This thesis describes how *illuweet* or teasing cousin songs are an expression of King Island Inupiaq identity. It is based upon ten months of intermittent participation observation and fieldwork. In the summer of 1991, my uncle, Alex Allughuk Muktoyuk, began teaching Inupiaq songs and dances to a group of displaced Inupiat living in Tacoma, Washington. Of the eleven songs that he taught this group, six had occurred between *illuweet* or teasing cousins. However, a review of the literature on Inupiaq songs rarely mentioned these kinds of songs. By reviewing the literature on ethnic identity, Inupiaq family relations and Inupiaq song and humor, it is concluded that my uncle taught these six songs as a way to express his King Island Inupiaq identity and of proving his connection to the community from which he has been separated for approximately 30 years.
ILLUWEET (TEASING COUSIN) SONGS AS AN
EXPRESSION OF KING ISLAND INUPIAQ IDENTITY

By

Deanna M. Kingston

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APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy

Assistant Professor of Anthropology in charge of major

Redacted for Privacy

Professor of Anthropology in charge of co-field

Redacted for Privacy

Professor of Sociology in charge of co-field

Redacted for Privacy

Chairman of department of Anthropology

Redacted for Privacy

Dean of Graduate School

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I want to extend my appreciation to the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers. If this group had not started, I would not have learned Inupiaq dancing.

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INTRODUCTION

As I was growing up, I would proudly tell people that I was half Eskimo (Inupiaq - singular; Inupiat - plural) when they asked about my ethnicity. After all, there were not many Inupiat in Central Oregon and I liked having dark skin because I was always complimented on my tan. However, besides knowing a few Inupiaq words, owning a walrus ivory bracelet and enjoying some "Eskimo" food, I did not know much about my Inupiaq heritage. It is a credit to my mom that I knew as much as I did. I cannot imagine the pressures she was under raising her children in Oregon and away from her family and her culture. At some point in high school, I decided that I wanted to learn more about my Inupiaq heritage and that I would do so in college. However, as an undergraduate, I never had the time. I then promised myself that I would start learning after I received my bachelor's degree. Four years after reaching that goal, I still had not made the effort to learn about the Inupiaq culture. I decided that the only way to obtain the necessary discipline to study about my mother's culture was to go back to school. A friend of mine who is very interested in Native American cultures suggested that I study anthropology. After talking to the Anthropology Department at Oregon State University, I decided that anthropology would indeed give me the tools and the discipline to satisfy my desire to know more about my Inupiaq heritage. This phenomenon, a search for my "roots", is not unheard of. Both
Friedman and Edwards acknowledge that a renewed interest in ethnic identity has arisen due to the "impersonalization and homogenization of the dominant society" (Friedman 1992:842) and "bureaucracy and impersonality of modern life" (Edwards 1985:102). This thesis represents the beginning of my search for my ethnic identity.

I am fortunate because today's society allows me to learn about my Inupiaq heritage. But, as little as 25-30 years ago, people from non-dominant cultures were forced to give up their way of life so that they can be a productive member of the dominant society. They were discouraged from speaking their native language that they were taught as children. These people suffer from a lack of self-esteem because they are told that the things that they learned as children are useless for being a success in the dominant culture. Their sense of identity is undermined. This is the case with both my mother and my maternal uncle, Alex Muktoyuk.

Both my mother and my uncle grew up in the Inupiaq community of King Island, Alaska. My mother chose to complete her high school education at Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon, and received her GED in 1961. Except for three and a half years in Anchorage, Alaska, my mother has lived in the Pacific Northwest. My uncle moved to Oregon briefly in 1968, then spent some time in Los Angeles before returning to Oregon in 1969. He met his wife, Nancy, and married her in October, 1969. He continues to live in Beaverton, Oregon, and is an ardent Portland Trailblazers fan. Thus, both he and my mother have been removed from the community, and the culture, in which they grew up for approximately 30 years. For both of them, this has led to feeling less
connected with the community in which they grew up, and to feeling as though they do not fit in with the dominant culture.

Although my uncle may not be consciously aware of this feeling of not fitting into the dominant culture, it is evident in a comment he made to me in October, 1992. He had been selected to go to a week-long workshop in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for Native American writers, artists and wisdom keepers to "counteract" the Columbus Quincentenary. After his return to Oregon, he stated that this was the first time in a long time that he felt good about being Inupiaq. This workshop gave him the freedom to be proud of his identity, a feeling that had been suppressed in him for most of his adult life.

This thesis will demonstrate one way that Uncle Alex found to express his identity and his sense of connection with the Ugiuvak (King Island) community. He was asked by a group of displaced Inupiat in Tacoma, Washington, to teach Inupiaq singing, drumming and dancing to them. Since this coincided with my first year of studies in anthropology, I became part of this group of Inupiat learning how to sing and dance. Of the eleven songs that we learned in this time period, six of them are from an Inupiaq song tradition that occurs between illuweet, or teasing cousins. Two of these songs concern my uncle directly - he composed a song about his teasing cousin and his teasing cousin "retaliated" with a song about my uncle.

When I began my literature search on Inupiaq song traditions, I was struck by the fact that songs about teasing cousins were rarely mentioned. Only two authors even mentioned that this type of song existed. However, these types of songs comprised over half of the songs
that my uncle taught and it seemed to me that these were the songs that my uncle enjoyed the most. I wondered at this apparent discrepancy between what was written about Inupiaq songs and the songs taught by my uncle. I felt that either the ethnographers had missed a complete genre of songs in their inventories, or that they must hold some importance for my uncle. I have concluded that these teasing cousin songs, apparently very important to my uncle, represent an expression of King Island Inupiaq identity. The rest of the thesis will support this idea.

In Chapter One, I review the literature on ethnic identity, Inupiaq kinship relations, and Inupiat songs and humor, and how these topics relate to the Inupiaq tradition that occurs between illuweet. In Chapter Two, I give an overview of King Island, where it is located and what it was like to live there, with special attention given to singing and dancing traditions. In Chapter Three, I discuss the results of fieldwork with my uncle. In Chapter Four, I argue that the songs that my uncle taught the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers are an expression of his King Island Inupiaq identity. Finally, I have included a Postscript that discusses the break-up of the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers.
CHAPTER ONE
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on ethnic identity, Inupiaq family relations and Inupiaq songs and humor will be the building blocks upon which this thesis is built. Although seemingly dissimilar, all of these subjects are intertwined in this thesis. Too often, these subjects are treated as discrete events in a society, when actually they are all interwoven into the fabric of everyday life. I will show how they are related in the case of the Ugiuvak illuweet tradition.

Defining Inupiaq

Before I begin, however, a distinction between different Eskimo groups must be made. Throughout the circumpolar north, Eskimos are now commonly referred to as Inuit, a term that also includes Alaskan Eskimos. However, different Eskimo groups have their own name for themselves, according to the geographic area that they are from. Alaskan Eskimos call themselves by different names. The Eskimos of the northwest and north coast of Alaska refer to themselves as Inupiat or the real people (inuk - people, piaq - real). Inupiaq is the singular form of the word, while Inupiat is plural. The Eskimos located on the southwest coast of Alaska are referred to as Yup’ik (yuk - human being, pik - genuine or real) (Fienup-Riordan 1990:71). The approximate cutting line between Inupiaq and Yup’ik groups is Norton Sound, located south of the Seward Peninsula. Generally, all peoples north of the Norton Sound are Inupiaq.
Those south of Norton Sound are Yup'ik. This thesis deals with Inupiaq identity and songs.

**Ethnic Identity**

It is a common assumption that one's ethnic identity arises from common objective characteristics such as language, race, religion or geographic place (Edwards 1985:7). Up until the last 30 years or so, it was assumed that one's language defined one's ethnic identity or culture. In other words, one's culture was dead when the language was no longer spoken. This idea is still prevalent today. For instance, in a research paper entitled, "Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present and Future," Michael Krauss stressed that fewer Alaska native youth are speaking the Inupiaq language and predicted that some of these languages will die within the next forty to seventy years (Krauss 1980:51). He equates language death with a cultural one, evidenced by a subtitle in his paper, "Cultural survival or cultural suicide: A community responsibility" (Krauss 1980:88).

But this assertion that language equals culture (i.e., ethnic identity) does not adequately explain the phenomenon of groups who still maintain a sense of identity with their ethnic roots although they have moved from their geographic home or they no longer speak their language. Neither does it explain people who grew up outside of a culture that their parents grew up in, but still feel as if they were a part of their parents' culture. Edwards takes these examples into consideration in his definition of ethnic identity:
"Ethnic identity is allegiance to a group... with which one has ancestral links. There is no necessity for a continuation, over generations, of the same socialisation or cultural patterns, but some sense of a group boundary must persist. This can be sustained by shared objective characteristics (language, religion, etc.), or by more subjective contributions to a sense of 'groupness', or by some combination of both." (1985:10)

In other words, even though the "cultural 'stuff' of their lives" (Edwards 1985:10) will likely show change across generations, perceived group boundaries will continue. For example, even though an ethnic group may no longer speak their language or live in their ancestral home, perceived group boundaries continue in some way that will help a group to maintain its ethnic identity.

