

LIITUKUT SUGPIAT'STUN

(WE ARE LEARNING HOW TO BE REAL PEOPLE):

EXPLORING KODIAK ALUTIIQ LITERATURE THROUGH CORE VALUES

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By

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Abstract

The decline of Kodiak Alutiiq oral tradition practices and limited awareness or understanding of archived stories has kept them from being integrated into school curriculum. This study catalogs an anthology of archived Alutiiq literature documented since 1804, and provides an historical and values-based analysis of Alutiiq literature, focused on the educational significance of stories as tools for individual and community wellbeing. The study offers an exploration of values, worldview and knowledge embedded in Alutiiq stories. It also provides a history of colonial impacts on Alutiiq education and an in-depth study of the early colonial observers and ethnographers who collected Alutiiq oral literature, clarifying the context in which the stories have been retold or framed. Collections of traditional Indigenous literatures are valuable on many levels. This collection is of historical and personal significance for local Kodiak Alutiiq tribal members' identity as it makes these resources more accessible for community members and educators, and therefore accessible to younger and future generations. The conclusion also provides recommendations for next steps for developing curriculum and revitalizing Alutiiq oral traditions. The book is intended to contribute to an understanding of the evolution of cultural traditions in Alaska, and to serve as a model for similar cultural reclamation and education efforts.

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Preface

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Kodiak Alutiiq people and a summary of my background combined with the purpose of the book and my rationale for its research objectives and long-term goals for integration into the education system. It also explores the traditional role of story within education and the various genres and practices that comprise Alutiiq literature.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework behind my research methodology. This literature review examines the significance of traditional knowledge education, oral versus written story transmission, and historical reclamation of knowledge through archival research.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology used for this study based on a paradigm shift in Indigenous studies raised international to decolonize Indigenous Knowledge Systems, education, history and literature.

Chapter 4 provides an extensive history of Alutiiq story collection and exploration into the motivations and influences of past researchers so that current and future audiences are better able to evaluate, use, and enjoy Alutiiq literature. Combined with the appendix *Values Catalog of Kodiak Alutiiq Stories*, this chapter in essence serves as an annotated bibliography as well.

Chapter 5 offers a history of Native education in the Kodiak Archipelago, and the impacts on families and students today within the context of educational processes and the transmission of knowledge based on oral literature as a foundation of traditional education.

Chapter 6 is an introduction of Alutiiq cosmology, archetypes and themes that are essential for understanding Alutiiq literature within the context of Alutiiq traditions. It also explores the transition to Russian Orthodoxy and Christianity, which has had an impact on the transmission of traditional stories.

Chapter 7 analyzes core Alutiiq values as aspects of five spheres that comprise Alutiiq wellbeing, using traditional stories that demonstrate lessons of the importance or manifestation of Alutiiq values.

Chapter 8 offers samples of close readings of two Alutiiq stories through this values-based literary analysis.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation, calling for collaborative story research and educational curriculum development with the hope that teachers will recognize the significance of acknowledging what the rich Alutiiq culture and heritage offers for students' wellbeing so that they will include it within all aspects of education, reversing cycles of dysfunction.

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Quyanaasinaq!

Chapter 1: Introduction & Rationale

Introduction to the Kodiak Alutiiq: Place & Identity

While the larger concept of storytelling as a learning tool and important component of wellness is applicable across cultures, I have chosen to focus this study on my own Alutiiq heritage community. The greater Sugpiaq / Alutiiq Nation reaches from the Alaska Peninsula to Prince William Sound, the Lower Cook Inlet, and the Kodiak Archipelago in the Gulf of Alaska, as shown in the map at right. On the Kenai Peninsula and

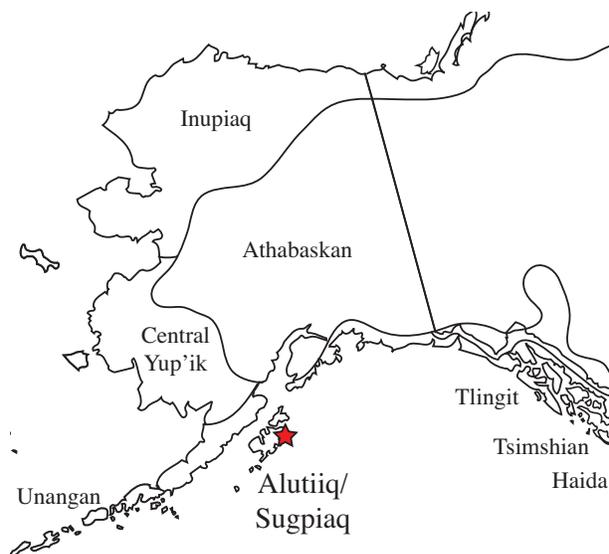


Fig. 1.1: *Alaska Native Language Map (Krauss, 1982)*

Prince William Sound the dialect is Chugach Alutiiq, with the Alaska Peninsula sub-dialect to the east of Kodiak. While we can understand each other, Chugach and Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq vocabulary and pronunciations are quite different from the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect. The linguistic differences increase further to the northeast with Central Yup'ik, which shares the same language family as Sugpiaq / Alutiiq. Within the Kodiak Archipelago the Kodiak Alutiiq is comprised of ten federally-recognized tribes.

While the Alutiiq / Sugpiaq are closely related to the Central Yup'ik linguistically and culturally, and share many common traditions with the Unangan or Aleut as island maritime peoples, they are their own distinct culture. The Kodiak Alutiiq dialect has assimilated a great number of Russian root words and traditions during the past two hundred years since contact, as Kodiak was the location of the first Russian capital in Alaska and has been a trading crossroads for many peoples, making the Kodiak Alutiiq culture of today a unique intermix of Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabaskan, Tlingit, Russian, and Scandinavian influences.

Kodiak Alaska Natives originally called themselves *Sugpiaq*, meaning “real person,” just as many other Indigenous peoples do in their own language. While it is typical for communities to give themselves names meaning “the people,” their definition of identity categorizes the spiritual understanding that the Sugpiaq had of their world—a world imbued with interconnected spirit worlds inseparable from what western cultures would call physical reality. This self-designator therefore makes the distinction from both animal spirits or neighboring tribes.

Kodiak Alutiiq people also refer themselves as *Qik’rtarmiut* or “island people”. There is a general sense of unity across the island among the ten tribes of Kodiak as we share traditions, family connections, language and stories. The map of Kodiak below shows the names of each tribal community and the Alutiiq name for each village as well.



Fig. 1.2: *Qik’rtaq - Kodiak Island. Map of Kodiak Villages & Tribes*

At colonization in the 1700s, the Russians named all Alaska Native peoples from the Aleutian chain to Chugach Peninsula *Aleut*, despite cultural and linguistic differences between the *Unangan* and the *Sugpiaq*. Both of these groups still identify themselves as *Aleut* based on their shared history of being called this. Many Kodiak Alutiiq Elders today still refer to themselves as Aleut, having been raised with this self-designator. The name further emphasizes a link to Russian heritage. In essence, Aleuts were Alaska Native peoples whose ancestors came in contact with Russians and whose heritage was based on a merge of Russian and Native ideology.

In the 1970s and 80s, scholars researching the Kodiak Alutiiq / Sugpiaq people encouraged the use of the designator *Alutiiq*, which is the word *Aleut* in the Sugt'stun/ Alutiit'stun language. Now many prefer this term, but others have gone back to *Sugpiaq*. A group of Kodiak Alutiiq Elders recently agreed we should be referred to as both *Sugpiaq / Alutiiq*, in acknowledgment of our unique heritage and in respect of community members who identify with one versus another self-designator (Alutiiq Language Workshop, 2010). We continue to use these terms interchangeably to be inclusive of the identities of all Sugpiaq / Alutiiq / Aleut peoples. I have chosen to use "Alutiiq" predominately for my own personal heritage identification and as used throughout this dissertation, as it carries the memory of Russian contact as a major cultural influence. In interacting with other Alutiiq peoples, it is important to clarify their preference to be referenced as Alutiiq or Sugpiaq or Aleut, and respect this choice in acknowledgments.

Since Russian conquest in the late-1700s, the Kodiak Alutiiq community has struggled and changed under various colonizing forces. Among the tragedies survived: the 1786 Russian massacre and conquest, forcing all surviving men into slavery while women and children were held hostage (Black, 1977; R. Knecht, Haakanson, & Dickson, 2002), which greatly altered family dynamics and extinguished our tribal sovereignty for generations; Widespread deadly epidemics in the 1800s and early 1900s, including suspected systematic viral eradication of medicinal shamans around the island and Russian colonial consolidation of our 65 villages down to the seven we have today (Clark & Black, 2002; Crowell, Steffian, & Pullar, 2001; Fortuine, 1992; Luehrmann, 2008);

Rapid cultural shifts from a shamanic based spirituality to Russian Orthodoxy and other Christian denominations, perpetrated through social engineering in hopes of taming a work force; Near extinction of the Alutiiq language through an abusive English Only policy in American government schools, causing lasting negative socioeconomic effects (Dauenhauer, 1997; Hegna, 2003); and Commercial fisheries rationalization striping rural communities of their primary industry as well as oppressive regulation of subsistence resources, which has significantly crippled our rural economy and contributed to poverty and outmigration (Carothers, 2007, 2008). These survived crises offer only a glimpse into the pervasive dysfunction that ensued, leading to high rates of suicide, substance abuse and domestic violence through today, as well as struggles to perform within the western educational system, contributing to a legacy of Alutiiq social and family economic crisis that touches every family in our Alaska Native community. Knowing this heritage of historical trauma, we are better able to understand and heal, sifting through our past, looking at what we want for ourselves in the future, and figuring out together how we want to raise and educate our children to stop the cycle of dysfunction.

Starting with the pursuit and subsequent passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, when Kodiak Alutiiq leaders sought to unify, we began rebuilding pride in our Alutiiq identity. Yet through our survival of these transformative experiences, few Elders remain who are comfortable telling traditional stories, particularly those with shamanic undertones given Christian influences. Within the past several generations, traditional stories have rarely been passed down and there are many adults and young adults who believe there are no more traditional Alutiiq stories. The growing generation gap further decreases the likelihood that Elders are being listened to due to increased technological influences in homes and an education system detached from family life. Fewer families seem to be telling hero and family stories, which were once the primary education process.

Ultimately, youth need traditional stories accessible, as they are thirsty for an educational experience rooted in their homeland. One way to do this is through community review of collected stories to date and development of educational curricula

that incorporates the traditional Alutiiq worldview through storytelling, as well as builds an appreciation of our ancestral oral traditions. Through this study I intend to explore the Indigenous Knowledge Systems embedded within the Alutiiq oral tradition, and help identify how this knowledge fits into a wider context of Native education, providing a framework for review and analysis of traditional stories for educational purposes. This research study intends to bring a new level of revitalization, providing community members an anthology of previously collected stories from the Kodiak Alutiiq region, as a means to address the erosion of traditional values by western influence, oppression, and colonization, countering the fractured intergenerational relationships, identity and self-esteem of our community. My hope is that increased awareness of the depth of traditional knowledge will positively influence community wellbeing as we celebrate our traditional stories and worldview. It will further encourage exploration by future generations of what it means to be Alutiiq and spiritually grounded in our place and values.

Thankfully, there are some families and Elders who know and tell stories today who we can turn to for help in rebuilding and celebrating storytelling traditions. Although the Alutiiq oral tradition has been documented and continues in some families, there is little access to these stories for most community members currently, particularly given the major shifts away from the oral tradition this past century. Many stories have survived only in a written form are fragmented, out of context, or largely inaccessible in archives. Since Russian contact in the late 1700s, there several explorers and anthropologists have documented traditional stories of the Kodiak Alutiiq, but most of these records are only either available in museum or library archives, or past issues of the Journal of American Folklore; and most community members are not aware they exist. As an Alutiiq person seeking out these recorded stories, I wondered *what from among them are true to their original telling? Who did these researchers talk to and how did they learn what they wrote? What motivations and background experiences influenced their edits?*

The Kodiak Alutiiq Museum and several of our tribes have gathered many of these resources, as has the Kodiak Island Borough School District. However, out of context and without an appropriate understanding of the Alutiiq cultural perspective,

these stories can easily be misunderstood or misused. As parents and teachers realize the need to honor and integrate traditional stories into children's learning, they find there are limited resources available to do this. I have repeatedly heard Alutiiq tribal members state that they have never heard a traditional story but that they would love this opportunity, particularly as a way to share their culture with their children, building a positive identity and pride in being Alutiiq. Therefore, I believe I can offer a major contribution to the Kodiak Alutiiq community by developing this dissertation to review and summarize the contexts of these sources to provide an annotated bibliography or anthology of the stories collected, which can then serve as an educational resource to help pass on our traditional knowledge as the community sees fit.

Personal Background

My personal passion for Indigenous stories comes from my family background and a career working in heritage preservation within my community, as well as my love of literature and Indigenous cultures. I was drawn to this research through a career in tribal cultural research and cultural education; my own art and creative writing in fiction and poetry grounded in Kodiak life and place; my family's love of Alutiiq cultural history and family stories; and my readings of other Indigenous researchers breaking new ground reclaiming and revitalizing their communities through decolonized methodologies (Kawagley, 2006; L. Smith, 1999).

As an Alutiiq woman of mixed ethnicity I am both an insider and an outsider in many senses, which gives me a unique cross-cultural perspective and an advantage in this exploration as I straddle two worldviews (Leonard, 2007; St. Denis, 1992). This stance allows me to work from within the culture through my personal relationships with family, Elders and Native educators: growing up in Kodiak with a love of stories about my Alutiiq family and our place in the world; learning the Alutiiq language and engaging in its revitalization as a tribal member; and developing tribal equity and education programs over the past decade.

Despite this close relationship as an Alutiiq descendant raised within the Kodiak Alutiiq community, I am also an outsider due to my mixed ethnicity and my education background. Beyond the five Indigenous cultures in my family's heritage, including Alutiiq, Tlingit, and Athabaskan on my father's side; and Iroquois and Tsimpsian on my mother's side, I also come from Scandinavian, English, Irish, and Slavic backgrounds. Together, I have ancestral ties to thirteen cultural groups, as well as have married into and am raising three sons with even more diverse cultural backgrounds. My eldest son also shares Filipino, Chinese and Spanish heritages and my youngest sons also share Cherokee heritage. This family diversity, and my work as an academic researcher and writer, has given me experience in successfully navigating within the western worldview, but this background also sets me apart from my Indigenous community. Yet, for Indigenous peoples struggling in an environment bent on assimilation, we need both worlds to thrive. By embracing our Indigenous worldview through stories, we can bring healing from the rapid assimilation processes our communities have survived. In order to do this effectively, one needs to be able to appreciate and navigate within both worlds.

My background, from my personal life, academics and work, has set me on this path. Born and raised in Kodiak, Alaska, with paternal Alutiiq tribal connections to Afognak Island, my work after college centered on supporting the Alutiiq community within the nonprofit realm. My father's service as President for 25 years for one of our Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations, Natives of Kodiak, has also influenced me throughout my career in Alutiiq community service. Additionally, my grandmother's love of our Alutiiq culture and history plays an influential role in my life, relayed through my father's and other family members' stories about her; perhaps more so due to the tragedy of early Alzheimer's which struck her at a young age, making her unable to speak after I was six years old, up to her passing away before I was out of high school. Despite this prolonged loss, her voice carries on in our memories and her love of learning left a lasting impression, which our family has since memorialized through an education scholarship through the Koniag Education Foundation.

With the help of Native scholarships after I graduated from Kodiak High School, I earned my BA in English – American Literature, with a minor in Creative Writing from the University of Arizona in 1994. I continued with creative writing studies in graduate school and earned my MFA in Fiction, with an emphasis in Native American Studies in 1996. Throughout college I missed Alaska and my family, feeling adrift in a foreign land. This led me to seek out any publication I could find about Kodiak and the Alutiiq people, exposing me to knowledge of history and culture not taught in our schools. Through this yearning and growing awareness, I came to realize that our Alutiiq stories had been suppressed. This quickly became my primary focus, ultimately leading to my decision to return to school in pursuit of a PhD in Indigenous Studies at University of Alaska Fairbanks to complete this dissertation.

After college, my tribe (Native Village of Afognak) recruited me in 1999 to serve as their administrator. I leapt at the chance to connect directly with our rich culture and be home again. In this capacity, beyond my tribal governance support duties, I helped develop their cultural research and publication programs, including the *Dig Afognak Program* – an archaeological, ecotourism, and multi-generational culture-based spirit camp; and an Afognak heritage research and preservation program to gather and publish Afognak history. Through these two projects, I co-authored a children’s book titled *The Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwood Journey*, based on stories from Elder John Pestrikoff and driftwood research by archaeobotanist Karen Adams who is an independent consultant for Crow Canyon Archaeological Center (Drabek & Adams, 2004; Drabek, 2009b). Our book blends Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with western scientific research for a 4th-6th grade age audience, and earned two Honoring Alaska’s Indigenous Literature (HAIL) awards and an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation, as well as opened a door for me to explore our Indigenous literature as a means of improving access to education for Native students. I was further able to share this project with wider audiences in a presentation I delivered at the 2008 Worlds Indigenous People’s Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Melbourne, Australia, and again at the 2009 Tribal Archives, Museums, and Libraries Conference (TALM) in

Portland, Oregon, and via publication of my essay *Blending Indigenous Story and Science* in the *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, which explores the making of the *Red Cedar of Afognak* book and its use in Indigenous education and honoring Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Drabek & Adams, 2004; Drabek, 2009b).

I left administration and transitioned fully into education as the Alutiiq Lead Teacher for the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR) through UAF's Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI). In this role, I supported Alutiiq curriculum development, including collaborative creation of an *Alutiiq Spring Plants Booklet* to encourage place-based K-12 education (NEAR, 2005). To bring attention to Native education in the community, I also co-founded the annual *Esgarlluku Taquka'aq – Awakening Bear* gatherings, and coordinated them for six years in Kodiak. The gatherings featured three years of regional education summits, two years of wellness gatherings, regional leadership summits and honoring ceremonies to celebrate culture-bearers who promote Native education from around our Archipelago, with participation from all ten Alutiiq tribes and our regional Native organizations.

I continued my Alutiiq community service at the college level when I joined Kodiak College as English Chair and Alaska Native Studies coordinator for three years. I also served on the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Language Committee, coordinating college credit for language trainings and other Alaska Native studies courses. While at the college I joined the Alutiiq Museum as an Alutiiq Language Apprentice, meeting several hours a week with fluent Alutiiq Elder Phyllis Peterson from Akhiok and Kaguyak, along with other Elders to learn and record the Alutiiq language as part of the Museum's field research project. Besides devoting several hours a week to learning Alutiiq, I volunteered to teach the language and develop Alutiiq resources, which I continue to support. Among these efforts, I created an *Alutiiq Picture Dictionary* (Drabek, 2008, 2012) to promote language learning in our region, including over 1,000 Alutiiq vocabulary words. The book has been very popular, with a second print run in 2012 after edits made by Elders and Jeff Leer, who developed the Kodiak Alutiiq Dictionary (1978) and Grammar book (1990), providing an early foundation for our revitalization efforts.

I also recently assisted the Native Village of Afognak (NVA) in development of their archives program, and completion of a translation and publication project to produce Kodiak Alutiiq language elementary curriculum books and resources, translated from Chugachmiut Alutiiq. In June 2009, I was fortunate to be invited to teach at NVA's Dig Afognak camp a culture-based writing workshop I designed as part of my coursework in 2009 (Drabek, 2009a). The Kodiak Island Borough School District provided half a High School English credit for student participation in the course and its follow up work, completing Elder interviews and developing articles for a community publication called *Iluani*. The project took the *Iluani* publication from a classroom endeavor, with individual field interviews, to a group project rooted in a cultural setting with Elders actively engaged in talking circles and lessons. All of this work has helped me build a rapport with our Alutiiq Elders and a stronger sense of my role in our region within education and Alutiiq cultural sustainability, as well as contributed to my background in understanding Alutiiq stories and their application within education.

In my education, work and personal life, I have struggled with a conflicted relationship about research. While I continue to be fascinated by delving ever deeper into learning and understanding, and the subsequent communication of this knowledge for others' benefit, I have experienced negative impacts from other researchers that tempers my eagerness to engage in research processes within a mainstream academic context. My recent academic journey toward a doctorate in Indigenous Studies has not fully resolved this conflict, but it has clarified my perception of the conflict and helped me find more holistic methodologies emerging from within an Indigenous research paradigm that can serve as a framework for my pursuits; this in turn encapsulates how I wish to live and contribute to my community through my efforts. Most importantly though it has helped me trust my intuition and beliefs about what is the right or appropriate way to work within my community as a researcher.

Forms of Alutiiq Storytelling

There are several forms of verbal and visual storytelling within the ancestral Alutiiq tradition. The main form explored within this dissertation are ***unigkuat***. *Unigkuat* (plural) are legends, myths, or origin stories that explain how the world came to be the way it is and why. Jeff Leer's recent unpublished Alutiiq dictionary files define *unigkuaq* as a "legend passed down from generation to generation; thing of the past" (Leer, n.d., *U*). Leer also raises the issue of connotation with using the term "myth" as a translation for *unigkuat*, given that in English *myth* implies a story that is not based in fact. His notation questions this translated word choice when he writes, "is the terminology 'myth' correct? (implies a value judgement)." In looking deeper into the meaning behind the word *unigkuat*, it appears to be etymologically and metaphorically related to the adverb "*unegkut*" — "those out there...toward the open sea," and the verb roots "*unegte-*" — "to remain, stay behind" or "*unite-*" — "to be left (behind); to be left over; to remain" (Leer, n.d., *U*). These word roots provide us a glimpse into the Alutiiq perception of what a story is, where they originate from, and their function as a trace of what once was. Today it is generally accepted by Alutiiq Elders today that *unigkuat* stories are "fairy tales," but likely in the pre-Christian era they would have held more spiritual significance and been revered as biblical stories are today within Christian society.

The general term used for all other types of stories in Alutiiq culture is ***quliyanguat*** (plural). Leer in his most recent unpublished Alutiiq dictionary files defines *quliyanguaq* as a "story, tale, history" (Leer, n.d., *Qu*). *Quliyanguat* can also be legends but are more frequently true life stories telling how heroes dealt with challenges in life or significant occurrences. The Alutiiq word *quliyanguat* is etymologically related to the verb roots "*quliyar-*" — "to tattle, snitch, tell," "*quliyangar-*" — "to be a tattle-tale, snitch, informant," "*quliyaqe-*" — "to talk it up, to talk favorably about it," and "*quliyanguaqe-*" — "to tell the story of it; to tell about it; to have it as an account" (Leer, n.d., *Qu*). It is also etymologically and metaphorically related to "*qule-*" — "above" (Leer, n.d., *Qu*), which clearly implies that stories come from above. Within the Alutiiq tradition it is commonly understood that stories or messages from the sky worlds

were carried by little birds, which serve as a link between the animal spirit world and human existence.

Another form of storytelling, frequently combined with dance motion, are *atuutet*. Leer defines *atuun* or *atuuteq* as a “song... [or] music” (Leer, n.d., *A*). *Atuutet*, or songs, are a combined form of verbal and visual storytelling when performed together with dance motions, gestures, or “*liilet*” (Leer, n.d., *Ll*). The word *atuutet* is etymologically linked to “*atuute-*” — “to sing with or for him/her” (Leer, n.d., *A*) and related to “*atuu-*” — “to be usable, serviceable, wearable” (Leer, n.d., *A*). There are a number of traditional Alutiiq songs that tell stories that continue to be used today. For example, as documented in Pinart’s (1872a) journals, there are many mask songs that embody the stories of archetypal characters from Alutiiq spiritual life.

The Alutiiq traditionally used gestural sign language within dance or “*liiler-*” — “to dance (in the aboriginal style, with hand motions)” (Leer, n.d., *Ll*), which Elders today typically define as “motioning.” Beyond the dance motion gestures common across Alutiiq, Yup’ik, Inupiaq, and Inuit traditions, the Pacific Northwest tribes also share a traditional form of **sign language** used to communicate with outside traders. In fact, recently members of the Kodiak Alutiiq community recovered a chapter from a book *The Graphic Arts of the Eskimos: Based Upon the Collections in the National Museum* that catalogs traditional sign language used in the region in the 1800s, as well as other chapters on pictographic depictions (Hoffman, 1897). “Dr. Hoffman’s special studies were largely concerned with sign language, pictography, secret societies, primitive ritual and primitive art, in all of which subjects he contributed notable papers to governmental and other scientific publications” (Chamberlain, 1900, Jan-Mar). The signs inventoried in this book not only were used to communicate, but the signs themselves are metaphors that assist us in understanding how different words may have been perceived.

From 1871 to 1879 Dr. Walter James Hoffman (1897), an assistant ethnologist for the Bureau of Ethnology worked with an Alutiiq man named Vladimir Naomoff who he describes as “an intelligent Kadiak half-caste...offspring of a Russian father and a Kadiak mother” who worked for the Russian American Company (p. 750). After Alaska was

transferred to the U.S., Naomoff “continued in the service of the Alaska Commercial Company, of San Francisco, California, visiting the various settlements of natives on the mainland and inland to the Copper River Indians [Kutchin or Kenai], a tribe of the Athabaskan linguistic family.” This is how Naomoff spoke Russian, English, Alutiiq and several other native dialects, and made use of sign language to communicate and trade with other Natives. Hoffman (1897) cataloged the gestures that Naomoff taught him in the summer of 1882 in San Francisco, California. The hand signs collected were also verified by a Mahlemut native from St. Michael’s. The recent Alutiiq Language class at the Kodiak High School has begun to reintegrate these signs into their communications.

While stories are typically understood to exist within verbal, written and in body language realms, stories also are embodied within cultural objects of stone, wood, bone or textiles. The Alutiiq have a rich heritage of graphic symbolism, as do many other cultures, which conveys stories through petroglyphs, incised pebbles or talking rocks, transformation sculptures, talismans, dolls, weaving patterns, story knives, and masks (Steffian & Counciller, 2009; Roberts, 2008; Knebel, 2003). These images or forms are an important form of Alutiiq literature, although not explored in depth in this dissertation beyond references to images that relate to oral and written stories and in Chapter 8. As explored in Chapter 8, cultural objects are often paired with or representative of an oral story or its motifs. For this reason, it is important for cultural reclamation efforts to incorporate explorations of symbolism and story motifs imbued in cultural objects, as they help illuminate the ancestral worldview that oral stories may not be fully able to convey significance across cultures or across generations.

Purpose & Value of Stories: Wellbeing through Story

Oscar Kawagley (1999) in his book *A Yupiaq Worldview* explains that the Yupiaq, like other Indigenous cultures rooted in the oral tradition, “use mythology and stories for value creation and teaching what it means to be human” (para. 69). This entire process is how values are transmitted as the stories provide a “cultural orientation—an identity.” Kawagley’s claim that the storytelling process instills one’s identity emphasizes the

importance of the tradition and its value as a practice, given our state of divergent worldviews today. Among many Alaska Native families, including many Kodiak Alutiiq families, suppression of cultural traditions throughout colonization has left a silence. A silence in which many traditional stories, conveyed across millennia, have been extinguished in their oral form. Therefore, communities must make efforts to maintain traditional storytelling as a primary means for youth to learn, as stories connect them to their families and heritage values, and build a strong sense of identity and well being.

Storytelling as a traditional vehicle for knowledge acquisition is multifaceted and offers a richness in learning that is difficult to surpass. Shared stories build a common experience; develop the art of listening and symbol association; foster social skills and an understanding of human motives and patterns of behavior; invoke a physical response through language; prepare us for life through experiential connections; transmit cultural traditions; strengthen identity and demonstrate “right” behavior within values. All of these complex lessons and more can be conveyed through a simple story passed down from generation to generation. As Oscar Kawagley (1999) explains, “Mythology is an invaluable pedagogical tool which transcends time” (para. 15). Across millennia, stories convey their lessons and have sustained generations as they are retold and become integrated into our minds as a means of interpreting and comparing our experiences to what we’ve been told through story. Storytelling is a powerful learning tool that links us to our ancestors. For all these reasons and more, a culture’s storytelling practices and oral traditions should be cultivated for each new generation as one of their best ways to maintain connections to their ancestors and valuable lessons.

Stories reinforce our identity and help shape our sense of purpose in life (Cajete, 1994; Eder, 2007; Kawagley, 2006; L. Smith, 1999). As we find our place in the world, stories keep us on track and motivate us. In a healthy environment, metaphors and archetypes within traditional and family stories repeat in our minds and our communication with others. However, as our Indigenous communities suffered colonization, they watched their people, beliefs and stories repressed and devalued, which

injures a family’s spirit for generations as evidenced by the challenges of many within our Alaska Native community.

