq</i>	<i>Kaigassuutet</i> <i>kepqutnek</i> Requesting for specific needs	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Community	
<i>It'rukaryaraq</i>	<i>It'rukarcuutetaituq</i>	<i>Qasgimun</i> <i>itqauciluteng</i> Bringing a gift to <i>qasgiq</i>	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Community	

The overview of rituals reveals an account of multiple ceremonies most of which are accompanied with appropriate music and dance styles. Koranda's (1980) article

entitled “Music of Alaskan Eskimos” stated, “Their musical style is recognizably Eskimo, for the Eskimos differentiate rather clearly between their kind of music and other kinds, such as classical, Western, and rock” (p. 347). She identified Eskimo music and performing practices to be derivatives of the natural and social environment. These include shaman hunting power songs, fortune songs, joking partner songs, love and friendship songs, and commemoration for first occasions. She stated that the Messenger Festival was a hunting festival with family and personal songs. The article reveals that music texts for the feast are not known today and Alaskan Eskimo musical literature excluded war songs. Her perspective on the purpose, music, and songs of the feast contradicts research evidence where elder recollections of the Messenger Festival claimed it to be directly related to the era of war. In this section, I will fill in the missing gaps by providing examples about the origin of the festival, music, and presenting a war dance story.

According to elder’s Agimuk, Bird, Tucker, P. John, Moses, Alirkar, and Chagluak (personal communication, 2008) the construction of knowledge in the *Kevgiryaraq* ceremony include four segments illustrated in the table below. I will identify these events and their associated music.

Table 9. *Kelgiryaraq* Dance and Song Structure

<i>Kevgiryaraq</i>	<i>Kevgircuutet</i> <i>Qavaruarcuutet</i> : Messenger Festival music	Genuine traditional family motions	<i>Nunalgutet</i> Everyone
<i>Tekiqata’aryaraq</i>	<i>Tekiqata’arcuutet</i> : Welcome music	<i>Kelgimi tekiqata’aryaraq</i> Entrance dances during Messenger Festival	<i>Malruk yurartek</i> Select two dancers

Table 9 continued...

<i>Ciuqiyarat</i>	<i>Ciuqissuutet</i> : Music and dance for guests	<i>Ciuqlirmi pingayun yurat kevgimi</i> First three dances in Messenger Festival	<i>Malruk wall'u pingayun yurarluteng</i> Select two or three performers
<i>Qayuaryaraq</i>	<i>Qavaruarcuutet</i> : Pretend to sleep music <i>Angutet</i> <i>anguaruarcuutait</i> : male qayaq music	<i>Arnaungualriit yurartet qayuarluteng</i> : Women family dances <i>Angutet qayuarluteng</i> : Male pretend to travel on qayaq	<i>Atauciq arnaungualria</i> : Female dancer <i>Atauciq angutngungualria</i> : Male dancer
<i>Kingullugciyaraq</i>	<i>Kingullugcissuutet</i>	<i>Piarkani kingulluggluku</i> : Teasing cross-cousin during <i>Keviq</i>	<i>Ilu'urqellriik</i> : Cross-cousins

The *Kelgiryaraq* (Messenger Festival) dance and song structure table context is described in detail in the following section. First, the origin of the Messenger Festival is explained, followed by the description of the child's first dance ceremony and the common dance.

#### The Origin of *Kelgiryaraq* (the Messenger Festival)

The origin story of the *kelgiryaraq* as told by Nelson Islander elders defines social life transformation from interregional warriors to cooperative friendship. Fienup-Riordan, in her book entitled *Boundaries and passages: Rule and ritual in Yup'ik Eskimo oral tradition*, described the story:

One of the elders was making a drum and *enirarautet* [pointers], three of them.

Then they sent out one person, not caring whether or not he got killed. There were two of them.... So they sent to their enemy taking those things that the elder had made, and that elder told them exactly what to say. Nothing written only spoken.

So when they arrived at their enemy they waited across from their village and

waited for the night fall. There must have been two of them if not three of them.

They were across the river.

When the people subsided from walking around they went across to the *qasgiq*.

So they appeared holding a drum and pointers. When the enemy saw them they said to them, “Let us stop fighting each other, but let us use these that we should use during the winters. Having established villages not far from each other like this, let us stop fighting one another, but using these let us be antagonists! (1994, p. 325)

Elder Mike Angaiak (1988) shared a similar origin story with two men, when he was an elder-in-resident in Cultural Knowledge of Native Elders class at University of Alaska Fairbanks. This version is different in that it includes a wooden colored triangular stand with descending colors of red, black, and white. He described these paintings to be symbolic representations of the dynamic social transformation. The red color symbolizes bloodshed from war, while black is a sign of social depression and white represents modern life with peace and harmony. Today, these symbolic colors are used to remind us of this transformation in artwork designs such as regalia, hunting equipment, and tools.

The stories contain a similar message in that the drum is an instrument of peace. Narrative differences are in the accessories that accompanied the drum. The first story comes with three pointers, while Angaiak’s version is supplied with a symbolic stand. Three pointers were used in the Messenger Festival to call for gifts from performers, while essential colors are represented in arts. As a result, I argue that the elders’ critical conceptual theory to end the war and the bravery warrior volunteerism has caused a

major historical turning point, where social dynamic shifting transgressed from warlike to that of a harmonious social welfare system.

*Kelgiryaraq* (the Messenger Festival)

*Kelgiryaraq* was an elaborate complex ceremony that was well organized, orchestrated, and engineered by village leaders. Ritual processes include *tekiqataaryaraq* (a way of slowing approaching into the village dances), *nernerrlugcetaariyaraq* (a way of disrupting the eating, high level dance in front of hungry guests), *ciuqiyaraq* (a way to conduct common dances), *cukaqeryaraq* (a way of practicing quick motion dances), *qavaruaryaraq* (a way of dancing Messenger Festival motions), and *kingullugciyaraq* (a way of teasing cross-cousins). These interwoven Messenger Festival events represent diverse music and dance styles.

The kinship system is a core aspect of the Messenger Festival. The performers represented a family that consists of a father, mother, and a child. This is why there were three verses in music composition. Two verses were composed when the parents were represented. For example, I can recall my own dance enactment pretending to be a child in the Toksook Bay *Kevgiryaraq* in 1973. I was trained by my grandmother to dance three family-owned motion dances identified as the whale hunting dance, the mouse food gathering, and the preparation of a bearded seal intestine raincoat. My male counterpart enacted paddling dance motions at my side.

According to elders Charlie and Alirkar (personal communication, 2008)

*Kevgiryaraq* (the Messenger Festival) and *Kelgiryaraq* (Inviting-In Festival) define an individual social event. The reason these elders addressed their conceptual theory is that

the process of invitation for the festival is called *kelgiryaraq*. The base word is *keleg-* that means “to invite.” The validation on the relationship of these rituals enhances for me the truth in the construction of knowledge on dance that I have learned from the leaders. In contrast, the literature presents these rituals as separate practices.

There are discrepancies in dance literature that relate to the proper classification, identification, and categorizations of rituals and music styles. The probable cause is that scholars’ and participants’ accounts may be diluted due to the fact that the majority of these have been banished for years. The underlying issue in anthropological and social science research is that the outsider perspective can contribute to confusion or misrepresentation of information. A classic example of this incident is exemplified by Hawkes’ (1913) and Mather’s (1985) differing opinions on masked dances.

The *Aithukaguk*, the *Kelek* (Inviting-In Feast) referred to by E. W. Hawkes (1913) is observed in the month of January, after the local rites, the Asking Festival, and the Bladder Feast have been completed:

The “Inviting-In” Feast is a matter of great moment to the Eskimo, for on it depends the success of the hunters. It differs from the Bladder Feast in that while the latter placates the spirits of animals already slain, the *Aithukaguk* is an appeal to the spirits represented by the masks, the totemic guardians of the performers, for future success in hunting. In the Eskimo ritual, this festival is only equalled in importance by the *Aithukatukhtuk*, the Great Feast of the Dead. (Hawkes, 1913, p.1).

Hawkes also claims that they didn't dance for pleasure alone but also to feed the families: "If they did not dance, the spirits who attended the feast would be angry, and the animals would stay away. The shades of their ancestors would go hungry, since there would be no one to feed them at the festivals" (Hawkes 1913, p. 3).

Mather argues that Hawkes may have mistakenly identified the mask ceremony as *Kelek*:

*Taukut nunat yuraryullrat kegginaquryaraullrungatuq. Uugun nallunaituq yuut caciryaraita arcaqalriarullrat. Ilait yurat pinricunailnguuluteng tamaani. Cat yuit pitarkat-llu yuit cakaarluki pillerkait alingurnaqluni ellaitni.* [The ceremony villagers wanted to perform was possibly the masking ceremony. The evidence is revealed by the description of how people perceived importance in cultural practices. During that time period, it was critical to maintain some dances. People feared to disrespect the spirits including the spirits of animals and game.] (Mather, 1985, p. 195, translation mine).

Although Hawkes and Mather offer differing opinions on proper classification, both conclude that masked dances functioned to appease human and non-human spirits. In addition, Nelson Island elders Agimuk, Alirkar, and Moses (personal communication, 2008) claimed masks were also used in the Messenger Festival. Elder Bird of Emmonak shared an eyewitness account of a masked dance:

*Ellangua maaten murilkua yuraraqluteng uksumi. Carrarnek it'ruqu'urluteng waten ilateng taivkarluki piaqluki. Yup'igtarrlainarnek kass'artarnek avungqevkenateng. Taugaam kegginaqurluteng amllernek-llu yuarutnek*

*pivkenateng. Kegginaquit-am ayuqevkenateng canguarluteng pinguat kaviat, ungunssiruut. Tua-i kaigatekluki-gguq tamakut kaigaurutekluki aperluki makut maani man'a-llu Kuigpak aperluku neqnek kaigaluteng. Kaigatekluki tamakut yuarutet tamakut. Ilait tauten muragnek tamakunek tua-i kaigaurutekluki tamakut maa-i ilait aturlaraput. (personal communication, 2008)*

To synthesize, Bird witnessed winter invitational dances where people brought small gifts to the *qasgiq*. Diverse masks depicted visuals of natural resources that include red foxes and edible animals. Masks functioned to petition for items that are needed by the people, specifically those that addressed the Yukon River and its abundance in resources. Songs that request for driftwood are still practiced today. His personal narrative validates that the petition songs are still practiced today, text unchanged from original context.

Bird (personal communication, 2008) testified that masks functioned as forms of prayer, specifically in *Agayuliyararput* and *Kelgiryaraq*. There seem to be a parallelism and similarity in how people perceive masking as a form of prayer with gift distribution. My argument on Hawkes' and Mather's interpretations is that several ceremonials involved enacted forms of prayer using masks. For example, *Agayuliyararput* specified forms of prayer sponsored and organized by powerful shamans. *Kelek* with similar intentions and reasons was less serious with flexibility to have humorous and harmonious masks. It is evident that masked dances were performed in various cultural practices such as *kelek*, *kevgiryaraq*, and *Agayuliyaraq*.