It is also a common belief that there has been an "ethnic revival" in recent years. In other words, it seems as if more and more people are reclaiming their ethnic roots and becoming more involved in their ethnic identity. This "revival" has resulted in a reconstruction of identity, as is the case with Hawaiian identity. After contact with missionaries and other explorers, Hawaiians assimilated into Western society. However, today, due to the tourist industry and the Civil Rights Movement, many Hawaiians are repatriating and reconstructing their past. Friedman states that this reconstruction of Hawaiian identity has arisen due to the "impersonalization and homogenization of the dominant society" (1992:842). Edwards, too, supports the idea that a sense of ethnicity is on the increase due to "dissatisfactions with the bureaucracy and impersonality of modern life" (1985:102), but he feels that this "revival" is more accurately termed "persistence" (1985:115). Group markers have become
more visible today because of a greater social tolerance of diversity, not because there has been an actual revival.

Edwards also points out that this "ethnic revival" is often characterized by symbolic markers - markers that "continue to exist because they promote the continuation of group boundaries without hindering social mobility and access." These symbolic markers include such things as "dress, ornamentation, dance, [and] song" (Edwards 1985:111-2).

One question that arises is whether people freely choose to maintain their ethnic boundaries or whether they are able to maintain these boundaries because the dominant society has become more tolerant of diversity. The dominant society allows people to acculturate today instead of forcing people to assimilate into mainstream society as it did in the past, but this could be because a certain degree of homogenization has already occurred. Perhaps the hegemonic system only presents the illusion of free choice. People do what they need to do to get along in today's society, and then, are able to choose to maintain some identity markers that set them apart from others. Thus, ethnic identity can be maintained, or even reconstructed, in today's society without endangering one's social mobility and success in the dominant society and without endangering the dominant system.

**Inupiaq Family Relations with Specific Reference to Cross Cousins**

In order to better understand Inupiaq society, a review of certain family relations is included. In particular, I will focus on the cross cousin relationship.
Beginning at birth, Inupiat were encouraged to be friendly, happy and to share. Pouting, anger and boastfulness were discouraged. Babies were constantly cared for and were rarely allowed to cry (Burch 1975:132). "Parents hugged their babies, cuddled them, rubbed noses with them, made faces at them, played with them, talked to them, and continually carried them around" (Burch 1975:139). Milan writes about the Wainwright Inupiat that a "child's outward expression of aggressive tendencies towards siblings or other children is discouraged. Mothers . . . can be frequently heard admonishing children not to fight." He goes on to say that this lack of aggression "seems to be a highly pursued value among adults and is internalized at an early age" (Milan 1964:57-58). Chance states that, as children became older, they learned that their "needs were more likely to be fulfilled when [they] gave assistance around the house" (1966:75). This system of socializing children fosters a sense of cooperation and sharing -- an attribute that helped the Inupiaq society to survive the harsh environment in which they lived.

Juan Muñoz and his wife, Rie, observed the King Islanders' willingness to share and their sense of happiness when they taught on King Island during the winter of 1952-53. Muñoz states, "The ever-happy and fun-loving King Islander is always ready to help a brother, sister, or nephew whenever help is needed" (Muñoz 1954:130). However, this readiness to help often extended beyond siblings or nephews. According to Burch, "cousins were expected to share, to work together, and to help each other" (1975:55). In addition, he explains that "cousins" did not
necessarily have to be "blood" cousins\(^1\). Heinrich and Anderson reiterate that the "biology of the matter is trivial and unimportant" (1971:543).

This sense of sharing among themselves is evident in the cousin relationships among the Bering Strait Inupiaq groups. They typically distinguished between their parallel and cross cousins (Oswalt 1967:202-203), a system usually referred to as the Iroquois system of kinship (Heinrich and Anderson 1971:541). This is counter to the "Eskimo Type" of kinship explained by other authors (Howard 1989:192; Spier 1925 as quoted by Heinrich and Anderson 1971:541). As is commonly known, parallel cousins are the offspring of two sisters, or the offspring of two brothers. Cross cousins are the offspring of a brother and sister and were treated as more distant relatives. According to Burch, expression between arnaqatigiik (parallel cousins) was similar to that between siblings (1975:186, 188). The difference between the two types of cousins is that help would be expected from a parallel cousin as it would be with a sibling, but the formality of asking would have to be used for cross cousins (Kaplan 1988:97). Oftentimes, some sort of payment was expected from teasing cousins in return for the help. This is illustrated in a passage in *King*

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\(^1\) See Burch's discussion on "The Scope of Eskimo Kinship in Northwest Alaska" (1975:50-61). Not only were people considered "blood" relatives through descent from a single ancestor, but also through marriage (including step-relations), adoption, and sexual intercourse ("Any offspring of any person with whom one ever had sexual intercourse could be a child" [Burch 1975:52]). These relationships were also considered permanent - "any kinship bond, once established, lasted for the lifetimes of the people involved" (1975:52). In Burch's words, "it was almost more difficult for an Eskimo to determine who was not a cousin than who was one... the number of one's cousins could run into the dozens even in one's own local group or village" (1975:55). Thus, theoretically, one person within a village could be related to most everyone else within the village, and they were not necessarily related by blood. In a future study, I hope to analyze how King Islanders trace teasing cousins outside their "blood" line.
Island Tales, as reported by a now deceased elder, Frank Ellanna, who uses the term teasing cousin for cross cousin:

"They (the King Islanders) would distribute food, giving it first to their teasing cousins (during a dance). Then they distributed food to any others" (Kaplan 1988:79). "In that way our ancestors before us had a way of helping their teasing [cross] cousins without payment, through dancing. This dancing was not done without a reason; it was their way of sharing. It was their way of sharing without payment some small but useful thing - whatever it was - with their teasing cousins" (Kaplan 1988:83).

Ellanna seems to be implying that usually, some sort of payment or other form of reciprocity was expected when one cross cousin asked another for help or for an item. It seems that a village dance event (as opposed to dance events in which only one clubhouse, and its associated families, participated) gave King Islanders the freedom to share food with everyone. Since food was distributed to "any others" in addition to the teasing cousins, the teasing cousins were not obligated to reciprocate.

In addition to helping one another out, illuq (illuriik - plural)
2, or in English, cross or teasing cousins, enjoyed what Burch calls a "radical departure from all other Eskimo kin relationships as far as expression was concerned" (1975:188). This relationship is characterized by joking and teasing and "by extreme lack of restraint" (Burch 1975:188). In most all other close family relationships, including father-daughter, mother-son, father-son, and brother-brother and brother-sister over the age of five,

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2 Burch spells the plural of illuq as illuriik. However, throughout this thesis, I have spelled it as illuweet according to my uncle's pronunciation. The King Island dialect of Inupiaq has what is known as "consonant weakening" (Krauss 1980:106) and many sounds such as "v" or "r" are softened to "w". Since this thesis concentrates on King Islanders, I will use illuweet since it is the King Island variation. However, when discussing Burch, I will use his spelling of the word.
expression of affection was restrained, even to the point of avoidance in the case of mother-son and brother-brother relations (Burch 1975:140, 175). Burch elaborates by saying that "... illuriik could 'talk to each other any old way'. By this they meant that joking cousins could tease and insult each other as much as they wanted to without evoking ill feelings" (emphasis mine). He goes on to say that illuriik were "mature adults who had gradually developed their association from a solid foundation, and who were very fond of one another." Finally, Burch states of this relationship that a person "would often go to considerable lengths to contrive a situation that would provide him with an opportunity to make fun of his illug" (Burch 1975:188).

This type of joking relationship occurs not only among the Inupiaq, but has also been documented among the Ojibwa: "When cross-cousins meet they must try to embarrass one another... But being 'kind'. relations, no one can take offence" (Landes 1937:103 as quoted by Radcliffe-Brown 1965:93). As Radcliffe-Brown states:

"The joking relationship is a peculiar combination of friendliness and antagonism. The behaviour is such that in any other social context it would express and arouse hostility; but it is not meant seriously and must not be taken seriously. There is a pretence of hostility and a real friendliness" (Radcliffe-Brown 1965:91).

Radcliffe-Brown explains this "peculiar combination of friendliness and antagonism" as one in which the relationship embodies some form of social disjunction or divergence of interests, but also one where an avoidance of strife is needed (1965:91-2). Thus, a joking relationship arises that is characterized by "mutual disrespect", but also where neither party is to take offense. This can apply to the Inupiat. Since Inupiaq cross
cousins were considered to be more distantly related to one another, and
had to ask for (as opposed to expect) help, the relationship is characterized
by an inherent social distance. However, since cooperation was also
expected when asked, a friendly relationship must be maintained.

As Burch stated, illuriik would often go to great lengths to
embarrass each other (1975:188). On Ugiuvak, this sometimes took the
form of creating songs about each other. If one cousin did compose a song
about his illuq, then his illuq often "retaliated" and composed a song about
him. It would help then, to discuss Inupiaq songs and humor.

**Songs and Humor in Inupiaq Culture**

Below, I outline the song inventories from the major works
on Eskimo song. In particular, I discuss those articles in which references
are made to humor and to genres which sound similar to the songs that
occurred between illuweet. While humorous songs between illuweet
figure into the song inventories which have been completed in Alaska
(Johnston 1988, Koranda 1972:12), it has not yet been fully described. In
order to better understand why these songs seem so important to my uncle,
I will describe the illuweet song and the cross cousin relationship which
generates these songs. In addition, humor in Inupiaq songs is discussed
since the illuweet songs are considered humorous.