Ancestrally and contemporarily, storytelling is done to perpetuate life, convey values and a worldview, as well as heal from and honor past hardships. Asserting who we are as a people, how we see the world and what matters to us most is the job of storytelling. Use of this process is not new, but based in the ancestral oral tradition. As Bruchac and Ross (1994) state, “[Our worldview] has been preserved nowhere more strongly than in the traditional stories told by Native people, stories which point out the relationship between human beings and the natural world” (p. 12).

Exploring the concept of story as survival, I designed a diagram based on the metaphor of the ripples a stone makes when thrown into water, as shown below. This diagram illustrates how at the core storytelling is an educational process, where cultural and skill based traditional knowledge is transmitted. As the story’s intensity and messages radiate outward, storytelling can become a healing process, both for storytellers and their audience, reinforcing our sense of identity and belonging to our identifying group — building unity, wellbeing and a sense of purpose or meaning to life. These ripples move outward further, carrying the power to correct history, stopping inaccuracies or untruths from being passed on, which is particularly important for Indigenous people whose histories previously were told by their conquerors. Then in a larger sense, stories seek to empower a community, becoming tools for reclaiming lost traditions or lands, and validating actions within the community’s lived context. In essence they function as change agents, drawing attention to and addressing inequities of power or oppression.

As Alutiiq traditional knowledge has regained respect and

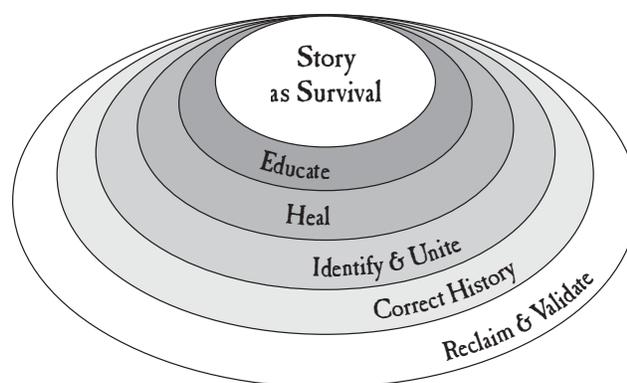


Fig. 1.3: *Story as Survival Diagram*

space is being made for it to reclaim its proper place as central to Alutiiq people's lives and homes, there has been a movement to integrate the language and culture more into schools—ironically the force which once banned our heritage language. Despite this openness, Indigenous stories are often enigmatic for non-Indigenous teachers to figure out how to integrate into their classrooms, particularly if they have little familiarity with the families and community of that heritage. With few Alutiiq Elders remembering or telling traditional stories, and even fewer who are comfortable coming into a classroom setting, it is not currently feasible for every child to have regular exposure to storytelling within schools. Any opportunity to engage directly with an Elder storyteller should be taken as precious, and families should encourage their grandparents and other Elders to share stories with children in their own homes and community gatherings. Yet, in order to continue Alutiiq storytelling, it appears that the transmission of traditional story will also have to evolve for it to survive in our modern context. As Mather (1995) argues, we must make use of writing and technology to increase access to these important lessons. While the focus of this study is limited to one cultural group, the application and larger lessons discussed should be useful to other Indigenous groups in exploring their own oral traditions as education tools.

My long-term goal through this research process and book is to reemphasize the Alutiiq oral tradition, Elder wisdom, and literary efforts of the Kodiak Alutiiq people. Drawing attention to traditional Alutiiq literature and knowledge will meet an underlying community need to restore equality for the Alutiiq worldview and help revitalize Alutiiq storytelling traditions within homes and the community.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Indigenous Literature Reclamation and Storywork Pedagogy

Indigenous studies researchers agree that Indigenous literature and its use as an education resource must be done outside western literary theory and educational practices, and within an Indigenous theoretical framework that is holistic and inclusive of community values and cultural knowledge systems (Archibald, 2008; Leonard, 2007; L. Smith, 1999; Cruikshank, 1998; Dauenhauer, 1997; Kawagley, 1999; Cajete, 1994, 1999; Blaeser, 1993; Sarris, 1993). Jo-ann Archibald (2008) developed just such a framework for working within Indigenous stories within education based on seven principles of what she terms *storywork*: “respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy.” The essence of her values-based Indigenous Storywork Pedagogy establishes solutions for working with traditional stories that speaks to the core issues that many other Indigenous scholars have raised. Her methods for working with stories provide a road map for applied storywork that has the potential to revitalize oral storytelling traditions for communities who follow them.

This dissertation serves as preparation to apply storywork educational curriculum design that explores the core values intended to be taught through traditional stories. This process responds to Linda Smith’s (1999) call for Indigenous community empowerment by returning voices and shifting power through reframing, remembering and storytelling. For the Kodiak Alutiiq, given our history of colonial impacts over the past two hundred years, a great deal of preparation work was needed to identify collected stories, reframe those stories filtered through an ethnographer, and to spotlight the Alutiiq core values and knowledge system embedded within. To this end, this chapter explores the philosophies and Indigenous methodologies that inform this study about the importance of Indigenous story and the significance of its rightful role within education, therefore serving as the foundation for the methodology described in Chapter 3.

Oscar Kawagley (1999) explains that the Yupiaq, like other Indigenous cultures rooted in the oral tradition, “use mythology and stories for value creation and teaching what it means to be human” (para. 69). The education process within the oral tradition

allows for transmission of encoded traditional knowledge. It is through stories that our values are passed down, providing a “cultural orientation—an identity.” Kawagley’s claim, that the storytelling process imprints one’s identity and emphasizes the importance of the tradition and its value as a practice, is of particular need given our state of divergent worldviews today. Among many Alaska Native and Kodiak Alutiiq families, suppression of cultural traditions throughout colonization has left a silence. A silence in which many traditional stories, conveyed across millennia, have been extinguished in their oral form. Therefore, traditional storytelling needs to be maintained, both as a practice in a traditional oral storytelling context and within a cross-cultural written context as a primary means for Indigenous youth to learn, as stories connect them to their families and heritage values, and build a strong sense of identity and wellbeing.

Storytelling as a traditional vehicle for knowledge acquisition is multifaceted and offers a richness in learning that is difficult to surpass. Stories shared over generations convey life lessons and establish shared metaphors and archetypes for people to live by. Knowing the collective stories of your community provides the foundation for identity and a sense of belonging (Nicholas, 2009; Kawagley, 2006). The sharing of such stories builds a common experience; develops the art of listening and symbol association; fosters social skills and an understanding of human motives and patterns of behavior; invokes a physical response through language; prepares us for life through experiential connections; transmits cultural traditions; strengthens identity; and demonstrates “right” behavior within values. All of these complex lessons and more can be conveyed through a simple story passed down from generation to generation. As Kawagley (1999) explains, “[m]ythology is an invaluable pedagogical tool which transcends time” (para. 15). Across millennia, stories convey their lessons and have sustained generations as they are retold and become integrated into our minds as a means of interpreting and comparing our experiences to what we’ve been told through story, thus forming our sense of self. Storytelling is also a powerful learning tool that links us to our ancestors. For all these reasons and more, a culture’s storytelling practices and oral traditions should be cultivated for each new generation as one of their best ways to maintain connections to

their ancestors and their hard earned knowledge about their place in the world, particularly as a way of keeping purpose and meaning in one's life given rapid cultural changes within the modern context. As Archibald (2008) writes, "Only when our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits work together do we truly have Indigenous education" (p. 12).

Today, as Alutiiq traditional knowledge is regaining respect, and space is being made for it to reclaim its proper place central to Alutiiq people's lives and educational processes, there has been a movement to integrate the Alutiiq language and culture more into schools—ironically the force which once sought to eradicate our heritage language. Despite this openness, the meaning and relevancy of Indigenous stories are often enigmatic for non-Indigenous teachers to make sense of how to integrate them appropriately into curricula, particularly if they have little familiarity with the families, community or the Alutiiq heritage—not to mention the challenge of finding access to traditional stories in either written or oral form. Archibald (2008) reminds that "without basic cultural sensitivity among teachers, appropriation and disrespectful use of stories are more likely to occur" (p. 150).

With few Alutiiq Elders telling traditional stories, and even fewer comfortable coming into a classroom setting, it is not currently feasible for every Kodiak child to have regular exposure to storytelling in its traditional form, as this practice has diminished. Opportunities to engage directly with an Elder storyteller are precious, and families should encourage their grandparents and other Elders to share stories with children in their own homes and community gatherings (Littlefield, 2000). Yet, in order to continue and revitalize Alutiiq storytelling, the transmission of traditional story will also have to evolve for it to survive within our modern context. As Elsie Mather (1995) argues, we must make use of writing and technology to increase access to the important lessons that sustained our ancestors. This ultimately means that documentation can support preservation of individual stories, while emphasizing the oral traditions as a preferred method, providing a bridge for younger generations of storytellers. Just as we're having to do with our heritage language, documentation and publication, both in print and online, can be strategies to raise awareness and reemphasize value and meaning. Further, we

must strive to decolonize stories previously collected and retold. Archibald (2008) explains that,

Indigenous stories have lost much educational and social value due to colonization, which resulted in weak translations from Aboriginal language to English, stories shaped to fit a Western literate form, and stories adapted to fit a predominately Western education system. The translations lose much of the original humour and meaning and are misinterpreted and/or appropriated by those who don't understand the story connections and cultural teachings. (p. 7)

Yet, just as Archibald (2008) and Mather (1995) have struggled with the realities of oppressed storytelling traditions within their communities, I hesitated in moving forward with the western forms of literary analysis I had learned in undergraduate school in my efforts to reclaim and explore Alutiiq stories, for fear of perpetuating colonization. It was not until I read Archibald's recommendations for storywork that I began to see the application of a culturally respectful approach for working with Indigenous stories. Identifying an anthology of Alutiiq story documentation ultimately made it clear that the Kodiak Alutiiq first needed to become more aware of how their documented stories had been filtered and what impacts contribute to their loss of storytelling traditions.

Role of Story within Education and Transmission Barriers

Esther Ilutsik (1999) in her article "*Traditional Yup'ik Knowledge - Lessons for All of Us*" dismisses the claim that schools should not have to give opportunities for teaching about Native cultural traditions, as Native youth should be learning this at home. Her descriptions of home life before colonization compared to home life after western contact makes it clear how much change has happened in Native homes and how disconnected kids are from their families, daily influenced by their schools and peers in school.

Ilutsik (1999) argues that parents and communities need to be more involved with their schools and that schools need to be open to taking the lead. Few parents can home school or are aware of how their child's school needs to be a partner to them, not an assimilative force to drive a wedge between them and their child. It is hard to change an

institution that is rooted in just that history, but it is possible when more and more Native researchers and educators are pointing out how school can be done right to build confidence, real life skills, and connections between kids, families and Elders. It's heartening and a good reminder to engage tradition bearers who have been marginalized. They are becoming more and more rare, and therefore must be treated with respect and as guides in educating Native children and in producing educational materials that will impact Native communities.

Many traditional Alaska Native stories are no longer told in daily lived contexts for a number of reasons. Today, there are limited opportunities for Elders to connect with youth in the same way as once done on a regular basis. Learning in schools has supplanted their role. As Mather (1995) explains, “[Elders] don’t often have the chance to impart their knowledge today with young people away in schools and parents away at jobs” (para. 8). The modern western social and economic influences, as well as technological distractions, have changed contexts so much that traditional stories have become as devalued as have our Elders as learning resources.

The effects of colonization on Indigenous worldviews has also blocked transmission of stories, which have been identified as competing with the assimilated Christian or western worldview shift. One Alutiiq Elder explained that the mythological stories she was told as a child are “not real” and therefore she will not tell them. She explained that these types of stories “were made to make the younger children disciplined in that way—superstitious beliefs.” Her view is shared by some that to revive such stories will awaken “shamanic” traditions, which many fear and believe have been extinguished and should stay that way. She explained that storytelling should only be shared from lived experience, about how we have survived challenges. However, this strong aversion to traditional stories raises questions about its influence. Perhaps in a wider investigation we can identify the colonizing factors that brought about this suppression within our community, and also identify more appropriate terms for describing traditional practices and beliefs that will not carry the same negative connotations they do in English today.

Language itself is a barrier in storytelling, as traditional stories were known in the Alutiiq language, not in English. While Alutiiq Elders are bilingual, the connotations and symbolism embedded within an Alutiiq story are often not translatable into the English language. Ideally, youth will become bilingual in Alutiiq and English, and have opportunities to learn stories in their Native tongue as intended. Yet with few fluent speakers, this is clearly a challenge that makes it necessary to support Alutiiq storytelling in both Alutiiq and English to increase access.

There are many other colonized peoples who have revived their oral traditions, despite loss of native speakers and deeply engrained negative views of their ancestral traditions. For example, the Sámi people in Scandinavia are beginning to respect and practice their oral poetry tradition of yoiking, previously suppressed when colonizing Christian influences convinced them that practicing the tradition was a sin and that their traditional language was the “devil’s language” (Hirvonen, 2008).

Language barriers and aversions to mythological or symbolic aspects of Alutiiq storytelling traditions have widened the gap between generations. Thankfully, young people are eager to hear traditional stories, but will likely need an orientation to ground them in the values and metaphors embedded within the stories, which otherwise they may dismiss as obsolete or simply not recognize. Ultimately, suppression has impacted the Alutiiq community to devalue traditional knowledge, and the process of reviving traditional storytelling requires that we investigate how and why this suppression has been so effective.

Oral Versus Written Story Transmission

One of the first challenges in this reclamation effort is the issue of oral versus written transmission methods. As other Indigenous researchers have identified, “[w]e do a lot of injustice to our language when we rely on literal translations” (Fienup-Riordan & Kaplan, 2007; Mather, 1995, para. 36; Morrow, 1995). In shifting from an Indigenous language into English, a lot is lost in translation, namely the connotation of metaphors, words and concepts that are so significant in traditional stories. The metaphorical

undercurrents within Indigenous storytelling are impossible to fully translate into written English. Many concepts embedded within Indigenous languages do not make sense in English and therefore misunderstanding or oversimplification ensues. Efforts to maintain traditional stories in both languages are essential to balance meaning and access. This will also support Indigenous language survival. Further, annotated references to a translated story can help avoid misunderstanding, but this is often at the cost of the fluency and beauty of the story, which are essential for integration into our beliefs, imagination, and sense of self (Archibald, 2008; Mather, 1995).

Written storytelling, rather than shared orally, puts a vast distance between the audience and the storyteller (Mather, 1995, para. 29). When we rely on written storytelling, the vitality and contextual connections of the story are diminished (Archibald, 2008; Blaeser, 1993). The words themselves are only a part of the story and cannot fully replace oral transmission. Beyond the words, voice inflection, body language, and context all play significant roles. Traditional storytelling is not based on linear plot driven telling, rather it circles back on itself as a storyteller relates the story to their own or the audiences' experiences, making contextual references to surrounding events so that the story provides a way of making meaning of life events or carries deeper connotations than could be understood in their detached written form removed from their intended audience. Therefore each telling is and should be unique, meant especially for the intended listener. For this reason, every effort should be made to share traditional stories in their intended oral format, or if from a written version, flexibility of telling should allow the story to unfold so reader and listeners can engage with the story, digressing as appropriate to the situation. This technique of retelling provides a bridge between oral and written traditions, where the reader pauses frequently from direct reading to expand, emphasize important details to make meaning, or connect events as the storyteller deems appropriate to the situation and audience. Any telling of a story from a written form should include discussions about the value of oral transmission, so that the written form does not come to stand as the only version or as property of the

writer/author as it would within the western worldview. Stories from the oral tradition belong to the cultural community and should be acknowledged and shared as such.

Additionally, stories are told at different times to mean different things. The context shifts the meaning or intention of the story. Lessons were not intended to be delivered as a prescription or linear or hierarchical process of knowledge attainment, which is valued within the western education system. Listeners get from a story what they're meant to learn or what they're capable of learning at that moment. But in our modern context this form of learning is often overshadowed as we are spoon-fed information, or morals are identified or constrained by western concepts of "age-appropriate" subject-matter or stages of skills acquisition. However, to some extent, we need to provide a bridge to help students of all ages engage regularly with Indigenous stories as an important part of placed-based education, given the history of colonization and cultural oppression that have impacted Indigenous communities.

Traditionally, stories were shared during appropriate seasons or animal cycles. Stories were told also depending on events related to the storytelling time. They were told in different ways depending on the audience. Alutiiq Elder Clyda Christiansen (1998) explains at the beginning of one of her tellings of *The Sun and The Moon* that her Elders used to tell stories as a past-time. The *unigkuat* or origin stories, or fairy tales as she defined them, were told to entertain and to teach, as a way of spending time together. Storytelling has served as an educational process for millennia. The process by which they were shared may be changing, but as we investigate storytelling practices more with our Elders we may better come to understand the core values and rituals associated that should be honored within a living context for future generations. In collaboration with Elders and other Native educators, highlighting and analyzing traditional stories can help us explore how these stories fit into a modern context and are still relevant today, rather than leave them in the past as antiquities. Given how so many within the Kodiak Alutiiq community struggle with wellbeing and purpose in life, helping show the relevancy of our traditional knowledge to life today can be a powerful way to rebuild connections to

each other and to ancestors, which otherwise would be lost if we only focused on survival within this technological age using assimilated western ways.

Storytelling Contexts

While my focus is limited to one cultural group, the application and larger lessons discussed are intended to be useful to other Indigenous groups in exploring their own oral traditions as education tools. Traditional stories are a wealth of knowledge for exploring cultural practices and values. They contain complex patterns of concepts and metaphors about how to live, survive, relate and engage in the world. To pass this complex knowledge on to future generations, it requires a vehicle that is engaging, illustrative and relevant. Using stories, teachers can encourage this traditional teaching process by engaging youth in deeper cultural learning, at the same time as building upon skill sets.

As non-Indigenous teachers engage with and use traditional Indigenous stories, they must be mindful of how they evaluate or discuss traditional stories with their students (Archibald, 2008; Sarris, 1993). It is important for any educator of Indigenous students to gain a background experience of cultural contexts and values that are integral to the community, and build a collaborative relationship with an Elder or a tribal community member if no Elder is available to advise or lead class discussions. It is further imperative that Indigenous heritage not be relegated to a fraction of the school year or reduced to an arts and crafts exercise. Rather the culture indigenous to a place must be integrated and acknowledged into all aspects of learning for the wellbeing of Indigenous children (Cajete, 1994; Kawagley, 1999). As Oscar Kawagley (1999) writes in support of Yupiaq learning, “[b]y not teaching the Yupiaq youngsters their own language and way of doing things, the classroom teachers are telling them that their language, knowledge and skills are of little importance” (para. 30). The same is true for Alutiiq or any Indigenous community. Culture is transmitted through education and language, therefore it should be present and acknowledged daily in schools so that students have an opportunity to learn within a familiar context. As Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) explains,

Indigenous people have their own ways of looking at and relating to the world, the universe, and each other (Ascher 2002; Eglash 2002). Their traditional education processes were carefully constructed around observing natural processes, adapting modes of survival, obtaining sustenance from the plant and animal world, and using natural materials to make their tools and implements. All of this was made understandable through demonstration and observation accompanied by thoughtful stories in which the lessons were embedded. (p. 10)

Without personal exposure to deeper cultural knowledge, the non-Indigenous teacher risks inadvertently making judgements about what they may think are “ancient” traditions, believed dead, or may evaluate the culture based solely on metaphorical stories, which can perpetuate harm long prevalent within the western educational system.

As a metaphor for understanding the transformation and living nature of cultural practices, an Aboriginal Elder in Australia compared knowledge systems to a tree (Gorringe & Spillman, 2008). The roots represent heritage values that provide nourishment and structure. The trunk represents the traditions or rituals that endure from generation to generation, but can transform and grow over time. The leaves are the cultural practices or daily lifeways of the people, which change with the seasons and are influenced to change by their environment. Understanding culture as a transformative concept is essential for viewing it as a living process, which allows for inclusion of multiple identities within a cultural group. This empowers the people of a community to accept that some things change in the new context, but the enduring values at their roots must be protected, respected and nourished for the people to thrive.

Within our modern contexts, Alutiiq traditional stories can and should be used to teach Alutiiq children, as they form the trunk of our knowledge system. The best way to do this is to engage Elders with students in a culturally-relevant environment to orally share stories and visit about understandings of their meaning and relevancy within their own lives (Kawagley, 2006). As Wilson (1996) explains, empowering Elders is an important part of supporting the community and an Alaska Native culture for the greater

wellbeing of the individual. Storytelling is an excellent means for honoring Elders as our primary knowledge providers.

However, if the logistics of oral storytelling are prohibitive, teachers need to still have a means to convey traditional stories of the local place and to explore their meaning, contexts, and lessons with their students. Because traditional stories can be used as the framework for wider curriculum exploration, their function should not be ignored, but should be viewed as an important resource for learning about our place on the planet. As many Indigenous educators have found, traditional stories can be used to teach social studies concepts, history, language arts, composition, mathematics, science concepts, technology and art (Cajete, 1994; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Eder, 2007; Silva, 2000). By incorporating once fragmented subject lessons into the context of a traditional story, a teacher can provide students a more holistic approach to learning new concepts and developing skills.

As Silva (2000) describes in an article on Hawaiian education, metaphorical symbols embody cultural lessons (p. 73), symbols within cultural stories are physical embodiments or metaphors for larger concepts or lessons. The process of encoding knowledge into elements of the natural world is a means of teaching and is a common practice and within storytelling. Further, for nature-based Indigenous cultures, landscape and animal relationships hold a great deal of influence within stories and significance within their belief systems. In comparative reference between Native and western cultures, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) describe that Native cultures are rooted in “[c]ommunication of metaphor and story connected to life, values and proper behavior” (p. 16). Therefore, Alaska Native education must continue to engage students in learning through metaphor and story within their own cultural contexts. In this manner, usage of storytelling is an effective way to build a common experience for Native students that is essential for their sense of self-esteem and identity, across the curriculum.

Esther Ilutsik (1999) further dismisses the myth that schools should not have to provide opportunities for teaching about Native cultural traditions, when administrators or teachers unfairly claim Native youth should be learning this at home. Her descriptions

of a home life prior to western contact compared to home life after western contact make it clear how much change has happened in Native homes and how disconnected children often are from their own families as a result, as they are daily influenced by school, peers and western media. Ilutsk's (1999) argument clearly supports that while parents and communities need to be more involved with their schools, schools need to be open to taking their lead. Not all parents are aware of how their child's school needs to be a partner to them, as schools have been an assimilative, colonizing force, driving a wedge between parents and their children. It is hard to change an institution that is rooted in just that history of practice, but it is possible when more and more Native researchers and educators are pointing out how school can be done right to build confidence, real life skills, and connections between kids, families and Elders in a culturally responsive manner (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, 2004; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Cajete, 1994).

While development of communication skills within our modern context is important, it is equally important that young people grow rooted within their culture and community, as no amount of skill can compensate for a sense of wellbeing. Our growing sense of alienation within the modern context of Native life today often results in identity crisis and a pervasive search for meaning (Kawagley, 2006; Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974). Therefore, education practices need to continually build cultural relevancy and opportunities that will strengthen students' sense of identity and belonging within their community and homeland.

Elders today are the last first language speakers of our Indigenous languages, with rich life experiences prior to rapid technological and western cultural assimilation so prevalent for our current generation. Beyond our cultural traditions and language loss, Nabhan and Trimble (1995) states, "While [Indigenous] communities may not immediately recognize the severity of this loss of orally transmitted knowledge about the natural world, the consequences are perilous, for once the reservoirs of folklore have been dissipated, it is increasingly hard to replenish them" (p. 86). Given the rapid cultural shifts Indigenous communities have suffered through colonization and assimilation (Nicholas, 2009; Wyman, 2009; Kawagley, 2006; L. Smith, 1999), clearly renewed

attention to reestablishing oral traditions and preserving traditional knowledge are invaluable for future generations. It is this reality that drives culture-based, place-based education efforts, so that the lifeline is not broken between generations.

As research of Alutiiq or Indigenous storytelling expands, this study of Alutiiq storytelling is intended to serve as a reference point for exploring more deeply its role, the meaning of spiritual and cultural metaphors and the effectiveness of teaching through story. It is my hope that Alutiiq traditional stories, and other Indigenous stories, will become more accessible to children and families, regaining value as essential learning tools as we allow space for storytelling to continue to flourish as a lived tradition.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Overview of Indigenous Research Methodologies

I am thankful for all the recent explorations by other Indigenous scholars about their research processes and what they believe about the ethics of researching within their own Indigenous communities. Through this learning process, I too have now come to trust that there are effective strategies that enable researchers to promote wellbeing, maintain ethics in their approach, and be more conscious of the impacts they inevitably will cause for communities and individuals. Of the Indigenous research methodologies I have studied I consistently see how process is valued as more significant than product—which conversely is prioritized more within mainstream western society and academia. This also helps explain some of my discomfort with much of traditional western research protocols. This conflict stems from a fundamental difference in worldview, as reflected within communication as Indigenous verb-based languages emphasize relationship and action within place, opposed to the noun-based language structures of western cultures that emphasize objectification and ownership. Wilson (2008) explains that in an Indigenous research paradigm “the process is the product” (p. 103). So, given this truth, research methodologies are somewhat more personally significant or conflict-laden for an Indigenous researcher than a western researcher, as the process or methods take priority over research results, publications or other benefits for the researcher’s career. As western methodologies carry a legacy of negative experiences and other colonizing forces in communities, this shift in priority ultimately has a very subjective influence for Indigenous researchers as we must come to terms with what matters most, despite the demands of western academic traditions and institutions.

My philosophy of life, which influences my research philosophy, is based on a belief that everything I do is interconnected and impacts all aspects of my own wellbeing and the wellbeing of those I interact with. The notion of interconnectedness is imbedded within the Alutiiq values system for me and my community (NEAR, 2002), as it appears in other Indigenous cultures. The work I choose to do, the people I have relationships with, and my own sense of wellbeing are all linked together in a hoop. Further, the

qualities I am known for serve me across all aspects of life, impossible to compartmentalize or dissociate. I am a good listener, and value listening as one of my best tools for understanding; I am curious, and always look for deeper meaning and synchronicity as a sign that I'm on a good path; I value humor as a means of survival—living up to my Alutiiq name *Englartaq* (one who laughs), given to me by one of my Alutiiq language masters; I am passionate about the place and people I come from on Kodiak Island, and so reinvest my energies in those who I grew up among; I am also fundamentally an optimist and a creative thinker, always searching for ways to make things better, and help others communicate so that together we can sustain balance. This last quality or concern of mine is what most influences what and how I choose to invest myself in.

All of the work I do ties back to my core belief that my community and family should live a healthy, fulfilling life and that we should celebrate our unique heritage and our qualities, never forgetting our connection to our homeland, our people and our lifeways. In order to achieve this goal I recognize the inequities, disempowerment, tragic histories, and lack of healthy communication that oppress us and keep us from realizing wellbeing. And so, I continually look at these negatives and try to find positive alternatives to better understand, emphasize and communicate so my family and community will be empowered to work together to attain this vision of greater wellbeing and self-expression in balance with others. It may sound idealistic, but that's because I am an idealist. I believe knowledge and right living practices get us there.

The best example of how firmly I believe this is in one of my core life practices: writing. Throughout my life I have been a writer, since I was taught how to write in grade school. I love stories and language, and the lives and realities I can put into words. While I have two degrees in English, a B.A. in American Literature Studies and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, Fiction, my writing life covers much broader ground than what I practiced in these areas. It is also deeply influenced by my family's storytelling traditions. Within my professional life I have been primarily a tribal grant writer and a public relations writer/editor. In essence, I dream with my community for opportunities and put

words on paper to raise money for them as well as to bring people together as we seek to improve our lives. This is extremely idealistic work based in faith, passion and trust. However, I take this practice of writing for life even further, in that I believe that if I want something in my own life or for others, that if I put it down on the page in just the right way it will manifest. There is a power to this that I will not deny. It is not the act of someone else reading the writing and responding that I believe in, rather it is the essence of a thought or a need that now has life breathing into it. The power of words is unmeasurable in bringing change. This is the potential I see in the research documentation process. Because of this spiritual look at the writing process, I know I must be mindful of community goals and how the words I put on the page effect others, because this power can also harm.