### Curukaryaraq (Attack Ceremony)

The *kevgiq* ceremony involved bonding of two opposing villages for dance and gift distribution. Fienup-Riordan states, “Beginning where war left off, *Kevgiq* on Nelson Island was also referred to as *Curukaq* (from *curug-* “to go over to physically attack”) (1994, p. 326). The hosts were referred to as *inglut* (enemies) of the guests who were the *curukat* (attackers). During *curukaq* they had only one person to start the songs, one whose voice will not crack, a smart person (T. Moses, personal communication, 2008). Villagers who attacked the other village presented one or two of their best female performers. During the attack, the women with exquisite regalia performed motions without audience eye contact. Teasing cousins attentively observed and waited for minor mistakes and when she accidentally opens her mouth they yelled *katagtuten* (you fell off) (Chimiugak, personal communication, 2008).

### Kevgak (Messengers)

The messengers sent to another village to deliver formal invitational announcements were called *kevgak*, two fast runners. The leaders selected the qualified men who are intelligent and physically fit. Elder John Moses said, “so they go tell them and having informed them that they were messengers that when they were ready they would come to invite them” (personal communication, 2008).

The second set of messengers who went to deliver the final announcement were referenced as *paiqak* (two that meet the enemy), formerly called *kevgaq*. The message was *amci-gguq pinariaci tua-i curukarci* (it is time for you to attack). The term for message delivery is called *qalurraq*, the process when messengers reveal what is needed

and mention everything (Fienup-Riordan, 1994, p. 331). Elders said it this way: “*Amkut amani qaneryararkaitnek qanemcikanak qalurrarlutek*” (T. Moses, P. John, personal communication, 2008). Messengers were rewarded with gifts during *kevgiq*.

P. John exclaimed one critical aspect of *kevgiq* referred to as *aqvakngaq* (one who has been fetched from the other village):

*Tuamta-ll' call' kevgimi atutukiit pinricesciiganaku inglukamta nunalgutiit aterpaggluku waken call' wangkuta nunamtenek inglulirluku aqvakngamek acirluku wall' angayuanek. Tua-i cali tauten pitullruluteng aqvakngangqerrluteng. Aqvakngat-llu nunat taukut qacignarqenrilngurmek piyukunegtegggu neryugcecugngaluku capernarqelrianek neryugcecugngaluku piyukunegtegggu. Paivnganrilngurnek neqkanek. Tamaa-i taukuk ciuqliik kevgak ayallrek qanrutkan'gu tauna imna aqvakngaq neryugniluku camek, tua-i apellranek taumek nunakek-llu allanek pikangengnaqluku canek tua-i navrutaarluki cateng pitullruamegteki. Tauna nunat taukut pingqerqata taumek naverrluku apqengaanek tua-i taumek neqkangaqluku. Tuaten tua-i piaqluteng ellait taukut pikailkuneng. Pikangqerraqameng tua-i neryukngaanek pivkaraqluku. (personal communication, 2008)*

The messengers were also responsible to deliver an invitation to a specified guest from the opposite village called *aqvakngaq*. The host villagers also identified their own *aqvaqngaq*. The honored *aqvakngaq* had to request delicate meal menus in advance that they ate during the welcome reception. The particular food was usually a highly prized produce that was hard to find. For example, one may request for a fresh king crab that is

not easy to acquire in mid-winter. Once the opposing villagers heard what both *aqvaqngak* wanted for their reception, villagers worked diligently to provide their needs. Bartering was a common practice during this exchange. The Yukon people referred to the *aqvakngaq* as a *nasquq* (head).

Finally, when all was in readiness, the hosts sent a third set of messengers to fetch the guests: “When all preparations are completed and the dance songs completed them they get the invited village” (Fienup-Riordan, 1994, p 332).

I remember the last *Kevgiq* in Toksook Bay was held in 1973. My paternal grandmother Angayiq spoke on the VHF radio to tell the Nightmute elders that they were prepared for *Kevgiq*. She was obviously one of the two messengers. She received gifts at the community hall.

The final process was the meeting of the villagers called *kassuuskuneng*. This stage is where an abundance of specified gifts were provided accompanied by music and dance.

### Song Composition

Song composition primarily involved constant investigation of the enemy and critical disciplinary circumstantial evidence, a process defined as *canganarqeqallrit*. This means was used to identify “offensive” character behavior and dialogic practices of the participants. People adhered to their cultural values and principles in fear of becoming victims of public ostracism, performed in song and dance. The purpose of the incrimination is to counsel and enhance the proper way of living. The level of judgment

on misconduct was based on a minor language expression or a major unfortunate way of life.

To exemplify, I will describe how two different people became victims of dance and composition. The first incident happened to my grandmother's half-sister who commented to a child, "Your earrings are beautiful." The listener behind the shelf spoke out "We shall bring you many gifts." Instantly, she realized that she had become a victim for needing gifts like her earrings. She told me that she was embarrassed for making this mistake. The family stood her in the middle of the community to give her many presents.

The second incident took place at a Toksook Bay dance several years ago. Women from five surrounding villages got together to present things to our male cousin in public for lack of supporting for his family. The elder women spoke first to testify that he was sleeping a lot, lazy, and not fit to be a provider. We brought him many gifts that included a blanket, basin, soup, hunting, and survival tools. The psychological counseling was for him to change his way of life to seek prosperity. These distinct social practices reveal samples of how one earns the title of *canganarqeqallrit*. The rules applied to other social practices that include Messenger Festival music.

T. Moses stated: "*Makut-llu maa-i angutet yuaruciurluteng. Una tua-i yuaruciniaqluku-ll' cetamanek tamaa-i angutet yuaruciurluteng ellait. Kiagmek ayagluteng yuaruciuratulliniluteng. Tamaa-i tauten pikunegteki elissautekameggnek. Ayangermeng tamaa-i yuarutpiamek elissarluteng ellaita pimeggnek mengluteng*" (These men around here composed songs. They said a man had made up to four songs. They

composed during the summer season, music to be shared with villagers. Even in the wilderness they created real songs, their very own) (personal communication, 2008).

*Tekiqata'aryaraq:*

*Tekiqata'aryaraq*, the first part of *kevgiq*, functioned as a way to honor and celebrate the arrival of the guests to the Messenger Festival. The literal meaning is to “arrive slowly.” Two songs were composed and performed by two women in front of their guests. “*Kangiracilegnun yurarcuutenguut tekiqata'arautet*” (P. John, personal communication, 2006). My father said these dances are for *kangiracilegnun* (unexplained ancient term). Alirkar (personal communication, 2008) added that the dance motions are different that depict human social actions which are continued family traditions. Elders shared the knowledge that the music style resembles the kind of music we dance to today.

*Ciuqiyaraq (Common Dance)*

The second phase of the *kevgiq* performance is called *ciuqitet* (front dances). The data provided by my parents stated that common dances were *agayu-* or a form of prayer. Three consecutive *ciuqitet* songs were performed in front of guests following the *tekiqata'aryaraq*. Different masks were seen being used by the dancers. The public was restricted from joining them.

*Nernerrlugcetariyaraq (Disrupting the Meal)*

Elder Lizzie Chimiugak (personal communication, 2008) said *kevgiq* was referred to as *nernerrlugcetaaritmek* (a way to disrupt the guests' meal). The guests were welcomed with music and dance that was performed while guests ate food and *akutaq*. The host's goal during the performance of the “songs of indigestion” was to embarrass

and inflate members of the guest village (Fienup-Riordan, 1994, p. 334). The music style is the same as the *qavaruarcuutet* (pretend sleeping songs) (P. John, personal communication, 2008).

The difference between the *cuiqitet* and *qavaruaryaraq* (family motion dances) is that *cuiqitet* have music, text, and gesture connection, while family motions remain unchanged.

#### *Qavaruaryaraq* (Family Motion Dance)

The main part of *kevgiq* was called *qavaruaryarya* (pretending to sleep) also known as *yurapiaq* (“real” or “genuine” dances) (Wallen, 1990, p.10). The ceremony was critical because it functioned as a way to reveal people’s socio-cultural conceptual narratives of the past. Three music leaders who stood in the middle of a wall with dance wands were the *niiraraartet* who orchestrated the ritual. The middle person was called the *mengurasta* (one who started music), while others were called *eriniasta* (those that voiced). Two *kevgak* (messengers) sat on either side of the leaders. The whole lead group is referred to as *apallirtulriit* (those singing verses). The verses were referred to as *yuraukarautet* (Alirkar, personal communication, 2008). The drummers sat on the floor, facing the leaders. The *agniurta* (song text expert) also sat on the floor next to the messenger.

I remember watching my grandmother, Macung Piiyuuk Frances Usugan, standing in the middle holding a decorated wand. Her elaborate attire included wolf and wolverine beaded headdress, colorful beaded necklaces, ivory earrings, and fancy mukluks. Her voice echoed across the gathering place as she called out the performers to

bring in specific gifts. My grandmother, Al'aq Angaiq Anna Kungurkak, was a messenger who received gifts on the floor. Her attire was similar except she did not wear a headdress. My grandparents had to be remarkable for their critical roles, requiring keen memory skills for music, traditional names, gifts, and categories of performers.

Performers waited outside the door while they waited for music. The gift managers organized gifts throughout the ceremony. Their responsibility was to keep performers in line along with their gifts. I remember the excitement of dancers, specifically with the children. The energy was aesthetic and energetic. Everyone helped out in gift presentation. The main dancer stood in front of the line holding the requested gift, while the rest assisted with accompanying products. When the lead singer called out the name, we marched in bringing gifts, swaying them above our heads and screaming a unified sound of joy together. The singers swayed their wands quickly as we placed gifts in the middle of the floor and danced paddling motions in unison. The house was filled with enthusiastic singing, dancing, and laughter.

At the end of each song, the audience mimicked animals, mammals, and birds. I recall listening to what sounded like natural birds calling *qau, qau; lak, lak; quter, quter; wee, wee; and kuk, kuk, kuk*. This special moment in celebration where enthusiasm and energy hit the highest limit made me feel as if the human and non-human spirits had truly joined us.

#### *Qavaruaryaraita Kangiit (Meanings of Their Dance Narratives)*

The dance narratives in *kevgiq* were the continuations of essential social, historical, cultural, and spiritual practices. Music rhythm that was fast paced meant that

dancers also had to perform energetically. Elders educated dancers about multiple ways of storytelling through dance or *ciuliat tunluki* (Agimuk, personal communication, 2008). Family dance repertoire included a variety of warrior tales, mouse food hunt, whale hunt, mammal hunt, cleansing seal intestine, construction of fish trap and wooden sled, ghost tales, and lice. One-hundred-year old Aata Therchik stated that people had their very own motions. He specifically enjoyed the lice dance and described it this way:

*Amiigmek tua-i tauna yurararkaq pugciquq neglilini man'a* (dancing about a movement of arms and head around the ruff). *Yuukuni-ll' nutaan tua-i yuukirluni. Neresciqnguarluni kumegluni. Anglanilallrubrianga neresciqngualrianek* (The one who is going to dance surfaced from the door in middle of the floor, dancing about a movement of arms and head around the ruff. When the dance comes up on the floor, motions changed to the wiggling of upper torso, swinging arms back and forth (symbolism of itchiness). I liked watching lice dances). (personal communication, 2008)

The positioning of arms in these dances is essential because they are symbolic tools for proper narration. The first gesture in *qavaruaryaraq* was the process of waking up from sleep. The right hand held parka hood in the neck area, while the left arm is stretched out. Arms are rotated once. The second motion is to push away the headrest and pillow by swaying both arms outward (upper right, lower right) twice on each side. This motion procedure sets the tone in preparation for the main story dance. Only female performers practice this initial dance.