Most of the ethnographers who have studied Bering Strait Inupiaq
music have collected and classified Inupiaq songs into various
categories. Generally, these classifications are based on song content and
include: folk songs, game songs, dance songs, shaman/magic songs,
animal/hunting songs and humorous songs. Only three ethnographers,
Ray (1967), Koranda (1972) and Johnston (1988), acknowledge humor in Inupiaq song and dance. This lack of mention of humor in songs is due, in part, to the difficulty in understanding the humor of another culture. What is funny to one group of people may not be funny to another group. Thus, outsiders researching another culture may not have had enough time in the other culture to be able to describe that culture's humor. Or, it could be, as Deloria implied when he wrote about Indian humor, that it was easier for non-Native Americans to perpetuate their myth of the "granite-faced grunting redskin" than it was to sympathize with Native American problems (Deloria 1969:148). As he stated, "People have little sympathy with stolid groups" (Deloria 1969:148), implying that when a group is perceived as humorous, people can then sympathize with that group. In any case, it has only been in the last ten to fifteen years that researchers have studied joking and teasing behavior in Native American communities.

Some of the earliest research in Inupiaq songs was reported by Jenness. He completed most of his work in northern Alaska and classifies Inupiaq songs into two categories: songs that are handed down and do not change and songs that are popular for a season and then are rarely used again. He categorizes the songs that do not change as folk songs, game songs and magic songs. Dance songs or "topical songs . . . rise suddenly and flourish for a season, then drop back into oblivion" (Jenness 1922:377). He also states that folk songs and game songs are confined to the children and that magic songs have disappeared due to the effects of missionary teaching.
Lantis completed most of her fieldwork south of the Seward Peninsula and north of the Aleutian islands in the 1940s and 1950s. Thus, she worked primarily with the Yup'ik Eskimos. Her categories of songs include shaman songs, songs of welcome and praise for guests, narrative songs commemorating special events and descriptive songs for "scenic or mimic performance". In addition, she describes song contests in which "contestants . . . sought to abuse and ridicule their opponents" (Lantis 1947:99-100). It is unclear from her description whether these "song contests" between opponents were friendly or unfriendly, although "abuse and ridicule" carry negative connotations.

Another researcher who describes "song contests" is DeNevi. DeNevi, in 1969, writes about the Inuit around Hudson Bay in Canada. DeNevi's categories include conjurer's songs, play songs, lullabies, story songs, game songs, hunting songs, animal songs, songs of "tender sentiment" and songs of derision. The songs of derision are "a form of contest between men who have become enemies" that serve to relieve tension and reestablish friendships (DeNevi 1969:66). These songs are meant to be amusing. He also mentions that songs texts "are often meagre, since the audience is expected to be familiar with the whole subject and fill in most of the meaning". Like Lantis, the terminology used by DeNevi ("songs of derision" and "enemies") casts song contests in a negative light.

Koranda has collected "ceremonial" songs and stories from the Yup'ik areas of Unalakleet, Hooper Bay, St. Michael, Bethel and St. Lawrence Island and from the Inupiaq areas of Shishmaref, Nome, Anaktuvuk Pass, Barrow, Point Hope, Wainwright, Kotzebue, Mary's
Igloo, Point Franklin, Barter Island, Colville River, Diomede Island, Wales and King Island (Koranda 1972:i, iii). She concentrated on those "ceremonial" songs that are rarely performed anymore. The songs she collected comprise the following categories: weather songs, power songs, shaman songs, hunting songs, game songs and ritual songs such as the welcome song or the messenger feast song (Koranda 1972). In describing game songs, Koranda mentions "song contests often take the form of ridiculing one's 'joking partner'. The joking partners are frequently cousins or distant relatives. . ." (Koranda 1972:12). She does state that these joking partnerships often produced some amusing songs.

Johnston, in his earliest research, classified songs into game songs, songs-within-stories and dance songs which include special ceremonial dance songs (Johnston 1976a:7 and 1976b:438). Later, he gives three main topics of dance songs: "(1) heroic or comic hunting adventures, (2) reports of animal behavior, and (3) accounts of mythical figures from the past" (Johnston 1980:370). The categories he discusses in these three early works are fairly broad. However, in 1988, he talks about song and their texts in more detail. He includes shaman songs, children's songs, songs of historical significance, songs about arctic life and subsistence and traditional dance songs. In addition, he discusses humor in songs. He states that humor is a "social lubricant" and that "there is much emphasis upon humor in dance, song, and everyday life." In addition, he states that:
"Humor is seen in comic dance masks, in witty songlines, in bawdy dance motions, in joking cousin relations and in the sometimes uproarious kidding and teasing which occurs within the context of the community hall during dance festivals" (Johnston 1988:168).

Ray, in *Eskimo Masks: Art and Ceremony*, also mentions humor, especially as seen in the dances and festivals of the Inupiat. She states, "The Eskimo's love of joking and his mastery of the sly dig has rarely been surpassed by any culture. Though humor was usually reserved for storytelling or spontaneous interpersonal situations, [dance] festivals had their share of it" (Ray 1967:44). She goes on to describe several instances at Mary's Igloo (Inupiaq), St. Michael and Yukon (Yup'ik) villages where "biting sarcasm", "lewd behavior", "ridicule and buffoonery" were evidenced. In addition, she states that the "King Islanders had always been famous for their 'funny' masks" (Ray 1967:44-46). Masks were primarily used in dancing.

To summarize the above information, a chart has been developed for the various song categories:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Folk/ Songs that don’t change</th>
<th>Shaman Dance</th>
<th>Hunting Game</th>
<th>Humorous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenness (1922)</td>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>Magic</td>
<td>Dance or Topical</td>
<td>Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lantis (1947)</td>
<td>Songs of Shaman</td>
<td>Narrative or descriptive</td>
<td>Welcome songs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeNevi (1969)</td>
<td>Lullabies &amp; songs of tender sentiment</td>
<td>Conjurer Story</td>
<td>Hunting/ Play &amp; animal songs of derision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koranda (1972)</td>
<td>Ritual &amp; Power &amp; welcome shaman</td>
<td>Hunting/ Game, weather song contests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnston (1976)</td>
<td>Songs-within-stories</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnston (1980)</td>
<td>Mythical figures from past</td>
<td>Animal/ heroic hunting adventures</td>
<td>Comic hunting adventures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnston (1988)</td>
<td>Historical significance</td>
<td>Shaman Traditional dance</td>
<td>Arctic life &amp; subsistence</td>
<td>Game/ Children songlines, joking cousins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Humorous songs, especially as indicated by Koranda and Johnston, often take place between joking partners or joking cousins and are characterized by "witty songlines". Johnston classifies them in the humorous category while Koranda places them in the game category under song contests. The kind of song I am focusing on is humorous but shares aspects of the song contest.

CONCLUSION

Ethnic identity, Inupiaq kinship relations and Inupiaq song and humor are intertwined in Inupiaq society. Johnston (1988) explains this very clearly when discussing humor. He emphasizes the fact that humor is emphasized in dance and song and is evidenced by "witty songlines" and in "joking cousin relationships". He says that humor is often apparent in community halls, where most Inupiaq dancing is done today (Johnston 1988). This ties together three of the four subjects - Inupiaq kinship relations, song and humor. In order to bring Inupiaq ethnic identity together with the other three, traditional dance settings should be explained.

Sometimes, a song performed in the community mentioned the name of one of its members. The song did not contain a lot of detail since the words only indexed an event which was known about by all. If an outsider was present for the performance of one of these songs, that outsider would have no idea about the meaning of the song. The rest of the community, knowing the person mentioned in the song and the situation that was alluded to, would thoroughly enjoy the song and would probably laugh. The outsider, however, would not understand the song and would
not laugh. This would tend to bring together the members of the community and enforce their sense of cohesiveness as a group. To quote Edwards:

"this ability to read between the lines . . . depends upon a cultural continuity in which language is embedded and which is not open to all. Only those who grow up within the community can . . . participate fully" (Edwards 1985:17).

Humor, music, dance and kinship relations are all important to the creation of illuweet songs. In the remaining chapters, I will attempt to show how illuweet songs are important to Alex Muktoyuk's sense of ethnic identity.
CHAPTER TWO
GROWING UP ON UGIUVAK

Background

In this chapter, I will try to reconstruct what life was like on King Island historically, and, what life may have been like for my uncle while he was growing up on King Island. King Island, or as it is known by the King Islanders, Ugiuvak, is located in the Bering Sea. Ugiuvak is located approximately 85 miles northwest of Nome and approximately 70 miles south of Little and Big Diomede Islands. Captain James Cook named the island "King Island" after his executive officer, Lieutenant James King. "Ugiuvak" means "winter home" because the King Islanders traditionally lived there during the winters, spending their summers trading along the mainland (Renner 1979:67). The population on King Island averaged approximately 200 people.

The King Islanders lived in a small village that was built on the south side of the island, which sloped in a 40-45 degree angle to the ocean. Prior to white contact, the islanders lived in subterranean houses. However, in the mid-1800s, they began using tall driftwood poles and building 1-2 bedroom houses on platforms. The backs of the houses rested on bedrock, with the front of the house standing on poles approximately 10-15 feet above the ground (Renner 1970:68-71; Munoz 1954:130). To enter a house, one usually crawled through a tunnel and emerged into the house from a hole in the floor. This type of entrance was innovative because cold air would stay in the tunnel instead of being let into the house, which was
heated by small seal oil lamps, and later, after white contact, by gas stoves.