The word “empowerment” has been used to describe the process of helping oppressed voices surface. However, within the word I am struck by the root notion of “power”, which itself implies strength and domination over something, someone else, or even oneself. While empowerment is a method for inclusiveness, or diversity of perspectives, it can stop short of the purpose to bring wholeness for all, without oppressing others in the process. While this may be just semantics, regardless of the word we choose to explain how individuals and communities can gain strength to express their voice after a history of colonization or oppression, power plays a major role in the research dynamic and must be considered at all times as a swinging pendulum throughout the research process: from first thought to presentation of findings.

As Indigenous peoples articulate the power and colonizing forces inherent in western research methodologies, they have been successful in creating a global paradigm shift in research by asserting validity of their Indigenous perspectives and approaches. I was first introduced to this paradigm shift and transformative dialogue through Linda Smith’s (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Prior to Smith’s publication, which offers a holistic overview, researchers such as Verna St. Denis (1992) and Concha Delgado-Gaitan (1993) were exploring these new methodologies in essays as they reconciled their own research processes as Indigenous researchers. Since then, many others have

deepened our understanding of Indigenous research models within their own specific contexts (Wilson, 2008; Brayboy, 2005; Sarris, 1993). These conversations expand as each new voice deepens the dialog and has resulted in Indigenous researchers refining approaches that are inclusive, responsive, emancipatory and empowering in ways defined from within Indigenous communities—taking research out of the ivory tower and repositioning it within the heart of the community. As Wilson (2008) points out though, we have now moved beyond naming and unmasking colonizing forces to a time of establishing new models for community-based research that both respect an Indigenous worldview and recognize our self-determination over research within our communities.

Indigenous researchers studying their own communities generally share a common approach as “Participant Researchers,” which shifts their work away from the conflicting belief that researchers can be “objective,” as defined by the western model that dominates academia (Wilson, 2008; L. Smith, 1999). As Indigenous people assume the role of researcher, particularly within their own communities, their motives or research agendas are inevitably different than those of western researchers. As Indigenous researchers we are often related to our research “subjects” and possess intimate knowledge prior to formal research, as well as a vested interest in making our community a better place. Therefore, we need a means to approach our communities in a natural and community-centered manner that does not alienate or offend (Wilson, 2008; G. Smith, 2000; L. Smith, 1999; St. Denis, 1992). Established networks and patterns of communication also make the research process a different experience than it is for an outside researcher, which can be both a benefit and a challenge (Jones & Jenkins, 2008).

However, as Delgado-Gaitan (1993) emphasizes, “[s]haring the same ethnic background as the participants does not necessarily make the researcher more knowledgeable about the meaning of the participants’ feelings, values, and practices” (para. 7) and this is crucial to acknowledge despite how one’s identity is intertwined within the community of study. It is therefore a careful walk; as Indigenous researchers must “recognize the power dynamic which is embedded in the relationship with their subjects” (L. Smith, 1999, p. 176). Perhaps this, more than any other aspect of

research, causes the most conflict for me. Like other Indigenous researchers I recognize many of my community members as collaborators. These relationships are built on trust and generations of our families living side by side, taking care of each other. They trust that I will help make sure that our core values are respected and that I will not exploit or take advantage of this trust. I have had to be on my guard with other researchers because of this responsibility for the relationships I have within my community. In one instance, I began a collaborative research process with a non-Indigenous researcher to interview Elders I knew, but after realizing his plans for producing a film I saw that in many ways I and my community could be used for his own personal gain, and this directly put me and my community at risk. I was able to withdraw from the project, but it stands as a reminder to question motives and consider first how the community will perceive the process and the results, and make sure that it will benefit them more than it will others. I have further understood and found it challenging in planning a dissertation because of my sense of personal accountability to my community first. It does not feel right to come in with a preconceived plan or motives for resource extraction about things that I myself am interested in, as I have seen other researchers burden them with research that does not start and end with community involvement. And so, I found setting my course to be one of the most challenging parts of research to navigate, knowing that I cannot skip steps just to stay within a timeframe. With this understanding and the need for total community control I chose an archival research methodology for my study and this dissertation rather than an action research or oral history interview research method, as described later in this chapter. In my concluding chapter I explore plans for the next phase of research with stories and my recommendations for others who plan to work with the stories, influenced by the research methodologies that I explore in this chapter.

One of the greatest shifts Indigenous researchers have created in their methodologies has been in how they define their research purposes, as well as respecting data and findings ownership. These discussions have moved community research from a western position that imbues the researcher with all the power to a more communal Indigenous perspective that places it with the researched community (L. Smith, 1999).

This transformation is mainly due to how Indigenous researchers find ourselves more accountable to the researched community, as we seek to sustain lifelong relationships during and after any study and documentation process, which is a bond much easier broken by someone outside the community. With that said, development of Indigenous research methodologies is about creating a balance between enabling the researcher and empowering co-researchers, all the while seeking to protect against harm.

Perhaps one of the most painful examples of recent research abuse within my community has been the research and publications by Arthur Mason (2009, 2002, 1996). In the mid-1990s, he lived in Kodiak for one summer to study our newly forming Native-owned Alutiiq Museum for his Master's thesis and help with establishing artifact curation as an intern. He conducted a number of interviews with many Native leaders and community members, including with my father and myself. At the time I was an undergraduate student home to work for the summer. My father was the President/CEO of Natives of Kodiak and developer of the Alutiiq Museum facility in collaboration with Kodiak Area Native Association. The development of our Native-owned museum was an enormous achievement for our community, both psychologically and spiritually. It has brought life changing impacts for our community wellbeing. As part of our unification and healing processes the Museum has been most significant to us as a symbol of this process and as a means to celebrate our heritage, language, and lives of our ancestors which were previously denigrated and oppressed.

Beyond allowing Mason to interview me at the time about the development of our museum and community feelings about our heritage, we met for coffee one day to visit about our mutual schooling experiences and the community. He explained to me how he had been raised in New York, and despite his mother's South American heritage, he felt he did not have any connection to culture outside the mainstream American dominant culture. He expressed confusion about how I and others felt about our heritage and our responsibilities to our community. I told him that he should get in touch with his mother's family and reach out to build these connections. He brushed the idea aside, which caused me some initial concern as to how he would be capable of understanding what our Alutiiq

heritage and connections to Kodiak meant to our community if he did not understand his own family heritage ties. He rejected his own cultural diversity and promoted the western worldview as superior, and this was telling.

After we welcomed him into our community and participated in his interviews he left to write his thesis. As far as I know he did not work with anyone from our community to review or comment on his findings, as I've asked several leaders about this. The title of his thesis was *In a Strange Turn of Events: How Alutiiq Cultural Pride Became a Commodity*. This offensive title only hints at how hurtful and narrowly the manuscript described our community and our efforts, as well as the racial stereotypes and fallacies that it was riddled with. His academic focus on economic theory was the only filter through which he looked at us, misguided in his focus only on economic power plays that he believed Alutiiq leadership had engaged to reposition themselves for social equity by using our heritage for profit as he saw it. I can assure you the Museum and our community's cultural education programs are not profit making, but rather a significant ongoing investment by organizations and individuals and a continual financial burden.

In later years when I returned home from college to work as Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Afognak, in the basement of the Alutiiq Museum building no less, I was in Anchorage attending a tribal conference. I was shocked to see Mr. Mason among the participants, now working on his PhD. I told him how he had deeply hurt our community with what he wrote and asked why he didn't consult with anyone about his research. He apologized for his hit and run tactics, rationalizing that thesis advisor pressure to focus on economic theory led him astray, and said that he hoped someday to be able to come back to Kodiak to make amends with the Native community. We parted with a sense that he regretted this early research efforts and that the thesis would not come to anything more. Unfortunately this was not his last effort to profiteer from this misinterpreted and offensive research about the Alutiiq community.

In 2002 and again in 2009 he published two additional articles—the later as a chapter in a book, *Indigenous Cosmopolitans: Transnational Indigeneity in the Twenty-First Century*, which I suspect were done in a grasping effort to “publish or perish”,

trying to make a name for himself and justify his position as a professor at Arizona State University today. In order to write either of these equally offensive, misinformed and sloppy articles he did not conduct any new research, other than perhaps an Internet search, to see how our community has developed over the past 15 years. His outdated information showed that he was unaware of current Alutiiq cultural education and decolonization efforts spurred through the creation of our museum. He made broad generalizations which I do not wish to perpetuate by quoting here. Further, he misspelled and named informants, including my father, without their permission to be quoted, out of context from their original interviews no less. Again he employed rhetorical devices and fallacies to attack our community and a generation of leaders, now our Elders.

What I have found by his lack of involving us as a community in his findings, is that he took great liberties to over-simplify and demonize our Native leaders for learning to play the western economic game and obtain power for their communities, neglecting to see this as a means to facilitate the decolonization process for a community that was so brutally colonized and oppressed for over 200 years. He further insulted our full community by referring to Alaska Natives as “rank and file shareholders,” implying that when our leadership is not full-blood that they are oppressive to other full-blood Native community members. After regularly participating in shareholder meetings as a shareholder in the three Native corporations I am a member of in our region, I cannot imagine how if Mr. Mason participated in any of our meetings how he could see our general shareholder population as submissive to their elected and hired leadership. We are all very vocal about our concerns, and values, and our leadership must stand before us to explain their decisions on our behalf and generally they listen and respond. No community is without conflict and communication issues, but if he had informants who felt our culture was being commodified or that they were abused by our leadership, he should have at least had those individuals serve as reviewers of his research. His persistence to lay judgements, and classify us with a dismissive attitude is a perfect example of why community involvement in the research dialog is essential, as he clearly learned nothing from us—only taking, never giving back. This traumatic experience has

shaped our community as many are now extremely hesitate to talk to any researcher and are distrustful of a university system that could allow someone like this to graduate based on these research methods, or further give them a job to train others to perpetuate such harmful and careless research studies.

As research has shifted from “gathering knowledge” to “empowerment,” Indigenous researchers define their related approaches in various ways. For Delgado-Gaitan (1993) she calls her framework the “Ethnography of Empowerment,” focused on “empowerment as an ongoing, intentional process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and collective participation...” (para. 8). “The principles of community empowerment recognize the researcher as an active participant who acts as a facilitator in the community’s change process” (para. 50). St. Denis (1992) similarly asserts, that research focused on community empowerment can “become more liberating than manipulative” (para. 4) as she goes on to outline guidelines for doing Community-Based Participatory Research that seeks to liberate and bring about positive social change for the community (para. 52). Regardless of the title, these types of inclusive and transparent methodologies are related and are what inform me in how I will engage in research.

As Wilson (2008) articulates so succinctly in his book *Research is Ceremony*, “...research can be done that respects our knowledge and worldview...[and] the shared aspects of relationality and relational accountability can be put into practice through choice of research topic, methods of data collection, the form of analysis, and the presentation of information” (p. 137). In reading his study of research processes rooted in an Indigenous worldview I am renewed in my own process to come to terms with what research means to me and how I must engage in it.

As Linda Smith (1999) asserts, “Real power lies with those who design the tools...” (p. 38). Only an Indigenous community can truly plumb the depths of their own Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and no researcher can fully understand this knowledge without wider community consensus. The term Indigenous Knowledge Systems encapsulates the thought processes, knowledge acquisition and transmission, ancestral

concepts, beliefs, behaviors, and rituals that Indigenous communities share (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). These systems of communication and context are rooted within the culturally-based perspective or worldview specifically influenced by the shared place, history and heritage that an Indigenous community collectively acknowledges as central to their own lifeways. While individual members of each Indigenous group have varying levels of awareness of their knowledge systems, it is Elders specifically who are the knowledge keepers or role models for their societies. Therefore it is unwise to define or try to understand a specific Indigenous Knowledge System without direct and continuous consultation with several Elders within a community. It is in this way that I see myself contributing as a facilitator to my community in their cultural research process to support youth education, and how this dissertation is intended as a step in the process which I offer to my Elders as we move forward together in how we will use this information.

Often marginalized or misunderstood within mainstream western knowledge systems and schools, Indigenous Knowledge Systems appear to be frequently described or portrayed only in comparison to western knowledge systems, which tends to diminish their value and validity as they are cast as the ‘other.’ It is therefore an ongoing challenge of Indigenous peoples to protect, honor and live within their knowledge systems in their own right—not as an alternative to a mainstream western perspective. We must remain vigilant to the rapid and oppressive influences that can alter or extinguish core cultural attributes or functions, essential to our wellbeing.

Linda Smith (1999) describes the challenges Indigenous peoples have had in maintaining their connections to their knowledge systems, but also in their own study of these processes, ideas and practices within an academic context. The very act of research has been falsely argued to be outside of the realm of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and the negative history research has had within Indigenous communities has made it further difficult for Indigenous researchers to engage in a process so frequently damaging to their communities in the past (Tuck, 2009), much as I struggle with choosing how to continue on a research path. However, as Oscar Kawagley (2006) writes in *A Yupiaq Worldview*, the empirical observation framework that Indigenous peoples operate from is naturally

predisposed to a research process, albeit one that is revised as subjective and inclusive, rather than objective and isolated as valued in western research models. While few authors define Indigenous Knowledge Systems directly, their studies of these systems contribute to our understanding of these complex systems as they seek to describe their specific subject. They help illuminate within the context of an individual culture the aspects that differentiate Indigenous Knowledge Systems from western systems and make it clear that we have needed a shift within academic research methodologies to respond to both worldviews on an even playing field. Again it is here I see my role most clearly established in helping synthesize and communicate across cultures so that my community values and traditional knowledge are respected and integrated into our education systems and lives more fully.

Research and its processes in the western perspective has often been based on knowledge for knowledge sake and as an accumulation of information solely for quantification and meaning making, rather than as research for social change, which is driving the Indigenous research agenda (Wilson, 2008; Leonard, 2007; ; Kawagley, 2006; Brayboy, 2005; L. Smith, 1999; St. Denis, 1992). From an Indigenous perspective, research of a cultural group must be consciously conducted in partnership with the research subjects toward a positive change expectation. As Delgado-Gaitan (1993) calls this ‘Ethnography of Empowerment,’ she claims that since:

...learning among humans occurs across cultures, primarily in the home or in sociocultural units in which individuals are socialized...learning ideally is purposive, and should ultimately be directed to the enhancement of cultural values. (para. 11)

Further, it is crucial for Indigenous researchers to recognize that “research is knowledge production” (St. Denis, 1997), and therefore wields a previously oppressed power that needs to be consciously considered throughout its process. As the Indigenous researcher gathers, documents and interprets their research data, they are producing materials that can be used either as a useful tool or as a hurtful tool. It is a delicate balance to walk, but since Indigenous Knowledge Systems are rooted in spirituality,

Indigenous research should also come from spiritually-based core values and be conducted in a respectful manner for the ceremonial process that it is (Meyer, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Only this will guide the research toward its appropriate and necessary results in collaboration with a community who values spirituality.

From early experiences with unethical and disempowering researchers in my community, I once believed that research was at its core harmful and invasive. Despite this concern, I have always loved learning new things and communicating what I learn in writing or other visual forms. In this way I have seen my own motivation for research to be like a search for sustenance, as a search for self, and as a way of contributing to my community. As I consider my own research methodologies, I return to examine the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ to ensure that my research processes maintain integrity and contribute to the wellbeing of my community, and the larger world. As my great-grandmother Olga Naumoff Larsen from Afognak used to say, as passed down to me through my cousin Olga Rowland, “Don’t complain unless you have three solutions to fix it.” This and many other kernels of wisdom from my Elders guide me in how I respond to issues in my community as I work to pursue collaborative research that is enriching. In this way I am thankful for the bravery and wisdom of Indigenous researchers who have found solutions and who have shown others why research is important and a part of our Indigenous community processes. Because of their efforts, I now believe that I do not need to compromise my intuition or my values. Through their models I see how research can be done in a way that is an extension of our personal beliefs, values and practices, in a manner that is spiritually balanced and can breathe life into our communities.

In my exploration of Alutiiq stories, I have sought to explore how they demonstrate traditional values—as identified by Alutiiq Elders honoring aspects of *place*, *process*, *people*, *spirit* and *ethics*. I selected several research objectives that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The three objectives that guided my research and writing process include: 1) archival research and historical analysis; 2) story catalog and self-reflective analysis; and 3) community review and study approval. As conclusion

to this process, I close the dissertation with recommendations for curriculum development and continued community storywork.

Archival Research and Historical Analysis

My first research objective within this dissertation project was to gather a comprehensive collection of traditional Kodiak Alutiiq folk narratives from previous anthropological research and recordings of Elders, and the related historical publications that illuminate our understanding about these collections and the cultural practices or beliefs they explore. In researching all references to stories within the colonial record this goes back only to 1804 with Urey Lisiansky in 1804-1805 and Hieromonk Gideon in 1804-1807. My research scope and catalog review stretches into modern story or oral history collections to today, but I place emphasis on collections prior to 1909 with the Journal of American Folklore publications by Frank Golder, given my goal of accessing published retellings by researchers and reclaiming archived stories for the community's benefit. Through this research process I identify over 40 archived or published *unigkuat* (origin stories) and *quliyanguat* (hero tales) stories, not including stories told by contemporary storytellers firsthand on audio and video recordings yet to be transcribed.

In February 2010, I visited several archives in California searching for greater understanding of the researchers who collected these stories and the context in which they were collected. During this trip, I traveled to San Francisco and its surrounding communities to visit two archives. In the interest of time and camaraderie I brought my mother Kathleen Drabek with me to the archives to assist me in searching through boxes for relevant items and duplicating the resources we found and that I wanted to explore further. We spent one full day at the Bancroft Library at Berkley University to view and copy for my later reference the French explorer Alphonse Pinart's (1872a) journals detailing his study of Alutiiq traditions in the 1870s (2 boxes; 2 microfilm rolls). Of the two boxes of his manuscripts, they are written in a mix of English, Russian, French, German, Latin and Alaska Native dialects. I was able to scan through the 2 microfilm roles and copy all sections referencing the Kodiak archipelago or the Alutiiq language for

later reference. At the Berkley archives we also reviewed the *Adventures of Zakahar Tchitchinoff: An Employee of the Russian American Company* (1802-1878) (52 page narrative written or transcribed by Ivan Petrov), including Tchitchinoff's experiences with Baranov and life on Kodiak, Sitka and at Fort Ross (Woodward, 1956). We made a copy of the handwritten Tchitchinoff manuscript, and ordered a copy of an excerpted published version with a lengthy introduction prepared by Arthur Woodward (1956).

We also spent two full days at the Stanford Library and Hoover Institute reading through the Frank A. Golder, Ph.D. (1877-1929) Collection (37 boxes). It is this last collection that the following chapter explores most in depth, which is a significant contribution as there is not published research on his study of Alaska Native storytelling. My original interest in Golder came in finding and reading his "Tales of Kodiak Island" and other stories published in the *Journal of American Folklore* (Golder, 1903a, 1903b, 1905, 1907a, 1907b, 1909). Some of these stories have been used within our schools and republished in a few instances. However, I have always been curious about their context and wondered who Frank A. Golder was that he was able to collect and publish these stories, as well as what license he took in retelling them. Learning that the Hoover Institute at Stanford University (which Golder founded) had a collection of Golder's manuscripts and field notes, I was hopeful that there would be additional stories in his notes and background information on the storytellers. If nothing else, I hoped I would at least be able to know this man better and understand the context of the stories he collected and published.

Of the 37 boxes and 12 envelopes, with the guidance of Bulatoff's (2004, 2001) index, we reviewed 14 of the 37 boxes. In the interest of others who will want to know what we looked at from the collection and its relevancy to Golder's Alaska experiences and research, I prepared a table (see Appendix A) listing the contents of each manuscript box. The table follows Bulatoff's index, with my notations about the relevance to this study of the boxes and folders we reviewed. This research was quite fruitful in collection of several hundred pages of relevant materials, including his journals from 1900-1902

when he served as a teacher in Unga and Belkofsky, including several unpublished papers that speak to his character, beliefs and influences.

Of particular note were four unpublished writings by Golder:

- 1). A 15-page untitled essay about his time in government service in Alaska, relaying his experience of tragic events and the uncomfortable roles he often found himself.
- 2). A 12-page creative nonfiction reflection essay of his time on Unga and one of his friendships with a saloon owner and philosopher, Pete Nelson (possibly a pseudonym). It appears he took creative license in writing this essay as he used pseudonyms such as Agnu for Unga and style elements common to the American Romanticist literary movement. This embellished creative essay clearly comes from his life on Unga, given similarities repeated in his journals and essays.
- 3). An 8-page keynote speech in 1924 called *Aim in Life or Career in Life* which he presented at the Commencement of San Mateo Union High School in the nearby town of Burlingame, CA.
- 4). The last significant unpublished resource group in this collection were several journals from 1900-1902, during his time in Alaska at Unga and Belkofsky when he was between the ages of 23-25 years old. I was surprised to learn from these and the other materials that I could find no evidence that he had ever been to Kodiak during his time in Alaska.

After completing review of the Golder archival collection, I later borrowed or purchased several additional published books on Golder's and Pinart's life and work, as well as some of Golder's other relevant journal publications. References to all of the resources I reviewed are included in the bibliography of this dissertation. From the sources about Golder I have synthesized my understanding of who Frank A. Golder was during his time in Alaska and as he worked with the Alaska Native stories he collected; what his motivations and influences were; and the contexts of the Journal of American Folklore stories he went on to publish.

For Pinart, additional information about him and the mask songs and stories that he collected is currently being researched and written by other colleagues, therefore out of respect for their scholarship and investment of time I chose to defer to future

publications of findings. I do however, include a summary of Pinart's work and my initial analysis of his journals as to the stories and mask songs that he collected and his study of the Alutiiq language during his visit.

Following my return to Kodiak I worked with a friend who is developing a genealogical study of Kodiak Island for Native Village of Afognak and Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak to search for related family names in her database, which incorporates Russian Orthodox church records and U.S. census data for the Kodiak Island (T. Heitman, personal communication, May 7, 2012). I also accessed the 1900 U.S. census records for Unga to verify Golder's informants and see if we could determine their family connections to Kodiak (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900). From my own personal knowledge of Kodiak genealogy and history I know many families with close ties to Unga, now established as Kodiak Native families. There clearly is a close relationship between these two islands, beyond their proximity. A better understanding of this relationship and its history fills in the context of these original storytellers. The findings on the genealogical connections of Golder's informants is described in Chapter 4 in my discussion of research contexts.

A fair amount of my study of past researchers and contextual analysis comes from published books about or by the various researcher who collected stories in the Kodiak Alutiiq region. These sources are all listed in my bibliography and described in detail within Chapter 4. What information that is available on most of the early ethnographers and explorers is already in print, and therefore archival retrieval was only necessary for Pinart and Golder's journals.

Following my archival research into Pinart and Golder at the California archives and other resources published on their lives, I also visited several Kodiak archives to survey their collections. I was able to complete local library and archival review at the A. Holmes Johnson Public Library Alaska Collection, the Native Village of Afognak Nadia Mullan Heritage Library, and the Alutiiq Museum archives so that I could summarize the availability of Kodiak Alutiiq oral history collections. Within my Appendix B story catalog, I indicate the location of stories and the various collections that comprise the

anthology of Kodiak Alutiiq stories. There are large collections of analog and digital recordings at the Native Village of Afognak Nadia Mullan Heritage Library, the Alutiiq Museum, and the Alaska Native Language Center in Fairbanks, which will continue to be resources for the Kodiak Alutiiq community and other researchers for many years to come. While these collections largely contain life stories and oral histories, there are references to mythology and hero stories that will continue to grow this anthology.

Chief among these resources, is a collection of oral history recordings collected by Jeff Leer for the Native Village of Afognak. Over a series of summers Leer met with and recorded Elders at the Dig Afognak cultural camp site at Qataq, Afognak Island, where my paternal grandmother's family, the Nekrasoffs, lived through the early 1900s. His interviews with Elders on Afognak Island were conducted both in Alutiiq and English. Qataq is located across Litnik Bay from the Old Afognak Village, evacuated following the 1964 earthquake and tsunami. The Elders from around the Kodiak Archipelago have enjoyed gathering on Afognak Island's shores to reminisce and share stories of traditions learned in their youth from their Elders. The campsite offers a unique opportunity to form a seasonal village with a mix of youth, adults and Elders, exploring and celebrating Alutiiq traditions, history and science or Traditional Ecological Knowledge. In addition to oral history research, the camp has also supported excavation of several sites within the area, expanding our documentation of the Afognak Alutiiq people from prehistory to the present. Some of this excavation and historical research has also contributed to this dissertation. What is important to recognize about the process of engaging in storytelling upon a specific landscape is that the storytelling is made relevant as the people are interacting within that landscape and can feel the energies of that place and the connections to people and events that have passed. It both increases the opportunities for more vivid memories to arise, enriching the stories, and links the audience into the stories cycle as a participant upon that land. Unlike the western linear concept of time, an Alutiiq perception of time is circular and fluid (Crowell et al., 2001; Pullar, 1994). Participation in direct oral storytelling upon the land engages listeners to become a part of the story within that place.

I was fortunate to work for Afognak Native Corporation and Native Village of Afognak, supporting coordination of this research effort and operation of the Dig Afognak culture camp from 1999 to 2003, which allowed me to be present during the last year of Leer's interviews. A decade later, I was pleased to reread these transcripts, frequently quoting stories our Elders shared as I reflected on how they view our place in the world and the traditions our ancestors practiced to survive and prosper in the Kodiak Archipelago. Comparing my understanding and interpretations of the transcripts now has been an interesting process, and a reminder of the value of oral stories over written stories. Those stories that I heard firsthand within the story's setting are both powerfully vivid and meaningful in ways that reading or listening to a recording can not compare.

My last archival research trip was to Fairbanks on July 12, 2012, to the Elmer Rasmuson Library, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections and Archives. In previous years when I worked for the Native Village of Afognak, I had already visited the Alaska Native Language Center archives to review their Kodiak Alutiiq collections. In addition, many collections, referenced in Chapter 4, are also located in Kodiak or are cataloged online.

The purpose for revisiting the Rasmuson Library in Fairbanks in 2012 was to complete a profile on Margaret Lantis's background as a contemporary researcher of Alutiiq mythology and to better understand her motivations as I describe her Alutiiq mythology analysis within Chapter 4. In Fairbanks, I read through the one box of Margaret Lantis papers, requested a copy of her curriculum vitae, and took detailed notes on significant quotes from her correspondence with Don Foster, General Superintendent of the Alaska Native Services in Juneau from 1947 to 1950 regarding her publication of the *Alaskan Eskimo Ceremonialism* book and her Kodiak Alutiiq mythology article in the *Journal of American Folklore* in which she explored Kodiak Alutiiq storytelling in 1938. I was also able to find reference to an obituary that I was not previously aware of that included additional biographical background that I needed to develop my profile of her life and major influences. Lantis also had a list of U.S. Indian Service Schools in Alaska in 1947 that was a helpful addition for my chapter on the history of Kodiak Alutiiq education. Through this archival research I learned more about Lantis's personal reasons

for beginning her research into Alaska Native culture and ceremonialism and about her college experiences in California that influenced her studies, and the resources she used.

In addition to the general assistance that assistant archivist Rose Speranza provided me during my Fairbanks archives visit, she also introduced me to Robert Drozda, an archivist at the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections and specialist on the ANCSA 14(h)(1) Oral History Holdings. He shared database records on their collection of oral history recordings collected in the 1970-90s of the Koniag Alutiiq as part of that project. He also provided me with contact information for Ken Pratt at the Bureau of Indian Affairs ANCSA office in Anchorage, who oversees the original oral history resources (R. Drozda, personal communications, July 13, 2012). Drozda made me aware that copies should also be available in Kodiak at Koniag, Inc. These resources comprise a collection of 36 oral history interviews from 1975 to 1991 of Alutiiq Elders and 73 related maps of various significant sites around Kodiak and Afognak Islands. He provided me with summary transcripts of the interviews that reference their content.

In addition to the archival and published story research that I completed, I also studied about other aspects of Kodiak Alutiiq history and cultural traditions in order to develop a series of historical analysis chapters that are intended to contribute to community understanding of Alutiiq storytelling and cultural transitions. With references to historical facts and other research within the area, much of the qualitative analysis in this section is self-reflective in nature, based on firsthand experience from attending school in Kodiak from Kindergarten through high school graduation, and my career working at Kodiak College, the Kodiak Island Borough School District, and with many of the tribal and Native corporations on Kodiak Island. These historical analysis background chapters cover past research on Alutiiq literature (Chapter 4), the history of Alutiiq education and storytelling practices (Chapter 5), and the history of Alutiiq cosmology and lifeways before christianity, as well as the transition into Russian Orthodoxy (Chapter 6). In particular, I modeled Chapter 5 after several contemporary publications that describe the greater Alaska Native education history and impacts (Kawagley, 1999, 2006; C. Barnhardt, 2001; Dauenhauer, 1997).