Dance participants distributed small gifts to the messengers and leaders prior to their music. The three performers walked in one-by-one from outside dressed in beautiful regalia. The grandparents accompanied the children in this process.

The first part of the *Kevgiryaraq* dance ceremony is the presentation of family-owned testimony called *anerquciaryaraq*. The procedure is the presentation of a child by the grandparent to address ancestral family stories. P. Asuluk described this ritual:

*Wangkuta taugaam cat atulput qanrutekluki pilaqait augkut-llu yuraraqameng itruciluteng qayagaurumaluteng piaqamta yurallemteni tamakut waten*  
*“talligkaa, ukuk callruak?” Qanrutekluki-llu talligkaa ukuk callruak,*  
*qanruteklukek “talligka, talligka kepliarcutegkaa.” Canek tamakunek taugaam qanrarkauluta wangkuta atullemtenek* (Only we can share those things that we experienced, when we are called upon to dance and bring in the gifts. They would yell out like this, “my arms, what have they accomplished?” Then they explained what the arms have done “my arms, my arms the ones I use to cut grass.” We can only talk about those things we have done in life). (personal communication, 2008)

My paternal grandfather’s oath related to the notion of governing communities that my father practices today when he honors his grandchild. The audience listens quietly to these important family messages passed down by our ancestors.

### *Kingullugciyaraq*

The teasing song, referred to as *kingulluggluki-gguq*, occurred at end of *kevgiq* dancing that was initiated by an opposing cousin in the audience. The function of this

event was to ostracize him or her in public. The teaser promptly stood up to sing as the dancer quietly listened. People laughed as they watched the teasing exchange. Gifts are presented to the dancer at the end.

For an example, Mr. Mickey Abraham composed a teasing song for *Nupigaa* entitled *ikiicugnimek narumaluku* (the awful smelling being) in Nightmute. My grandmother Angayiq defended her by composing a reciprocal teasing song entitled *paagkun qilagkun-lli* (through the sky) the following year. This song was originally from the village of Mekoryak. Village women were offended by his words and decided to take revenge for her. The teasing exchanges went on for many years (Chimiugak, personal communication, 2008).

*Yuramek Upciyaraq* (Planning Process for Dance)

The planning process for ceremonies involved community collaboration, organization, and management. Preparation involved two groups: the children's families and the community dance leaders. While families plan their own celebration, the local leaders plan at the larger stage by setting up rehearsals and inviting the neighboring villages.

The grandparents, parents, and extended relatives bond to prepare the family speech presentation, present the namesake of the child, prepare fur items for regalia and place mate, composition context, prized gifts, and identify participants. Family gender roles are defined in this planning process to assign duties for the multitalented members such as professional seamstress, male hunters, choreographers, and composers. In

general, the male hunting and gathering expedition promptly begins for edible and usable natural products for the gift distribution.

The women normally stayed home to sew brand new dance regalia that include *nasqurrun* (a beaded wolf/wolverine/seal headdress), *qes'utaq* (a beaded sealskin pullover vest made with bearded seal, wolf tail, and wolverine tassels), *naqugun* (belt), a new *qaliq* (fancy parka), and *piluguuk* (tassled mukluks). In addition to the child's clothing all participating family members also wear matching new clothing. The children are physically stood in front of the audience during the presentation on top of prized pelts. Place mates include rare natural resources such as wolf, wolverine, otter, mink, sealskin and foxes. Upriver Yukon people normally prefer coastal sealskin, while the coastal people present wolf, wolverine, and mink.

Gifts include fabric, fur, guns, shovels, oars, jackets, mukluks, handmade socks, gloves, fur hat, hunting equipment, and tools. People have told me that they have seen snow machines, televisions, and other prized valuable being given away in various villages.

*Yuraqerraaq* or *Nangerceciyaraq* (the First Dance)

*Yuraqerraaq* or *Nangerceciyaraq* is the first dance ceremony that is a remarkable family and community-based event that functions as a way to honor the child's first successful hunting and gathering endeavor, recognizes a child's significant mark in human development, and importantly to officially initiate the children to become a member of the community dance group. Elder's Agimuk and Chagluak (personal communication, 2008) define possible reasons for first dance as *pitqerraallrukan wall'u*

*avaliciqerluteng* (to honor their first catch or to come up with a reason to celebrate).

These are appropriate reasonable accounts to present the child to the public. The families petition to have the child's first dance could itself initiate a reasonable cause to have invitational dances (P. John, personal communication, 2008).

The children who were not honored with first dance were not allowed to stand in the middle of the *qasgiq*. One reason for the first dance is to present the child's *Yup'ik* identity where a respected elder explains the namesake of the child. Naming is essential because in *Yup'ik* epistemology names are believed to be reincarnated into the next generation. Because of this belief system, the child is regarded as the namesake returning back to the community. It is an honor and a humbling experience for the family to present the child. When the ceremony has been successfully presented, the child will have earned their right to dance in the middle of the *qasgiq*. The fact that people revered and honored the *qasgiq* laws (Tucker, Jacob, Bird, and Agimuk, personal communication, 2008) was why first dances were encouraged. In the following, I will provide first dance ceremony narratives provided by Jolene John, LaLa Charles, and elder Nick Therchik, Sr.

Arnaqulluk: Jolene John

The first story shared by my sister, Arnaqulluk Jolene John, then a Manager of the Sub-Regional Clinic in Toksook Bay, defines first dance:

*Tayima yuraqerraalriit iliini ciuqlikaca 'arr' ca imna pillrat pilalriit, taugaam akaurcan augkuk paniigka caqerraaryaurtellruut taugaam Kass'ani uitallruamta nunarpagni tamakut pitekluki yurarceteksaataak aatama taugaam tua-i iciugg' nunamun qanrutkellruak paqnayulriarunilukek mat'umek piciryaramtenek. Ak'a*

*imumi pitqerraalriit augkut like neqcuaraat, cali-llu naunrat pinrilengraata taugaam paqnayulriarulutek* (The first dance celebration as I understand the meaning, seems to function as a way to commemorate the child's first productive accomplishment in life. Since my own daughters were raised in the city our dad composed and presented my children to the community with a given purpose that the girls were curious to learn about the indigenous village lifestyle. Traditionally, the purpose of the first dance would be presented for catching small fish and for picking salmonberries. The reason for my daughters' first dance presentation was to tell the public that they were curious to learn about village life. The title of the song was called "*paqnayuglua, yuraryartulrianga,*" or "I went to dance because of my curiosity"). (personal communication, 2008)

### Lala Charles

Lala Charles, Manager of Sub-Regional Clinic in Emmonak, shared her first dance experience in the video documentation about Yukon River Invitational dancing entitled *Uksuum Cayyai: Drums of winter*:

When I first danced, I remember it was on a weekend, on a Friday. I was in school that day. I was very excited. I felt very special because older folks looked at me and said, "you're going to be very nice tonight." I was nervous. I was excited, and I couldn't wait for the night to come. When our dance started, there was whole bunch of gifts right in front of us dancers. And they put sealskin right in the place where I was supposed to stand. They set it up and everything. I was dressed in my belt, my new dance fans and my new *qaspeq*. And that was the first time I was

gonna facing the crowd. I walked out. Dad brought me out there and he placed me where he wanted me to dance. I felt really afraid. I almost couldn't remember what to do. I guess my uncle thought that it was time for me to begin dancing in public. My father, he sort of explained it to me a little bit. He said that in this way a first dancer is looked upon and recognized as a member of the community. I was afraid, I was scared and I couldn't look at anybody. I couldn't move my eyes. I just looked at one little spot. I just remember looking at one nail on the floor. I couldn't move my head. My uncle told me to move my head back and forth with my arms. But that was too much for a first dancer. (Elders and Kamerling, 1988)

Nick Therchik, Sr.

Nick Therchik, a Catholic deacon, got involved in dancing as an adult. Billy Lincoln, Sr., inspired him to join the drummers. Nick is my *ataataq* (paternal uncle). He composed a song entitled "*Al'rapaulua Ayagataanga*" ("I took me around as a passenger") and used it to honor his grandchild.

The primary function of first dances is for *kumegyugaqameng pituit* (a feeling of spiritual enlightenment between grandchild and grandparent). It is hard to translate into English because Western culture does not seem to have a similar expression.

Twenty of Therchik's grandchildren have been honored. One of his grandchildren, Ayagina'ar, was honored twice. It is an uncommon practice to initiate a child more than once. I asked his mother why she decided to have a second dance. Her response was because she wanted a prosperous life for him. She believed that giving gifts to the needy, elderly, and the public would return with an abundance of luck. Her prayers

are for him to have many blessings in life. In this sense, honoring can be defined as a form of prayer.

The two women defined the first dance ceremony. Jolene provided an example of her girls that proves it is never too late to honor a child. LaLa provided a vivid narrative of how she felt the spiritual connection of her family and community. Therchik described the humbling role as a grandparent being a composer, gift provider with honor and dignity. Mather (1985) compared the first dance with the Christian baptismal rite.

#### First Dance Song Composition

The first dance composition is like a form of prayer, as Therchik exemplifies in his song about hope and love. Grandparents usually composed music. Another option would be to hire and pay an expert choreographer. Examples of past songs include halibut fishing, hunting for mammals, searching for land animals, and hope for youth prosperity.

Elder Peter John from Newtok shared his sixty-five-year-old wife's first dance song:

<i>Taiguraunga unani</i>	I am arriving down there
<i>Taiguraunga unani</i>	I am arriving down there
<i>Uivuraanga unani</i>	It is circling me down there
<i>Aya iya rra ya iya</i>	chanting
<i>Aya iya rra ya iya</i>	chanting
<i>anga rra rra</i>	chant
<i>Iingi irri i</i>	the end

The song is about a flying object that flies around a person. He was hesitant to share the verses because my nephew, a composer, was listening. Pointing and laughing at him, he said somebody might steal it. He stated the song was composed sixty years ago and has not been practiced since then. It is obvious that this song is a specially owned music piece.