The island is very rocky and is described as barren by some. However, the location of the island assured its people of abundant sea mammal life. The annual spring and fall walrus migrations pass right by Ugiuvak. Seals, whales, king crab, polar bears, shrimp and cod were also plentiful. Murres, cormorants and puffins nested on the cliffs of the island. Young boys would use their slingshots to hunt these birds, as well as climb cliffs for the eggs. Greens and berries grew on the island. The islanders were also fortunate in having a large ice cave that was used to preserve their food. They would save large caches of food in case of a bad hunting season or bad weather.

Prior to the 20th century, the King Islanders practiced a form of animism. Animal spirits were thanked when an animal gave up its life for food for the people. For instance, the Bladder Festival was "held each year to honor and appease the spirits (inua) of all the animals taken in the hunt during the past season." It was "believed that the spirits in the bladders would enter animals of their own kind, be reborn, and return again, bringing continued success to the hunter" (Hawkes 1913:26 as quoted by Koranda 1972:18).

By the early 1900s, Father Bellarmine Lafortune had converted most of the King Islanders to Catholicism. He was always impressed by the King Islanders and began asking to build a mission on Ugiuvak in 1909, a mission that he would oversee. However, he was not able to build a church on the island until 1929, after the U.S. Bureau of Education decided to build a school on Ugiuvak (Renner 1979:76). Between 1909 and 1929,
however, he administered to the islanders each summer in Nome.
Lafortune had tremendous impact upon the islanders, so much so that, even today, the King Islanders refuse to sing or dance during Advent in accordance with his wishes (Renner 1979:149). In contrast to other missionaries on the mainland, Lafortune allowed the King Islanders to continue singing and dancing. It is fortunate that Lafortune allowed the King Islanders to sing and dance because, according to Johnston, Inupiaq ethnic identity "finds expression today in the stressing of their traditional dance and ancient songs, which more than any other facet of their culture, embody the quality of being Inupiaq" (Johnston 1988:169).

**Song and Dance on Ugiuvak**

Traditionally, the King Islanders performed their songs and dances mainly in the winter in the *qagrit* or clubhouses. They usually began dancing during the month of December, or *Sauya.tugvik*, the "Time of Drumming" (Kaplan 1988:72-3). There were three *qagrit* (plural; *qagri* - singular) on Ugiuvak: Nutaat, Qaluilat and Agulitt (Kaplan 1988:99). Four or more families, who may or may not be related to each other, belonged to each *qagri*, and except when the whole village gathered together to dance, only those families would have the use of their *qagrit* to gather together to make their tools and boats and to carve ivory. Not only did the families gather at the *qagrit* for community events, but adolescent men and bachelors often made the *qagrit* their home. *Qagrit* were made of sod or wood. Nutaat and Qaluilat could seat almost the whole village. Agulitt was smaller. Benches of drift wood were built into the
walls to be used as seats. All others were seated on the floor with a small area used for dancing.

According to Ray, "Dances were for the most part religious. . . . However they were performed also for the enjoyment of the participants and observers . . ." (Ray 1967:25). She goes on to say that dances could be both secular and religious, secular only or religious only. Secular dances tended to be spontaneous and these are the dances that my uncle seems to remember best, probably because of Lafortune's influence on the island. Most of the authors writing about Inupiaq dance agree that all aspects of Inupiaq life were included in songs and were pantomimed in dance. The main purposes of the dances were "to honor, entertain, and flatter in a number of ways the spirits of game animals foremost in Eskimo economy, as well as to satisfy aspects of social cohesiveness through a reciprocity of pure entertainment" (Ray 1967:47).

According to my uncle, when songs were performed in the Ugiuvak Inupiaq tradition, they were accompanied by only shallow, round, membrane-covered drums. Sometimes, though, gloves with rattles were used. Rattles were usually made from puffin beaks. Mostly men drummed, although some women also performed this function. Most songs consisted of 10-12 lines which were repeated once or twice. The first time through, the singers and drummers were quiet and the dancers' movements were subtle. The second time through, the music escalated - drums were beaten harder, singers sang louder and dancers used more body language. Some songs did not have words; they were just a series of syllables sung together (unga, aya, kyanga, yuh). Most welcome dance
songs and animal songs did not contain any words. Songs that did have words in them usually related a story.

Usually, the dancers did not know what song they would be dancing to next and would not know until the drummers would sing the "introduction" to the song. This introduction was the dominant line of the song. For instance, during a community dance, the lead drummer of the group would begin drumming and would sing the dominant line of the song. Then, the other drummers would join in and the dancers would begin dancing.

This is a brief reconstruction of the context within which my uncle grew up. He remembers hunting auklets and murres with slingshots, living in the Qaluilat qagri as a teenager and dancing. In fact, he and his best friend choreographed their own movements to an old taliq song (transcribed in Chapter Three). He taught this song and his movements to me and the rest of the dance group in Tacoma.

Dancing Today

Today, the King Islanders no longer live on the island. Many of them moved to Nome in the 1950s and 1960s "to be closer to the health care and other services Nome provides" (Kaplan 1988:30). In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs closed the school on Ugiuvak in 1959, claiming that it was unsafe and too isolated for teachers to live there. According to my uncle, the King Islanders were threatened with arrest if they did not send their children to the mainland to go to school. After that, some families without children attempted to stay on Ugiuvak, but said that it was too lonely and moved to the mainland permanently in the early 1960s.
Today, the King Islanders live in Nome, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and throughout the lower 48 states.

There was a period of time from the late 1960s to the late 1970s in which the King Islanders stopped singing, drumming and dancing. This coincides with their first decade of living on the mainland. However, beginning in the 1970s, the King Islanders began dancing again after an almost ten year hiatus. One reason why they began dancing again was because of the tourist trade. Some of the airlines that flew into Nome hired King Islanders to dance for the tourists to give them a taste of an exotic culture.

Today, most dancing and singing of the King Island Traditional Dancers and the King Island Eskimo Dancers occur at King Island Hall in Nome and at various homes of the King Islanders in Anchorage. There are two troupes today primarily because there is still a large core of King Islanders who live in Nome and another large core of King Islanders who live in Anchorage. King Island elders live in both places and still enjoy dancing. In Nome, the King Islanders will have potlucks at King Island Hall and will sing and dance after eating. The King Island Native Corporation holds its meetings at King Island Hall and, after meetings, they will also sing and dance. These situations mirror most closely the traditional dance performances.

In addition, the King Island Eskimo Dancers of Nome and the King Island Traditional Dancers in Anchorage are often asked to do special performances. For instance, in 1976 and in 1984, the King Island Traditional Dancers performed at the annual Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Office of Folklife at the Smithsonian
Institution. In 1989, the King Island Traditional Dancers performed for the opening of the Crossroads of the Continents exhibit in Washington, D.C. Also, in October, 1991, both King Island dance groups joined together to dance a portion of the Wolf Dance in Anchorage. The Wolf Dance had not been performed in approximately ten years, and prior to that, it hadn't been performed in 25 years. Traditionally, the Wolf Dance lasted three days and used what is called a box drum, in addition to the flat, round, membrane-covered drums usually used. From what I could gather from a videotape of this dance, the Public Broadcasting System, Alaska Airlines, Delta Airlines, the King Island Native Corporation, the Bering Straits Native Corporation and the Cook Inlet Regional Corporation, sponsored the re-creation of a portion of this dance. In these cases, the dances were performed either in large gymnasiums, or on the Mall and the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

In all of these settings, the drummers typically sit at the back of the stage and face the audience and the dancers usually dance in front of them. This is somewhat similar to what used to be done on Ugiuvak, but of course, they are no longer performing only for insiders.

The purpose of this chapter was to present a brief look at what life may have been like on Ugiuvak while my uncle was growing up. In addition, I wanted to show how the traditional dance setting has changed for King Islanders today. This background may serve to give readers an understanding of the circumstances under which my uncle taught singing and dancing traditions to a group of displaced Inupiat living in Tacoma, Washington, which is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE
CREATING INUPIAQ IDENTITY IN THE
NORTHWEST INUPIAQ DANCERS

This chapter will discuss the fieldwork with my uncle, Alex Allughuk Muktoyuk. A more thorough description of the tradition between illuweet or teasing cousins will be presented, and how that tradition has manifested itself in the verbal art of the King Islanders. First, though, a brief description of my uncle's life will be presented.

Alex Allughuk Muktoyuk

Uncle Alex was born on Ugiuvak in 1941. While growing up on there, he attended school through the eighth grade and went to Catholic church services. He remembers using a slingshot to hunt auklets and climbing the rocks where the birds roosted to gather their eggs. He seems to have always enjoyed dancing. As a teenager, he and his best friend, Tommy, choreographed their own movements to an old taliq song (see below for definition of taliq). In addition, he and Tommy were among the first teenagers on the island to proclaim that they liked Elvis Presley songs, who was popular at that time. At age 13, he began hunting walrus with the men in the big umiaqs during the walrus spring migration. However, he had never been allowed to hunt by himself on the ice because he was too young. He left the island "for good" at age 17 in 1958 and moved to Nome.