Story Catalog and Self-Reflective Analysis

My second objective was to catalog identified stories by title, developing a tool for easy access of Alutiiq literature. I also felt that this catalog needed to be helpful in demonstrating how the stories can be used by educators or families and which values they each explore. The data spreadsheet I developed designates the fourteen core values, as identified by Kodiak Alutiiq Elders in 2002 with Alutiiq translations in 2012. The *Values Catalog of Kodiak Alutiiq Stories* also indicates the location of stories within various collections that comprise our anthology of Kodiak Alutiiq literature. Stories explored within the values analysis chapter (Chapter 7) and curriculum recommendations concluding chapter represent an early anthology of Alutiiq literature, providing the Kodiak Alutiiq community a foundation to explore core values through stories.

In my studies and connections with other Alaska Natives, I have learned that stories often appear across cultures and in various versions, as they have been traded or shared over many generations. The Alutiiq people widely traveled, as did other Alaska Natives who visited our archipelago. For example, my great-grandfather was known to have paddled by himself in his kayak from Afognak Island (north of Kodiak) to Fort Ross, California to pursue an “education”. Gone for three years before he returned to Afognak Island, he lived out his life as a spiritual leader, which is testament to how far our people will travel to seek knowledge and bring back what they learn to share with the rest of the community. Therefore there are often several version of stories that have been collected and told by different storytellers. I explore story versions in Chapter 8 as a sample analysis chapter on close reading to explore values within stories.

As part of my story analysis and the development of my process to understand the Alutiiq worldview, I undertook learning the Alutiiq language. The study of the Alutiiq language and the meanings of the stories through Alutiiq metaphorical language has been invaluable to my understanding of the stories and will continue as a lifelong process. It further enabled me to translate from Alutiiq to English and English to Alutiiq in several instances as needed and appropriate, and will continue to contribute to my work in this field. During my doctoral studies I worked closely with a number of fluent Alutiiq Elders

who contributed to my growth in fluency. During my doctoral studies, my language fluency skills have risen from Novice to Advanced fluency on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale, based on oral assessments conducted by April L. Counciller, PhD. as part of the *Kodiak Alutiiq Teacher Mentorship Project*. Building relationships with fluent Kodiak Alutiiq speakers has also greatly enriched my abilities to understand the Alutiiq worldview and story contexts as I explored them throughout this dissertation. Over the last two years I met with fluent Kodiak Alutiiq Elders for between two to five hours a week to learn and practice the Alutiiq language. These sessions also provided me informal community review of cultural concepts, story analysis, value descriptions and translations during the writing process. One of my main chapters focuses on understanding core Alutiiq values, and thanks to the Elders I am apprenticing under, I was able to translate these core value statements into Alutiiq, where previously they were only in English. The experience of working with Alutiiq Elders has provided me important professional development, directly informing my research process and ensuring that I fairly represented the Alutiiq community. In this way, second language acquisition served an invaluable role in my research methodology.

In 2010, I also had the unique opportunity to teach Alutiiq Language an hour a day, four days a week, at the Kodiak High School. Teaching Alutiiq at the high school level reinforced what I learned of the language, traditions and stories, and made me fully learn new concepts that I had struggled with previously. It is true that after you have to teach something, you learn it better than if you were just studying for yourself. Serving as teacher of Alutiiq language and culture for this age group also gave me the opportunity to gain greater insight into the application of values lessons and our understanding of Alutiiq storytelling within a secondary education setting. As my emphasis area is in Education and Pedagogy this experience has been indispensable. Through the high school class I was also able to focus my own study of the stories as I shared them with students and considered next steps for building story curriculum. While I chose not to use the class directly within my formal research methodology, it helped me immensely in my own self-

reflective analysis and provided me structure as I developed my analysis of our values within the stories.

Through my years of Alutiiq language apprenticeship and studying Alutiiq stories, I have combined my previous knowledge of literary analysis with my more recent understanding of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the oral tradition to use what I am calling a self-reflective method of analysis that explores story through the language, symbolism and values from my own perspectives as an Alutiiq community member and through references to published sources on Kodiak Alutiiq culture and practices.

Community Review & Study Approval

My dissertation committee includes two Alutiiq community members (Sven Haakanson, Jr., Ph.D. and Gordon Pullar, Ph.D.) to ensure wider community input and oversight into my dissertation project as called for by numerous Indigenous scholars, including St. Denis (1992) and L. Smith (1999). Their contribution as Alutiiq scholars with continued local community involvement provided oversight that further validates the accuracy and thoroughness of my study. In addition to these Alutiiq committee members, I also submitted chapter drafts to several other community members for input. In its entirety, I submitted a copy of the final dissertation to key staff at the Alutiiq Museum and the Native Village of Afognak Tribal Council for their comments. These community members also serve on the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Language Revitalization Committee.

I followed up with each to respond to any questions or edits to my study. While this dissertation includes exploration of several key stories, the main purpose of the study is to identify an anthology of stories, explore the values lessons within the stories, and recommend a framework or methodology for review and analysis of traditional Alutiiq stories for educational purposes. The process of community review also ensured that if any of the reviewers were in disagreement with my analysis, I agreed to remove it and would still have a full study of stories for ongoing development by our community.

In my final year I also presented about my research at three public events to receive feedback from local community members and Elders and share my study and

research process. First, I presented at the Kodiak Archipelago Rural Leadership Forum in 2010 on the history of Alutiiq education (Chapter 5) during their education session. I was invited back twice more to contribute to the Rural Forum's Education Session panel and received only positive comments on my research and presentation. The Rural Forum is made up of community leaders from the seven villages around Kodiak, with the majority of Alutiiq descent. My second presentation on August 18, 2011, was delivered after I was invited to present an hour talk as a featured presenter in the Alutiiq Museum Summer Lecture Series. The Kodiak Daily Mirror published an article on my presentation about the symbolism and context of Alutiiq storytelling. Sven Haakanson Jr., Ph.D. was in the audience and was able to engage me in discussion on the depth of my research. There were also several Elders in the audience who listened to my analysis of the two stories that I completed a sample close-reading for the book (Chapter 8). My third presentation was on May 22, 2012, as the featured author on the "Off the Shelf" show on the KMXT Public Broadcast Radio Station with former English professor and well-published local author Leslie Fields and Jared Griffin, current Chair of the English Department at Kodiak College. Leslie and Jared interviewed me on my dissertation and invited me to also share a selection of Alutiiq stories during the 35 minute show.

In addition to these three formal presentations on my dissertation research, I also served on several volunteer committees that contribute to my analysis and dissertation writing: Alutiiq Museum Collections Committee, Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Language Committee, Koniag Education Foundation Student Mentorship Program Advisory Committee, Kodiak Regional Workplace Advisory Committee (KWRAC) appointed by the Borough Mayor, as a learner participant with the Alutiit Nuta'aq Niuglilistat or Kodiak Alutiiq New Words Council, and with the Alutiiq Language Club. I also contributed as an advisor and enrolled participant in the first year of the Kodiak Alutiiq Language Teacher Mentorship Project, which is a collaboration between the Alutiiq Museum and two tribal councils. All of these service experiences contribute to my professional development, and enabled me to share research findings and my educational process with the Kodiak community.

As a defined layer of protection, many Indigenous groups have established principles, guidelines and protocols for protecting their cultures, languages, community members, and environments from the harm of inappropriate or invasive research practices (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 2000; Alaska Federation of Natives, 1993; Commission on Human Rights, U. N., 1994; G. Smith, 2000). The guidelines are intended to lead researchers to use approaches defined by the community. At the core of all of these protocols is their right to be self-determining. My request for review of this dissertation document ensured that I was properly respectful of cultural and intellectual property rights of my community members and that they have had sufficient access to comment on my research and benefit from it. Ultimately, this dissertation is intended as part of a lifelong process and a resource for continued storywork and curriculum development by the Kodiak Alutiiq community, Elders and educators.

Chapter 4: Clarifying Contexts: Historical Perspective on Past Research

Introduction to Past Kodiak Alutiiq Story Research

Since early western contact, Alutiiq stories have been collected by explorers, colonists, ethnographers, and other researchers. To gain a historical perspective on their documentation efforts, this chapter explores the backgrounds, influences, and accomplishments of the researchers who collected Alutiiq stories. As most early researchers were greatly influenced by the doctrine of Manifest Destiny in how or what they wrote about Alutiiq peoples and their stories, this chapter also seeks to evaluate the validity and scope of their writing to clarify where the stories they collected came from and how we might view them today. This chapter responds to questions such as: *What motivations and background experiences influenced their edits of the stories in written form? What among the stories collected are true to their original telling? Who were their informants or how did they learn what they wrote?*

This chapter is intended to establish a background knowledge of the history behind the collection of Alutiiq stories so that current and future audiences are better able to evaluate, use, and enjoy Alutiiq literature. My hope is that this chapter will assist teachers and families without an established relationship or ready access to an Alutiiq storyteller in how they make selections, understand the possible meanings or intentions behind the stories, and to consider the historical context that influenced how each story was filtered by those who collected them. Ultimately, the documented stories available to us will hopefully inspire current and future Alutiiq generations to revitalize oral storytelling traditions, drawing from the best of what is available to us and encouraging our Elders to share stories that have not yet been documented.

Following an overview of each early researcher's background and the stories they collected, this chapter also provides a summary of contemporary Alutiiq storytellers whose stories are available unabridged in either print or audiovisual formats, as well as other contemporary ethnographic researchers who have helped develop new collections or whose work contributes to our understanding of Alutiiq literature and the ancestral Alutiiq worldview.

The earliest known documentation of Alutiiq stories was by Captain Urey Lisiansky in 1804-1805 and Hieromonk Gideon in 1804-1807, albeit in summary. Around the same time Davydov also experienced Alutiiq poetry, as he describes it, but did not document any specific story in his journals. Henrik Johan Holmberg followed in 1851 to document an evolved origin story and several other stories as told by Arseni Aminak. In 1872, Alphonse Pinart was the first to collect a comprehensive collection of mask songs and origin stories. Thirty years later, Frank A. Golder published his collection of stories documented from informants in Unga during his term as the village's school teacher. Together all of these early observers and colonists have contributed greatly to preserving Alutiiq literature of the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century up to today there have been several contemporary Alutiiq storytellers who shared their life stories, along with other researchers who have developed oral history collections. The summaries of contributions by historic researchers is organized chronologically within the major eras of Alutiiq history, shown in the following visual timelines. These timelines are intended to place major events contributing to Alutiiq written language and storytelling documentation within the larger context of Alutiiq colonial history. The first timeline depicts events since contact, and the second shows more recent during the Alutiiq renaissance. While traditional storytelling continues to some degree as an oral tradition today on Kodiak, this dissertation is focused on exploring stories previously recorded in print (published or unpublished) and those archived in audio and video formats as they can be easily misinterpreted when viewed outside of a historical context or without knowledge of how they have been edited.

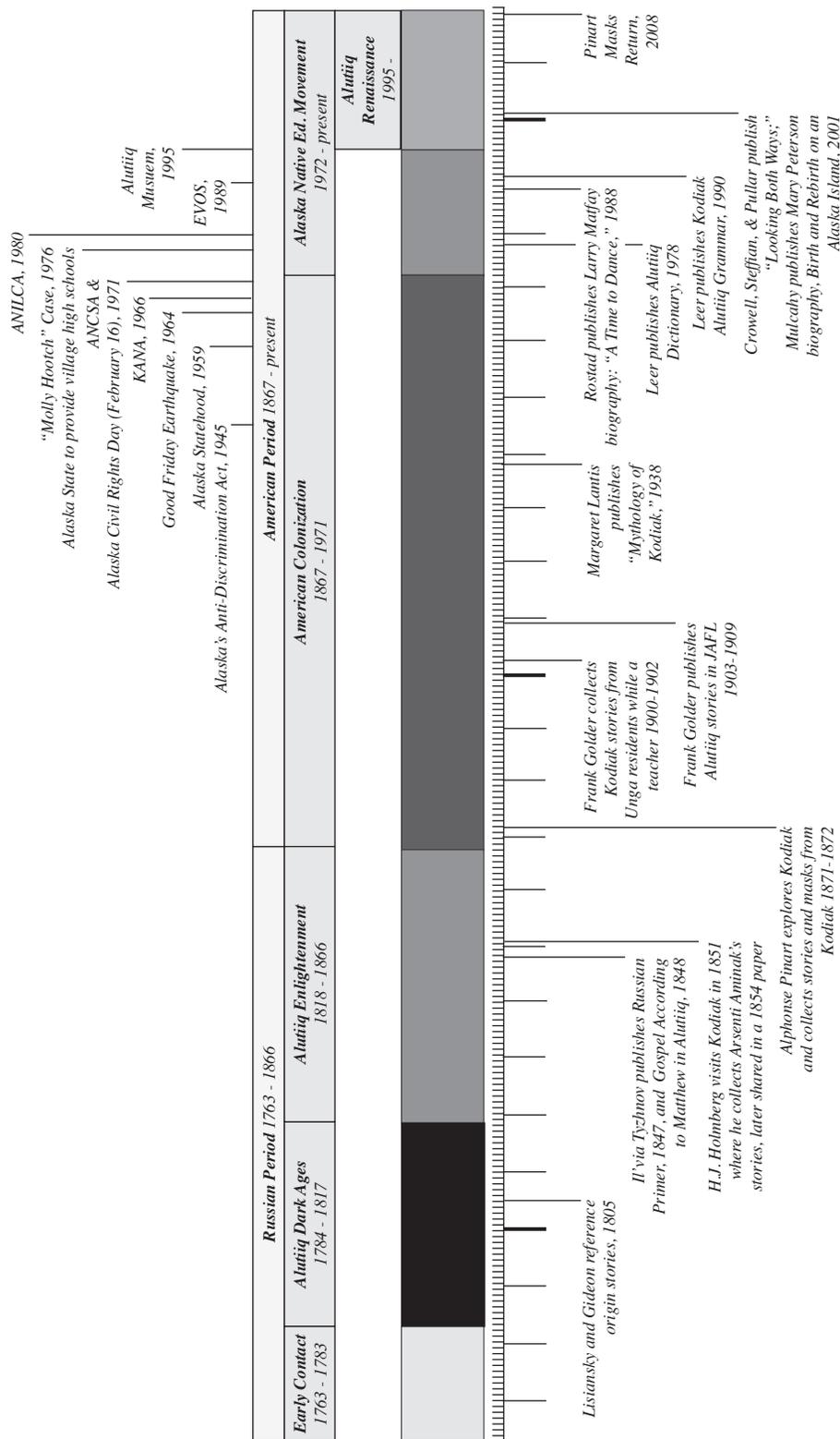


Fig. 4.1: Alutiiq Literature Timeline Since Contact

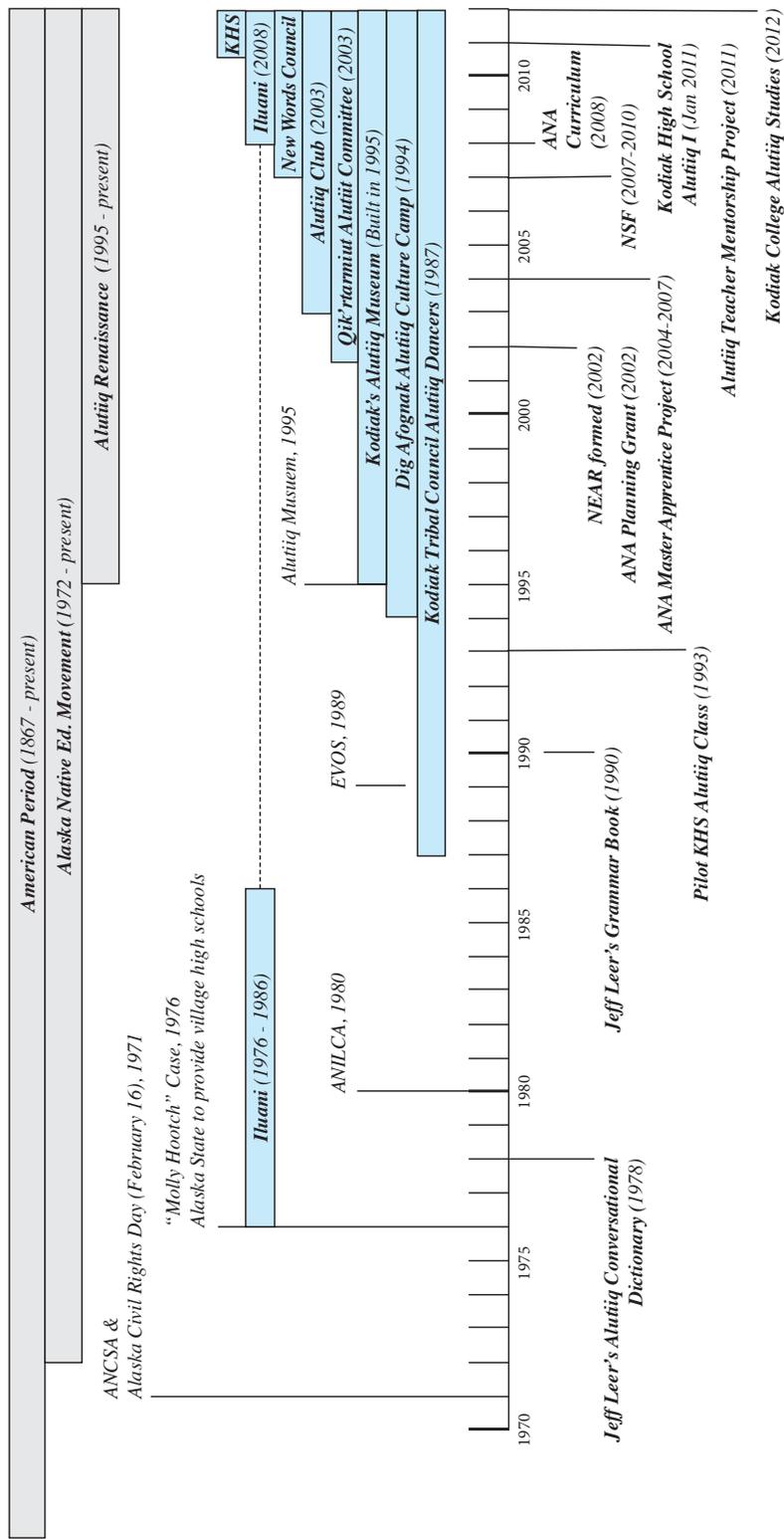


Fig. 4.2: Alutiiq Literature Timeline During Alutiiq Renaissance

Urey Petrovich Lisiansky — Colonial Observer — 1804-1805

Urey Petrovich Lisiansky (aka Iurii Lisianskii) was born in Nizhyn, Russia (now the Ukraine) in 1773. He served as a commanding officer in the Imperial Russian Navy, and sailed with Admiral A. J. von Krusenstern on the ships *Nadezhda* (hope) and *Neva* during the first in a series of circumnavigations by the Russians to bring supplies to the Russian American Company and to explore the Americas (Lundberg, 1999). On his first voyage, Lisiansky landed at Kodiak in July, 1804, and again in November of the same year to winter there until June, 1805 (Lisiansky, 1814).

During his eight month stay, he observed and wrote about the Kodiak Alutiiq people who had lived in colonized captivity for twenty years at that point. He kept a diary in which he summarized a few Kodiak Alutiiq origin stories. In 1814, Lisiansky produced an account of his experiences, entitled *Voyage Round the World in 1803, 4, 5 & 6 for Alexander the First, Emperor of Russia*. Within this book, he retells three creation stories. I include this passage in its entirety as it is a significant resource which is out-of-print:

The real history of the first peopling of this island is not known, though every old man has his story to tell about it. Toyon Kolpack, who is held in great esteem for his cleverness, and whose story obtains most credit, told me, that the true origin of the people was this : —To the northward of the peninsula of Alaska lived a toyon, whose daughter cohabited with a male of the canine species, by whom she had five children, three males and two females. The toyon being displeased with this degenerate conduct of his daughter, took an opportunity, in the absence of her lover, of banishing her to an island in the neighborhood. The lover, coming home, and finding none of his family, grieved for a long time: at last, discovering the place of their exile, he swam towards it, and was drowned on the way. The whelps in the mean time were grown up, and the mother had acquainted them so much against their grandfather, that when he came to see them they tore him to pieces. The mother, on this melancholy event, resolved to return to her native place, and gave free leave to her offspring to go wherever they chose. In consequence of this permission, some went northward; while others,

passing the peninsula of Alaska, took a southerly course, and arrived at the island of Cadiack, where they increased and multiplied, and were the founders of the present population.

On my asking the toyon, by what means they reached the island, he very gravely affirmed, that it was formerly separated from Alaska by a river only; and that the present channel was made by a large otter, in the bay of Kenay, who one day took it into his head to push himself through between it and the peninsula.

Another islander told me a very different tale of the origin of the first peopling of the island. The raven, it seems, is considered by many of the islanders as a divinity; and a raven, he said, brought the light from heaven, while a bladder descended at the same time, in which a man and a woman were enclosed. At first this pair of human beings enlarged their dungeon by blowing, and afterward by stretching their hands and feet; and it was thus mountains were constructed. The man, by scattering the hair of his head on the mountains, created trees and forests, in which wild beasts sprung up and increased; while the woman, by making water, produced seas, and by spitting into ditches and holes, formed rivers and lakes. The woman, pulling out one of her teeth, gave it to this man, who made a knife of it; and cutting trees with the knife, threw the chips into the river, which were changed into fish of different kinds. At last this human pair had children; and while their first-born, a son, was playing with a stone, the stone all of a sudden was converted into an island. On this island, which was the island of Cadiack, a man and a she-dog were then placed; and it was set afloat on the ocean, and arrived at its present situation. The man and the she-dog multiplied, and the present generation are their descendants.

These fables, which have a degree of analogy, plainly show, how slow is the progress of civilisation; or at least, how little effect has been produced on these people by an intercourse of more than twenty years with the Russians (Lisiansky, 1814, p. 196-7).

Lisiansky's description of his informant as a Toyon designated Kolpack as holding a Native leadership position with the Russian American Company. As Black (1977) describes, the Russian term of probable Yakut origin was applied to "Company appointed natives whose duty it was to obtain compliance with Company demands (restricted sense). The word is usually but somewhat erroneously (for lack of other label) rendered in English as *chief*" (p. 105).

The she-dog and her whelps in this origin story may be confused by outsiders as anthropomorphism of dogs, but it is perhaps more likely that it references a commonly-known Alutiiq designation of "dog people" or people who are outcasts for reasons such as being guilty of an incestuous relationship.

Black (1977) describes Lisiansky as "anticlerically inclined" as he "resented the churchman's presence" (p. 81). Being of opposing interests with Gideon, Lisiansky sought profitability for the Russian American Company whereas Hieromonk Gideon was interested in serving the spiritual life and wellbeing of the native population. Although Lisiansky devalued the Alutiiq people as uncivilized, the *unigkuat* he references are significant as we look at versions of these stories told by Elders in contemporary times.

Hieromonk Gideon — Early Missionary — 1804-1807

In June 1804, Father Gideon arrived at Kodiak aboard the *Neva*, captained by Urey Lisiansky (Black, 1977, p. 87). As Black (1977) describes, "Gideon was a very well educated man—the style and organization of his writings leave no doubt on this point" (p. 81). Gideon served as Cathedral Hieromonk of the Alexandro-Nevisky Lavra, and similarly to Lisiansky, was ordered by Russian Emperor Alexander the First to report on Russian American Company operations on Kodiak. "Gideon traveled not only as a representative of the Metropolitan Amvrossii, to whom he had direct access (many of his letters are marked "secret" and some obviously were sent by hand through unofficial channels) but also, as some letters indicate, he may even have represented the Emperor himself" (Black, 1977, p. 81). "In short, Gideon had power of the highest order. Again the correspondence with Baranov, Rezanov, Banner and others demonstrated that when Gideon asked, the managers complied."

Black (1977) identified that Gideon and Lisiansky were at odds, as Lisiansky admired Baranov, “while Gideon vehemently took the side of the exploited natives and supported the remaining members of the original Mission of 1794 in their opposition to Baranov’s policies” (Black, 1977, p. 81). Black further credits Gideon as being “instrumental in the subsequent dispatching of Golovnin to the colonies and in the removal of Baranov from his post” due to the atrocities perpetrated under Baranov.

Black (1977) republished an excerpt of Gideon’s report about the Kodiak Alutiiq, originally published in 1894, in which he summarizes a creation story he was told (p. 99):

They have the following notions about the creation of the world: once upon a time there was someone named Kishshakhiliuk (a wise man or a clever one). At that time there was no day and no night. He began to blow through a straw and gradually land began to emerge from the water and began to spread imperceptibly; he continued to blow, and the sky opened; the sun appeared, and in the evening, the stars and the moon rose. Finally, animals and people appeared (Gideon, 1989).

As Black describes in her introduction to the Gideon report excerpt, his correspondence and journals offer great value to researchers as they shed light on the history of the native population of the area. It is possible there may be additional references or summaries of stories that Gideon was told during his four years on Kodiak that are within his journals.

Gavrill Ivanovich Davydov — Colonial Observer — 1802

Gavriil Ivanovich Davydov (1784-1809) a Russian naval officer who first visited Kodiak in 1802 and spent the winter, claimed that Koniag poetry consisted solely of love poems (Miller, 2010, p. 98). He writes in his report *Two Voyages to Russian America, 1802-1807*,

The Koniags have poetry which consists solely of love poems, sometimes praising and sometimes satirical--these savages find the latter kind most to their taste. The Kasiats are for the most part the composers of this poetry and this gives them quite a reputation amongst their fellows. More often, however, the Koniagas, like the Yakuts, will take some short statement and sing it repeatedly solo, such as for

example “I love you and you love me.” From boredom a savage may sing this very short song for an hour or more (Davydov, 1977, p. 184). (Miller, 2010, p. 98) Translated by Richard Pierce and co-authored with Lieutenant Nikolai Aleksandrovich Khvostov and Admiral Aleksandr Semenovich Shishkov, the Report provides a series of ethnographic essays about the Koniag (Kodiak Alutiiq) people, their appearances, behaviors, customs, rituals, and warfare, to name a few themes. As a snapshot into Alutiiq life 18 years after conquest at *Awa'uq*, Davydov’s report illustrates how Russian subjugation impacted and changed the people. Similarly other colonial observers such as Carl Heinrich Merck (1790), Martin Sauer (1790), and Il’ia Vonznesenskii (1842-1843) also provide descriptions that help inform our understanding of Alutiiq people and ancestral lifeways (Crowell et al., 2001).

While Davydov does not retell stories or poems directly, he and other colonial observers do provide descriptions of some of the ceremonies and rituals that they witnessed. While Davydov’s perceptions of the Koniag people and their traditions are severely judgmental, it is useful nonetheless for cultural reclamation efforts to visualize what he witnessed and to read between the lines (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 76). As the ceremonies he describes last occurred in generations past, his report explores traditions that are referenced in stories and contributes to our understanding of classical or ancestral Alutiiq society.

Henrik Johan Holmberg — Early Ethnographer — 1851

Henrik Johan Holmberg (1818-1864), a Finnish professional mining specialist, naturalist, and amateur ethnographer, visited Kodiak in 1851, officially to “prepare a report on the mineralogy of Kodiak Island for the governor” (Marvin Falk’s introductory essay, p. x. (Holmberg, 1985)). Holmberg was part of a survey team hired by the Russian American Company for a geologic, biologic and natural resources survey of south central Alaska, including the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island. He traveled with Russian geologist Petr Doroshin and Finnish geologist Friedrich Frankenhäuser aboard the schooner *Tunga*. After dropping them off on the Kenai Peninsula for their portion of the survey, he headed on to Kodiak (Bowser, 2010, November 5).

During his summer stay on Kodiak, Holmberg became fascinated with the Kodiak Alutiiq people and their culture. He later produced an *Ethnographic Sketches of the Peoples of Russian America*, originally delivered to the Russian American Company in 1854 and later published in 1985 within the Rasmuson Library Historical Translation Series: Volume I, by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Press. Among his observations, Holmberg documented several stories of the Kodiak Alutiiq told to him by his informant Arsentí Aminak. Holmberg (1985 translation) explains that he lived with Aminak for two days in his hut in Kaniagmiut and “with the help of a capable Creole interpreter Panfilov” from Three Saints Bay or the current village of Old Harbor, he was able to write down several of Aminak’s stories (p. 57).