*Ciuqitet (Common Dances)*

*Ciuqitet* (common dances), part of *Kevgiryaraq*, are about the socio-cultural activities of people in the past and present. The word base *ciuqaq* means the one in front. Today many dancers in Alaska practice both old and new versions of common dancing. In the past twenty years, dancing has been revitalized in communities and schools. Many communities, including those ruled by Christianity, have become leaders in the revitalization process. For example, the village of Kasigluk, a Moravian village, has created a remarkable group of young dancers called the *Akula* Dancers. The villagers have not danced for many decades. A local native educator invited Toksook Bay leaders (my late grandmother *Piiyuuk* Frances *Usugan* and Billy Lincoln, Sr.) in the 1980's to educate them about dancing. The elders were inspired and became actively involved in the group. Today, the *Akula* dancers perform in regional gatherings such as the *Cama-i* Festival in Bethel, singing their ancestral songs.

The revitalization also enhanced youth empowerment into leadership roles. My research data reveals new age composers that are active contributors of music in their communities and schools. The list includes Joann Abraham of Chefnak, Elena Pavilla of Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, Joseph Bill of Nelson Island High School, and Vernon John of

Toksook Bay. My brother Simeon shared an example of a common dance song composed by his son Vernon John in 2000:

Chorus

*Augna Carvanra Cauluku.*

*Carvanraa cauluku*

*Carvanraa cauluku*

*Watmun-qaq ayagaurlinga*

*Ya-a-ia, ya-i-ia*

*ii-i-ri-i*

First verse

*Cam un'a kuimuralria*

*Imarpiim-qaq qukaakun*

*Watmun-qaq aiyagaurlinga*

*Ya-a-ia, ya-i-ia*

*ii-i-ri-i*

Second Verse

*Cam un'a kuimuralria*

*cikullam akuliku*

*watmun-qaq aiyagaurlinga*

*ya-a-ia, ya-i-ia*

*ii-i-ri-i*

S. John describes the meaning this way: “*Imarpigmi taqum piciryaraanek yuarutenglalria. Tamana imarpiim akuliikun kuimelriamek, kinguqlia-wa cikullam akuliku kuimuralria*” (This song is about the life of the mammal in the ocean. First verse is about a sea mammal that swims through ocean, while the second verse talks about a mammal that swims in open ice) (personal communication, 2008).

The late Stanley Waska of Emmonak, a dance leader and a deacon said,

Well, I don't enjoy other things...like movies, white people's dances, basketball games or playing bingo. I don't enjoy them and I usually don't go to these activities. But even if they have *Yup'ik* dancing day after day, I don't think I will get tired of it. If they say there will be dancing, then I will have a good time just waiting for it. I came into my awareness with this dancing, I grew into consciousness with it. (Elders and Kamerling, 1988)

In summary, in this chapter I have provided descriptive detail of new local-based information in *Yugtun* and in English which are the socio-linguistic dance terminologies, the six fundamental key entities in dance, and these three remaining ceremonial rituals and dance types: *kevgiryaraq*, *yuraqerraaq* or *nangerceciyaraq*, and *ciuqitet*. As an insider and a professional dancer, I addressed the gaps in the literature by expanding the categories and types of dance from two dance types (*yuraq* and *yurapiaq*) to a more comprehensive list of twenty. I have also developed graphs and illustrations on the song composition structure and dance gesture analysis graph. This chapter provided a compounded knowledge on the depth and breadth of complex cyclic dances. In the next chapter, I will describe how dancing is an integral part of the social infrastructure where the participants identified their meanings and themes.

## Chapter 6

### *Yup'ik* Social Infrastructure Themes

Yes, dancing is another way of visually speaking. I think it is like a sign language. It goes well with the whole thing, the dancing, the music, reading the book, sleeping, walking, and it just kind of draws you in as you watch. Even the dancers help to visualize what's happening there, I think. You know kind of almost like watching the movies but better. Cause when you're all together, the drums are going, the singing, the dancing and even the audience I think the whole atmosphere everyone comes together and you leave feeling just wonderful.

(Andrews, personal communication, 2008)

#### Introduction

The construction of knowledge on the living traditions of dance and their meanings survived the missionaries' effort to banish these practices. The early Alaskan religious denominations (for example the Catholic, Orthodox, Moravian, Covenant and Friends) met with State Commissioner Sheldon Jackson to develop a rural strategic plan to implement these institutions across the state. These religious sects, empowered by the state assimilation policy, had a goal to convert Indigenous people to a Western belief system that also embraced the beliefs of Christian-based religions. This belief system supported the assumption that Indigenous/*Yup'ik* dance was a cultural practice counter to Christian beliefs and values. Therefore, in many villages, *Yuraq* (*Yup'ik* dance) was

banned. Thus, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta dancing took a major turn when Christianity banished the critical cyclic event at the turn of the century. My father stated,

*Cunaugg' tamakut Agayulirtet alarrluteng taqevkaqeryaaqellrullinikiit tamana tauten Kassi'iyuryaraq. Tangvallermeqgni imumek, piciryaramegcetun pingraata, ellaitnek pikaikluki* (At that time, the Catholic priests made a mistake when they banished the Messenger Festival. In their eyes we were giving away our food and possessions, even though we were practicing our ceremony). (P. John, personal communication, 2008)

Also, my paternal grandmother, Angayiq Anna Kungurkak once told me a story in 1971 about how she confronted the local Catholic priest to explain the negative social impact the stripping of dance had on the people. In her observation, the villagers were getting emotionally and psychologically depressed as a result of the banishment. Her plea emphasized that the community essentially needed to revitalize the dances to enlighten local spirituality. As a result, the priest eventually agreed to the revitalization with the exception of shamanistic dances. Other concerned village members also explained the functional role of dancing to the priest until it was understood and retained.

In the late 1950's, the Nelson Island dances were revitalized after thirty years of banishment (Agimuk and Moses, personal communication, 2008). Our great-grandparents enthusiastically revitalized music and dances they remembered. But by this time some local members had lost interest in the rituals. Respecting the missionaries' wishes, the dance leaders revived what we call the *ciuqitet* (common dances) (Alirkar, personal communication, 2008). Other rituals that involved shamanism were not revived.

The people who promised not to sing spiritual music still practice an ancient healing song entitled *tarvagnauramken*. The base word *tarvag-* is to purify with smoke, performed in ancient times by the shamans who purified hunting equipment, utensils and hunters by burning *ayuq* (tundra labrador tea) (P. John, Agimuk, and Tucker, personal communication, 2008).

In my region/village, while the ban on *yuraq* was enforced, the practice of *yuraq* prevailed because the shamans, leaders, and elders genuinely believed in connections that are associated in the essence of dance within our social infrastructure. The villagers knew and understood the outsiders misconceived as paganism the functional role of dance as forms of prayer, specifically the priests.

I remember listening to my grandparents' songs that woke us in the morning and put us to sleep in the evening. The various types of music we learned were about our feelings, kin relations, survival, and animal songs of the loon, mice, and the arctic fox. The music served to construct the interconnected holistic perspective of the people, environment, and spirituality.

In analyzing elders' interview data, I argue that there is connectedness in dance, music, and stories that are part of our *yuuyaraq* (epistemic worldview). *Yuuyaraq* is defined as a way of being a human (Napoleon, 1991) or an absolute unified social web. As I stated in Chapter 2, the essence of our own epistemology is described by utilizing Indigenous theoretical frameworks and methodologies to capture the socio-cultural concept of our worldview, *Ellarpak*. *Ellarpak* is described as the overarching Indigenous framework that describes the holistic interconnectedness of the *Ellam Yua* (the creator),

the human/non-human, and the Universe. The root *ella-* has many interrelated meanings, and this concept, with various shades of meaning, forms the basis of much of *Yup'ik* epistemology. *Ella* includes the universe, consciousness/awareness, weather, world, and the outside. Within this theoretical framework there is an absolute sense of interconnectedness and co-existence of the three elements that are spiritually unified. Also, within the epistemology our *yuuyaraq* is connected within that overarching framework.

There is a relationship in storytelling genres in dance and oral stories that represent people's historical and contemporary accounts, describing their social, cultural, and subsistence lifestyle. Interview participants' data suggested these connections still exist in our society. Therefore, using these data provided by the participants, I developed the following table to illustrate these connections between storytelling genre, epistemology, and *yuuyaraq*.

Table 10. *Yup'ik* Social Infrastructure Analysis

Social Infrastructure	Quotes	<i>Qulirat</i>	<i>Qanemcit</i>	Dance (Types/Categories)
I. Kinship defines how people understand their roles and relationships with other people. For example, the grandparent and grandchild relationship.	<p>“<i>umyuallgutekluteng quyungqayaraullinian, ilakucarauluni nunaulriani</i>”</p> <p>“dancing is a form of bonding social relationships” (Asuluk, Bird, P. John, S. John, M. John, A. John, Bayayuk, and Tucker, personal communication, 2008)</p> <p>“<i>Ilakutaqameng</i>: you get to know more [relatives] even from far away villages” (Friday, personal communication, 2008)</p> <p>“dances pass on traditions and culture” (Andrews, personal communication, 2008)</p>	<p><i>Ciuliaqatuk</i>: the Ancestor (Flynn and Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p> <p><i>Tutgara'urluunkuk Nukalpiartayagaq-llu</i>: The Granddaughter and The Young Hunter (Orr and Orr, 1995)</p> <p><i>Cingumalriit kingumta yuitnek</i>: To encourage future generations (John, 2003)</p> <p><i>Allamek-gguq ella yuituq</i>: They say the world is populated by no one else (John, 2003)</p>	<p><i>Anngaqelriik</i>, Those two were brothers (John, 2003)</p> <p><i>Anngaqelriik</i>: The Two Brothers (Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p>	<p><i>Yuraqerraarcuutet</i>: Child's First dances</p> <p><i>Iluriurutet</i>; cross-cousin teasing dances</p> <p><i>Ciuqitet</i>: Friendship and common dances</p> <p><i>Qavaruarcuutet Kevgiq</i>: traditional family motion dances</p> <p>Shaman dances: “<i>Yuugiyama ullagamkan</i>” (Tucker, personal communication, 2008)</p>

Table 10 continued...

<p>II. Health/Physical and Mental define the psychological and social welfare of the people.</p>	<p>“And they are also entertaining with each other and laughter is a good medicine...and it’s very healing” (Andrews, personal communication, 2008)</p> <p>“it’s a good mental health exercise...cleansing...it lightens you up” (John, S.)</p> <p>“<i>Anlanituut, nunaniryugluteng</i>: People have fun and become very happy” (Friday, personal communication, 2008)</p> <p>“<i>angniilkumta-llu aturarkauluta, yurararkauluta-llu makut aturluki</i>: We are to sing and dance when we are unhappy” (McIntyre, personal communication, 2008)</p>	<p><i>Tan’gurraam Anguyavkanrillra</i>: The Boy Who Made Peace (Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p>	<p><i>Asmuuriyunaituq</i>, One Ought Not Disobey (Kanrilak in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p> <p><i>Elpecenek uptuci</i>: You are getting yourselves ready (John, 2003)</p> <p><i>Angalkunek qanemcit</i>: Stories of Angalkut (John, 2003)</p>	<p><i>Tarvagnauramken</i>: Purification dance</p> <p><i>Unugaanga</i></p> <p><i>Tamlegitangaa</i>: Shaman’s Moon Dance</p> <p><i>Agayuliyararput</i>: Mask Dances</p> <p><i>Nakaciuryarat</i>: Bladder Festival Dances</p> <p>Healing Dances</p> <p>Teasing Dances</p> <p><i>Ciuqitet</i>: Common Dances</p>
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Table 10 continued...