In 1959, while in Nome, he signed up with the National Guard for six months. Then, from 1960 to 1961, he again lived in Nome until he signed up for the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) Relocation Program. Under this
program, he lived in Oakland, California, until the spring of 1962. When his brother, Edward, was flown to Nome from Ugiuvak with heart problems, he decided to go back to Nome. While there, he applied to go to school at Mt. Edgecumbe High School in southeast Alaska. He attended Mt. Edgecumbe for four years, from 1962 to 1966. He was very active at the school and was the associate editor of the school newspaper and had acted in several one act plays and one large theater production. He graduated with a high school diploma in the spring of 1966 and then attended Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado in the fall. After one term, he moved to Portland where his sister (my mother) was living.

After living in Portland for a short while, he moved to Los Angeles and lived there for approximately one year. At that point, he moved back to Portland in 1968. Shortly thereafter, Uncle Alex met his wife and they were married in the fall of 1969. Since that time, he has returned to Nome on eight occasions: in 1970, 1972, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1983, 1985 and 1989. In contrast, my mother has only been to Nome twice, once in 1973 and again in 1986. This contrast in numbers of visits between my mother and my uncle explains, in part, why most of my research was carried out with my uncle. He had more opportunities available to him to return to the Ugiuvak community, which meant that he had more opportunities to "remember" his culture. By "remember", I mean that he was able to participate in more Ugiuvak cultural activities over a longer period of time than did my mother. Hence, my uncle is much more comfortable in transmitting Ugiuvak customs and traditions than my mother is.
Methods, or Learning How to Sing and Dance Inupiaq-Style

I began approximately ten months of fieldwork with my uncle, Alex Allughuk Muktoyuk, and the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers in June, 1991. The Northwest Inupiaq Dancers formed their group in May, 1991. Most of the fieldwork took place within the context of dance practices located at various sites in the Tacoma, Washington area. These practices occurred most often bi-weekly but sometimes weekly. I attended about half of those practices in this time period. In addition, since Uncle Alex and I carpooled from Beaverton, Oregon, to Tacoma, Washington, I had the opportunity to ask him about the songs and about traditional Ugiuvak culture during our trips. Approximately 75% of the practices I participated in were audio-recorded. In addition, I audiorecorded 75% of the conversations I had with my uncle during our trips and notes were always taken.

Most of the members of the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers were of Inupiaq blood; those members that were not Inupiaq were either married to, or were foster children of, a member who was Inupiaq. The group members ranged in age from 6 to 60. Those members over age 40 were born and raised in Alaska and have relocated to the Pacific Northwest. Of these "older" members, all but Alex and one other woman (besides my mother) were discouraged by the missionary priests and school teachers from learning their native language and their singing, drumming and dancing traditions. Those members who are under age 40 are the sons, daughters, nieces or nephews of the older members. In the spring of 1992, there were approximately 18 members who either grew up or had family
from various villages on the Seward Peninsula (Deering, Wales, Teller, Nome and Ugiuvak) and from Barrow. Three members were not Inupiaq and ten were Inupiaq, but not King Islanders.

Since most of the members had not learned traditional Inupiaq singing, dancing and drumming, the whole group had a common starting point. Most of the members also did not speak the language. Thus, my uncle started teaching us a welcome dance song, which is traditionally the easiest to learn because the dancing is simple, the drum beat is steady and the words are fairly easy to pronounce. Alex was also a little uneasy about which songs he could teach; ethically, the songs belonged to the King Islanders and he was not sure how they would receive the news that he was teaching "outsiders" Ugiuvak songs. The Seward Peninsula Inupiat had a strict code about which songs one could sing. For instance, Uncle Alex told of an incident in which the King Islanders performed a song originally from Little Diomede Island. When the Little Diomede Islanders found out, they became upset. Thus, the first song he taught us with "real" words in it was a song that he had composed himself. He then taught us other Ugiuvak songs, although he was apprehensive about doing so. Some time later, he heard from his brothers and from other King Islanders that they supported his efforts. They did not mind that he was teaching non-King Islanders Ugiuvak songs.
My uncle classified dances he taught into the following categories: the tughomik /puwalaq, taliq and sayuq. Tughomik /puwalaq dances are what are called welcome or invitational dances. Welcome dances were performed when a village welcomed visitors to their village. Invitational dances were performed when a village invited the visitors to dance with them. Generally, the beat was steady and the songs that accompany these dances most often did not have words in them. Because the beat was steady, it enabled everyone, whether visitor or not, to dance because there were no surprises in the music. In these dances, women tughomik and men puwalaq.

When women tughomik, they stand in one place and bend their knees (a motion called "naplooziaq") in time to the drum beat. Then, they sway their torsoes back and forth from the hips and hold their hands at just above waist level. The hands are usually cocked upright so that the palms are facing outward. The hands punctuate the drum beat by making a kind of pushing motion forward and stopping just as the drum is struck. When men puwalaq, they move gently and softly the first time the song is sung, then, the second time through, they crouch down, stomp their feet in time to the beat or jump from left to right, and wave their arms. The men move spontaneously to the beat of the drum and there are no prescribed movements for them.

3 Throughout this chapter, I have tried to spell words according to the orthography developed at the Alaska Native Language Center in Fairbanks, Alaska (MacLean 1980, Kaplan 1988). However, only a couple of words appeared in the dictionary (taliq and sayuq). Most of the spelling of songs was done first by my uncle according to the phonetic rules that he knows. Then, I looked over those words and changed the spelling where appropriate according to the above orthography. Thus, the spelling of the words to these songs may differ from that developed at the Alaska Native Language Center.
The following song is an example of a welcome dance song. It was composed by my uncle's stepmother, Mary Muktoyuk. Composing a song includes deciding on the syllables or words to use, the rhythm or the beat of the drums and the melody\(^4\).

Ah yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Yah yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Ah yuh yuh unga ahhh.
Ah yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Yah yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Ah yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Ah yah yah unga ah eeyung uh.
Yah unga unga.

Ah yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Yah Yuh yuh eeyung ay.
Ah yuh yuh unga ahh eeyung ay.
Yah unga Yakatonnee.
Yah eeyunguh ah unga ah.

Taliq ("arm") or bench dances are done only by the women. As mentioned before, the clubhouses that the King Islanders used to dance in had benches built into their walls to allow for more seating. The drummers/singers and women dancers sat on these benches while performing. Many women could taliq at a time and the number was usually limited by who could be seated on the benches. The women usually sat with their left sides to the wall. Their dancing was characterized by smooth, graceful, swaying movements of their arms and torsos. To emphasize the beat of the drum, the arms would punctuate a movement at the precise time of the beat of the drum. The dance was "mimetic" in that their movements would mime a word or sound resemblance in the song.

\(^4\) When I transcribed these songs onto paper, I would often break up the lines of the song according to pauses in the music or to a strong beat of the drums.
For instance, in one song, there is a man named Kayangoorak in it; since Kayangoorak sounds like "kayak", the dancer's movement mimics the front end of a kayak. Johnston (1976b, 1988) and Lantis (1947) point out this mimetic quality of Inupiaq dance.

Below is the transcription of the taliq song that my uncle and his best friend, Tommy, choreographed movements to as teenagers. It contains meaningless syllables.

Unga unga uh, yah yah eeyung ay
Unga unga uh, yah yah eeyung ay
Unga unga uh, yah yah eeyung ay
Yaghi yah ah ah
Unga unga uh, yah yah eeyung ay
Unga unga uh, yah yah eeyung ay
Yaghi yah ah ah
Yaghi yah ah ah
Yaghi yah ah ah

*Sayuq* or floor dances can be performed by both men and women, by men only or by women only. Sometimes, *sayuq* dances were done by husband and wife teams (as described in *King Island Tales*, Kaplan 1988:73-93). Because the floor space was limited, only three to four dancers usually performed at a time, although six to eight people could dance at once. Sometimes a dancer would choreograph a *sayuq* dance to a *taliq* song. For the ceremonial dance such as the polar bear dance, masks and elaborate mittens (decorated with puffin beaks) were worn. The dancers used arm motions and performed in a low crouched position. The dancers either stomped one foot or they hopped on both feet from side to side in time to the beat.

Most dance practices lasted approximately two hours. In those two hours, Alex would lead the singing and drumming, first with songs that
we knew and then moving into songs that he was teaching. In traditional Inupiaq society, educating children typically took a "watch, then try" approach, according to Burch (1975:133). Children were not lectured to, they were expected to follow their teacher, "not to ask questions". Milan states that "Eskimo children in school are quiet and passive in learning situations and never volunteer information" (Milan 1964:58). Rarely were words exchanged. Children learned by watching. This was the style of learning that my uncle utilized in teaching our group. He would drum and the aspiring drummers were supposed to watch and learn. He rarely told us what to do. He set an example and we were to follow.

In our practices, the drummers would lean against a wall while either sitting on the floor or on a chair. The women (and men when they were floor dancing) faced the drummers. The women were either seated in chairs, benches or on the floor when we "taliqed" (bench danced). Or, if we were learning a floor dance, we stood in rows. A typical practice had five to six male drummers and about seven to eight female dancers. We would usually warm up with welcome dances. Then, if we were learning a new song, Alex would sing the song, then translate it to us, along with an explanation of the story behind the song if he knew it. If we were practicing for an upcoming performance, we would practice our entire repertoire until everyone was either drumming or dancing together.