Aminak’s first story that Holmberg (1985 translation) includes is a biographical account of the arrival of the first Russian ship to the area, recollections on the Alutiiq history of warfare with the Unangan, and his memory of Russian conquest at *Awa’uq* that Aminak survived as a young boy (p. 59). Aminak went on to tell a story of the Discovery of Ukamok or Chirikov Island, gifted to his father (p. 59-60).

Aminak’s last story is an *unigkuaq* about the origin of the Alutiiq people combined with Christian ideology, which is to be expected given nearly 70 years of Russian colonization at its telling. Holmberg appears to have held higher regard for the stories of the Alutiiq people in his description of the story of *Llam Sua* (Holmberg spelled it Shilam Shoa):

What little I could catch, which contained a lovely myth of the peoples of the earth, is stated next. *Shilam Shoa*, which means master of the world, was prayed to by the Koniags as the greatest of gods. He had created the whole earth and the heaven; but the light was still not present. He sent a brother and sister to the earth and forbade them to eat grass. But the sister was curious as to what would happen if she broke the command, and said to the brother: ‘Probably there will be light if we eat grass.’ The brother advised against this, feeling that it could bring trouble and that they would be ashamed and wanted to part; the sister went one way and the brother another, but they could not hide and finally returned to heaven. On the

steps leading to heaven, they met and fell in love. To their sorrow, all five children that were born to them died. Shortly before the birth of the sixth, Shilam Shoa came to them and said: “Why are you sad?” “Because our children that are born to us die,” they answered. “Be troubled no more,” Shilam Shoa said, “I shall sing you a song and children shall thereupon be born unto you.” And thus it happened. He returned them to earth and from them originated mankind.

A flood (aljak) is supposed to have at one time destroyed mankind. How, later on, the earth was again peopled, the old man did not know.

After every successful hunt a sacrifice was brought to Shilam Shoa, which consisted of an animal—sea otter, seal or the like—but never a human. Also, if one wished for a good hunt, one usually brought him a sacrifice.

Ijak was the god of wickedness; he lived inside the earth and also listened to the peoples’ pleas. However he dealt mostly with the shamans.

When Shilam Shoa was angry with mankind, he sent forth two dwarfs who caused thunder and lighting.

While this story amalgamates Biblical aspects of the Genesis story, several significant Alutiiq features remain, such as reference to the coming of light, the number five, hunting sacrifice, shamans, and demigods. What is most interesting is while in the earlier version summarized by Lisiansky tells of five children born to first woman, in this version they all died as the Alutiiq are implied to be reborn through baptism to have new, healthier children. This story is an excellent example of how mythological versions develop as cultural and spiritual traditions shift through assimilative pressures. Holmberg does not appear to moralize, judge or interpret this story as many other early explorers have, rather his report seems to come from sheer fascination or curiosity. However, he too appears to summarize rather than transcribes his informant’s story.

Alphonse Pinart — Early Ethnographer — 1871-1872

Alphonse Louis Pinart is described as a “brilliant savant” for his linguistic talent by Carl Dentzel in his introduction to Parmenter’s (1966) book about Pinart’s life and work. Pinart was born in 1852 in Marquise, France. His father, Leon Pinart, owned an

industrial ironworks factory in Marquise but died when Pinart was a young boy, contributing to Alphonse's financial ability and freedom to undertake a solitary exploration of the Americas at such a young age (Laronde, 2009; Parmenter, 1966). At the age of 17, Alphonse Pinart journeyed to America and two years later in April 1871 left San Francisco for Alaska. Pinart's motivation for pursuing research in Alaska appears to be his desire to investigate the connection between Asian and American Indigenous peoples. As a philologist, he studied languages for their comparative and holistic relationship to other languages, demonstrating the connections between and migration of cultural groups. After exploring Nushagak, Nuniak Island, the Yukon River, and the Siberian coast of the Bering Strait, he left Unalaska by kayak to arrive on Kodiak Island two months later in November accompanied by a group of Aleut men (Laronde, 2009; Alutiiq Museum, 2008). There he spent six winter months in the villages of Afognak, Kodiak, and Eagle Harbor (Alutiiq Museum, 2008; Parmenter, 1966). He also kayaked around Afognak and Shuyak Island in March and April, 1872 (Alutiiq Museum, 2008). In Pinart's notes he credits and references several informants. One informant, Tit'nakaak, who related a Story of the Creation of Man, and an account of the methods of whale hunting by Kodiak Alutiiq, was documented in Russian. Another informant, Konstantin was an inhabitant of the Island Ougak, who Pinart wrote about while at Eagle Harbor. During his stay he took prodigious notes and collected an array of cultural objects, some of which he purchased or commissioned and some that he is known to have looted from a funeral cave at Unga. Despite this moral infraction in his research methods, he is greatly appreciated for his efforts to document classical Alutiiq beliefs, stories and practices in their twilight due to cultural shift after 87 years of Russian colonization and just four years as an American territory. As Lantis (1938a) writes, "yet we must express gratitude to him for having obtained and preserved certain tales and accounts of shamanism, the whale cult, and other religious practices which no one else has recorded among the Koniag" (p. 124)

Pinart's research throughout Alaska and on Kodiak in 1871-72 is widely accepted as his "most celebrated" work (Parmenter, 1966; Pinart, 1872a, 1872b), for which he won

the Société de Géographie’s “annual gold metal award for the world’s most important discovery in geography” (Alutiiq Museum, 2008, p. 11). Parmenter (1966) cites Pilling (1887) regarding the magnitude of Pinart’s unpublished research about the peoples of southern Alaska, describing his field notes as a “[m]anuscript of about 700 pages, in Alaskan and Russian, collected by Mr. Pinart in 1871 in Unalaska, Belkofsky, Unga and Kodiak” (p. 3-4). Within his journal he recorded 23 traditional Kodiak Alutiiq stories (Lantis, 1938a) and 19 mask songs (Haakanson & Steffian, 2009; Desson, 1995). He also described various rituals that he witnessed, along with illustrated cultural objects and the Kodiak geography. As his initial focus was linguistic, as Parmenter (1966) explains, “[e]verywhere he went he collected native vocabularies” (p. 3), and Kodiak was no exception. His journals contain lists of Alutiiq words, many of which were transcribed from journals or books by other previous researchers to the area.

Margaret Lantis (1938a) describes Pinart’s field notes as: “One of the best sources...at the same time one of the worst” (p. 124). She evaluates Pinart’s methods and story collection content aptly by stating:

Pinart seems to have been especially interested in folklore and language and made an effort to obtain such material in many settlements. But at the same time he seems to have accepted fragments or usually the bare outlines of stories. Of course he may have heard full versions but wrote down in the Notes only an outline, with the intention of filling in the details later from memory. This does not help us, however, since we do not dare to carry on this filling-in process.

(Lantis, 1938a, p. 124)

While Pinart’s notes only provide outlines of many of the stories he documents, as Lantis (1938a) acknowledges, he “obtained and preserved certain tales and accounts of shamanism, the whale cult, and other religious practices which no one else has recorded among the Koniag” (p. 124). As explored later in examination of Frank Golder’s life, Pinart (1872a, 1872b) similarly retold stories in his own voice, frequently summarizing the stories rather than taking dictation or full transcripts from his informants. It is also unclear how he engaged the storytellers he listened to and what their motivations were for

sharing stories, although it is likely that there was some form of compensation or exchange similar to how he purchased or collected cultural objects.

Among the *unigkuat* that Pinart (1872a, 1872b) documented, are summaries of eleven cosmological or creation origin stories, including: two versions of the origin of animals, two of the sun and moon, as well as stories on thunder and lightning, stars, the earth, winds, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and floods (Lantis, 1938a). One such *unigkuaq* telling the origin of the moon *Iraluq* and sun *Macaq* recounted by Konstantin a toion of Eagle Harbor, also known as Irak in Alutiiq and Orlovic in Russian, from Ugak Island (Alutiiq Museum, 2008). These stories offer a framework for understanding classical Alutiiq cosmology and aid in our understanding of the Alutiiq mask songs and ritual practices he documented as well. In addition to these origin stories, Pinart (1872a, 1872b) also transcribes 19 other stories, as cataloged by Margaret Lantis in 1938:

- The Girl Who Married a Star
- The Girl Who Married the Moon: Phases of the Moon
- Demonstration of Shamanistic Power (5 stories)
- Hunting Tabu
- Magic Boat
- The Dwarfs
- Masks & Hunting Songs (2 versions)
- Two Brothers
- Boy Who Went Under the Sea
- Man Who Killed the Sea Creature
- The Huntress
- Feigned Death (2 versions)
- Beginning of War

Many of these stories Lantis (1938a) retells and others appear as versions also documented thirty years later by Frank Golder (See the comparative *Values Catalog of Kodiak Alutiiq Stories* in Appendix B for a comparison of the sources for each story).

Following his stay in Alaska, “[e]arly in 1873 he set out for Russia to study the Tatar languages to see if they could yield further light on the possible linguistic affiliations of the peoples of Asia with those of America” (Parmenter, 1966, p.11). Parmenter (1966) states, “Though he was only 59 when he died he had already fallen into relative obscurity” (p. 4). He goes on to explain, “[h]is problem was that he was never able to top his magnificent achievements of 1871-2—achievements begun when he was only 19 and completed before he was 21” (p. 5). Pinart died in 1911 in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris (Laronde, 2009), where his Kodiak Alutiiq cultural objects collection is on now display at the Chateau Boulogne-sur-Mer museum, including “about 80 masks and other items such as beaded headdresses, bowls, paddles, model kayaks, and open boats and bows and arrows” (Alutiiq Museum, 2008, p. 11).

At Berkley University’s Bancroft Library, the original Pinart (1872a) Journal from 1870-1871 along with a microfilm of the journal are available. A new translation of sections of Pinart’s (1872b) journals by Celine Wallace (a French translator) and Sven Haakanson, Jr. is in progress, which is a great challenge as the manuscript is written in French, English, Russian and several Alaska Native languages. As the Alutiiq Musuem’s (2008) first of two books about their *Giinaquq* exhibit states, “Pinart was not the first Westerner to explore and document the Kodiak Archipelago, but his writings and descriptions of ritual, worldview, beliefs and culture were extraordinary. His work preserves for contemporary Alutiiqs a window, a doorway into their ancestry, heritage and culture” (p. 11). Pinart’s favorable support for preserving Alutiiq ceremonial heritage is invaluable, and will continue to play a major role in the Alutiiq cultural revitalization movement as more people are able to access and learn from his research.

Frank A. Golder — Early Ethnographer — 1900-1902

The Golder collection of stories represents one of the largest collections of complete Alutiiq stories that is easily accessible online, and for that reason it is most important that we become knowledgable about the man who collected these stories and retold them in his own voice. The following section is a contextual analysis of Frank A. Golder’s background, motivations or perspectives, and the people he worked with during

his time as a teacher in Alaska, and as an amateur ethnographer. It is intended to contribute an understanding of the Kodiak Alutiiq stories Golder collected at Unga between 1900-1902. Golder subsequently published his collection of stories in the *Journal of American Folklore* between 1903-1909.

Frank Alfred Golder was born in Odessa, Russia in 1877 and immigrated with his family to the U.S. in 1880 at the age of 3. In 1898, at age 21, he graduated with a college degree from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, where his family lived. Pursuing a dream to be an educator, he promptly applied for and secured a teaching position in Alaska, believing he was striking out on a great wilderness adventure like a character from a book.

In an essay about his experiences of tragic events in Alaska, he writes about how his fantasies led him to Alaska to take a post as teacher and U.S. Commissioner for Unga, a small Aleutian Island in the Shumagin Islands, east of the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Range and south of Sand Point. (See map below for its relative location to Kodiak). He described himself at the time as “...full of dreams of the wild West with its Indians, hunting and fishing when I received the appointment of teacher to one of the U.S. Public Schools in Alaska. I accepted the position eagerly without fully realizing just what was before me for it offered me an opportunity to realize some of my boyish fancies” (Golder, n.d., p. 1). In a reflective essay or story about an Unga friend, called Pete Nelson, Golder explores the process that led him to Alaska, and the roots of his emotions to seek such an adventure. He writes from a romanticized comparative perspective of western and Indigenous cultures when he says he thought, “Our boasted culture was a sham and that

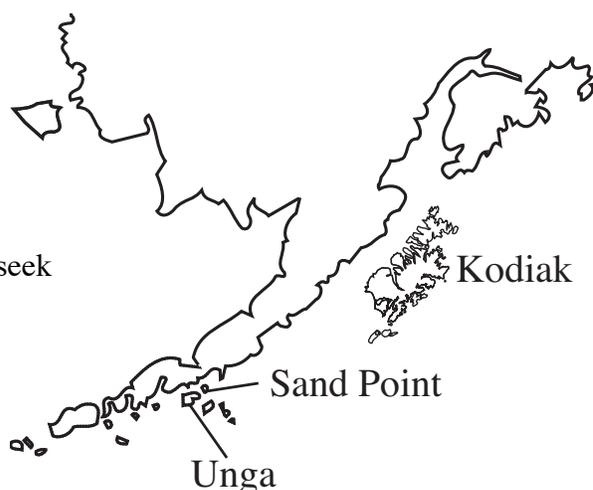


Fig. 4.3: *Map of Unga Island in Relation to Kodiak Island*

the only life worth living was that in a 'state of nature.' Being young and full of adventure I resolved to turn my back on civilization and strike out for the wild places, the wilder the better" (Golder, n.d., p. 1).

In August 1900, after a 17-day voyage from Boston, he reached Unga where he taught for three years from 1900-1902. After arriving at his new home and after teaching there for one year, he wrote a letter to William Hamilton, Assistant Agent for Alaska Education under Sheldon Jackson, requesting a shift in placement to Kodiak (Dubie, 1989, p. 12). While he craved an Alaska wilderness adventure, Kodiak appealed more to him with its population of 340, two-thirds larger than Unga's population. It seems he always held a fondness for Kodiak, despite his never living there.

Ougnagok, as Unga was called previously, was first reported to the Russian Empire by Evstratii Ivanovich Delarov of the Shelifkov-Golikov Company in 1833 with a population of 116 (ADCCED, 2008). The Ungagan village of Ougnagok was later developed as a Russian Trading Post. Following the transfer of Alaska to the U.S. in 1867, a Post Office was established in 1888 and the American government changed the village's name to Unga in 1894. Not long after Alaska became an American territory, gold was discovered on Unga Island, which led to its brief period as a boom town. "The gold boom ended before World War I, and the bustling community began a long decline" (Zegrahm & Eco Expeditions, 2009). The village site is no longer occupied year round, but is still used for subsistence hunting and gathering by tribal members seasonally, with the last year round residents leaving in 1969. Most of the tribal members of Unga now live in the nearby town of Sand Point.

When Golder lived in Unga the population is estimated to have been between 110-150 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900). He had approximately fourteen students as noted in a grade book from one of his years teaching there. As the headmaster and only teacher on Unga, he succeeded John H. Carr as teacher of the Government School, according to government records. Golder details in both his journals and an essay of his life on Unga that he served the community in many roles beyond teacher, as he was one of the few literate people on the island. Because he was literate, he was continually called

upon to read and write correspondence, represent community members in legal matters, act as ex-officio coroner, officiate funerals and marriages, and become involved in many other American governance and social service issues for the village. While in Unga, he viewed these extra duties as a huge, uncompensated burden, stating that “He who goes to Alaska in the government service should count on having more work to do than bargained for...especially true for those who go their as teachers” (Golder, n.d., p. 1). Later, as he became seasoned by years on Unga, he came to see these extra duties as a blessing in disguise because they kept him preoccupied, not focused on “the long dark nights, gloomy sunless days and the indescribable loneliness which drives one almost to despair” (Golder, n.d. p. 13). He writes of his extra duties: “they took my mind away from myself and gave me peace” (Golder, n.d., p. 14).

At first, he felt himself a great explorer of characters, living life like he was in a James Fenimore Cooper story, as in his own words about Unga he writes,

Naturally the inhabitants greatly interested me. They were made up of pure Eskimos, pure whites, pure yellows and various blendings of the three. Not a character pictured in Cooper was missing. They led simple lives, lived off their own toil, and were free and independent. They had few silly ceremonies, no conventional codes, no false modesty and no prudery. I liked the crude conversation of the men and the quiet ways of the women. In my note book of that time I jotted down these words: ‘At least I have found what the eighteenth century philosophers dreamed’ (Golder, n.d., p. 4).

Later, as a growing state of misery and isolation set in, he described Unga in a less romantic manner as “a small village made up of Aleuts, half breeds and white hunters and fishermen, some married to native women, but the greater part single. My house was at the extreme end of the village and in it I lived all alone for three years” (Golder, 1927). From his journals and a personal essay about his service in Alaska he clearly felt he was lost and adrift during that time, and it appears that as he later reflected back on it, he was not proud of how he handled it, succumbing to misery in his loneliness, unable to sustain himself in a foreign environment (Golder, 1900-2, unpublished diary).

Throughout his journals he expresses a mixed response of loving the experience of adventure—as a pioneer—and then conversely feeling great conflict in how he was unaccepted, misunderstood, and separate. In a January, 28, 1901, journal entry he wrote, I wish I were not so different from other people. The life that I admire in others I can never enjoy and be the man that I want to be. Lonely in soul... I wonder if I wouldn't be best after all to spend the remainders of my life here. May the Lord help me that I may at least be honest and manly, even if I must be cowardly.

During his time on Unga he read voraciously, such works as Tennyson, Wordsworth, Keats, Emerson and James Fenimore Cooper. The latter was a favorite author at the time and the inspiration for his journey to Alaska, as well as a major influence on how he saw Alaska and its peoples as mentioned earlier. As the years progressed, he became increasingly despondent, to the point of turning away from even reading his favorite authors. He writes that, “the second winter I felt no desire to read them, the last winter I became so morbid that I had to lock them up because their sight became distasteful to me” (Golder, n.d., p. 14). He describes how often, “A whole week at a time would sometimes go by and I would not see any other person except the little children” (p. 14). Although during these times on Unga his loneliness made him seek out other adult company, he later would regret many of these encounters as he describes how the white fishermen and hunters talked “about squaws and depraved subject which left [him] in a still worse state” (p. 14). He ends this reflective passage about the many unsatisfying contacts with the pioneers come to strike it rich, stating, “Above all I hated myself.” In another similar passage, he writes, “After the charm of the wilderness had worn off I would often catch my self praying, Good God, I am willing to work here but don't let me die here, it is so cold, gloomy, lonely, and away from everybody” (p. 4).

Outside of his duties and readings, his other preoccupations were hiking to pick berries or climbing the mountain behind the village almost daily to watch for the mail steamer, as well as most significantly for our understanding of his documentation of Alaska Native stories, listening to storytelling and writing. Although he does not describe it as such, it seemed as if seeking out Alaska Native stories was a way for him to

assimilate to Unga, holding onto what he valued most while trying to fit in and understand the place he had come to live in. He mentions various story sessions and topics he listened to throughout his journals, indicating that he later wrote them down from memory. Winters in Alaska particularly were harsh for him (Golder, n.d., p. 14), but he occupied himself as best he could, and collecting stories seemed his way to keep sane.

In addition to his time at Unga, he also spent at least one of his two summers teaching in the neighboring village of Belkofsky, located at the eastern end of the Alaska Peninsula near King Cove. Belkofsky is now also a seasonal fishing camp with no year-round inhabitants. It was there that he collected more Unangan stories that appear in one of his personal journal, but which he did not publish.

His limited understanding of Alaska Native culture, and lifeways was initially naive and romanticized. As was true of most colonists, Golder believed that he knew what was best for the Indigenous peoples in the community, and that his way of life was superior to Natives in most cases. However, as a teacher in government service, he did exhibit a significantly more sensitive perspective on Native culture than many of his peers at the time. In fact, “He criticized the Bureau of Education for its lack of awareness in understanding the different cultural and social experiences between American children and children raised in Alaska. He saw no advantage in the learning process if one took the teaching methods of another culture and superimposed them over a foreign one” (Dubie, 1989, p. 6). Yet, the way he writes about the Native people demonstrated that he did see himself as their detached superior, frequently referring to them in his early encounters not by name, but as “my men”. In one example, he writes about his efforts to advise and perform marriage rights for a couple, believing their lives would be improved if they partook of the sacrament of marriage. Another example of his paternalistic tendencies was in how he tried to teach them about American Independence Day. On July 4th, he decided the village needed to move away from their focus as a former Russian territory to being American. He wrote, “I decided we too would celebrate” (Golder, n.d., p. 12). He tells what he saw as a humorous, yet humbling, story about his experience that day, calling the whole town together to the school to give a patriotic speech about the meaning

of the 4th of July. As the villagers sat patiently through his whole speech, they did not move or respond when he finished, and he came to find out that they were waiting for candy, as they were well accustomed to white men coming to “educate” them through force or bribery, as they most likely believed in this instance.

Similarly, as other American Romanticist authors of the time believed, Golder imbued Indigenous peoples with an animal-like sixth-sense. He states in one essay, “Somehow I always had the feeling that in such [dangerous] cases the instinct of animals and Indians is more to be relied upon than the reason of a white man” (Golder, n.d., p. 6). Particularly coming to such a foreign land with its unfamiliar ways of life, Golder at least acknowledged his ignorance of these ways and an awareness that the Indigenous people knew more than he did on how to survive within this land. In his personal essay about tragic times in Unga, he describes his own unfamiliarity with these ways of life when he writes of his first experience in a kayak, “I had never before ventured in a frail skin boat, but I had no choice but to go.” (Golder, n.d., p. 3). He later notes, “To know an Aleut at his best one, must see him handle his boat in rough weather under unfavorable circumstances” (Golder, n.d., p. 6). Despite his recognition of their skill and knowledge, like other colonists he did not seem to ever acknowledge the Alaska Native peoples as able or within their own rights to exercise self-determination on how they lived outside of western colonization and resource extraction efforts. Yet, he did struggle with the mistreatment and murders of “the defenseless natives” and an accumulation of disturbing events eventually contributed to his leaving Alaska.

Golder ultimately matured somewhat as he witnessed the often tragic lives of the people he came to know, although focused most heavily on the tragedies of the white men. He writes, “Some of the saddest sights in Alaska are the hundreds of men who having left home, love, good positions come to Alaska in search for gold” (Golder, n.d., p. 8). He was a man full of moral obligation and great sensitivity for human suffering, which his actions and his thoughts on his responsibilities showed. He fulfilled the roles he was placed in but the experiences tormented him. As his time in Alaska progressed, he survived many periods of frustration and conflicted judgements about life there. In the

end he came to appreciate the people in Alaska who he knew. It is likely these views developed as he grew the friendships with those who shared stories and their homes with him. At the end of one of his reflective essays he explains how "... there were the many kind acts shown by the Aleuts as well as the white people." (p. 14). He also goes so far as to at least recognize that the racial prejudice of the whites against the Alaska Natives when he writes, "To some the Aleuts may be 'dirty siwashers' but to one who has come in daily contact with them during three years they seem like other of God's children and I learned to love them and I try to think that three years was not too high a price to pay for that" (Golder, n.d., p. 15).

His experience on Unga most certainly shifted his perspective on what he wanted to do with his life and his research. When he left, he wanted to write a history of Alaska and focus on the peoples of Alaska, but perhaps due to his isolation and struggles there after returning to school he turned his interests from the Alaska Native experience to that of the Russian occupation of North America and later events within Russia.

As he matured through many harsh experiences in Alaska he came to have respect for the people he lived among, but he ultimately fled from his Alaskan service, returning to academia in pursuit of a graduate degree from Harvard University.

At the end of his service he returned to the United States carrying in his notebooks a collection of Aleutian songs and stories (subsequently published in six installments in the *Journal of American Folklore*) and in his mind a determination to write the history of Alaska. In the fall of 1902 he entered Harvard. After receiving the A. B. degree in 1903 he continued, as a graduate student, his Alaska studies at Cambridge, in the Library of Congress, in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and the *Archives de la Marine* in Paris, and in 1909 received his doctorate." (Fisher, 1929, p. 253)

During his studies he poured through his notes and edited the stories he collected at Unga for publication in the *Journal of American Folklore* through University of Illinois Press in 6 installments (see page 79-80 for a list of the stories as they appear within these articles).

He immediately went on to pursue his PhD from Harvard, graduating in 1909, with the title of his dissertation *Russian Expansion on the Pacific, 1641-1850*, published in 1914. The *Journal of American Folklore* stories represented a chapter in his life, one that he moved beyond in pursuit of research and writing about Russian American History and the Great Russian Famine (Wachhold, 1984). Through this later research and publications he went on to become a world renown expert in Russian American history and founder of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He was a professor of Russian History at Stanford and was the first curator of the Hoover War Collection, which houses an enormous Slavic collection chiefly due to his efforts. He died at age 52 in Stanford, California of lung cancer and was greatly missed by colleagues and students (Fisher, 1929; Lutz, 1929).

In his own words on his philosophy of life, “Every person should know how to do some one thing well and to make himself useful to society. But after all professions and occupations are not ends in themselves but means to ends” (Golder, 1924, p. 1). Just as he advised graduates of San Mateo High School during a Commencement keynote address, “your career must fit in with your ideal, it must contribute to your happiness” (Golder, 1924, p. 7). It seems that Golder was able to fulfill his vision of a life well lived and maintain a sense of bravery as he thrust himself into foreign environments to seek out stories and histories. As his biographer, Dubie (1989) indicates, Golder preferred the storytelling and human side of history (p. 29). He used his own personal fascinations and his storytelling abilities well.

Alutiiq Story Collection by Golder

Golder’s process of story collection as mentioned earlier appears to have been gathered by building friendships or as trade for services with the people of Unga and Belkofsky, as he spent time in their homes, listening to their stories. In his journals he describes spending the day picking salmonberries and then giving them to the people he spent time listening to or assisting with written correspondence. As his main social

involvement, particularly in his last year on Unga, Golder spent many an afternoon and evening listening to stories.

Golder (1903) credits three individuals from Unga in his first publications in the *Journal of American Folklore* as his storytelling sources: Mrs. Reed; Nicoli Medvednikoff; and Corneil Panamaroff. He explains that all the stories were told in Russian, which Golder was fluent in and in which he primarily communicated with local Natives. Golder identified his informants and their stories as, “all natives of the island of Kodiak where they had heard them.” He goes on to state that he translated some of their stories literally, but others more freely according to his own style choices. He explains that references to “Aleut” throughout the publication refer to the people of Kodiak Island, now known as Kodiak Alutiiq or Sugpiaq. However, many of the stories are subtitled with an origin of Unga as well, which denotes their Unangan origin.

In July 1900, shortly before Golder arrived in Unga, the U.S. Census Bureau (1900) shows two of the three informants living in Unga. Nicolas Midevednikoff (census spelling) was listed as a hunter, born in Alaska in 1850, and married to Annie Midevednikoff (census spelling) of mixed heritage. While the census does not list origin community names, Golder’s claim that Medvednikoff was from Kodiak is likely accurate. According to the the 1900 U.S. census for Kodiak there is an Evgeniia Medvelnikov (census spelling) listed, who is likely a relative of Nicoli. Evgeniia was born December 1854, within four years of Nicoli, and later married Iakov Grigoriev Erykalov on April 14, 1876, according to the Kodiak Vital Statistics for that year.

As for who Golder’s informant Mrs. Reed, in the July 1900, a Poligia Reid is listed in the U.S. census for Unga. She was born in Alaska in 1866, and 34 years old in 1900. She was married to Lawrence Reid, born in Nova Scotia in 1879, and 56 years old in 1900. Both are listed as coming from mixed heritage. There are no references to residents named Reed or Reid on Kodiak, but it is more likely that if we were to know her maiden name we would be able to identify her family connections to Kodiak.

The 1900 Unga U.S. census does not list a Panamaroff, so perhaps he was also a new arrival to Unga in 1901. However Panamaroff is a common Kodiak area name from

both the villages of Ouzinkie and Afognak (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900). Corneil Panamaroff is referenced frequently in Golder's journals, indicating that Golder spent much time listening to his stories, and then an equal number of hours writing them from his memory, as he describes, "Corneil is at the house cooking, and he told me three stories which took me three hours to copy" (August 13, c. 1901).