<p>III. Form of Prayer/Rituals define how dance played a role in our belief system</p>	<p><i>“Agayuyaraugut, kaigaciugut: Dancing is a form of Prayer”</i> (Tucker; Joe Asuluk, Josephine Asuluk, P. John, J. John, M. John, Felix, Therchik, Andrews, Bird, and Westlock, personal communication, 2008)</p>	<p><i>Nakaciuryaraq</i> “The Bladder Festival” and The Story Of The Boy Who Went To Live With The Seals (Lewis, Angaiak, Charlie, and Gregory in Orr and Orr, 1997) and (John, 2003)</p> <p><i>Tan’gurraam</i> <i>Anguyavkanrillra:</i> The Boy Who Made Peace (Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p> <p>Hunting and the Power Of The Spirits (Kanrilak and Charlie in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p>	<p><i>Angalkunek qanemcit:</i> Stories of Angalkut (John, 2003)</p> <p>In Memoriam: <i>Elriq</i> “The Great Feast For The Dead” (Orr and Orr, 1997)</p> <p><i>Callartellria</i> <i>Angun:</i> The Scabby Man (Angaia in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p>	<p><i>Tarvarnaruumken:</i> Purification dance</p> <p><i>Unugaanga</i> <i>Tamlegitanga:</i> Shaman’s Moon dance</p> <p><i>Agayuliyararput:</i> Mask Dances <i>Nakaciuryarat:</i> Bladder Festival dances</p> <p>Healing dances</p> <p>Teasing dances</p> <p><i>Ciuqitet:</i> Common dances</p>
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Table 10 continued...

<p>IV. Spiritual Enlightenment defines the psychological and social impact that dance provides for the participants</p>	<p>“dancing has been important inside makes me feel complete, more so whole, a connection than with our ancestors...many of them are also spiritual you know” (Andrews, personal communication, 2008).</p> <p>“<i>Kenkuyutnguluki tangvatuanka caituralrianun, aipairutlerrnun</i>: I see dancing as a form of love and compassion to those who are in need and to those who are widowed” (Felix, personal communication, 2008)</p>	<p><i>Tutgara’urluunkuk Nukalpiartayagaq-Illu</i>: The Granddaughter and The Young Hunter (Orr and Orr, 1995)</p> <p>The Story Of The Boy Who Went To Live With The Seals (Lewis, Angaiak, Charlie and Gregory in Orr and Orr, 1997) and (John, 2003)</p>	<p><i>Enret aulukellrata iquegtaarii</i>: A good ending for taking care of bones (John, 2003)</p> <p><i>Tegganret Inerquutait</i>: Warnings From The Elders (Kanrilak in Orr and Orr, 1995)</p> <p><i>Nasaurluut waten elpecicetun ayuquirkaatnek qanaataqluki</i>: He would give advice to young girls like you about proper behavior and conduct (John, 2003)</p>	<p><i>Yuraqerrarcuutet</i>: First dances</p> <p><i>Ciuqitet</i>: Friendship and common dances</p> <p>Shaman dances <i>Agayuliyararput</i>: Healing Mask Ceremony</p> <p><i>Nakaciuryaraq</i>: The Bladder Festival</p> <p><i>Iluriurutet</i>; Cross-cousin teasing dances</p>
<p>V. Leadership defines those people who play major role in dance ritual preparation, process, and organization</p>	<p>“<i>angalkuut yuarutait tua-i pissuutekluki, kaigassuutekluki pillruut</i>: Shamanistic songs were used as tools to request for survival necessities from the spirit world” (Tucker, personal communication, 2008)</p> <p>and “everyone moves forward together and no one can back off” (S. John, personal communication, 2008)</p>	<p><i>Angalkunek qanemcit</i>: Stories of Angalkut (John, 2003)</p> <p>Nakaciuryaraq ‘The Bladder Festival’ and The Story Of The Boy Who Went To Live With The Seals (Lewis, Angaiak, Charlie and Gregory in Orr and Orr, 1997) and (John, 2003)</p>	<p><i>Apanuugpak</i> During The War (Hooper in Orr and Orr, 1997)</p> <p><i>Tutmaralria</i>: Shaman (John, 2003)</p>	<p><i>Agayuliyararput</i>: Mask Ceremony</p> <p><i>Nakaciuryaraq</i>: The Bladder Festival</p> <p><i>Kevgiq</i>: Messenger Festival</p> <p>Shaman Dances</p>

Table 10 continued...

VI. Teasing defines the relationship between cross-cultural cousins that have a right to ridicule or ostracize their opponent in public environment	“ <i>Iluriurutnguuq</i> ” (J. Asuluk, personal communication, 2008)	<i>Apaqassuugaq</i> (M. Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1995)	<i>Ilurat kingullugqaqluki</i> (M. Mike in Orr and Orr, 1995)	<i>Kingulluguutet</i> <i>Nernerrlugcetaritet</i> <i>Iluriurutet</i> : Cross-cousin teasing dances <i>Ciuqitet</i> : Friendship and common dances
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In the following sections, I will (1) provide a description/overview of the social categories, (2) discuss what the participants said about the categories, (3) describe related *qulirat*, (4) describe related *qanemcit*, and (5) describe related dance types. This will illustrate how the themes, stories, and dances are critically connected in our *yuuyaraq*.

The social infrastructure thematic table contains data analysis that represents the relationship between participant quotes, relevant story genres, dances styles, and music. The goal is to document the interconnectedness of the three key functional social cultural segments. The table that I developed is designed to identify and define the important dance themes as articulated by the participants. It is constructed with vertical and horizontal columns. The vertical column contains six fundamental social infrastructure themes that were defined by the participants. These are prioritized according to their frequency as analyzed in the data generated from the participant interviews: I. Kinship, II. Health/Physical and Mental, III. Form of Prayer/Rituals, IV. Spiritual Enlightenment, V. Leadership, and VI. Teasing.

The horizontal category is comprised of five columns that function as an analysis method to capture the connections between 1.) social infrastructure themes, 2.) data

collection interviews, 3.) *qulirat* (historical personal accounts), 4.) *qanemcit* (non-fictional narratives), and 5.) dance types and categories. The first column contains social infrastructure themes that define the meanings of dance. The *qulirat* and *qanemcit* columns provide examples of the stories that relate to specific themes. The dance types and category column identify ritual that relate to the stories and themes.

## **I. Kinship: *Ilakucaraq***

### Overview of the Kinship

Our genuine *tuqluutet* (identity terms) were based upon a complex traditional kinship system, where given names were not permitted. The kinship terms identified specific social relationships among the people. These terms include the grandparents *maurluq* and *apa'urluq* (the grandparents), *angayuqak* (parents), *ataaq* (father), *anaaq* (mother), *anngaq* (older brother), *al'qaq* (older sister), *uyuraq* younger brother, *nayagaq* (younger sister), *anelgutet* (siblings), *tutgar* (grandchild), *ataataq* (paternal uncle), *angak* (maternal uncle), *acak* (paternal aunt), *anaanaq* (maternal aunt), *ilungaq* (female cross-cousin to a female), *uicungaq* (male cross-cousin to a female), *nuliacungaq* (female cross-cousin to a male), and *iluraq* (male cross-cousin to a male). Specific ancient family cross-cousin kin terms we use include *arenqiq* or *naruyaq*.

Although we have given family names in our communities, each person is referenced by kinship terms. The principle behind using kinship terms is to show respect and to acknowledge ancestral ways of addressing family lineage and social relationships. Elders encourage maintenance of the kinship system to ensure a close connection with distant relatives. It is disrespectful to call family members and relatives by their given

names especially in public. This is the reason we do not know individuals' given *Yup'ik* names. The only ceremony that permitted the use of *Yup'ik* given names was during *Kevgiryaraq* (the Messenger Festival) when dance leaders call out “*taitnauraa pim-gguq-qaa*” (may (name) individual bring in a requested gift) to the *qasgiq*.

Kinship defines how people understand their social role and their relationship to those around them. The *Yugtun* term *ilakucaraq* means the way people relate to “other” beings. The base word *ila-* refers to relatives such as one's immediate family, extended family, and also includes the individual's namesake's family tree. *Ilakuyucaraq* has a deeper meaning compared to Western relationship practices, a meaning in which people show respect *qigcikiyaraq* (respect) to all members of family tree. Therefore, a person has to show respect and compassion to all people beyond the immediate family. In this case, it is essential to use appropriate kinship terms that have been passed down for generations. For example, the *maurluq* and *apa'urluq* (grandparent) and *tutgaraq* (grandchild) relationship is an important aspect in the kinship system that has to be nurtured in the *Yup'ik* social web.

The kinship relationships of our namesakes are kept alive by holders of the names in the following physical existence. The social interactions of the former name are kept alive and remain the same in the current social infrastructure. For example, *Arevgaq* is the name that I inherited, and she was my late paternal grandmother's youngest sibling who died right before I was born. She was from the village of Chefornak, a community where my paternal family originated from before relocating to Nelson Island due to the marriage of my parents. In honor and respect to her name and spirit, my father would take

me to her village to be with her family and community by dog team during holidays. When I arrived at the village, her children greeted me by saying, “our mother has arrived” or her close relatives would say to her husband “your wife is here to visit you.” Her relatives would acknowledge me by using kinship relationship terms that she practiced such as *ilungaqa tangramken* (my cross-cousin I see you).

We have a namesake validation theory in the *Yup'ik* social system called *atran kaugartaa* (the spirit of the namesake enters the person who bares the name). There are actual moments in our lives when only the namesakes would have knowledge and performed the recognizable social actions and speech that surfaces through the present name holder. This kind of spiritual human enactment demonstrates and confirms the truth and validity in the spiritual connections from the past to the present time.

Because our names are honored and respected, we are told stories of their previous holders' lives and learn about how they behaved and lived. The reasons for and purpose of passing on the personal narratives was for us to understand and nurture those relationships in succeeding generations. In *Yup'ik* ways, sometimes we are given more than one name; those who believe in *Yup'ik* epistemology, the person that inherited the names has to believe and ask for continued strength to nurture and honor their spirits. The complex naming social system assists to keep intact strong social ties between people.

### Participant Data

The selected participant quotations that define the kinship theme in dance include the following: “dance is a way to live cohesively, with one mind and as one family,” “dancing is a form of bonding social relationships,” “you get to know more [relatives]

even from far away villages,” and “dances pass on traditions and culture.” As indicated, kinship is important to building family relationships. This kinship is reflected in the bonding relationships that are reflected in dance. Kinship is also the vehicle for passing down the values and beliefs supporting living as a cohesive unit, with one mind. In analysis, it seems clear to state that kinship in dance is defined to be the essential aspect in the social infrastructure.