The whole group participated in choreographing the movements (except for the welcome dance songs, which, for the men, had no prescribed movements, and for the women, was simple and static). However, we generally based our movements on movements that Alex indicated were based on traditional King Island Inupiaq dance movements. Thus, even
though we may have sung the same songs as the King Island Eskimo
Dancers of Nome and the King Island Traditional Dancers in
Anchorage, most of our dance movements were different.

Prior to the resignation of my uncle from the Northwest Inupiaq
Dancers in the summer of 1992 and their eventual break-up, the group had
learned approximately eleven songs. My uncle classifies songs
according to the types of dances he taught us. We learned two
welcome/invitational dance songs, three sayuq songs, and six taliq
songs. This classification system is different from the song content
system that the ethnographers used above. Using their system, we learned
three folk songs, two animal songs and six humorous songs. See the chart
below for song classifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Title ( or First Line)</th>
<th>Dance Style (Alex’s)</th>
<th>Content (Researchers’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uh yungay          Uh yungay</td>
<td>Tughomik/Puwalaq</td>
<td>Folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah yuh yuh eeyung ay</td>
<td>Tughomik/Puwalaq</td>
<td>Folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unga Unga uh</td>
<td>Taliq</td>
<td>Folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walrus</td>
<td>Sayuq</td>
<td>Animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven</td>
<td>Sayuq</td>
<td>Animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimenac</td>
<td>Taliq</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayac</td>
<td>Taliq</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiulana</td>
<td>Taliq</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kipkatasinak</td>
<td>Taliq</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribbon</td>
<td>Taliq</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attaluraq</td>
<td>Sayuq</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In our group, four to six men sang and drummed. The rest of the
group would sing along. Both men and women in the group danced
welcome dance songs. The women would *taliq* (or bench dance) to the bench dance songs. The men would *sayuq* to the animal songs and to the Attaluraq song. If the men performed a floor dance, my uncle either led the drummers, or he would dance to an audiotape of himself singing.

Drums for the group were made with the help of one of our members. Traditional drum heads were made of walrus stomach linings and the frame from driftwood. Our frames were made from balsa wood and the drum head from model airplane materials. These drums are then held in one hand and the other hand would beat the drum with a stick from *underneath* the drum. Sound was produced by hitting both the frame and the drum head, or by the frame alone. The frame of the drumhead is usually about an inch thick.

**The Tradition Between Illuweet or Teasing Cousins**

Of those songs that the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers learned, there are six that were composed in the spirit of the *illuweet* tradition. *Illuweet*, as described by Burch (see above), is a tradition that occurs between cross cousins, or the children of a brother and sister. Cross cousins are considered to be more distantly related to you than your parallel cousins, or the children of two brothers or two sisters. My fieldwork with my uncle confirmed Burch's observations about cross cousins relationships -- that they were characterized by joking, teasing and insulting one another and by doing whatever they can to embarrass each other. My uncle believes that this teasing often helped to relieve tension among the villagers. My uncle also confirmed that cross cousins generally were very fond of each other.
Teasing cousin relationships can take the form of name-calling, practical jokes or teasing one another in song. For example, my Aunt Margaret's male teasing cousins called her "toothless" relentlessly during her growing up years because she was missing her two front teeth. Another example involved Uncle Alex's female teasing cousins who caught him napping while traveling on a boat. They kissed him over and over again in front of the hunters and he became very embarrassed. Uncle Alex also related that he remembers one man, Kokoluk, who used to give him a hard time all the time and Alex believed he was just being mean. It was not until a few years ago that he discovered Kokoluk was his teasing cousin. Songs were a very effective way to tease one's teasing cousin. Just mentioning one's teasing cousin in a song was enough to publicly embarrass him because the entire community was usually witness to the performance of the song.

**Songs Composed By Illuweet and the Stories Behind Them**

Composing Inupiaq songs is not easy and, according to my uncle, there were not many King Islanders who were gifted in doing so. My uncle has mentioned only a few song composers (my stepgrandmother, Mary Muktoyuk, Charlie Mayac, John Kimenac and Paul Tiulana) during my fieldwork with him, an observation that may be skewed because I only learned eleven songs from him. Uncle Alex also said that it was hard to get a song right. In fact, it took my uncle approximately two years to compose a song (see below - the story behind the Tiulana song). I also remember his reaction (or lack of) when one of the members of the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers showed him a song that she had composed.
She was not a native speaker of Inupiaq, yet she used an Inupiaq/English dictionary to compose a song about the fun and laughs and togetherness she felt about the group. Since she gave it to him right before a performance, he took the composed song from her and continued to get ready for the performance. He stated that he didn't like it because "it didn't sound very native by its wording." He threw that song away after the group started fighting amongst themselves. I must admit that I did not care for the song much myself; my uncle remembers that I stated at the time that it sounded too much like a Hallmark card.

I received a similar reaction to a song that I was trying to compose once. Since Uncle Alex is my maternal uncle, his children, Mark and Tasha, are my cross cousins. Several months before my song composition attempt, at a performance at Oregon State University, I tried to tease Mark, an OSU student who was also in the audience. I made him stand up as a way of demonstrating cross or teasing cousins to the audience. I wanted to continue with this teasing, so on our way home from a practice, I tried to ask my uncle's help in composing a song about Mark. I wanted to poke fun at Mark's earring and various other things. My uncle attempted to translate some of my ideas into a song, but after half hour to an hour, the subject was dropped. That's when I learned that I really did not know enough about Inupiaq songs to even begin composing them. The more I thought about it, the sillier I felt for trying to compose a song in a language I didn't even speak!.

Although my observations about King Island songs are limited, I have noticed that most of the songs I do know rhyme in some way and have a certain rhythm to them. Even those songs with "nonsense syllables"
rhyme and follow a particular rhythm. It could be that rhyming in songs is a given -- that it is something that is necessary to song composition and both the other member and I had left it out creating our own song compositions.

As mentioned previously, another researcher, DeNevi, reported that song texts "are often meagre, since the audience is expected to be familiar with the whole subject and fill in most of the meaning" (DeNevi 1969:66). In other words, the songs index an event in the community that all community members know about since they were present at the time the event occurred. Although he was talking about the Inuit of Hudson Bay, Canada, I found this to be true of the Ugiuvak songs. Most of the song texts we learned were approximately 10-12 lines long. When my uncle would teach these songs, he would laugh to himself as he translated the song. The rest of our group would not understood what he found so funny about the song and it wasn't until he explained the story behind the song that we understood what the song was about. I am not sure if the rest of the group found the songs funny or if they understand the humor behind the song as I did. I had the benefit of extended one-on-one conversations about these songs while we traveled between Tacoma and Portland. Because the songs themselves are rather obscure, whenever our group performed these songs for general audiences, I would try to explain the story behind the song so that the audience could appreciate the humor inherent in the song. It could also be that the songs were considered funny just because a community member was mentioned in them, and during a village performance of the song, the community member was publicly pointed out in front of the entire village.
Among the King Islanders who used songs in the teasing cousin tradition were two well-known song composers. Charlie Mayac, a King Islander, was a teasing cousin to a man named John Kimenac, originally from Little Diomede Island who had since made Ugiuvak his home. These two men frequently composed songs about each other in an attempt to embarrass one another. For instance, one song that the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers perform was based upon lack of communication between Charlie Mayac and an airplane pilot. The airplane pilot was called to the island in order to transport a girl burned by boiling water. He was supposed to land on the north side of the island on the shore ice. However, he landed on the south side of the island where Mayac happened to be hunting. The pilot asked Mayac for directions, but Mayac did not understand English and the pilot did not understand Eskimo. Fortunately, Mayac knew what he was there for and finally said, "King Island udder (other) side!". The pilot then understood that he was then to go to the other side of the island to get the girl. Mayac was somewhat chagrined, given the seriousness of the situation, about the lack of communication between he and the pilot, so Mayac composed a song about Kimenac, in effect blaming Kimenac for the lack of communication. The Inupiaq and English versions follow:

Nugia sugnik atugia
Ya eeyung ee yah
Yaghi yah ah ah
Nalooagmiu, oorri yungi yah
Oorri yungi Aveksha manga
Yaghi yah ah ah
Soona Ooa Kimenac

Ya eeyung ee yah
Yaghi yah ah ah
Oorri yungi yah eeyungi, ya ah

I was filled with confusion
Ya eeyung ee yah
Yaghi yah ah ah
When a white man, oorri yungi yah
Oorri yungi asked me a question
Yaghi yah ah ah
It turned out to be (because of)
Kimenac
Ya eeyung ee yah
Yaghi yah ah ah
Oorri yungi yah eeyungi, ya ah
Another song performed by the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers was composed by Kimenac about Mayac. In this case, however, Kimenac was proud of his teasing cousin because of the following situation: Mayac was flown to California to appear on the old television show, *This is Your Life*. On this particular show, a man named Father Bernard Hubbard, the "Glacier Priest" was being featured. Father Hubbard had spent one winter on Ugiuvak (1937-38) and some summers and he considered Mayac a close friend. As a surprise, the producers flew Mayac down to California for the occasion. Kimenac’s song about Mayac, in both Inupiaq and English follows:

Ahtootookloo
Kinnakiakle
Televishiuroova
Amuni
California mi yah Ay yah
Ah Ah Kayunga
Eeyunga Ah yah
Soona Uva Mayac
Ozzingiloo yah ah yah anga
Ahtootookloo

I want to shake his hand
Who is that I saw?
On the television?
Way over there
In California?
Ah Ah Kayunga
Eeyunga Ah yah
It turned out to be Mayac
I thought so
I want to shake his hand

These two men composed many songs about each other. When one man made up a song, shortly thereafter the other one would compose one in retaliation. (However, the above two songs do not fall into this pattern.) These songs were performed in the qagri and usually the whole village gathered together to dance and sing and drum. The performance of these songs was the perfect way to ensure that the entire village could witness one cousin teasing the other cousin.