While there is mention of these three sources in his journals, there are other storytellers named as well. In one journal he credits Matfai Verchovskoi of Belkofsky as the storyteller of four stories within that journal. These stories are all handwritten script in English, and at this point it is unknown if he translated from field notes that were discarded after he revised them for publication, or wrote from his memory. From how he writes about listening to stories in his journals, and then the later write ups, I believe his method was to listen attentively to Russian tellings, and then directly after the story he would work on writing a storytelling session from his memory into English. This process obviously meant that the story he retold on paper was filtered through how he understood or envisioned the stories, and what lessons or images he thought were important to convey as well as through several layers of language. In this context, he was really writing his own story of how he heard their story. He does not seem to recognize the cultural contrast between the Unangan people of Unga and the Sugpiaq people of Kodiak, with their vast linguistic differences. It is important to consider what languages these storytellers spoke and at what level. It isn't clear at what level Golder spoke Russian as an adult, or if as his first language it was still his strongest. The stories in his collection seem somewhat disembodied without geographic reference, which makes complete sense when you know that a Native Alutiiq or Unangan speaker was translating the story, possibly watered down or embellished for Golder as their audience, and then later from his memory translated the story from Russian into English, embellishing as he felt would improve the story's delivery. As Lantis (1938a) explains, "Even though Golder many have bodied out his stories somewhat to give them more readable form and sequence, nevertheless he did get more incidents in each plot [than Pinart]" (p. 124).

The following is a list of all the story titles within Golder's six *Journal of American Folklore* (JAFL) articles. The year references refer to which JAFL publication they appeared in, and the community listed indicates the story's origin. Kodiak could mean any number of villages, but only Karluk is identified differently, or it could be only the town of Kodiak (Sun'aq). As my research focuses on the Kodiak Alutiiq region, I indicate these stories in bold.

- **The Raven & His Grandmother (Raven Takes Human Wives) (1903a) Kodiak**
- **The Two Inquisitive Men: Achayongch & Achgoyan (1903a) Kodiak**
- **The Girl Who Married a Star (1903a) Kodiak**
- **The Girl Who Went in Search of Her Lover (Girl & Cannibals) (1903a) Kodiak**
- **The Girl Who Married the Moon (Phases of the Moon) (1903a) Kodiak**
- **Light: (Raven Steals the Light: Origin of Light) (1903b) Kodiak**
- **The Grouse Girl (Mysterious Housekeeper) (1903b) Kodiak**
- **Unnatural Uncle (Jealous Uncle) (1903b) Kodiak**
- **Boy Who Became a Mink (Weasel) (1903b) Kodiak**
- **The Sad Fate of Uchatngiak (Swan-Maiden) (1903b) Kodiak**
- The Sad Woman (1905) Atka & Attu
- The Woman Who Was Fond of Intestines (1905) Aleutian Islands, likely Unga
- The Man and Woman Who Became Sea-Otters (1905) Attu
- A Sea-Otter Story (1905) Belkofsky (Alaska Peninsula)
- The Brother and Sister Who Became Hair-Seals (1905) Unga
- Chief Agitaligak (1907a) Adus on Unmak Island
- A Story for Husbands (1907a) Aleutian Islands
- The First Sea-Otters (1907a) Unalaska
- "Kugan Agalik" The Appearance of the Devils (1907a) Translated from Veniaminov
- **The White Faced Bear (1907b) Kodiak**
- **Woman Who Became a Bear (1909) Kodiak**
- **The Old Man of the Volcano (1909) Nushigak Story by Kodiak Native**
- The Woman With One Eye (1909) Unga

- The Woman Without a Nose (1909) Belkovksy
- The Woman With One Eye (1909) Unga (verbatim)
- The Fight For a Wife (1909) Unga
- Koikoiusa (1909) Unga
- The Boy with the Seal-Flippers (1909) Unga
- The Lake Monster (1909) Unga
- **The Sinew Rope (Magic Rope) (1909) Kodiak**
- **Ughek (The Simpleton) (1909) Karluk on Kodiak Island**

Although Frank A. Golder was not the first nor the last visitor to research or publish Alutiiq stories, as Margaret Lantis (1938a) describes in her comparison of him to Alphonse Pinart,

Golder, who was working in the same region thirty years later and who moreover did not pretend to be an ethnographer, obtained much fuller versions (although not such a great variety of stories). Even though Golder may have bodied out his stories somewhat to give them more readable form and sequence, nevertheless he did get more incidents in each plot [than Pinart]. (p. 124)

While many of the stories Golder collected were romanticized as much of his perspective of Alaska was, with qualities of a Grimm Brothers' fairy tale in many ways, he was able nonetheless to capture a glimpse of what these stories told. In comparing one such as *The Woman Who Became a Bear* to other versions, including ones told today, there are many similarities. Further analysis of his versions could contribute to an Alutiiq retelling that more closely fits in with our oral traditions. Right now, as one Elder told me when I read her one of the stories from a Golder article, "That's a nice bedtime story."

Just as Greg Sarris (1993) explores in his essay *Reading Narrated American Indian Lives* the storytelling context and the level of language understanding between speaker and ethnographer are critical to the accuracy of the story. Given the fact that Golder did not speak either the Sugt'stun or Unangan languages, and heard stories at Unga in Russian and then later translated them from memory into English, there are several filtered layers of language translation that impact these stories. It is also not clear

from Golder's journal how he engaged the storytellers he listened to and what their motivations were for sharing their stories. The stories Unga residents told Golder were likely targeted for him as curiosities, and were therefore adjusted by the storytellers for him as their audience, in a similar way as Sarris (1993) explores of Pomo storytellers "money-storytelling-time" (p. 105). Given Golder's service as a correspondence reader and writer for the community, stories may have been given in exchange for his services, as well as the complex relationship he held with the village as an authority in his role as American government teacher and U.S. Commissioner of Unga. Further investigation into the genealogies and histories of his named informants from Kodiak may also further enlighten us as to the contexts of their story sessions with Golder.

Because the Golder stories are so accessible in print and online, it is more likely for readers or educators to find them and use them out of context. For example, in 1978 for the Adult Literacy Laboratory project at the Anchorage Community College, Kathleen Lynch (1978) also republished a selection of the Golder stories in a spiral bound collection titled *Stories of the Aleutians and Kodiak*, including her own illustrations and edited versions of the Golder stories. Of the eight stories in the compilation, three of the stories are from Kodiak including, *The Woman Who Became a Bear*, *The Sinew Rope*, and *The Odd Man and the Monster*. The booklet is available in Kodiak at the A. Holmes Johnson Public Library's Alaska Room. It is unclear what Lynch's background is or if she has any connections to the Kodiak Alutiiq. It appears that the stories were merely taken as amusing folklore, as she provides no background information about the Alutiiq or Golder and accompanies the stories with child-like illustrations.

Beyond the Kodiak and Unga area stories that Golder published in reference to the Kodiak area, he also wrote a book about the life of Father Herman, reprinted in its third edition in 2004, now titled *Father Herman: Alaska's Saint*. In 1914, Golder traveled to the Valaam Monastery located on Lake Ladoga between Finland and Russia to learn more about the monk who instilled the Orthodox faith into the Kodiak Alutiiq community and is affectionally known in Alutiiq as *Apaangcuk* - Little Grandfather.

Research into Golder's life and his oral literature documentation serves as a major part of an exploration into the contexts and sources of Kodiak Alutiiq story collections, and greatly contributed to our evaluation of these sources.

Margaret Lantis — Comparative Mythology Analyst — 1933-1938

Margaret Lantis is significant in our understanding of early Alutiiq literature research, as she provided the first comparative mythological analysis of the stories collected by previous researchers of the Alutiiq. Although she did not collect Alutiiq stories herself, she does summarize many of the previously collected stories and explores the meaning and symbolism of these stories. Her work is also significant in how she identified that many of the stories are shared across Alaska Native cultures in versions.

Margaret Lantis was born on September 1, 1906, in Dayton, Ohio, to paternal family of "German Dunkard (Church of the Brethren) farmers and craftsman, while her mother's kin were Scotch and Irish Episcopalians who worked in factories in Ohio towns and cities and became businesspeople" (Abbott-Jamieson & Van Willigen, 2007, p. 428). Her father's career teaching rural sociology and her upbringing among "low-income, hard-working, capable people in different farm and city environments" were influential in development of her "historical sensibility and interests" (p. 428).

She earned a bachelors degree with a double major of Spanish and Anthropology from the University of Minnesota in 1930 at the age of 21. Following college in 1933 she traveled to the Aleutian Islands to conduct research. Her interest in Alaska Native peoples developed by chance after a BIA teacher invited her to help students on Atka Island. As Abbott-Jamieson and Van Willigen (2007) describe in Lantis's obituary:

Lantis arrived there in 1933 knowing little about the people or their culture. The teacher abandoned the village not long after Lantis's arrival, leaving her to cope on her own for what she described many years later as 'a rough year, with tuberculosis and alcoholism (sourdough variety), and the Depression economy.' She went on to write, 'The scenery was beautiful, Alaska very interesting, and I never...liked hot weather...and the BIA gave me a good part of the teacher's salary" (letter from Lantis to Burch, 1995). She returned to Berkeley in 1934 and

began absorbing every historical and ethnographic account of Alaska then available in the Bancroft Library, later publishing early works that drew primarily on her archival research. (p. 428)

Lantis's growing fascination for Alaska Native culture and peoples was spurred by readily accessible archives at Stanford and Berkeley. In fact, Frank Golder had just developed the nearby Hoover Institute at Stanford in 1920, just nine years before his death in 1929, and the Alphonse Pinart (1872a) journals were also housed at Berkeley. Lantis's research into Golder, Pinart and other Kodiak Alutiiq storytelling collections were of personal interest, served her studies as an Anthropology student and were readily available in the San Francisco area where she lived. In this way, similar to Golder and Pinart, Lantis cut her teeth on research in her study of Kodiak Alutiiq stories with her first publication in 1938 titled *The Mythology of Kodiak Island, Alaska*. This 49-page article provided a comparative catalog of Alutiiq stories collected up to that point with the intent of comparing the cultural relationships of groups in southcentral and southwestern Alaska — the border tribes" (Lantis, 1938a, pp. 123-124). This essay was published in the *Journal of American Folklore* thirty-five years after Golder first published a Kodiak Alutiiq story there. The year after her first publication, she completed her doctorate in Anthropology from University of California at Berkeley in 1939. Directly following, she earned a research fellowship with the American Philosophical Society to conduct field research in Alaska from 1939-40. She later completed additional study at the University of Chicago in 1942 and the Washington School of Psychiatry in 1947. Following graduation Lantis published over 30 articles and books. Most notable and relevant to an understanding of Alaska Native cultures among her publications were the following articles and their corresponding publication year:

- (1938a). *Mythology of Kodiak*. *Journal of American Folklore*. 51(200)
- (1938b). *The Alaskan whale cult and its affinities*. *American Anthropologist*. 40(3)
- (1946). *The social culture of the Nunivak Eskimo*. *TAPS*. 35(3)
- (1947). *Alaskan Eskimo ceremonialism*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

- (1950). Eskimo Religion. In V. Ferm (Ed.), *Forgotten religions* (pp. 311–339). New York: Philosophical Library.
- (1953). Nunivak Eskimo personality as revealed in the mythology. *Alaska University Anthropological papers*
- (1963). Educating the Alaska Native. *Applied Anthropology Documentation Project*
- (1968). A Teacher's view of culture. *Applied Anthropology Documentation Project*
- (1969). The current Nativistic movement in Alaska. *Applied Anthropology Documentation Project*

Lantis (1938a) defines her study of the mythology of Kodiak as “limited to distribution in an effort to discover at least when the Koniag obtained the components of their folklore” (p. 125). She also aptly recognized that the stories collected by both Golder and Pinart were provided as fragments or retellings. Despite these limitation, her analysis of Kodiak stories is very thorough and provides great insight into the connection between Kodiak stories and other versions of the stories elsewhere.

In order to understand Lantis's motivation for studying Alaska Native mythology and ceremonialism further, her personal correspondence archives at UAF allow us to read it from her own perspective. After sending a copy of her book, *Alaskan Eskimo Ceremonialism*, she states in a letter to Don Foster, the General Superintendent of Alaska Native Services in Juneau, Alaska:

My chief purpose in writing and publishing on this particular subject, Eskimo ceremonialism, was - I think - to call attention to the cultural elaboration in the Bering Sea area that has somehow been overlooked. When the Eskimo lost their ceremonialism, they lost an awful lot: much more than strictly religious practice.

Too bad. (Margaret Lantis to Don Foster, personal communication, April 9, 1948) Foster writes back thanking her for the book, stating, “This book should be quite helpful to us in the future in considering the various problems of human relationship that arise with the Eskimos and Aleuts. I am going to recommend to Dr. Dale that he should order several copies of this book for our use” (Don Foster to Margaret Lantis, personal communication, April 27, 1948). Lantis's influence upon the Bureau of Indian Affairs in

Alaska at the time is clear through their future communication when Prissilla Parker, Nursing Consultant, writes on behalf of Don Foster to Lantis, “We are planning an Institute for our Public Health Field Nurses and Administrative Institutional Groups, in which the theme will be ‘Understanding Communities in which we live and work’” (personal communication, January 30, 1950). They ask Lantis to take the lead in discussions on the “Eskimo Culture Pattern” and on how staff can make the “best use of basic habits in the Community.” The co-relationship between health, spirituality, mythology and education is evident as Lantis’s life work was at the nexus of all of these subjects which comprise well-being.

During her career she served as a visiting professor at Reed, Berkeley, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Washington, Minnesota, George Washington and McGill in Montreal. She was the President of the American Ethnological Society and the Society of Applied Anthropology from 1964-1965 where she was recognized for her ethnographic skills. Initially she worked for public agencies from 1943 to 1963, including nearly a decade with the U.S. Public Health Service (1954-1963) and consultant work for the Alaska Area Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. During her work in various positions she researched socialization, health, and economy in rural communities, providing her data to administrators, publishing only a minimal amount of her work (Weaver, n.d.). In this research she also used Rorschach psychological tests and life-history techniques in studying Inuit childhood. Following this she worked for ten years until her retirement in 1974 for the Department of Anthropology at University of Kentucky in Lexington. In 1987 Lantis received the Society of Applied Anthropology’s prestigious Malinowski Award.

Margaret Lantis died in Dayton, Ohio on September 8, 2006, a few days after her 100th birthday. An accomplished anthropologist, Margaret Lantis was truly committed to academic pursuits and the lives of those she studied. As example of the level of her commitment, Abbott-Jamieson and Van Willigen (2007) concluded her obituary,

She never learned to drive a car, but she did master the techniques of dog sledding. Like many professional women of her generation, she never married,

believing she could not be both a full-time professional anthropologist and a responsible wife and mother. To a large extent anthropology defined her; it was her lifelong passion. (p. 428)

Contemporary Alutiiq Storytellers

In recent decades there have been several Alutiiq Elders who have shared life stories and traditional stories with ethnographers or community members. Their stories are available in several books and recordings. While some of these contemporary Alutiiq storytellers passed away before this dissertation was completed, several are still contributing to cultural education efforts on Kodiak. The following section is a summary of where community members can find their firsthand stories and some brief background information on these contemporary storytellers, as well as the context of the ethnographers who recorded them. While these are only a few of the most widely-known Elder storytellers, there are many others who have contributed to oral history and ethnography collections in recent decades, which are summarized in the next section.

In 1962, *Ralph Demidoff*, an Elder from Little Afognak and descendant from a hereditary line of whale shamans, told an Alutiiq traditional story called *Ar'ursulek - The Whaler* to University of Alaska Fairbanks ethnographer Irene Reed, Ph.D., and his niece Mary Sheratin. Reed, a professor at University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Alaska Native Language Center who helped develop a modern writing system for Yup'ik, audio recorded his telling of the story. Years later Jeff Leer typed a transcription of the Alutiiq recording, which continues an extra five stanzas beyond the English version. Shortly before Demidoff (1962) told Reed this story at his sister's house, he wrote the same story in English, leaving off the end of the story. This story is an extremely valuable Alutiiq language resource as it provides us a unique opportunity to read a story rich in traditional knowledge and spiritual beliefs available in both Alutiiq and English from the same fluent Alutiiq Elder. To facilitate reading the story in both English and Alutiiq I combined both tellings line by line of the 75 stanza story, as Demidoff's English version is a direct sentence by sentence telling of his Alutiiq version transcribed by Jeff Leer. Coupled with

the audio recording, recently digitized by the Native Village of Afognak, the story also offers an unparalleled Alutiiq language learning opportunity. Translation of the five stanzas remains to be completed so that the bilingual story will be available in its entirety (See the appendices for the bilingual transcript of *Ar'ursulek - the Whaler*).

Larry Sava Matfay (1907 - 1998) was an Elder from Alitak and Akhiok who worked with local Kodiak writer Michael Rostad to share his life story and wisdom (Rostad, 1988). Rostad published a biography of Matfay titled *A Time to Dance: Life of an Alaska Native*, told through his own voice in response to what he learned from Matfay. Matfay is a highly respected Elder whose daughter Florence Pestrikoff has carried on his education efforts to support transmission of Alutiiq culture and language. In addition to his biography, there are a number of recordings of Matfay and references to his wisdom and life story in several publications (L. Mulcahy, 1990; Crowell et al., 2001). In the *Looking Both Ways* (2001) book, a short biography of his life also appears, and you can listen online to Matfay singing *Staaman Palayat – Four Boats* recorded in the 1990s and posted on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWv5tIhlQ2A).

Lucille Davis (1926 - 2012) was the daughter of one of the last chiefs of Karluk village, Matfay Antowok. She has contributed recorded stories featured on a retail CD titled *Gathering, Native Alaska Music & Words CD* (2000), in which she tells of her first fox hunt with her father and life growing up in Karluk. She was also interviewed many times by Jeff Leer at the Dig Afognak Elders Camps in the late 1990s, and was known for her storytelling at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage and at Kodiak events.

In 2001, **Mary Peterson**, an Elder from Akhiok was featured in a book by Joanne Mulcahy titled *Birth & Rebirth on an Alaskan Island: The Life of an Alutiiq Healer*. This biography and exploration of midwifery traditions on Kodiak Island is an invaluable resource for traditional healing practices and female gender roles within Alutiiq culture. The book is presented as an exploration of healing practices, with frequent quotes from interviews with Peterson and also references to other traditional healers that Mulcahy studied. Mary Peterson has also contributed her telling of the story behind the song *Ukut Skuunat - These Schooners* on the Alutiiq Museum's (2007) *Generations CD*.

Clyda Christiansen, an Elder from Larsen Bay and Karluk, has shared many audio recorded stories, including *The Woman Who Became a Bear* on the *Generations* (2007) CD. She was also interviewed several times by Jeff Leer at the Dig Afognak Elders Camps in the late 1990s and has continued to participate in Kodiak area language preservation efforts.

In 2012, *John “JP” Pestrikoff* turned 102 years old and is the oldest fluent Kodiak Alutiiq speaker. Pestrikoff is an accomplished storyteller with a huge volume of audio recorded stories and his contribution to the creation of the *Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwood Journey* children’s book (Drabek, 2009b; Drabek & Adams, 2004). He was interviewed many times by Jeff Leer at the Dig Afognak Elders Camps in the late 1990s and has taught language apprentices in Port Lions through the Alutiiq Museum’s revitalization programs since 2004.

Contemporary Oral History Collections

Beyond historic researchers and contemporary storytellers who have built the canon of documented Alutiiq oral literature, there are other contemporary researchers whose work contributes to our awareness of Alutiiq literature, including several more recent collections.

***Irene Reed* (1931-2005)**

Irene Reed had “an illustrious 40 year career as an anthropologist-linguist-educator” (Duluth News Tribune, 2005). She earned her BA in Anthropology from University of Washington in 1961, MA in Anthropology and Linguistics from University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1972, and an honorary PhD in 1998. Her most well-known accomplishments are her Yup’ik language publications and research. She was a strong advocate of Native language preservation, and helped create the first bilingual Native language program in Alaskan schools. She served as former director of the UAF Alaska Native Language Center, and as professor of Yup’ik at UAF. Reed conducted some fieldwork on Kodiak and in the Chugach Alutiiq region. Recordings of her interviews and notes are housed in the Alaska Native Language Archives at UAF. While most of her

Alutiiq work was within the Chugach Alutiiq dialect, her most notable Kodiak interview was with Ralph Demidoff (1962) and his *Ar'ursulek* - Whaler story. She also collected interviews with Nick Katelnikoff and Katherine Chichenoff on traditional medicinal practices, and recordings of Russian Orthodox church singing, which are identified within ANLA. Within this collection is also a group of tapes from the mid-1980s that have not yet been cataloged, which may contain additional stories (ANLA Identifier CY961R1985b).

Laurie Mulcahy, Adaq'wy (1986-1987)

In 1986-1987, Laurie Mulcahy (1987) worked for the Kodiak Area Native Association on an ethnographic research project called *Adaq'wy - The Time Has Come*. The introduction to her report on the collection is titled *The Hidden Story*. The project was funded by the State of Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs to conduct interviews of Alutiiq Elders. Her unpublished excerpts booklet contains 10 interview transcripts, including: Mike, Jenny, Fred and Esther Chernikoff of Ouzinkie, Lawrence Panamaroff of Karluk, John Larsen and Betty Nelson of Port Lions, Ephraim Agnot of Akhiok, Katie Ellanack of Ouzinkie, John and Julia Pestrikoff of Port Lions, Nida Chya of Old Harbor, Alex Panamaroff, Sr. of Karluk, Nick and Christine Ignatin of Old Harbor, and Larry and Martha Matfay of Old Harbor. The collection provides oral histories and stories from Kodiak Alutiiq people around the island. In her introduction she points to the common concern that Alutiiq identity is slipping away and that in order to sustain the storytelling tradition it must remain a lived tradition, not just be documented. She writes in her final project report,

Many Elders expressed their concern...about the need to pass on their cultural heritage to the younger generations. Traditionally, this is primarily done through storytelling. The Elders feel that knowledge of one's heritage holds the keys or the answers to many of the problems facing the younger generations in the villages today. The Elders say 'By rediscovering your roots you learn more about yourself in the process. The clue to a man's future lies in his past.' It is imperative that these stories are gathered at this time. It became very apparent to this researcher

that those Elders who can provide most insight to the Alutiiq/Aleut heritage are no longer fifty or sixty years of age, but older! We are losing these Elders too quickly to wait any longer!” (L. Mulcahy, 1987, p. ii)

Mulcahy also provides a succinct summary of Alutiiq folklore recorded sources in the nineteenth century, as explored earlier in this chapter. She aptly identifies many of the root causes for why Alutiiq storytelling has not continued, including: shifts toward individualism, assimilation of American cultural values, suppression of the Alutiiq language, technology, and shifts in perceptions of religion and morality. Today, she works as an Environmental Program and Cultural Resources Manager for the Alaska State Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. The *Adaq’wy* collection is a wonderful oral histories resource sharing life stories of many Elders who since passed. It is available at the Alutiiq Museum and the Consortium Library at University of Alaska Anchorage.

Joanne Burke Mulcahy (1981-2001)

Joanne Mulcahy is a folklorist and anthropologist currently teaching at Lewis & Clark graduate school of education and counseling in Portland, Oregon. Today, she teaches a series of ethnographic writing and humanities courses at their Northwest Writing Institute. She earned her PhD from University of Pennsylvania in 1988 with her dissertation “*Knowing Women*”: *Narratives of Healing and Traditional Life from Kodiak Island, Alaska* (Mulcahy, 1988), which was the precursor to her later publication in 2001. She conducted field work on Kodiak since as early as 1981 when she contributed interviews to the Alaska Women’s Oral History Project, which contains three Kodiak Elder interviews: Kathrine Chichenoff, Hazel Nixon, and Julia Wolkoff (Collection number HMC-0037, 1981). Through her oral history research on Kodiak she published a series of articles on Alutiiq healing practices and ethnic identity, as well as a book on the life and knowledge of Mary Petersen titled *Birth and Rebirth on an Alaskan Island: The Life of an Alutiiq Healer* (J. Mulcahy, 2001; R. Mason, 1995). This book highlights Alutiiq Elder Mary Petersen’s life stories, as well as explores other Alutiiq healers, and provides a background on Alutiiq traditions and beliefs related to healing and midwifery.

Dominique Desson

Dominique Desson completed a dissertation titled the *Masked Rituals of the Kodiak Archipelago* in 1995, earning her PhD from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Desson (1995) explores the Koniag belief system and cosmology through archival resources, followed by a detailed analysis of several masked rituals and collections of masks, primarily collected by Alphonse Pinart in 1871-1872. Although some of her Alutiiq translations are incomplete, this book provides the first widely-available comprehensive look at Alutiiq mask traditions and songs. The mask archetypes in the songs and stories that Pinart collected and Desson translates are a significant contribution to the body of Alutiiq literature. Since her dissertation was completed, several researchers have studied and published new resources on the Pinart masks, including two recent books on the Pinart collection (Haakanson & Steffian, 2009; Alutiiq Museum, Koniag, & Chateau Musee, 2008; Roberts, 2008). A new translation of Pinart's (1872b) journals by Celine Wallace (a French translator) and Sven Haakanson, Jr. is in progress.

Iluani Project and Related Student Collections

From 1976-1986, Kodiak High School teacher Dave Kubiak developed a Journalism course for students to collect oral histories from local Elders and write articles about special topics on Kodiak history or culture. They named their publication "Iluani," which translates as "Inside It" in the Kodiak Alutiiq language, representing their focus on inward reflection, although early issues spelled the title as *Elwani*.

The *Iluani* publications that came from Kubiak's classes over the years he offered the course captured cherished memories for the Kodiak community today. They honor many Elders now since passed, and represent some of the only documentation of certain Kodiak traditions and history. For students, the project gave them a unique opportunity to connect with family and community members, learn about our place in the world, and write about what inspired and fascinated them, gaining real world experience in publication development.

In addition to the *Elwani* magazines from 1976 to 1986, Kubiak's students conducted workshops in the late 1970s in Eagle, Alaska and in Kodiak and 34 of Kodiak

area student biographical essays were published in Ann Vick's (1983) *Cama-i Book* categorized chronologically as: Pre-Katmai, Katmai era, Pre-World War II, World War II, Pre-1964, and Current. A copy of the book is available at the Kodiak public library.

Similar to the *Iluani* project several villages also have conducted student-driven oral history essay projects, such as the *Aukloktok - Changes* magazine from Larsen Bay School (n.d.), which includes 11 interviews with Elders and Larsen Bay leaders and the *Ukulaha* yearbook by the Ouzinkie High School (1981).

Two decades later, recognizing the special relationship-building nature of the *Iluani* project, the Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD, 2009) looked at how the course could be resurrected. Teachers in the Rural Schools office decided to offer the course as a series of intensive seminars for rural high school students, publishing one issue of *Iluani* annually for three years. One of the years, I contributed to the project by teaching publication layout design. I witnessed high levels of enthusiasm and interest from students writing about topics and community members they cared about, while gaining valuable skills in publication development. After the close of the grant which funded this *Iluani* project cycle, so ended the project. Since interest was still strong, KIBSD staff looked for other ways to continue with the spirit of *Iluani*.

In 2008, I helped write KIBSD's latest Department of Education - Alaska Native Education grant, including a revised version of the *Iluani* project. In partnership with Native Village of Afognak Tribal Council, who runs the Dig Afognak Culture Camp, we included an intensive writing seminar at camp. I designed the camp curriculum as part of my coursework for a Small School Curriculum Development course with Ray Barnhardt, Ph.D. responding to many of the Indigenous education theories and practices learned through my doctoral studies. After the award of the KIBSD grant, they invited me to teach the course as designed. The workshop was successful and continues today through another grant at Dig Afognak, taught by various teachers over the past three years. At the same time, the *Iluani* project was also integrated into the Kodiak High School Journalism class as an annual product. Instructor Tonya Heitman works with Journalism students to

identify Elders who have not been profiled in the publication. Submissions from the Dig Afognak summer workshop are also included in the annual printing at year end.

ANCSA 14(h)(1) Oral History Holdings

At the passage of ANCSA the conveyance of historical or culturally significant lands to regional Alaska Native corporations required site investigation, related to National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 review requirements. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Region, Division of Environmental and Cultural Resources Management developed a program intended to last six years that ended up spanning 33 years, from 1975 to 2008. They recently produced a book titled *Chasing the Dark: Perspectives on Place, History and Alaska Native Land Claims* in 2009, edited by Kenneth Pratt. Ken Pratt oversees the original oral history resource collection at the BIA office in Anchorage. The collection is also archived at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Rasmuson Library Archives. Robert Drozda is the archivist in charge of this collection at UAF and its catalog. Within this large collection of audio recordings and field notes, there are a number of Alutiiq resources, including 36 oral history interviews of Alutiiq Elders about key sites on Kodiak from 1975 to 1991, and 73 related maps of various significant sites around Kodiak and Afognak Islands (R. Drozda, personal communications, July 13, 2012).