#### Related *Oulirat*

The four *qulirat*, “The ancestor” (Flynn and Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1997), “The Granddaughter and the young hunter” (Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1995) “To encourage future generations” and “They say the world is populated by no one else” (John, 2003) demonstrate that kinship does play a functional role in the narratives. The first *quliraq*, “The ancestor,” is a creation story, where the father *Ciuliaqatak* (the Raven) and his daughter created the land from *Iquk* (Russian Mission) to *Qaluyaat* (Nelson Island). This Raven story describes how a family worked together to provide land to the inhabitants. The second *quliraq*, “The granddaughter and the young hunter,” is a story about *nukalpiartayagaq* (the young hunter) and the three sisters. The young hunter had made her storyknife and promised to marry the granddaughter when he returned from hunting. When the grandmother learned about this proposal, she warned the granddaughter that he was a liar. The two sisters pursued to win the hand of the hunter by dancing for him in the *qasgiq*. The grandmother instructed the granddaughter to make *akutaq* (mixture of berries and fat) for him and to compose a song to dance for him. When the hunter heard the message in her song, he married her and lived happily. The third *quliraq*, “To encourage

future generations,” is a short story that pertains to providing instructional pedagogy to youth about prosperity and compassion. The forth *quliraq*, “They say the world is populated by no one else,” is a story that explains land inhabitants being humans. The message of this story is about the fact that we are all humans sharing this world on equal basis. As indicated, these interrelated stories are about ancestors, the grandchild and grandparent, and humanity that are related to the epistemological essence of kinship as being an integral part of *yuuyaraq*. The people in these stories exemplify living together in harmony by treating their kin relations with respect and dignity, the traditional cultural values that were instructed by the elders.

#### Related *Qanemcik*

The two related *qanemcik* for the kinship theme are “*Anngaqlriik*” (“Those two who are brothers”) (John, 2003) and “*Anngaqellriik*” (“The two brothers”) (Angaiak in Orr and Orr, 1997). The first *qanemciq* is about the two brothers that lived harmoniously in the wilderness, living a nomadic way of life. The story describes their interpersonal relationship as they grew up together sharing the same social activities. The Angaiak story is also about two brothers that grew up with love and compassion for each other. One of the men married a woman that descended from the sky. She accidentally killed her brother-in-law while her husband was hunting. Being afraid of her husband, she hid the body against the wall behind the hanging grass mat. When the husband found his hidden carcass, he asked for an explanation of how he had died. She told him the truth. He told his wife that he still loved her and that he would not kill her for the incident. He had unconditional love for his wife. In *Yugtun* epistemology, it is essential to keep family

relations healthy because some day when times get tough, you will need their guidance and spiritual relations. As indicated, the *qanemcik* reveal the importance of maintaining kinship relations with family members.

#### Related Dance Types/Categories

The selected dance types and categories are examples that relate to the kinship theme, *Yuraqerraarcuutet* (first dance), *Iluriurutet* (cross-cousin teasing dance), *Ciuqitet* (friendship and common dances), *Kevgiryaraq* (the traditional family motion dances), and *Angalkuut yurait* (shaman dances). The *Yuraqerraarcuutet* (first dance) ceremony functions to honor the child's cultural identity (namesake), first catch, and for them to initiate him or her to the community dance group. *Iluriurutet* (cross-cousin teasing dance) pertains to identify kin relationships of 1) male to male or 2) female to female or 3) male and female teasing exchanges in public performances. These teasing exchanges reveal reciprocal messages about people's interpersonal nuances about funny incidents that occurred between them throughout the cyclic season. The history of this exchange is a lifelong practice held during festivities. *Ciuqitet* (friendship and common dances) stem from the Messenger Festival era. These dances reveal the constructed and re-constructed social events of the people's social and subsistence lifestyle. *Kevgiryaraq* (the traditional family motion dances) are ancient family-owned dances that have been passed down for many generations. These dances were practiced during the Messenger Festival. The *Angalkuut yurait* (shaman dances) contained petition dances for survival substances. Shamans played a major role in community health, cultural, and social survival in a harsh environment before missionaries banished this practice. Their dances were regarded as

forms of prayer. The fact that kinship has a functional role in rituals shows that it is an overarching theme of social infrastructure. These identified cultural dances are examples that reveal the connectedness of the peoples social kinship system in our *yuuyaraq*.

## **II. Health/Physical and Mental: *Anlanituut, nunaniryugluteng***

### Overview of Health/Physical and Mental

The health/physical and mental theme defines how the dance impacts the participants' social, psychological, and mental health. The mind being connected to physical and mental health, the expression of music and dance ensemble has a positive effect on the performers and audience. The dance as an exercise has a positive impact on the body. Listening to music and laughter in performance helps the mental health of the human. For example, my paternal grandmother Al'aq used her "healing" drum call to the community, where she was calling them into the hall for healing purposes that were demonstrated in dance and music.

### Participant Data

To analyze the meaning of the health/physical and mental theme, I selected the following four participant quotes from the data collection: "And they are also entertaining with each other and laughter is a good medicine...and it's very healing" (Andrews, personal communication, 2008); "it's a good mental health exercise...cleansing...it lightens you up" (S. John, personal communication, 2008); "*Anlanituut, nunaniryugluteng*" (people are having fun and they are very happy) (Friday, personal communication, 2008); and "*angniilkumta-llu aturarkauluta, yurararkauluta-llu makut aturluki*" (we are to sing and dance when we are unhappy (McIntyre, personal,

communication, 2008). As indicated, health/physical and mental is a core cultural principal and value that provides the families, communities, and visitors a joyous celebration and good mental health. Laughter as a known healing method helps to bond the extended relatives in a unified cleansing exercise from unhealthy social and psychological illnesses. When there is death in the community people are encouraged to drum and dance to call in the spirits of the ancestors to help uplift their spirits. These four quotations represent how people define dance as an entertainment, a way to express laughter, a good social medicine, healing, mental health exercise, cleansing, and happiness in our *yuuyaraq*.

#### Related *Quliraq*

The *quliraq* selected for health/physical and mental theme is entitled “The boy who made peace,” a story that captures a personal sense of self-contemplation, renewal, and wellness. The story is about how the war ended between the coastal and Yukon people. The elderly couple that could not have a child adopted and raised the Yukon captive boy. When he got older, the parents instructed him to return to his village. He made a drum and a staff to send a message about love and compassion to the enemy village. This is how the Messenger Festival began. The music brought peace, enjoyment, and social welfare for the needy. The elders say that the drum is an instrument of love and compassion (Alirkar, personal communication, 2008). In analysis, the story demonstrates that social/mental health is an essential part of the social infrastructure in our *yuuyaraq*.

### Related Qanemcit

The three related *qanemcit* are “*Asmuuriyunaituq*” (“One ought not disobey”) (Kanrilak in Orr and Orr, 1995), “*Elpecenek uptuci*” (“You are getting yourselves ready”) (John, 2003), and “*Angalkunek qanemcit*” (“Stories of *Angalkut*”) (John, 2003). The first *qanemciq*, entitled “*Asmuuriyunaituq*” (“One ought not disobey”), is a story about advice on the traditional cultural admonishments that pertain to the youth. The story emphasizes humanity, love, and compassion. The second *qanemciq* is “*Elpecenek uptuci*” (“You are getting yourselves ready”) (John, 2003), which is about self-esteem and prosperity. The emphasis of the story relates to the mental health and preparation of children that educate individuals to become meaningful members of the society. The third *qanemciq*, entitled “*Angalkunek qanemcit*” (“Stories of *Angalkut*”) (John, 2003), is about how shamans practice their powers using their mental health and power. Shamans exercised their powers in healing and to interact with non-human spirits using their mental capabilities. These related *qanemcit* exemplify the connectedness of the society’s discipline management, shamanism, and the preparation of the person’s health/ physical and mental development and wellness. In analysis, these stories demonstrate the essence of developing healthy communities in *yuyaraq*.

### Related Dance Types/Categories

The eight dance types and categories selected for this theme include the ancient purification dance that was revitalized to protect the people from bad spirits. The Yukon shaman dance is about the man who went to the moon to seek better health for his family. *Agayuliyararput* (the masked dance) enhances social health, physical wellness, and

welfare for all people. The *Nakaciuryaraq* (the Bladder Festival) is a ritual that functions to honor animal spirits. The healing and teasing dances provide laughter that is said to be a good medicine. Dancing is a physical wellness because the rhythmic music embraces social coordination and movement in unison of the head, arms, legs, body, and soul. As indicated, these dance types and categories are relevant for the health/physical and mental in *yuuyaraq*. In analysis, the interview data, related stories and dances define the essence of health/physical and mental as an integral part of the social infrastructure.

### **III. Form of Prayer/Rituals: *Agayuyaraugut*, *Kaigaciugut***

#### Overview of the Form of Prayer/Rituals

Dance is regarded as the form of prayer/rituals that was performed with music and dance. Traditionally, *Yupiit* asked for their survival needs and to heal their illnesses with the help of the *ellam yua* (the creator) and the spirit worlds. In pre-contact time, the shamans (male and female) were influential in the healing of the mental, psychological, physical, and social illnesses of the people. The Masking and the Bladder Festivals were performed annually to petition for the essential needs of all people. The only instrument used in these powerful rituals was the drum, the one that was created by the boy in the story “The boy who made peace” as described above.

The elder stories tell us that the *qasgiq* was revered and perceived to be the central place of prayer (Bird, A. Therchik, Spark, and Agimuk, personal communication, 2008). In ancient times, before the outsiders started to arrive, the term *yuraq* meant to pray. Today, the same term defines the practice of dance. Another critical term that was practiced in *qasgiq* was called *agayu*, defined as a form of prayer (Westlock, personal

communication, 2008). Therefore, the *qasgiq* was regarded as the most respectful central communal gathering place in the villages.

### Participant Data

The related theme is defined by the participants as “*Agayuyaraugut, kaigaciugut*: dancing is a form of prayer, a tool to request for essential needs of the people” (Tucker, P. John, Bird, Josephine Asuluk, and Jacob, personal communication, 2008). Elders describe the essence of how dance is a way to pray and to ask for survival needs of all inhabitants. As indicated, dance as a form of prayer is an important element of the subsistence economy that relied upon their resources from the creator and spirit worlds. Powerful shamans enacted calling of the non-human spirits using masks to interact and negotiate for the cyclic needs through music and drum. In analysis, these show that dancing is the form of prayer for all people to cure illness and to request for prosperity in our *yuuyaraq*.