Today, illuweet in the form of song is still practiced. Alex Muktoyuk has composed a song about his teasing cousin, Paul Tiulana,
and Paul Tiulana has "retaliated". Both of these songs are performed by the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers. In Alex's song about Tiulana, he is teasing Tiulana for having a piece of land "inside the wind", in effect, teasing Tiulana because he chose to camp where it is always windy. The background to this song is as follows: In 1983, Alex had gone up to Alaska to visit. He hoped that while he was there, he would get to go walrus hunting on Ugiuvak with the other King Islanders. The take-off point from the mainland to Ugiuvak is a place called Cape Woolley. The wind must be fairly calm there before the boats can take off. On this trip, the King Islanders were camped at Cape Woolley waiting for the weather conditions to change because it was very windy. My uncle was constantly cursing the wind and the bad weather because he really wanted to see Ugiuvak. Tiulana and Yahmanni, Tiulana's wife, had invited Alex to stay with them at their camp while they waited for the weather to change. Both Tiulana and Yahmanni are Alex's teasing cousins. While they were waiting, Tiulana and Yahmanni teased my uncle about the weather since he was their teasing cousin. My uncle would tease them back. At one point, Yahmanni complained about how the rocks and pebbles always got into her shoes. Alex teased her by telling her to put on some snow shoes, as if they would help keep the rocks and pebbles out of her shoes. The weather never improved and my uncle had to leave to come back to Oregon before he got a chance to hunt or to see Ugiuvak. After he got back from his trip, he spent two years composing the following song:

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5 Tiulana's mother and Alex's father were cousins, making Tiulana and Alex third or fourth cousins. Alex called Yahmanni's mother an "aunt", although Yahmanni's mother was not really Alex's father's sister. Yahmanni's mother and Alex's father were related in some way. Thus, they are teasing cousins because they are related through people who are of the opposite sex.
In 1985, Alex was able to go back up to Alaska to visit. On his way to Nome, he had a layover in Anchorage, so he decided to call up Tiulana and Yahmanni to say hi. Alex said "So-yah-ghlay" to Yahmanni which means "Time to beat the drums!" He had wanted to share his composition with them that night. For some reason, Yahmanni was not able to dance, so Alex was not able to share his composition with them. While he was in Nome, though, he taught the song to the King Island Eskimo Dancers. A couple of days later, Tiulana flew to Nome for a King Island Native Corporation meeting. He was present while Alex taught the song to the King Islanders in Nome. Tiulana made many teasing comments to my uncle while he was teaching the song. Since then, this song has been part of the Ugiuvak song repertoire. In fact, last winter, the King Island Dancers in Nome were performing Alex's song after a seven or eight year hiatus.

The next time my uncle went to Alaska, he discovered that Tiulana had "retaliated". Alex has two Inupiaq names -- Allughuk and Kipkatasinak. He never liked Kipkatasinak because it sounded to close to
the Inupiaq word for earring, *kipkatak*. When he was an adolescent, the other children teased him by calling him "earring" all the time. Also, when he was a young child, the adults called him "Lookoostalk", which is more of a nickname than an actual name. He acquired this nickname because the adults would make him dance to an old song that was popular at the time on the radio called "Look Who's Talking". He would dance by bending the knees slightly, moving his knees back and forth (similar to the "Charleston"), and, with his elbows next to his ribs, wave his forearms back and forth in front of him. Because he would dance to "Look Who's Talking", the adults called him "Lookoostalk". Tiulana's retaliation song used both of these names in it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lookoostalk</th>
<th>Lookoostalk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oolungnarakattonnee</td>
<td>Last spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kipkatasinak</td>
<td>This man Kipkatasinak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soyayghlay</td>
<td>Said, &quot;So-yay-ghlay&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuniksootioong</td>
<td>By telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soona ooa kaattonnee</td>
<td>It turned out that he wanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atughloonee</td>
<td>To sing a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eeyah, ah-ungah</td>
<td>Eeyah, ah-ungah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anugitowooni nooakaghlonnee</td>
<td>Just because his land has no wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah-eeyah, ya, ah eeyah,</td>
<td>Ah-eeyah, ya, ah eeyah,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yungah, ayaa, eeyah, ah ungah</td>
<td>Yungah, ayaa, eeyah, ah ungah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ah eeyah yung, ah eeyah</td>
<td>ah eeyah yung, ah eeyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yah-eeyah, yah!</td>
<td>Yah-eeyah, yah!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookoostalk!</td>
<td>Lookoostalk!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tiulana retaliated by trying to outdo Alex with a cleverer song - he used two of Alex's names that Alex does not like and then referred to Alex's song about Tiulana in the line "Just because his land has no wind". My uncle believes that the other two songs with words that the Tacoma dance group performed are also teasing cousin songs, although he
does not know who the people are that are named in them. In the Ribbon Song, a man named Nakak, presumably a member of a teasing cousin relationship, was caught spying on two lovers. It starts out with Nakak's voice, "Last summer I saw . . . a couple making out . . . I walked over to see them. It was Angilanna and Kayangoorak. When she spotted me, she said (as if Nakak was a thief and not a spy), 'Don't yank the ribbon off. It's very expensive. It's from King Island. It's made of silk.' (and then as a warning to her companion) Nakak is up there!"

My uncle is not sure who the man is in the song below, but he believes that it is also a teasing cousin song. In it, the composer is saying, "Look at that man (Attaluraq), he's doing women's dance motions!" as if to say "That man is dancing like a woman. How funny?" or "Isn't that man silly for doing women's dance motions?"
Ah yah yah yah yah eeyung
Attaaluraq oona
(Kungoosiziak) ataktuk too-oo

Ah yah yah yah yah eeyung
That man Attaaluraq
That (women's neck motion) he will do

Attaaluraq oona
(Naplooziak) ataktuk too-oo

That man Attaaluraq
That (women's bending knee motion) he will do

Unga

Unga

As can be seen, these teasing cousin songs seem to embody the spirit of the illuweet tradition. The songs are composed with the intention of poking fun at one's cousin through publicly announcing their actions, and in the case of the Mayac-Kimenac and Tiulana-Kipkatasinak teasing cousin relationships, a desire to outdo one another. This follows what Burch (1975:188) explained about the teasing cousin tradition, that teasing cousins were very fond of each other and that they would go to considerable lengths to make fun of each other. These types of songs have proven to be very popular among the King Islanders.

One of the researchers on Eskimo music reported that some songs "rise suddenly and flourish for a season, then drop back into oblivion" (Jenness, 1922:377). In the case of my uncle's song about Tiulana, it flourished during the winter of 1985-86 and then was not used for several seasons. However, my uncle reported that in the winter of 1991-92, the King Island Eskimo Dancers of Nome began singing his song about Tiulana again. This song did not "drop into oblivion" as reported by Jenness and instead enjoyed another year of performance by the King Islanders. My uncle states that this happens quite often. A song will be popular for a season, then it is not used for several years. Then, a drummer or dancer will remember the song and begin using it again. This is different from what Jenness reported. It could be that in his
fieldwork, Jenness would not return to a village he had visited previously, or if he did, he returned in a year in which the song had not been revived.
Individuality was a characteristic strongly valued in Inupiaq culture. According to Chance, "Prestige is more commonly gained through individual achievements than through association with a particular group" (1966:73). He goes on to say that individual achievement was demonstrated in friendly competitions between two men and could take the form of: "foot, boat and dog races, tests of strength, song duels, dancing, and storytelling" (Chance 1966:74). Ingenuity, hunting and skill in making harpoons and kayaks were also tests of achievement, as was being a good judge of weather. Thus, the identity and self-worth of an Ugiuvak male consisted of demonstrating all of these skills and these were the cultural "rules" my uncle learned in the first 17 years of his life.

It is well known that the developmental years shape the rest of one's life. I believe that my uncle is still guided by those "rules" of male identity that he learned as a youth on Ugiuvak. When he left the island in 1958, he had not yet learned to hunt alone on the ice. At that point, his hunting experience was limited to hunting auklets with slingshots and hunting walrus with the other men in umiaqs. In addition, he grew up at a time in which he was forced to assimilate into the dominant culture by the missionaries and school teachers that lived on Ugiuvak. As a result, he did not have the opportunity to demonstrate the abilities required of males in Ugiuvak society, nor to prove his identity as an Ugiuvak male. He moved to Oregon in 1968 and met and married his wife in 1969. He continues to make his home in Beaverton. How can he demonstrate his
identity and self-worth as a King Islander living in Beaverton, Oregon, 2,000 miles or more from Ugiuvak? There are no polar bears living in the Willamette or Columbia Rivers that he could hunt. He has no walrus hides or other materials available to him to make a kayak or umiaq nor does Beaverton have the climate with which to store these vehicles (it is not humid enough). Judging weather patterns is difficult enough in the Willamette Valley and is a skill that he does not need in the suburbs. So, what can an Ugiuvak male in Oregon do to express his identity? The only skills that are available to him are carving ivory and singing, drumming and dancing; activities in which he participates today.