Jeffrey Leer

Jeff Leer, Ph.D., as a linguist, has conducted research in the Alutiiq area since the early 1970s. Originally from Juneau, Leer has had a lifelong passion for languages which began as a boy in his study of Tlingit. He worked as a linguist and teacher at the Alaska Native Language Center at UAF since 1973, and completed his PhD dissertation *The Schetic Categories of the Tlingit Verb* in 1991. Leer is widely known by Alutiiq Elders as a fluent Alutiiq speaker. He also has completed comparative field study of Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit and speaks Alutiiq, Tlingit and Yup'ik. His study of the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect resulted in his publication of the *Kodiak Alutiiq Conversational Dictionary* (1978) and a *Kodiak Alutiiq Grammar Book* (1990), which are the foundation to the Alutiiq language revitalization movement. Throughout the course of his work he has produced

several articles and unpublished papers on Alutiiq stories and songs, primarily from the Chugach region. He retired from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Alaska Native Language Center in 2012, but continues to support Alutiiq language resource development, with plans for an *Alutiiq Language Orthography* with April Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D. in 2013.

Through a oral traditions research project developed by the Native Village of Afognak and Afognak Native Corporation, Leer conducted fieldwork at the Dig Afognak Elders Camp with Alutiiq Elders in the late 1990s, including Clyda Christiansen, Lucille Davis, and John Pestrikoff. Leer also prepared field note transcripts of the recordings. This collection of audio recordings from the Afognak Data Recovery Program offers a wealth of Alutiiq stories not fully translated, as most of Leer's field notes are summaries with segments as full translations. Beyond these relatively more recent recordings, Leer conducted research in the area for several decades; his older recordings are mainly housed at the Alaska Native Language Center in Fairbanks, with some at the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak (see Alutiiq Museum's Language Materials Catalog).

Leer's research in the Kodiak area has resulted in a long-standing relationship with Kodiak Alutiiq Elders, which has established a high level of comfort with him and his inquiries. His relationship with Alutiiq Elders has built a strong trust within the community and enabled him to record stories and discussions that normally are not shared, as so few people speak the Kodiak Alutiiq language now or are able to converse with our Elders in this manner.

Gordon Pullar

From 1998 to 2004, Gordon Pullar worked for Afognak Native Corporation and the Native Village of Afognak as a research consultant conducting approximately 30 interviews in English of Afognak tribal members and collecting archival research about Afognak Alutiiq peoples and traditions. Pullar is a Tangirnaq Alutiiq Tribal Member (Woody Island) and professor of Rural Development with the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He earned his BA in sociology and anthropology from Western Washington University in 1973, an MPA in tribal administration and natural resource and energy

policy from University of Washington in 1983, and his PhD in organizational anthropology and international studies from The Union Institute in 1997. He has served as the president of Kodiak Area Native Association, director and professor with the Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development, and as an ethnographer on various research projects. He is a highly respected researcher and educator in Alaska, and a valued community member in the Alutiiq region.

Following his Afognak history research he completed an online book that is available on the Native Village of Afognak website (<http://www.afognak.org/education/>). The book contains an introduction and three chapters, including historical stories on the 1964 earthquake and tsunami that destroyed Afognak village, the 1911 Katmai volcanic eruption, and discussion on the two sides of the village: Russian and Aleut Towns. The Native Village of Afognak Archives also holds the full transcripts for the oral histories that Pullar produced through that project. During this project he interviewed 34 Afognak tribal descendants during 1998 and 1999, as well as conducted extensive archival research into museums and libraries throughout the U.S..

Mike Rostad

As mentioned under the previous section about Elder Larry Matfay, Mike Rostad published life stories of Matfay in their book *A Time to Dance* (Rostad, 1988). In addition to this biography, Rostad has published many articles on the lives of Kodiak Alutiiq Elders and other local long-time residents within the Kodiak Daily Mirror, Kodiak Times, and most recently in a book titled *Close to My Heart: Writing and Living Stories on Kodiak Island, Alaska* (Rostad, 2010). Rostad has built his career, including service as a former editor of the Kodiak Times, retelling the life stories of Kodiak's people and has contributed greatly to documenting the experiences of many Alutiiq leaders and community members.

Alutiiq Language Living Words Project

Starting with an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant and developing through National Science Foundation (NSF) grants, April Laktonen Counciller at the Alutiiq Museum led a group of Alutiiq language apprentices as

fieldworkers with Alutiiq Elders starting in 2003. While the focus was to develop fluency in the Alutiiq language, storytelling and oral history collection was a nature result. They have amassed a vast collection of audio and video recordings, some of which contain mythological and life history stories. Many of the recordings have summary field notes to outline their content. During the project the Alutiiq Museum (2003) also identified and cataloged other previous audio and video recordings of Alutiiq Elders at the Museum. A number of significant life stories were excerpted and translated from recordings for online publication at the Alutiiq Language Portal (www.alutiiqmuseum.org/portal).

Conclusion & Other Resources

This chapter unites into one location background information on the previous research and documentation efforts related to Kodiak Alutiiq stories, particularly prior to the twentieth century. There are undoubtedly many other storytellers not highlighted, and ongoing research into archives and insight from Elders today that will continue to shed light on the rich history and art of Alutiiq storytelling.

Available oral history recording collections also offer an abundance of information for community members and future researchers to access and highlight stories that are not widely-known. In addition to the collections and researchers described above, there are a number of other individual recorded resources of Alutiiq narratives, storytelling, songs and cultural information within the Alutiiq Museum's archives. In 2003, Shauna Hegna, Language Program Manager developed a Language Catalog which has not been maintained but is available at the A. Holmes Johnson Library's Alaska Room. The catalog provides a wealth of information including the collection name or owner, subject or title, type of media, availability of transcripts, interviewee names or other information, catalog number and location. The February 22, 2003, version at the public library contains 43 pages of listings in the catalog, many of which are individual cassette tapes. While a significant portion of these resources are from the Chugach Alutiiq region and dialect, there are a number of Kodiak Alutiiq resources that the Alutiiq language revitalization community and educators are not aware exist. These twentieth

century resources contain stories and versions of stories that are not included in the values catalog developed through this project. The process to review transcripts and the thousands of hours of tapes was not possible for this study, but is an important next step for cultural reclamation and education efforts for the community to make selections within educational contexts and to encourage new generations of Alutiiq storytellers to develop their skills to pass on stories within both oral and written contexts. Online publication of paired transcripts and online audio files of significant stories would be extremely valuable for students and families.

Chapter 5: History of Alutiiq Education: Impacts on Families Today

Since the mid-1700s Alaska Native peoples have experienced the internationally familiar process of Indigenous conquest and assimilation, resulting in tumultuous consequences still felt today. The history of western influence has overwhelmed Alaskan communities, causing embitterment and a fractured state of wellbeing on many levels. The rapid cultural changes Alaska Native peoples have survived during the past 200 years is but a blink of an eye compared to the millennia our ancestors successfully adapted to their changing environment and in trade or conflict with other tribes, all the while maintaining autonomy. The difference during the past 200 years is the devastating loss of self-determination, only now being regained.

Knowing the history behind the modern Alaska Native experience and understanding the chain of effects still influencing us today can allow a healing process to grow and solutions to surface. This exploration could ultimately serve as a means to a healthier and a more community-empowering education process. With a deeper understanding of the historical trauma that has radically changed Alaska Native families and communities over the past two centuries, there is hope to reverse the cycle of loss without succumbing further to assimilation or leaving behind traditional knowledge and lifeways that sustained the Alutiiq well.

As an Alutiiq descendant growing up on Kodiak Island with cultural ties to two of the ten Kodiak Alutiiq tribes, I attended school from kindergarten through high school graduation in Kodiak, with only three winters during grade school spent in Washington. After earning bachelor's and master's degrees, I returned to work in Kodiak as an adult in a variety of capacities supporting culture-based education efforts for the region. Reflecting on the experiences of nearly 2,500 Alutiiq people in the Kodiak Archipelago, or 17.6% of the 13,900 population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), there is now a growing sense of cultural empowerment within families, due to efforts by Elders and leaders to regain autonomy during the past forty years since the passage of ANCSA. Our history as Kodiak Alutiiq people is similar to the experiences of other Indigenous communities worldwide who have survived conquest and assimilation, struggling to hold on to a

worldview and traditional knowledge that is misunderstood or threatening to the mainstream society within our various countries. As we look at next steps to ensure more empowering educational processes for future generations, we must maintain a balanced local and global perspective, considering past events and how history influences educational content and practices today.

Traditional Alutiiq Education (pre-colonization) (8,000 B.P. - 1784)

Prior to colonization, the Kodiak Alutiiq people lived in the Kodiak Archipelago for over 7,500 years in approximately 65 villages and seasonal traditional harvest camps according to archaeological evidence (Luerhmann, 2008; Clark & Black, 2002; Crowell et al., 2001). Education within Alutiiq culture, as in other Indigenous cultures, was integrated into daily life, rather than a detached classroom experience, so that children were raised not just in a culturally-appropriate manner in their homes but were trained by their Elders in life skills to thrive within the tribal economy and society. Some lessons learned were gender specific, based on the efficiency of living as a self-sufficient family and community, passing on subsistence, childrearing and household care traditions. Most lessons were taught through apprenticeship, watching and practicing alongside a technical expert to build skills, or as one Afognak Elder said, “learn[ing] by watching what is done and by doing what they are told to do” (Demidoff, 1962). Other lessons were taught via immersion and personal experience, as real life situations and curiosities motivated young people to make new sense of their world and ways of life (Cajete, 1994). Regardless of the context, Indigenous peoples, including the Alutiiq, maintained an intricate educational and traditional knowledge system supported through the oral tradition.

Indigenous methods of education encompassed practical, experiential learning within the context of seasonal life cycles. Competency was determined by performance within lived situations. The oral tradition played a primary role as the means for the passage of knowledge and values essential for survival and success in life. Our Alutiiq ancestors, like other Indigenous peoples, were fluent in their language but many also were fluent in the languages of neighboring tribes through trade, marriage, or extended

expeditions outside the region. The Alutiiq were far from isolated prior to Russian invasion, as there are many stories of water voyages between the mainland and the archipelago, including forays to the Aleutian Chain, Cook Inlet, and Southeast Alaska. Language, or multilingualism, were vital for trade and intermarriage, as traditionally our families incorporated cultural diversity and a blending of cultural knowledge from neighboring tribes, indicated in our stories, tools and arts.

In fact, prior to colonization, Alutiiq culture and way of life passed through at least three major societal evolutions (Crowell et al., 2001; Clark, 1990, 1998). Starting 7,500 years ago, from 5500 BC to 1800 BC, the period as known Ocean Bay was characterized by nomadic tent living in pursuit of traditional harvest foods at multiple campsites throughout the year, followed by development of small single family sod dwellings about 5,000 years ago. Then 3,800 years ago, from 1800 BC to 1400 AD, the Kachemak period brought development of larger multi-room sod houses or *ciqlluat*, allowing for extended family living in seasonal communities as people began to develop fishing nets and processing tools to fish in new ways. Then 800 years ago, from 1400 AD to 1784, the Koniag period was marked by climate change and increased trade with other tribes, leading to creation of a complex class system and elaborate ceremonies and arts. These economic and societal shifts within the Alutiiq pre-contact history contributed to development of traditional values and education practices still evident today. Knowledge of cultural phases in Alutiiq history informs us about trade, traditional harvest practices, and concepts of wealth, which were the foundation of the Alutiiq economy prior to Russian conquest.

As is now becoming more recognized due to efforts by Alutiiq organizations and tribes, such as the Native Village of Afognak, Alutiiq Museum, Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR), the Kodiak Alutiiq possessed a large body of knowledge about their environment, consistently passed down through the generations via stories and traditional initiatory practices. Elders today are still keepers of much of this traditional knowledge, having experienced some traditional education processes as young people. As Kawagley (2006) describes of our cousins the Yup'ik, there exists a rich, complex

knowledge base within each Indigenous culture, as knowledge about their homeland has accumulated over millennia, continually refined and distilled as new generations acquired it to survive within their specific area of the planet.

For the Alutiiq, as a coastal maritime people, they possess an awareness of surrounding areas and a complex knowledge about ocean navigation, including methods of reading the stars, currents, tides, winds, and animal behaviors (Mishler, 2001; Crowell et al., 2001). This close awareness of their environment also included knowledge of weather and natural catastrophic event predictions, including ways to contend with the often harsh environment. They understood and perfected engineering methods that enabled them to develop tools specifically suited to their environment. The kayak and kayak paddle design indigenous to our region are excellent examples of the ingenuity of our ancestors, made specifically for the types of currents and weather of the Kodiak Archipelago (Crowell et al., 2001). Each hunter learned the techniques and skills for building and maintaining their kayak and paddle; they knew how to produce waterproof clothing specifically custom-made for each person, all built to fit their exact body measurements for optimal maneuverability. Like other Indigenous peoples, the Alutiiq used a mathematical measurement system based on individual body measurement lengths to ensure an exact fit. All of this and other examples of ingenuity show the complex scientific and mathematical concepts that influenced pre-contact Alutiiq communities.

To subsist and thrive in the Kodiak Archipelago, the Alutiiq acquired hunting expertise, including knowledge of animal behaviors and relationships, and developed appropriate hunting techniques like snares, traps, weapons, as well as herding as practiced by Alutiiq whalers. Elders also tell of traditional subsistence resource management practices that established protocols for requesting permission to hunt and instilled respect for territorial boundaries, including the proper allocation of resources to hunters within each territory (August 11, 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 4, Side B). These protocols were monitored by specific Elders acknowledged as the area's chiefs or resource managers, maintaining an effective resource management system based on respect and spiritual influence prior to the American acquisition of Alaska and

creation of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, which striped the Alutiiq of their rightful ability to manage their homeland's traditional harvest resources and pass these practices on to future generations.

As the Kodiak Archipelago is home to a vast numbers of plants, and is the northern most point of the Pacific Northwest rainforest, the Alutiiq people gathered a medicinal expertise of plant lore and healing techniques that sustained the people in good health for millennia, before western conquerors brought devastating epidemics that upset the natural processes. Some of this knowledge still exists today with our Elders; and some of it has been recorded in publications on plant uses, medicines and poisons (P. Russell, 2011; Kelso, 2011; Schofield, 2003; NEAR, 2005; Garibaldi, 1999; Kelso & the Ouzinkie Botanical Society, 1985). However, a large body of knowledge is believed lost as traditional healers were killed or disempowered during Russian conquest and later assimilation during American colonization (Crowell et al., 2001; Fortuine, 1992).

Education Under Russian Colonization (1784-1867)

While the Russian explorers or *promyshlenniki* (Russian fur hunters) began to map Kodiak in 1769, it wasn't until 1784 that Shelikhov established their first outpost in Alaska at Three Saints Bay (Afonsky, 1977), near the present village of Old Harbor. Alutiiq stories and Russian accounts tell of occasional trading and frequent battles, leading up to the massacre and conquest of the Alutiiq people on August 14, 1784, by Shelikhov at *Awa'uq* (literally translated as *Numb*) or Refuge Rock as it is commonly known today (Martin, 2007; R. Knecht, Haakanson, & Dickenson, 2002; Pamintuan, 2001). This slaughter and subsequent hostage taking led to a dark period for the Alutiiq as Russian invaders enslaved men and boys to hunt sea otters year-round, while women and



Fig. 5.1: *Gregory Ivanovich Shelikhov, 1747-1795 RAC founder*

children were held captive (Afonsky, 1977). In later years, half of all Alutiiq men between the ages of 18-50 were forced to hunt sea otter to maintain Russian American Company production.

Russian-led Alutiiq hunting parties traveled as far as California, 2,000 miles away by sailboat and kayak, with many Alutiiq men never to return. One Alutiiq song, “*Ukut Skuunat—These Schooners*,” tells of this sad story when Alutiiq men were taken away from their women to hunt. Akhiok Elder Mary Peterson narrates an introduction and history of the song’s story about when men from Akhiok were enslaved to hunt sea otter and later abandoned near Unalaska (Alutiiq Museum & Blanchett, 2007, Generations CD, Track 25). With the men away for much of the year, or never to return, women and children struggled to survive on their own due to starvation from insufficient winter stores of food (Miller, 2010). This tragic era suddenly interrupted the transmission of knowledge and forever changed family and social dynamics, introducing new devastating traditions of alcoholism, depression, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and suicide.

Believing that formalized education would offer further control of the Alutiiq people, in 1786 Shelikhov established the first school in Alaska at Three Saints Bay, nearby the current day village of Old Harbor, thus beginning western colonial control of Alaska Native education. In a 1786 letter to chief manager Konstantin Samoilov while sailing to Ohotsk, Russia, Shelikhov (1786/2006) wrote of the Alutiiq that, “When they know a better way of living, they will understand and will take part in the work that enlightened people are doing.” Shelikhov’s motivation to develop the school revolved around the Russian American Company philosophy of assimilation for economic gain. He describes his plan to send young Alutiiq prisoners back to Russia for schooling:

Education is useful and necessary. Only literate people can be good and accurate interpreters, so needed in this country...For this purpose I am taking with me about forty Americans (Kodiak Alutiiq), male and female, both children and adults, some of their own free will and some as war prisoners. After they see Russia, our buildings and customs, I will reward one third of them and send them back. The other third I will attempt to present to the Imperial Court and the

remaining third, the children, we are going to educate in Okhotsk or Irkutsk, and after their education is completed, if they wish it, we will return them here. From them their relatives and countrymen will learn about the law, order, and prosperity in Russia and will want to improve conditions here. (Shelikhov, 1786/2006, p. 1)

In a later reference to Shelikhov's efforts to educate the Natives, contained within a collection of Spanish documents dealing with Russian presence in California and housed within the Frank A. Golder Papers collection at Stanford University, an 1818 notation describes the results of Shelikhov's schooling efforts:

“[The Russian American] Company has schools for Creoles and natives, has spent 37,000 rubles. In 1787 Shelikhov took 12 Creoles to Irkutsk. Half died in Siberia. Remaining returned good musicians. R. A. Co. recently brought eight to Kronstadt. Half died. Of other four 3 navigation, 1 ship building, and have returned to Alaska. Four girl creoles taken to Okhotsk. About seven years ago - one survived.” (Golder, n.d. unpublished notes)

Shelikhov extended his plans of assimilation by also requesting a mission of Russian Orthodox monks to Kodiak, who arrived on September 24, 1794 (Golder, 2004; Orthodox Church of America, 1970). The missionary group included seven monks, two novices and ten Natives who had previously been sent by Shelikhov to Russia for schooling in 1786. Prior to baptism, Alaska Natives had no rights in the eyes of their Russian conquerors. In fact, only those who were baptized and agreed to assimilate were granted citizenship and its related rights. However, the missionary monks were not as cooperative as Shelikhov hoped in helping subjugate the Alutiiq people. While they taught at the Church and school they built in Kodiak, converting Natives to Orthodoxy, instead of supporting Shelikhov they tried to intervene against the acts of slavery and oppression they saw upon arrival to Kodiak (Afonsky, 1977). After witnessing the abuses suffered, the monks stood up for the Alutiiq captives, and were themselves arrested and abused. Saint Herman survived the other monks, who were either martyred, died of natural causes or returned to Russia.

This period from 1784 to 1818 has been described as the "darkest period" in the lives of Kodiak Island's Native people (Crowell et al., 2001). Life for the Alutiiq began to change for the positive when Father Herman fled Kodiak in 1817 to establish a school on nearby Spruce Island, relatively free from Russian American Company (RAC) rule. After nearly two decades of persecution by RAC leadership, he was successful in providing intercession and offering education outside company objectives. Herman felt it was his duty to protect the Natives from exploitation, and lived his life as their guardian (Golder, 2004). This was the start of what is known as the *Golden Age* for the Alutiiq people. Father Herman, canonized in 1970 as Saint Herman, built a school, orphanage and garden at *Anwik*, now known as Monk's Lagoon. He remained there for 20 years until his repose in 1837.

As other churches were built around the island, so too were schools started and run by the clergy. The influence of the church and schools was pervasive, as Lydia Black (1977) describes,

Gideon established the first 'Russian-American' school at Kodiak in 1805 and by the time of his departure in 1807 at least two creoles and possibly one native were teaching in the school. Gideon presided over end-of-school-year exercises, and he could command attendance not only of various important Russians (including Rezanov) but also of all the skippers of foreign vessels in the port. (p. 81)

In Kodiak, Hieromonk Gideon had nearly a hundred students in his school (Dauenhauer, 1997). Dauenhauer describes that "...bilingual schools were paralleling the bilingualism that was the norm for the homes on Kodiak" (p. 28). However, Davydov (1997 reprint) describes the stability of the school as fluctuating during its early years when he writes,

Only those Koniagas who are brought up by the priests from childhood have learnt to read and write and receive the necessary understanding of Christian morality from daily example. A school has been re-established to take one hundred boys and could of course help to spread the Faith were the means available for the upkeep of this establishment. But in 1805 many children there

died of hunger and scurvy and this will almost certainly happen again. (Davydov, 1977 reprint, p. 181)

One of the most significant contributions to Alutiiq education during this time was the efforts toward literacy by Russian Orthodox clergy and Alutiiq converts as they translated biblical texts into Sugt'stun and prepared various primers for reading and writing Sugt'stun using a church Slavonic cyrillic orthography. "Gideon envisioned the translation of Church and secular textbook literature into the languages of the native people, and he himself translated the Lord's Prayer into the Konyag language" (Black, 1977, p. 81). In 1804, Hieromonk Gideon compiled a Kodiak Aleut [or Sugt'stun] grammar with the assistance of Creole Paraman Chumovits" (Dauenhauer, 1997, p. 28). Il'via Tyzhonov, also known as Elias Tishnoff, first published the *Sacred Catechism and Church History* in Sugt'stun in 1847, developing literate bilingualism with support by Russian Orthodox church leaders such as Bishop Innocent Veniaminov (Black, 2001; Dauenhauer, 1997). In 1848 Tyzhonov published a primer for Sugt'stun and a translation of the *Gospel According to Matthew* for use within church services on Kodiak and by parishioners (Tyzhonov, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). Between 1855 and 1867 Constantine Larionov wrote a *Primer & Prayerbook in Kodiak-Alutiiq* as well. These publications indicate the positive perspective on bilingualism that Russian Orthodox clergy held.

Dauenhauer (1997) describes in his book *Conflicting Visions in Alaskan Education* that "the Orthodox tradition maintains great respect for the language and culture of the individual" (p. 8). He asserts that "[f]or the Orthodox...one does not have to abandon or change his or her culture or language to become a Christian" (p. 12). Within Russian colonial efforts, "There [was] no attack on a person's language. Rather the Church sought to instill a sense of pride in the Native language and foster popular literacy in it. Because competency in two languages was stressed, it should come as no surprise that Aleuts had the first bilingual schools in Alaska" (p. 9).

Ultimately, Saint Herman and the 1794 missionaries played a major role in Alutiiq education. Dauenhauer (1997) describes that "an unbroken history of Orthodox bilingual education existed on Kodiak Island from the 1790s into the 1960s" (p. 28).

Despite strides in literacy, atrocities and disease again decimated the Alutiiq population beyond the earlier period of conquest, enslavement, and starvation. On Kodiak Island there were a series of flu epidemics in 1804, 1819-20, 1827-28 and 1852 brought by ships to the island that further subdued Alutiiq resistance to Russian empirical forces (Fortuine, 1992). The smallpox epidemic of 1837-40 was particularly destructive, killing huge numbers, leading to forced consolidation of the Kodiak Alutiiq people. Survivors of the 65 village in the Kodiak Archipelago were evacuated by the Russians and relocated into seven communities (Luehrmann, 2008; R. Mason, 1995).

Similarly for the Kodiak Alutiiq, Harold Napoleon (1996) describes how the Yup'ik and other Alaska Native peoples suffered a series of deadly epidemics when foreigners entered their regions, exposing them to new illnesses they were not physically adapted to survive. The *Great Death*, as Napoleon calls it, left every family in a state of grief for their dead as whole generations were lost. The survivors awoke to a new reality without leaders and without trust in the spiritual healing practices that had sustained them. In essence, their “resistance collapsed because of mass death” (Napoleon, 1996, p. 17). Survival after so much loss explains why Alaska Natives appear to have so easily left behind cherished traditions to adopt new lifeways and why generations later families still experience apathy or historical trauma that manifests as substance abuse, domestic violence, suicide and chronic health issues. As Napoleon (1996) argues, “No people anywhere will voluntarily discard their culture, beliefs, customs and traditions unless they are under a great deal of stress, physically, psychologically or spiritually” (p. 17).

The experience of the *Great Death* left Alaska Native peoples in a state of desperation and depression where new spiritual traditions brought by missionaries were melded with elements of their ancestral worldview, and where older practices were denounced as evil, resulting in an epistemological metamorphosis that severed connections to a large portion of ancestral knowledge (Napoleon, 1996, p. 12-14). These early acquiescences left an opening for western authority figures to influence greater assimilative changes during the century following.

As sea otter populations declined with the profitability of the Russian territory, the Russian tsar sold the Russian American Company (with implied rights to Alaska) to the U.S. in 1867 (C. Russell, 2009; Bolkhovitinov, 2003; Golder, 1920). The Alaska Commercial Company assumed holdings of the Russian American Company; and although the *Treaty of Cession* recognized the Alaska Native claim to land, it was not until 1971 that the U.S. agreed to honor these claims with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Unfortunately, from the date of transfer until the passage of ANCSA, education and the Alutiiq way of life again entered a period of decline as they transitioned under new assimilative forces when the Russian colonizers withdrew. Supportive bilingualism did not last for the Alutiiq, as the transition to American colonization buried translated texts, and suppressed both Alutiiq and Russian languages through “English Only” policies that encouraged corporal punishment, transforming the one high point of Russian colonial education into what is known as the period of “Forgotten Literacy” (Black, 2001).

Education Under American Colonization (1867-1971)

One of the most noticeable changes that western assimilation under American colonization brought was near linguistic annihilation as they tried to silence Alaska Natives languages (La Belle, 2008; Hirshberg & Sharp, 2005; Black, 2001; Dauenhauer, 1997). In just one hundred years, the Kodiak Alutiiq moved from trilingualism to monolingualism. During the 1700s-1800s, Alutiiq families commonly spoke Sugt’stun, Russian and English, and most were also fluent in other Alaska Native and Scandinavian languages. Then after the 1900s, they were left with only basic monolingualism. Today, there are only approximately 33 Sugt’stun speakers left on Kodiak (Counciller, 2012) — a tragic indictment of the power of educational assimilation.

After America acquired Alaska from Russia, the propagation of the American education system’s “English Only” policy through Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) take over of missionary schools, and the boarding school era, Native languages were effectively devalued, limiting language transmission, and creating communication

barriers within families that further impacted cultural transmission and emotional wellbeing (La Belle, 2008; Hirshberg & Sharp, 2005). On Kodiak there were only three villages that had schools run through the U.S. Indian Service department in 1947: Afognak, Old Harbor and Ouzinkie (Lantis, personal notes). Children from the other villages had to travel to these villages or Kodiak in order to attend school, or attend boarding school elsewhere in Alaska or the Lower-48.

Countless Elders from throughout Kodiak tell the same story of how their Native language was forbidden in school as they suffered cruel punishment and ridicule by their teachers (Counciller, 2010; Crowell et al., 2001). Hirshberg and Sharp (2005) documented stories about Alaskan schools where “children were forbidden to speak their native languages and were even beaten for speaking them” (p. iii). Ironically, the American education system instituted this policy believing that Native students would then more easily assimilate to become productive citizens in the new Alaskan society. However, their social engineering efforts instead left students with limited language proficiency and a debilitating lack of self-esteem as they lost their connection to Elders and their culture, and subsequently with themselves (Pullar, 1992).

As Gamble (1986) discusses, human language and thinking are interlinked. While Gamble describes the communication disconnect experienced between western and Indigenous peoples, it is equally true within Indigenous societies where the younger generation grows up without a linguistic relationship to others in their own families. The continuing communication barriers between western and Native peoples, as well as among assimilated Native peoples, has resulted in many negative influences from misguided social service implementation to emotionally and environmentally damaging research and regulations. Gamble (1986) argues that a lack of effective communication across generations and cultures is almost ensured “...unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar or can in some way be calibrated...[as interactions between cultures] often leads to fundamental differences in perceptions of what is true, what is right, and what conduces to public needs and welfare” (p. 22). Joanne Mulcahy (2001), points out the paradox of the American welfare system for Alaska Natives when she says:

Ironically, as the material well-being of Native people grew with the antipoverty programs of the 1960s and '70s, their psychic and spiritual health eroded with dependence on Western ways of life. Handed down generation after generations, the 'infection of the soul' ultimately manifested itself in the suicide, domestic violence, and alcoholism that pervades Native villages. (p. xxix)

Well-meaning individuals, including educators, from outside Native communities are notorious for making assumptions that the fundamentals of right and wrong and core values are much the same across cultures, or should be. One of the most common and significant mistakes is in the prioritization of values. For example, Gamble (1986) explains that in western culture often "the only things that count are the things that can be counted" (p. 22). This is arguably one of the main flaws within the western educational system, as educators are forced to place heavier priority on testing and quantitative measures of student performance than on more intrinsic values, which are deeply embedded in the practical and real life application learning process important within traditional Indigenous cultures.