### Related *Qulirat*

The related *qulirat* that define the forms of prayer/rituals include “*Nakaciuryaraq*” (“The story of the boy who went to live with the seals”) (Lewis, Angaiak, Charlie, and Gregory in Orr and Orr, 1997) and (John, 2003), “The boy who made peace,” and “The hunting and the power.” The first *quliraq*, entitled “The *Nakaciuryaraq*,” is about the Bladder Festival. In our *yuuyaraq* epistemology it is believed that animal spirits go to their bladders when they are killed. The bladders are carefully dried and stored inside the *qasgiq* before the animal spirits are released during the spring ceremony. The second *quliraq*, entitled “The story of the boy who went to live

with the seals” told by Lewis, Angaiak, Charlie and Gregory (Orr and Orr, 1997) and (John, 2003), is a story about a boy that was sent to learn about the lifestyle of the seals in their spirit world. *Yupit* philosophy reveals that the seals transform to humans when their *yuit* (souls) are returned to their homes during the Bladder Festival. In this story, the boy who was raised by an elderly couple sent him to the world of the seals in hope that he would gain knowledge about the world of seals to become a successful hunter. When he returned to the human world, he became a *nukalpiaq* (a great hunter) because of the education he acquired from the seals. The third *quliraq*, entitled “The boy who made peace,” is already described above. The final *quliraq*, entitled “The hunting and the power,” is a powerful story about instructional pedagogy for a male to become the *nukalpiaq* (the great hunter). The story exemplifies the spiritual connections between the hunter and the animal spirits. The Bladder Festival is central to the livelihood of the great hunter. He must follow all instructions regarding epistemology, cosmology, ontology, and scientific knowledge in order to be a successful community provider. As indicated, these stories reveal the spiritual interactions between the human and non-human beings. In analysis, it is demonstrated that these stories reveal the interconnectedness of the spirit world, people, and their ancient form of prayer in our *yuuyaraq*.

#### Related *Qanemcit*

The three related *qanemcit* include “*Angalkut*” (“Shamans”), “The great feast for the dead” and “The scabby man.” The first *qanemciq*, entitled the “*Angalkut*,” is a story about the shaman named Puylkuk who lived mischievously. In this story, the man knew that his fart could stop the shaman’s powers. When he saw a shaman performing a

healing ceremony outside behind a woven grass mat, he snuck behind him to let out a fart. The healing discontinued because his devious farting took away the shaman's power. The second *qanemciq*, entitled "The great feast for the dead," is about honoring the soul of the dead. This spiritual celebration require years of planning and preparation. The friends of the dead are dressed in fancy regalia to honor the dead. This great feast is prepared with delicacy foods accompanied by music and dance. Elders say planning lasted 20 years (John, personal communication, 2008). The last *qanemciq*, entitled "The scabby man," is a story about a man that was tricked by a couple to see the corpse of their daughter. The man became very ill afterwards and his body became scabby. He was healed by the power of the shaman. The people clothed him and others with brand new beautiful clothing during the great feast for the dead. As highlighted, these stories have similar features that talk about the spiritual transformations, cosmology, and epistemology. In analysis, these present that *Yupitit* have multiple spiritual narratives that are related to the forms of prayer/rituals in our *yuuyaraq*.

#### Related Dance Types/Categories

The related dance types and categories include purification ceremony, masking ceremony, the Bladder Festival, Messenger Festival dances, healing, teasing, and common dances. The purification song is about purifying the spirits that relate to subsistence life. The hunting tools and equipment used to be cleansed with *ayuq* (Labrador) tea to protect the people and to protect their hunting areas. The mask ceremony was performed in pre-hunting season to request for specific survival necessities. The masks that were worn by the shaman depicted ocean mammals, the land

animals, different species of fish, and the wind that were crafted by the local artists. The healing ceremony conducted by empowered people healed the physical or psychological illness of the people, using seal intestine raincoat and drums in practice. The teasing occurred among many cross-cousin relatives in dance events. The common dances, part of the Messenger Festival, were occasionally practiced. As indicated, dance ceremonies are regarded as forms of prayer/rituals that are an essential part of the social infrastructure.

#### **IV. Spiritual Enlightenment *Kenkuyutnguluni caituralrianun aipairutlerrnun-llu***

##### Overview of the Spiritual Enlightenment

Spiritual enlightenment is the core of music and dance as Simeon John (personal communication, 2008) states, “it lightens you up.” In our epistemology, the heartbeat of music and drum takes away the emotional, psychological, and social problems of the participants. Dancing is a way to bond people’s spirits by sharing unconditional love and compassion. Everyone is joined together through the spirit of dance to share ancestral and contemporary life stories, interpersonal accounts, and through laughter. In our epistemology, our namesakes join us in dance and we can feel their spiritual presence among us when we gather together.

My sister Panigkaq Agatha John-Shields, Principal of *Ayaprun Elitnaurvik* in Bethel, grew up like me as a dancer in our village. She stated that initially she did not understand the meanings of dance as a young girl. But later on in her adulthood, the meanings of songs and dances began to emerge for her. The gradual process of understanding music text made her become aware of the messages and she began to feel

*ilukegcinarqaqluni* (spiritual enlightenment). Elder encouragement and education increased her respect for them and made her realize how dance serves to strengthen self-confidence and cultural identity (A. John, personal communication, 2008).

### Participant Data

The participants define spiritual enlightenment: “dancing has been important and inside it makes me feel complete, more so whole, a connection than with our ancestors...many of them are also spiritual you know” (Andrew, personal communication, 2008) and “*Kenkuyutnguluki tangvatuanka caituralrianun aipairutlerrnun-llu*” (I see dancing as a form of love and compassion to those who are in need and to those who are widowed) (Felix, personal communication, 2008). As indicated, spiritual enlightenment is important in cultural values and practices especially for those communities that live in a harsh environment. The spiritual enlightenment provides the hunters and gatherers with a positive sense of being and helps to build stronger relationships between the human and non-human spirit worlds. In our epistemology, the ancestral spirits share their love and compassion in dance even though we cannot see them visually. The festivities bring high spirits to family homes, the village, and to the community environment throughout the duration of dancing. There is a difference between prayer and spiritual enlightenment. The forms of prayer in dancing are the ceremonies that are related to the shaman’s petitioning for essential needs by the use of masks. The spiritual enlightenment represents people’s enjoyment when they gather together to experience dance as an entertainment. The teasing exchange of cross-cousins is a good example that makes people laugh year after year with their on-going

episode of joking in public. As indicated, it is shown that dance promotes spiritual enlightenment in our social infrastructure or *yuyaraq*.

#### Related *Qulirak*

The two related *qulirak* “The granddaughter and the young hunter” and “The boy who went to the world of the seals” both reveal the essence of personal and spiritual enlightenment. In the first story, the granddaughter and the young hunter experienced spiritual enlightenment when they ended up marrying one another. The couple lived happily ever after sharing joyous moments together. In the second story, the boy experienced spiritual enlightenment when he bonded with the mammal spirits and became a great hunter. He acquired skills to have a cohesive relationship with the animal spirits in his life. As indicated, it is demonstrated that these stories contain a sense of spiritual enlightenment and harmony, essential aspects of principles and values in our social infrastructure.

#### Related *Qanemcit*

The three related *qanemcit* are “The fish bone story,” “Elder warnings” and “One who seeks advice for people.” The first *qanemciq* is a story about the spirit of the fish. The fish had sense of awareness and wanted to be treated with respect by the people. The bones were able to speak and told them that they did not want to be scattered and trampled on the ground. The people heard their plea and began putting their bones in the safe ground. The second *qanemciq* is about elder warnings that pertain to living a healthy spiritual life by following cultural ways. Elders emphasize that advice is like medicine, the words of love, compassion, and knowledge. The epistemic knowledge educates

people about prosperity and harmony. The third *qanemciq* contains advice about psychological and emotional advice being medicinal fruits for the people. As indicated, this shows that there are non-fictional stories that detail spiritual enlightenment in rituals in our social infrastructure or *yuuyaraq*.

#### Related Dance Types/Categories

The related dance types and categories chosen for this category include the first dance, friendship and common dances, shaman and healing ceremonies, and teasing dances. These ceremonies are included in this category because when the performers make exaggerated movements, the audience feels a sense joy and spiritual enlightenment. The little children are fun to watch when they are challenged by their grandparents on the stage. In teasing dances, the cousins make funny faces to their counterparts that make people laugh with tears. In analysis, most dances are relevant to the concept of spiritual enlightenment in the cyclic ceremonies that are essential in the *Yup'ik* social infrastructure.

#### **V. Leadership: *Ciuliqagciyaraq***

##### Overview of the Leadership

Leadership is an essential part of the social infrastructure that applies to every aspect of life, specifically in ceremonies. The leadership in social, political, spiritual, and cultural practices were shared and exchanged by the intergenerational members of the communities. The leaders are skilled in planning community events, organization, and management. These include shamans, choreographers, drummers, singers, artists, educators, and custodians. Rituals require yearlong organization planning where

community leaders meet regularly to ensure collaborative participatory community action. As indicated, leadership is essential aspect of our dances in *yuuuyaraq*.

Traditionally, there were recognized traditional leaders called *ciuliqagtet* (village leaders) that promoted healthy community development and livelihood. The leaders also included the women leaders in the communities. The immense power of the outside cultural forces to assimilate us tremendously changed our genuine way of life. The implementation of the multi-governing system (tribal, municipal, and corporate) took over the traditional leadership system. New governments caused conflict and division among elected officials who were related local members. Fortunately, they resolved this problem by creating a united governing system called the United Villages that opened up opportunities for unified local leadership. Today, the village issues are operated by a local base conscious of all entities that promote unity and harmony.

#### Participant Data

The theme leadership is defined by participants as “*angalkuut yuarutait tua-i pissuutekluki , kaigassuutekluki pillruut*” (Shamans’ songs were used as tools to request for survival necessities from the spirit world) and “everyone moves forward together and no one can back off” (S. John, personal communication, 2008). Shamans lead communities in all ceremonies assisted by community members and dancers. As indicated, the shamans played highest leadership roles in social, psychological and spiritual aspect of the social infrastructure. My brother Simeon explains that dance leaders help to move everyone forward cohesively throughout rituals. In this collaborative process, no one can back off in the spiritual movement of the people.

Dancing brings out local organizers, strategists and community action experts in regions. In analysis, this demonstrates that shamans held the highest leadership roles in the survival and welfare of the communities in our social infrastructure.

#### Related *Qulirat*

The three related *qulirat* in leadership are “*Angalkuut*,” “The Bladder Festival,” and “The story of the boy who went to live with the seals.” These stories involve shamanism, power, and interrelationships with the humans and non-humans alike in our society. The shaman and community members together encouraged and ensured that there is harmony and unison in the dance. The Bladder Festival honored spirit worlds and their leaders. The seal spirits created great hunters and leaders for the people. As indicated, there are multiple leadership roles in stories that pertain to ceremonies in our social infrastructure.

#### Related *Qanemcik*

The related *qanemcik* for leadership roles include two warrior heroes, the “*Apanuugpak*” and the shaman “*Tutmaralia*.” The first *qanemciq*, “*Apanuugpak*,” is about the great warrior that saved the Nelson Island people. This well known war hero is a historical character that is claimed by the people of Nelson Island, Kuskokwim, and the Bristol Bay region. He was known to be a person that single handedly conquered enemy teams in the pre-historic era. There is an old village on Nelson Island called *Nunalleg* with two *qasgiq*. In one of many *Apaanuugpak* stories, there was an incident where the arrow hit him under his armpit and went out the left side. Because people honor and respect him, this account is symbolized in our fancy parkas with a wolf tail. The tail is a

sign of the arrow that went through his upper torso. He is an icon of war times and his stories are still shared today in southwest Alaska. The second *qanemciq*, entitled “*Tutmaralia*,” is about a great shaman from Nelson Island. He is also a war hero like *Apanuugpak*. In *Yugtun* epistemologies warriors like these two are respected and kept alive in *qulirat*. As indicated, this show that there are stories about leadership roles in social, political, and spiritual lives in our social infrastructure.