As I discussed in Chapter One, Inupiaq singing and dancing traditions "embody the quality of being Inupiaq" (Johnston 1988:169) and are becoming more and more important to the Inupiat as they rely less on their traditional subsistence patterns. This conviction that singing and dancing traditions are important to Inupiat identity and cultural continuation is reiterated by Maria Williams. In a publication entitled *Native American Dance Ceremonies and Social Traditions*, she writes about Paul Tiulana:

"Paul Tiulana feels that his investment in teaching the younger generations the songs and dances of King Island is his most important legacy: 'Sometimes I feel discouraged that I have not done all that I should have, but when I saw my grandchildren dance the Wolf Dance I knew . . . . This gives me hope that our people will continue.'" (Williams 1992:163)

Singing and dancing traditions are very important to Ugiuvak identity, according to Tiulana. Uncle Alex demonstrates his agreement with his
teasing cousin by the emphasis he has placed on singing and dancing in his own life.

As discussed in Chapter Three, six of the eleven songs taught by my uncle were songs composed out of the illuweet tradition. In addition, two other songs that he taught (one composed by his stepmother and one song that he personally choreographed) involved my uncle in some way. It could be that my uncle taught us these songs, as opposed to more of the hunting or animal songs, because he left the island before he became more involved in hunting. He left the island at a time in his life where humor and relationships played a bigger role in his life than did hunting. Another factor to consider is that, by the time my uncle was growing up, the King Islanders were Catholics. By the 1940s, the King Islanders no longer danced dances of religious significance because Father Lafortune forbade them, although he did allow them to dance other dances. Since the humorous teasing cousin songs had no religious significance, they were allowed. Thus, my uncle's knowledge of songs and dances may be skewed due to the Catholic influence on the island.

I believe, though, that teaching the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers teasing cousin songs is my uncle's way of "repatriating" his past and reconfirming his identity as a King Islander. He is, in fact, proving that he is a King Islander because he knows the songs, and more importantly, knows the story behind the songs. As Edwards states, he is able to "read between the lines . . . Only those who grow up within the community can . . . participate fully" (1985:17). These illuweet songs embody Inupiaq humor and Inupiaq family relations which combine to be an important
part of his Inupiaq identity. By teaching us these particular songs, my uncle was expressing his identity.

This phenomenon of turning to the arts as a way of expressing one's identity is not unheard of. Alba states that cultural expressions, such as speaking the "mother tongue" or performing ethnic music and dance, "give meaning to an otherwise abstract assertion of ethnic identity and breathe life into ethnicity as a social form" (1990:75). This aspect of "breathing life" into one's ethnicity was seen in my uncle. Sometimes, on our way to Tacoma, my uncle would not be very enthusiastic and would state that he was not in the mood to go up there. However, after the practice, he was invigorated and much more enthusiastic about the whole trip. Dancing and singing seemed to positively reinforce his identity as an Inupiaq and made him feel proud of his ethnicity. In addition, since expressing his identity using subsistence skills were not an option to him, he has turned to the more "symbolic" expressions of his identity.

Thus, symbolic expressions of ethnicity, such as art or music, are very important today since they serve to demonstrate one's sense of ethnic identity and to delineate group boundaries. As Edwards states, "There is no necessity for a continuation . . . of the same socialisation or cultural patterns, but some sense of group boundary must exist" (1985:10). In other words, it is not so much the content of these expressions that are important since the content is constantly evolving. It is the fact that they help to delineate boundaries and, in a sense, prove one's ethnicity. This is the role that singing and dancing has played for my uncle.
POSTSCRIPT
BREAK-UP OF THE NORTHWEST INUPIAQ DANCERS

When the Northwest Inupiaq Dancers started, all we did was learn how to drum and sing and how to dance. It was exciting to learn how to do traditional Inupiaq dancing and I felt proud of myself for learning, as I am sure everyone else did. But, for some, it was not enough to just practice. They had to be dancing for a purpose. Thus, we began dancing at Pow Wow's. At the Pow Wow's, we would put out a blanket for donations. These donations were given to Alex to help defray the cost of his transportation from Portland to Tacoma. Some of our members also had connections at Day Break Star (a Native American Gallery in Seattle) and knew that this gallery sometimes hired traditional artists or dancers to perform. This gave our group the idea that we could start making money from our dancing -- a thought, I admit, that is very attractive.

About this time, some members started pushing our group to become more formalized. Up until this point, we had remained informal. We had elected officers, but the only officer who had any real duties was Alex, who was our President. His only duty was to teach us. I do not believe that Alex had any wish for the group to become more formalized. He just wanted to get together with other Inupiat and have a good time singing and dancing. However, in order to get paid as a group for some of our performances, we needed to get a federal tax identification number. In order to get this number, we were forced to become more organized. We tried to establish by-laws and duties for each of our officers. At this point, we were not ready for this type of formalization. Since there was some disagreement as to the
duties of our officers, we ended up with four different people trying to take care of various aspects of our application for a federal identification number. Each of them had conflicting reports on what was needed. None of them had any experience in organizing a group or starting a business. This caused a lot of hard feelings and confusion in our group.

A couple of months after we began dancing together, some of the members of group thought to surprise Uncle Alex. One of the members had videotaped the Little Diomede Islanders dancing. They decided to hold an extra practice, but didn’t tell Alex in order to surprise him. They began learning one of the Little Diomede songs and used their dance motions. At the next practice Alex and I attended, they "surprised" him by dancing this song. This caused some consternation from myself and from Alex. We were concerned because: We did not have permission from the Little Diomeders to use their song. Song ownership is very important to the Inupiat. In fact, songs were often traded between villages. One of the welcome songs that the dance group learned was a song that was given to the King Islanders from some Siberian Inupiat. We were also concerned because most Inupiat songs have a lot of meaning behind them and one cannot perform a song without understanding the meaning behind the song. We would not know this from the videotape of the song. We felt that it was very important that we get permission from the Little Diomeders to use this song. My uncle, especially, felt very strongly about this, and having grown up in a culture where one learned by watching, to learn from a videotape, without permission, was unacceptable. However, for most of the rest of the group who grew up outside the traditional Inupiaq culture, learning from a videotape is perfectly acceptable, as is evidenced
by all the "How to" videotapes available commercially. In addition, some of our members belonged to other Native American groups and had been quite active in attending Pow Wows. A Native American Pow Wow is somewhat Pan-Indian and it is an acceptable practice to learn another group's singing and drumming and use it to expand one's repertoire. This incident caused a fracturing in the group.

Another problem stemmed from the seeming unwillingness of the rest of the group to attend practices in Portland, where my uncle lived. The group seemed to expect that the teacher come to them in Tacoma since most of the group besides my uncle and myself lived in and around Tacoma. They would say that they would go to Portland to practice, but, there was never much enthusiasm for this idea, so my uncle never organized such a practice.

After ten months, I had decided that I was tired of driving so far to practice for two hours. Oftentimes, I would leave home around 8:30 am, drive to Portland, pick up my uncle, then we would drive to Tacoma and arrive there by around 12:30 pm. We would practice for two or three hours, then we would drive home. We would get back to Portland around 6:30 or 7:00 pm and I wouldn't get home until about 8:30 pm. Sometimes, though, practice would be scheduled for late afternoon (around 4:00 pm). For these practices, I would get home around midnight. I knew my uncle, too, was getting very tired of these long drives. Add to this the fact that he probably attended twice as many practices as I did. It was at this time, too, that the group divided into political factions. There were some who wanted to have matching parka covers and some who didn't. There were some who wanted to learn songs from other Inupiaq groups and some who didn't.
Bad feelings began to emerge within the group. This fact, along with the long travel time, led me to quit attending practices.

Much of the division in the group could be attributed to the fact that my uncle was less acculturated to the dominant society than any other member of the group besides my mother, who, because of transportation difficulties, attended only a handful of practices and performances. As mentioned above, only one other member was fluent in Inupiaq (besides my mother). In addition, my uncle was used to the more informal mode of dancing as it occurred on the island, and preferred the Ugiuvak tradition of wearing different parka covers when performing songs (an aspect of individuality so valued among the Inupiat). The rest of the group was more acculturated and needed the formalities in order to feel like they were a part of a more "official" group. They had also been more exposed to the dominant culture where matching outfits are a sign of professionalism. Thus, the difference in acculturation between the teacher and the students may have played a role in the break-up of the group.

Although I didn't formally quit being a member of the group, I did stop attending after ten months. About the time that I finally quit, the group was still trying to organize themselves. They passed a rule at a meeting that my uncle did not attend, that stated that only those members who lived in Washington could hold an office for our group. This was, in effect, an insult to my uncle. If not for him, the group would not exist. It was also rumored that one of the members stated that the group could hire anyone to teach them how to dance, implying that they could still dance even without my uncle to teach them. Finally, some members of the group made
matching Yup'ik-style parkas to dance in. Yup'ik dancing, although similar to Inupiaq dancing, is still different enough that anyone could distinguish between the two. My uncle felt that since most of the group was of Inupiaq blood, why would they want to dance in Yup'ik parkas? It was at this point that my uncle decided to quit. He felt as if he were being encouraged to quit by the other members of the group. Eventually, without a teacher and because of the political divisions within the group, the group ceased to exist.
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