#### Related Dance Types/Categories

The four related dance types on the leadership theme include the Mask Ceremony, the Bladder Festival, the Messenger Festival and the shaman dances. These ceremonies fit into this category because all of these events require the involvement of the prominent leaders from the community. The shaman, the leader of the village, is involved with ritual music composition, planning, management, organization, and also orchestrates the performances. Other dance leaders include the elders, professional dancers, educators, and artists in the village. As indicated, leadership is an important aspect in dance within our social infrastructure.

## **VI. Teasing**

### Overview of the Teasing

The cross-cousin teasing is an integral part of dance where specific teasing relationships in villages are the highlights performed in the Messenger Festival and common dance ceremonies. Teasing is an exchange between two males or between male and a female counterpart. It is a lifelong social relationship that is socially accepted and has a functional role in rituals. The purpose of teasing is to reveal funny or embarrassing

interpersonal accounts that cousins experienced in the past year. The opposing cousins observe each other for wrongful verbal expressions or incidental accidents that they could sing about. Teasing requires a song composition that is reciprocated by cross-cousins. I have witnessed a woman dancing about a male who fell off the ladder while he was making a fish cache. In this dance, the opposing male cross-cousin went to the floor to dramatize the scene about his own mishap. Songs function to ostracize their opponents in public and to make people laugh. As indicated, teasing is an important aspect of dances in our *yuuyaraq* and social infrastructure.

#### Participant Data

The teasing in dancing is defined by the participants as *iluriurutnguuq*. As indicated, the cross-cousin teasing is an important cultural practice that strengthens the kinship ties between men and women. This practice has been an essential part of celebration for centuries that bonds social ties in rural communities and in neighboring villages. Teasing brings laughter, good mental health, and builds strong connections among extended participants. This highlights that teasing is an essential in bringing out critical stories in our social infrastructure.

#### Related *Quliraq*

The related *quliraq* that defines teasing is “*Apaqassuugaq*.” In this story, the man enjoyed teasing his cousin by making fun of him, especially when they were out hunting. This teasing story serves as an educational tool to reveal that the kinship system supports the bonding of the inter-generational and intertribal groups. Teasing also contributes to the psychological and spiritual wellness of the participants. As indicated, this

demonstrates that teasing brings laughter and harmony, an essential aspect of dance within the *Yupiit* social infrastructure.

#### Related *Qanemciq*

The related *qanemciq* is about cross-cousins or *ilurat* that is primarily about teasing cousins in the village. *Ilurat* are male-to-male cross-cousins that can feely express unlimited personal accounts to each other without worrying about emotional reactions of the targeted person. As shown, teasing is a healing process in our *yuuyaraq* and social infrastructure.

#### Related Dance Types/Categories

The four related teasing dances include *kingullugutet*, *nernerrlugcetaritet*, teasing, friendship and common dances. The first teasing type *kingullugutet* are practiced during the Messenger Festival. This teasing exchange is a public ostracism that serves to give advice to the recipients. The second teasing is *nernerrlugcetaritet* that pertains to the Messenger Festival where host villagers tease their guest dancers while they eat their meal in the *qasgiq*. Teasing promotes laughter, strengthens social bonds, and enlightens community spirituality. As indicated, teasing dances are an essential part of the social infrastructure in our *yuuyaraq*.

In summary, the table developed from the data provided by the participants of this study has brought together the elements of the social infrastructure demonstrated through the cultural activities of stories and dance. This social infrastructure table provided an analytical tool for my research and can be a viable research analysis tool to define the connections between the themes, the quotes, story genres, and dance types. It is a first

step to begin to illustrate and explain the interconnectedness of the essential aspects of our *yuuyaraq*, or way of being a human. The epistemic social values and principles are an important aspect of our social knowledge system. There is an absolute bonding or an interconnectedness between the people, the creator, the cosmology, rituals and epistemic social values, and principles; all are an essential part of the fabric of our social infrastructure system.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion, Implications, and Future Research

#### Umgun (Conclusion)

My dissertation on our ceremonies is a like a spiritual journey. The spiritual journey that defines my relationship with those whom I love and communicate with on a daily basis: my ancestors, grandparents, parents, relatives, and colleagues in dance. The dynamic shifting of my multiple-situated identities provides challenges and benefits as I live in two worlds: the traditional knowledge educational system and the Western way of living. Because I was chosen to be the messenger, I am privileged to be the voice for the elders, adults, and youth in their *Indigenous critical praxis* or “people’s own critical reflection on culture, history, knowledge, politics, economics, and the sociopolitical contexts in which they are living their lives; and then their taking the next step to act on these critical reflections” (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 2001, p. 59).

The notion of using our own language, epistemology, ontology, socio-cultural conceptual theories, and the methodologies that emerged from the participants (Charmaz, 1995) empowers and enriches my research. The authentic *Yugtun* expressions of the participants’ first-hand accounts contributed to my research analysis as I seek to define our *nutemllarput* and the sense of how we construct and re-construct the traditional education knowledge system. Through the grounded constructivist theory emerged appropriate critical Indigenous research analysis theories and methods needed to represent our ways of knowing in the ethnography.

The Indigenous ethnographic analysis systems—specifically the *qulirat*, *qanemcit*, and *qanruyutet*; *yuraryararput*; and the social infrastructure themes—contributed to my analysis to decipher the existing dance literature and its connections to our epistemology. The usage of the diverse traditional ways of storytelling provided essential tools for me to define their complex interconnectedness within our holistic social web.

The partnership with the local participants helped to articulate and define dance Discourses (Gee, 2005), specifically in music structure, category, and also what emerged as the social infrastructure themes. The detailed knowledge on the essence of *yuraryararput* contributed to my analysis to define the multiple-situated identities, key functions, variety cyclic rituals, music categories, and styles.

### Implications

The *Yugtun* words as told by participants to define the construction of our traditional knowledge system (history, epistemology, narratives on ceremonies and their themes) through *qulirat*, *qanemcit*, and *qanruyutet* show that *Yupiit* still practice their first language, and therefore, I make an argument that they are the living tradition. The analysis of my interviews of the elderly to the young demonstrates this case and that the data collection is first-hand knowledge of their accounts. The *Yugtun* and *Kass'atun* (English) text of this research will be beneficial for rural and urban community leaders and members, educators, health and tribal administrators, and scholars.

Village cultural leaders can utilize my dissertation to educate their people about the construction of knowledge on rituals, the origin narratives, and organization of music

and dance. The educational systems, specifically immersion schools like *Ayaprun Elitnaurvik*, can utilize this bilingual research data by implementing Indigenous conceptual theoretical framework and methodologies into their curriculum. Their dance educators can use the dance analysis method that I developed to teach all children. This is also applicable to higher educational systems especially in Indigenous Studies Programs, Alaska Native Studies, and Alaska Native Art.

The elders program such as the Calista Elders Council (CEC) can utilize this research primarily in utilizing the social infrastructure themes graph through finding diverse stories and by connecting these to cultural practices. CEC is the leading organization in bilingual scripting of the elders' construction of knowledge. My research could inspire them to develop tools to examine narratives for specific educational themes and models beneficial for the children and educators. It is clear that there are multiple implications of how my research can be beneficial in association with the Indigenous social structure systems, such as the tribal, health, and educational agencies.

There are limitations that I have identified and will discuss in my research. The first limitation of my research applies to the fact that I could not discuss all of the aspects, issues, and concerns that are related to ceremonies and their narratives. The reason I define this as a limitation is that ceremonies originate from ancient times and transformed over time with their own complexities, structures, and functional purposes. Many cultural practices have been lost for decades and were not revitalized. I realized that two elders (Alirkar and Agimuk, personal communication, 2008) who offered to describe ancient ceremonies had problems with the explanations of the ancient ritual conceptual

framework. For example, the concept of shamanism in *qasgiq* was difficult for them to relay to me because there are no verbal descriptions for spiritual events. In sum, I focused on my research questions and sought answers related to the topic.

Another limitation of my research pertains to the transcriptions and translations that specifically relate to the issue of interregional cultural concepts and their meanings. In carefully analyzing data, I realized that there were differing words used by the participants for the same social events. For example, the Yukon people used the term *arula* for dance where Kuskokwim people used *yuraq*. Another example is the word for two messengers; in Yukon they are called the *nasquk*, while Kuskokwim people call them *paiqak*. As exemplified by the two translation cases, I argue that the linguistic translation and transcription issue in interregional linguistic research is vital and must be dealt with cautiously.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

In viewing my data resources and analysis, I realize that there still remains an abundance of raw material that is left untouched due to research limitations. It is clear that I could not discuss all aspects of ceremonies. The ceremony being a complex system provides scholars opportunities for future research to define the missing elements and aspects of dance. In my research, I identified and developed a chart of seventeen types of ceremonies and dances that were practiced by the people in the past. This finding is a rich contribution to the literature on ceremonies. These ceremonies have to be further defined and explained. In analyzing the types of songs, one can conduct research to describe the

variety of dances. The ceremonies had their own types, and I covered a limited number in the Messenger Festival.

By defining diverse dance styles, a researcher can contribute to revitalization of the lost cultural practices. In bringing detailed styles, modern composers could utilize the resources to recreate ancient music style and rhythm. For an example, I identified a slow solo motion entrance dance performed by the women called *ingularyaraq*. There are many stories associated with this style of dance. Another fast style dancing that I identified is called *puallaryaraq*, a standing dance. It is clear that the *ingularayaraq* and *puallaryaraq* are opposite dance styles. These two dances are not related at all and were practiced for specific reasons by specific performers. This finding exemplifies that there are many dance styles to research yet.

In the development of the ceremonial graph, my research reveals that there were many cyclic ceremonies that still need to be researched. I began to describe most of the ceremonies, but then I realized that my research would get cumbersome. I opted to cut out that portion due to the complexity and magnitude of the research context. A future scholar is needed to write down detailed aspects and elements of each cyclic ceremony. The result of the research could be beneficial because such study will help to define the cyclic connections of the rituals and the people's environment, hunting and gathering activities, kinship systems, and their narratives.

My research opens up a narrow window into the eyes of the participants. I am honored to be the voice for the people, for the opportunity to learn from the experts, and to write my analysis with their compassion and willingness to partner with me. In future,

I am willing to conduct research on dance again because my research shows how critical dance is in our lives. The connection of the people, music, dance, narratives, and the social infrastructure themes profoundly spell out the holistic spiritual interconnectedness that exists among the spirits of the ancestors, living, and their future descendents.

Dance was the heart of *Yup'ik* Eskimo spiritual and social life. It was the bridge between a person's own power and the greater powers of the unseen world. At the heart of dance with the drum in which could be heard the cadence of the universe.

(KYUK Production, 2005)

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