Consequently, as western education and government gained control within Alaska Native communities, it greatly diminished traditional harvest or subsistence lifeways. The development of a cash economy, wage labor, the American education systems' curricula, extinguishment of land claims through ANCSA (1971), and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (1980), as well as new technologies, have all led to a disconnection in the lives of many modern Alaska Natives from their traditional interdependencies with the natural world. The loss of these life skills and spiritual ties has further contributed to health and social dysfunction as families have moved into cities or begun to rely on imported foods that must be purchased from a store. This has considerably limited their contact with the natural world and the application of traditional harvest knowledge. In turn their radical diet change has resulted in new illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease (Carrera-Bastos, Fontes-Villalba, O'Keefe et al., 2011). Further, many Alaska Native communities have experienced increased pollution as they

have become more detached from their environment and the proper right relationships with it in order to sustain balance (Kawagley, 2006, p. 51).

Similarly, as the subsistence way of life diminished, the American welfare system permeated Alaskan Native communities. Qualifying as poverty stricken in the American perspective, many Native families in their crises states turned to welfare and government assisted programs for housing, food, energy, and other social and health services. These resources have both positive and negative influences. One significant cultural transformation that many families have experienced is a growing sense of entitlement, which greatly impacts self-worth and retention of survival knowledge. The American welfare system has enabled many Native families to continue unhealthy lifeways, becoming increasingly dependent and dysfunctional—all of which greatly impacts the children growing up in homes reliant on the welfare system. In turn this impacts their success within the education system, as evidenced by high numbers of “special needs” designated students. “Native students in Alaska are 50% more likely to be placed in special education programs for general learning disabilities compared to other students (National Center for Culturally Responsive Education)” (Glavinic, 2010).

Also in the 1900s, the Baptist Church became actively engaged on Kodiak by providing social services for orphans, due to the early 1900s epidemics and the high numbers of orphans in need of a home (www.tanignak.com). They operated four mission houses, including Ouzinkie, Larsen Bay, and a Baptist Industrial School on Woody Island, which was later moved to establish the Kodiak Mission after a fire. From 1938-1958, the Ouzinkie Mission supported children under five, during World War II in an effort to keep the younger children in a rural location in case of invasion into the more populated areas. The Baptist Mission provided homes for orphaned children who lost their parents or who were unable to care for them. While the missions provided homes for children, they too pushed an “English Only” policy and a focus on acculturation which furthered orphaned the children they tried to help.

Another significant occurrence that altered Alutiiq community communication and traditional education practices under the American period was the requirement to send children to boarding schools. As Hirshberg and Sharp (2005) explain,

The history of formal schooling for Alaska Natives, from the time of the U.S. acquisition of Alaska in 1867 to the present, is a troubled one. The initial goals of formal education in the North were to Christianize and “civilize” Alaska Natives... Over time, the federal, territorial, and state governments established a boarding school system to accomplish these goals. For the first three quarters of the 20th century Alaska Native children were sent to boarding schools or boarding homes either inside or outside Alaska. (p. 1)

Students from Kodiak went to several different boarding schools, including Mount Edgecumbe Boarding School (an accredited high school) (www.mehs.us) near Sitka, Alaska; Wrangell Institute (a middle ungraded school) in Wrangell, Alaska; Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon; and Chilocco Indian School in Chilocco, Oklahoma. Mount Edgecumbe has since transitioned into a modern boarding school favored today by rural families. Wrangell Institute was built in 1932 by the BIA and served as a boarding school until the 1970s. Chemawa offered industrial training for boys and girls. The occupational training focus of these schools was perhaps the most effective at assimilating students to western social expectations and wage economics. The shift in values from a subsistence lifestyle and the disconnection from family and community was devastating for most. However, there were those who appreciated the new opportunities the boarding schools offered, but they too were forever changed.

Regardless of whether boarding school was an individually positive or negative experience, the boarding schools inevitably resulted in loss of language and traditions, loss of access to community role models, shifts in sense of identity and were successful at assimilating a whole generation of Alaska Natives (Kleinfeld, 1973). For the many students who suffered abuse as well, these losses were further exacerbated (Hirshberg & Sharp, 2005). Elders and family histories tell many stories of painful experiences

associated with being forced to live away from home to attend American boarding schools (La Belle, 2008; Kleinfeld, 1973).

In fact, from 1969 to 1972 Kodiak attempted to address the ongoing rural exodus of high school age students to boarding schools elsewhere in Alaska and the lower-48 states by establishing a local dormitory complex at the Kodiak Aleutian Regional High School in the city of Kodiak. This local boarding school offered rural students from Kodiak's six villages an opportunity to attend high school alongside town-based students. The school served 113 boarded students in 1969—its first year of operation; followed by 120 in 1970, 152 in 1972 (BIA, 1972), and 73 in 1973 (Hirshberg & Sharp, 2005). This regional boarding school experienced significant issues, including cases of abuse by guardians and other students. It was ultimately abandoned as an ineffective strategy for serving rural high school students. This school within a school was short-lived due to a host of negative impacts, and ultimately closed in 1973.

As Hirshberg and Sharp (2005) report, “[boarding school] cost many students not only the loss of their language, but also their culture and identity” (p. iii). They interviewed 61 Alaska Natives about their experiences and the long-term effects after attending boarding school between the 1940s and the early 1980s. Interviewees agreed that the school policies were effective at assimilating them to the dominant culture; with this assimilation came lasting scars. Hirshberg and Sharp (2005) write that,

These practices had lasting effects on individual students, their families, and communities. Those we interviewed told of finding it difficult to return home and be accepted. They felt that by being sent to boarding school they had missed out on learning important traditional skills and had a harder time raising their own children. For communities, the loss of children to boarding schools created a tremendous void, one that interviewees said was filled by alcohol and a breakdown in society. Drugs, alcohol, and suicide are some of the effects interviewees spoke of as coming from boarding home experiences and the loss of cultural identity and family. (p. iii)

Despite this legacy, many rural community members today still support the reestablishment of a boarding school on Kodiak Island. The common argument offered as solution to past failures with boarding schools is to place the school in one of the six rural villages rather than the city of Kodiak, in hopes that the negative impacts of the first attempt would not be repeated. This solution only assumes that urban temptations were the factor, which was not the case.

In the case of Afognak village, when the BIA took over authority of the village school many biracial families chose to leave the village to move to nearby Kodiak after complaining about the school (Clark & Black, 2002). In this way, the BIA school became a major factor in rural outmigration. Some interpreted the move as a denial of Native ethnicity and elitism. Today, the inequitable quality of education in the rural schools on Kodiak has also led families to leave their village communities in order to provide their children with more educational opportunities. Ultimately, the issue of schooling has been and still is a major factor influencing outmigration.

After one hundred years as a territory, in 1959 Alaska became a state and transitioned from a federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) education system to a state education system. The full transition took several years, as outlined in the *Overall Education Plan for Rural Alaska* issued in 1963 by Alaska Governor William A. Egan's office. The plan provided for "the orderly transfer of Bureau schools to non-federal operation under the principle of mutual readiness on the part of the community, the State, and the Bureau" (BIA, 1972). They established Advisory School Boards, which allowed rural communities a greater voice in their local schools. The Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD) formed to manage Kodiak's transition to a state run system.

In 1976, the Alaska state lawsuit, "Molly Hootch" (Tobeluk vs. Lind), settled with a commitment by the state to provide local schools for Native communities as it had in predominately white communities in the state (C. Barnhardt, 2001). This resulted in construction of new K-12 schools in all six rural villages on Kodiak and implementation of high schools within each community. With rural schools available, families had the

opportunity to keep their kids home, rather than send them to boarding schools or opt not to complete high school.

Since 1976, KIBSD has undergone significant changes in its service to Alutiiq students. They continue to struggle with high teacher turnover in their rural schools, but have softened their previous ‘no local hires’ philosophies and are working with the Native community to develop teacher orientation programs in order to address culture shock and to better prepare teachers to work and live in rural communities. Rural schools specifically still struggle with high travel and shipping costs. The budget constraints and challenges inherent in small school operation contribute to a perception of reduced quality of education or equity between communities. Ultimately, there is much room for continued reform to improve continuity and applicability of education in rural schools. Further, efforts to make district curriculum more place-based continue to progress as KIBSD is more open to change than ever before.

The Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD) has obtained several Department of Education Alaska Native Education federal grants to help mitigate issues of high teacher turnover, low student assessment performance and high drop out rates. Some of these efforts have gone toward rural school reform as new strategies are tried and programs are developed to better support our Alaska Native students. KIBSD (2010) serves approximately 2,595 students in fourteen schools, including 506 or 19% Alaska Native. However, as over 90% of KIBSD teachers are White, and only 3.8% Native, it is difficult for Native students or parents to relate to the non-Native teachers who are often unfamiliar with how Alutiiq traditional knowledge should and can be integrated into all levels of school supporting place-based learning. Currently, KIBSD offers a standardized curriculum with limited inclusion of traditional Alutiiq knowledge, as a once year Alutiiq Week program is not sufficient. This curriculum underwent review by a Native Education Committee through a Department of Education Alaska Native Education grant, producing a revised curriculum to better meet Alaska Native Cultural Standards.

In addition to the KIBSD public school system, Kodiak has several Christian-based private schools that some Alutiiq families participate in, including St. Mary’s

Catholic School, Kodiak Christian School, and St. Paul Lutheran Preschool. However, as many Kodiak Alutiiq families are Russian Orthodox, there are few who send their children to these schools.

Kodiak has been fortunate as a small Alaskan community to have higher educational opportunities available locally. Forty years ago, in 1969, Kodiak College was also founded. It is now a two-year satellite campus of the University of Alaska Anchorage system with approximately 800 students served annually (www.koc.alaska.edu). In the past decade, they have extended support to the Alutiiq community by offering courses in Alutiiq Studies and co-sponsoring the Kodiak Rural Forum to address rural outmigration, education and community development issues, including access to additional training and exposure to best practices. In 2011, Kodiak College received a five-year Department of Education, Alaska Native Education grant to develop an Alutiiq Studies Program and support Alutiiq language revitalization (Counciller, 2012). This program promises to train teachers in culturally responsive practices, cultural traditions, and Alutiiq language.

The St. Herman's Theological Seminary was established in 1972, offering statewide opportunities for training to become Russian Orthodox clergy (www.sthermanseminary.org). The seminary has also brought many Yup'ik families to study and live in the Kodiak community today. Their sensitivity and interest in the Alutiiq language has also increased usage of the language within church services, which is raising attention to the revitalization movement. Members of the seminary also meet regularly now with several Alutiiq Elders, exploring the Alutiiq church texts in the prior cyrillic orthography. Church services now use more Alutiiq language prayers through this interaction and awareness of the need to honor and use the Alutiiq language.

Alutiiq Renaissance: An Educational Countermovement (1971-Present)

Following an international wave of Indigenous decolonization efforts, the Kodiak Alutiiq began an educational countermovement, often described as the *Alutiiq Renaissance*. Just prior to and following the passage of the Alaska Native Claims

Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, Kodiak Alutiiq peoples began to unite efforts in protecting and sharing traditional ways of life and knowledge as they regained autonomy.

There were a number of early efforts by Alutiiq leaders to revitalize our language in the 1980s and 1990s, including creation of high school and college level Alutiiq Language classes, developed and taught by Philomena Knecht and Alutiiq speaker Florence Pestrikoff in a 1993 pilot class (Counciller, 2010, 2012; P. Knecht, 1995). Their efforts and others grew from an increased interest and pride in Alutiiq heritage after ANCSA and the new availability of the Alutiiq language in a written form, through Jeff Leer's research and publication of an Alutiiq dictionary in 1978 and a grammar book in 1990. However, the Knecht and Pestrikoff class pilot was ultimately not sustained, although the unpublished lesson booklet they produced has been used to develop current language learning resources (P. Knecht, 1995). It is probable that all the cultural revitalization efforts had not yet gained momentum to influence students in their commitment to learning the language (Counciller, 2012). In January 2011, I launched a second pilot of an Alutiiq Language class at Kodiak High School. The course is now in its third year with twelve students in Level I and six in Level II.

Through a combined Alutiiq community effort, with funding from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trust, the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository through the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation was founded in 1995. The Museum has significantly influenced cultural education and helped reestablish a positive sense of identity and unity for the Alutiiq people, by having a regional focus for Alutiiq cultural and historical research, offering a home for artifacts and gathered cultural knowledge, and providing educational materials and workshops to help carry on traditional knowledge among each new generation. Through the Museum, Alutiiq leaders and educators have been able to teach mask carving, bentwood bowl and hat construction, kayak building, and the Alutiiq language. The Museum has won a number of awards and continues to be a community focal point as we use it to support educational efforts within the Kodiak Alutiiq community, as well as educate visitors and other community members about the traditional practices and lifeways of our people throughout time and into the present.

Among one of the most significant education programs the Alutiiq Museum manages is the Kodiak Alutiiq Language Revitalization Program. Through this program an Elders council called the New Words Council or *Nuta'at Niugnelistet* is working to empower Alutiiq people with creation of terms for modern scientific, technological and medical items, helping bring the language into the twenty-first century. As a collaborative effort between grassroots language revitalization leaders, the community is developing curriculum to expand instruction and help sustain Kodiak Alutiiq as a living language.

Perhaps less known outside the Kodiak Alutiiq community are a number of Native education programs quietly supporting Kodiak Alutiiq students and families. In 1966, Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) was established. Through their education department they provide job training, scholarships, and preschools in three of the largest villages: Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions. A number of tribal councils around the island also offer Alutiiq dance training programs and other after school programs. The Kodiak Island Housing Authority (KIHA) provides a series of education programs and an after school family center for residents of their Woody Way complex, as well as funding support for Native educational programs throughout the region. As a result of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), and our regional corporation Koniag, Inc., Koniag Education Foundation (KEF) was founded in 1993. They provide higher education scholarships and mentorship, and connections to internships and job training.

Another significant influence on Alaska Native education statewide was the development of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) through combined support by the Alaska Federation of Natives and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, with leadership by Ray Barnhardt, Ph.D., *Angayuqaq* Oscar Kawagley, Ph.D., and Frank Hill (Kushman & R. Barnhardt, 1999). Specifically for the Kodiak Alutiiq, a number of grassroots efforts were put into action during this time period or influenced related efforts around the state, including the AKRSI series of *Guidelines for Cultural-Responsive Schools* (1998-2003). As a graduate of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Education Department, with its strong emphasis in Cross-Cultural Studies, Teresa Schneider took on a role as Alutiiq Studies Coordinator at the Kodiak Island Borough School District

through AKRSI efforts and funding. She and a group of Alutiiq Elders and educators established a regional Native education association called the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR) in 1999. NEAR and the educators in its network have supported development of several curriculum units, such as a Kodiak Alutiiq Spring Plants curriculum, and new teacher orientation sessions that have begun to make a difference in the level of involvement the Alutiiq community has within our schools. Perhaps one of the most significant publications to promote culturally relevant education practices was their collaboration with Alutiiq Elders to produce an Alutiiq Values poster, publishing fourteen core value statements that help show how Alutiiq traditional practices and worldview today are part of a continuous knowledge stream and provide the framework for Alutiiq education (NEAR, 2002). I have since then collaborated with fluent Alutiiq Elders to translate these value statements into Sugt'stun and prepare a values map that serves as the framework for the story analysis in this book, as shown in Chapter 7.

Around the island various organizations have sponsored culture-based summer camps since 1995, which have significantly impacted Kodiak Alutiiq youth by building positive exposure to Alutiiq culture and ways of life through intergenerational learning environments aligned to traditional Alutiiq education practices. Through summer camps like these the community has produced additional curriculum and publications such as the *Red Cedar of Afognak*, a Native science children's book I co-authored, which won an Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literature Award and an American Book Award by the Before Columbus Foundation (Drabek, 2009b; Drabek & Adams, 2004).

Starting in 2000, the Kodiak Native community has co-sponsored a regional gathering called *Esgarlluku Taquka'aq* or Awakening Bear, which featured an annual education summit for several years. Later, through Kodiak Island Housing Authority (KIHA) efforts, community empowerment and leadership in education and other areas were further extended with creation of a Rural Leadership Forum, which meets three times a year. Through their education sessions, the Kodiak rural villages have been able to build a stronger relationship with Kodiak Island Borough School District and Kodiak College and developed *Advisory School Boards Best Practices*.

Combined, there are many Alutiiq organizations and leaders working together to develop new ways to support respect for the Alutiiq worldview and traditional knowledge. They are well aware that it is through education that we can transform our communities back into empowered, self-sufficient communities, rooted within our Alutiiq values. These efforts require collaboration, creative solutions, and learning from other Indigenous communities who are proving they can establish successful Indigenous place-based education systems.

Historical Trauma Implications Within Education

Despite all the many strides to improve education, specifically within the lives of Alaska Native children, their daily experience within school continues to have many assimilative impacts, particularly when they are not being taught their history, or are bombarded with conflicting messages of what is true and valued between school and home. Within the Alaskan K-12 schooling environment, if educators do not engage students in culturally-relevant experiential learning, nor embrace Alaska Native cultural beliefs, values and traditions every day in the classroom, then they are perpetrating assimilative forces that result in students becoming increasingly detached from their community and environment, and subsequently themselves.

The process of engaging in western education is a cross-cultural journey that, without an understanding of why and how the new experience is foreign, students are susceptible to continuing assimilative forces themselves. Alaska Native families and communities need to be more aware of the history of western influences on their lives and in their communities. How we learn and in what environment we learn is a major factor in our state of wellbeing and subsequent ways of life. If learning within school continues to lack relevancy and applicability to daily life and the traditions of our ancestors, it will continue to erode values and community traditional knowledge. Western influences will not stop, but if Alaska Natives truly regain self-determination in all aspects of their lives, including education, they will be better able to reconcile their cultural knowledge with western knowledge, taking the best from both worlds.

Within the Kodiak Archipelago, the Alaska Native community has been greatly marginalized for over two hundred years. Still today the Native community is viewed by many in power as incapable of effective self-governance. Honor and respect appears only to be paid to those few Natives who have assimilated and achieved higher education credentials and positions of power, which further makes their role uncomfortable as it is believed that since they succeeded within western higher education and employment they must share the same dominant, prejudiced view about Natives who have not attained their levels of educational achievement. This condescension that our Native community lives within is disempowering and frustrating for all Natives who recognize its reality, as we continue to watch each new generation taught outdated, irrelevant or misconceived information about our community; and worse yet, encouraged to look outside for their hope of a better future—as if we have nothing to offer them.

The reality is that many in power within our education system do not believe that Kodiak Alaska Natives are capable of providing their youth with a “complete” education, arguing that if we could we would have done so already. However, what they neglect to recognize is that because “schools” are established power structures that have inculcated generations it is challenging to awaken to this realization of how much the American education system has impacted us in the past and continues to influence us today, or for that matter how the education system should be working for, not against us.

Ultimately, it is not acceptable to place western educational achievement as superior to our traditional knowledge systems. We need to be able to give our children an awareness of these realities and the options to pursue education in whatever realm calls them, whether it be to maintain a traditional subsistence lifestyle within their own community, or to pursue cross-cultural leadership to benefit their community by building bridges between the two distinct worldviews. We deserve the right to determine what and how our children learn in a manner relevant to our own community. Education is the source of power to maintain self-governance, and so it is essential that Alaska Native communities take this power back.

While much of Alaska Native educational history tells stories about what has been taken away, there is much to celebrate. Despite near extinction of our Indigenous languages, despite attempted elimination of our Native villages and lifeways, despite dysfunctional dynamics within our families due to generations of social engineering and a paternalistic education, we are strong survivors who have held onto our values and ways of looking at the world. We are finding our own ways toward positive change as we learn to bridge these worlds. Educators today need to consider the current implications of this educational history for Native students. Educators who come to teach in our communities need to know the history of the place they enter and the experiences of its children through their grandparents, and they need to love them for it without taking ownership of it, rather they must share the power they wield with the community. As author Thomas King (2004) writes, “the truth about stories is that’s all we are.” We are the sum of our and our ancestor’s experiences. These experiences shape how we see, communicate, and react to the world around us. Educators beyond any other humans on earth must come from a place of understanding that there is no global or universal “us.” Their students start from the place they’re from and will always return to it, even if it’s limping. Efforts to shape or mold young minds will perpetuate the generations of harm in the name of “education,” but teaching from place, from identity, from cultural knowledge gives students the power to become lifelong learners.

Chapter 6: Before Baptism: Alutiiq Cosmology and Lifeways

There are a number of resources available today for educators and others to learn more about traditional Alutiiq cultural practices and beliefs, such as *Looking Both Ways* (Crowell et al., 2001; Smithsonian Institute, n.d.), *Alutiiq Traditions* (Steffian & Counciller, 2009), and *Alutiiq Word of the Week: Fifteen Year Compilation* (Steffian & Counciller, 2012) books. An older but comprehensive resource that discusses Alutiiq spirituality via observations by early explorers and colonists, such as Pinart (1871-73) and Gideon (1805), is an anthropological study done by Margaret Lantis (1947) titled *Alaska Eskimo Ceremonialism*. More recently from a church perspective, Father Michael Oleksa (1992, 2005), a Russian Orthodox priest who served on Kodiak Island, has published several books on Alaska Native and Alutiiq spirituality and the transition to Russian Orthodoxy. Christopher Donta (1993) also prepared a dissertation on archaeological and ethnohistoric analysis of Koniag ceremonialism that provides useful summaries, similarly as Lantis (1947) did in her dissertation. Although, linguistic references in both Lantis and Donta are not accurate for the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect. There are also several other researchers who more recently have examined Alutiiq masks and associated rituals in several books (Haakanson & Steffian, 2009; Laronde, 2009; Desson, 1995). All of these resources combined are helpful for understanding Alutiiq cosmology and traditional practices that appear within stories.

The following chapter offers a brief synopsis of traditional Alutiiq spiritual beliefs and cosmology, followed by an exploration of the transition to Russian Orthodoxy, as relevant for our general understanding of the cultural contexts of Alutiiq literature and socio-cultural transitions experienced through colonization. The first core question that this chapter responds to is: *What classical archetypes, motifs and symbols exist within Alutiiq stories?* An exploration of ancestral Alutiiq spirituality is also important as it attempts to address my underlying motivation for developing this chapter. In discussing Alutiiq *unigkuat* in particular, I have found that many Alutiiq Elders today are uncomfortable with the spiritual concepts or magical elements within ancestral stories. This discomfort originates from the transition into a largely Christian society, and our

history of colonial oppression of the ancestral Alutiiq belief system. Given this environment, I also attempt to respond to two questions: *How can we honor and better understand these traditional practices without causing fear or anger?* and *How do shamanistic traditions overlap within the modern Alutiiq Christian belief system?* Who the Alutiiq were prior to Russian influence is important for understanding our stories and why Orthodoxy had such a powerful effect.

Overview of Alutiiq Cosmology

The Kodiak Alutiiq or Sugpiaq people have made the Kodiak Archipelago their homeland for over seven millennia (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 26). Thriving through a rich traditional harvest lifestyle, ancestral Alutiiq peoples developed complex rituals, knowledge and understandings surrounding the correct preparation and practices for traditional hunters. “In Alutiiq tradition, personal rituals, hunting ceremonies, and rules of behavior maintained harmony with the supernatural beings upon whom human life depended” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 142). As recent as this past century, Alutiiq Elders recall witnessing ritualized preparations and the regular passage of traditional stories, which describe the practices and beliefs about how people should properly interact with their environment to ensure survival and maintain balance within the natural and supernatural worlds.

The ancestral Alutiiq people saw, as many Alutiiq people today still do, the spirit world as a reality inseparable from what the western perspective would call physical reality. The blend of spirit and tangible worlds, which comprises Alutiiq reality made it important to distinguish something as “real” from supernatural. As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of real or *-piaq* and not real or *-ruaq* in Alutiiq is a significant distinction that is pervasive throughout communication in the Alutiiq language. The ancestral Alutiiq belief system relates to how they saw the spirit world operating on a daily basis as they lived interconnected with the natural world. Their views of right and wrong were based on their distinctions between good spirits, *Agayun* and evil spirits, *Tak* (Black, 1977, p. 86; L. Mulcahy (Pestrikoff), 1987, p. 42). The good spirits were the means by which they learned hunting techniques, and all other useful information that became customs. The

evil spirits could harm people if they were allowed to. It was in the prevention of this harm from evil spirits that made shamanism important. The Alutiiq traditionally believed that anything not done according to custom would have grievous results. It is this adherence to custom and traditions which made their attachment to Russian Orthodoxy so strong as they saw the connection between it and their prior belief system.

Alutiiq cosmology or *llarpet* (our universe) is an intricate orchestration of deities, supernatural beings and worlds, some of which are listed at right. The list above the bold line are those within the five sky worlds, and below are those on earth. This is not an exhaustive list. An image representing *Llam Sua* is on page 143, showing the deity's face within the inner most world of a series of concentric circles or worlds. As a primary god, *Llam Sua* resided in the fifth sky world, and is defined as “The personification of the universe”; the universe’s person; “the aboriginal name for the Supreme Being” (Leer, n.d., *Ll*). As *Lla* is also the word for weather, *Llam Sua* can be understood as “weather spirit.” Lantis (1947) discusses the Inuit form of *Sila*, synonymous with *Llam Sua*, and defines *Sila* as “spirit of

Table 5.1: Deities and Supernatural Beings

Deities and Supernatural Beings	
Alutiiq	English
Llam Sua (5th world)	Weather God; Universe’s Spirit
Kas’arpak (3rd world)	Creator Spirit; Great Wise One
Iraluq (1st world)	Moon God
Macaq (1st world)	Sun Goddess
Qiugyat (1st world)	Northern Lights
Mit’at (1st world)	Star people
Imam Sua	Sea Goddess
Nunam Sua	Earth Goddess
Aqllat	Wind Gods
Qalngaa’aq	Raven (Light Bringer)
sungcut; susetka	mischievous little person; leprechaun
aula’q (N); arula’aq (S)	bigfoot; sasqatch; wise helper beings
nakernaq	good luck charm; lucky living stone
nanwam arnaa	mermaid; lake woman

weather, light, and air” (p. 36). Today, the Alutiiq use *Llam Sua* as the name to define the Christian god.

While the sun (*Macaq*) was respected through daily spiritual practices, and featured within Alutiiq folklore, *Llam Sua*, the weather god, was worshipped supreme (Lantis, 1947, p. 36). Lantis describes the practice of sun salutation documented by Pinart in 1872 as: “On Kodiak Island every morning before sunrise the people (everyone? or just the men?) climbed on the roofs of the barabaras or went to some elevated point near the village where they remained in a squatting position, eyes fixed on the east until the sun appeared. They then returned to their daily chores” (p. 36). There are a host of other deities and supernatural beings—many of which appear within Alutiiq folklore.

Symbolic replications of the universe were an important part of ancestral Alutiiq spiritual practices. For example, *Llanguaq*, a pretend universe or model of the universe, was made from a collection of miniatures created by *kalla'lek* (shaman) and *ar'ursulek* (whale shaman) as a means of ritually enacting an event such as a hunt, so as to influence the future (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 197). Dolls, and miniature animals, boats and weapons were used within the enactment. Similarly, Oleksa (1994) also describes how the *ciqlluaq* (sod house) and *qasgiq* (kashim) themselves are symbolic manifestations of the universe, with associated beliefs about how household actions can directly effect the universe and people's lives.

Villagers erect their homes following the same divine blueprint so that each house is a microcosm, a miniature universe. Not only does each dwelling reflect the structure of the world, but the process of building it follows the same sequence; for in erecting a house, human beings imitate the actions of the gods, and the time spent in constructing the building is not chronological, but cosmic time” (Oleksa, 1992, p. 104).

Understanding that all beings, objects and structures have the potential to both represent and influence the universe, the function of them within a story should be considered as symbolic even more so than common within western literature.

There is a great deal of archaeological evidence on the ritualized pre-hunt dramatization that Alutiiq peoples engaged in to prepare for a successful hunt (Crowell et al., 2001). Stories and descriptions by early colonists of ceremonies within the *qasgiq* (kashim or ceremonial gathering house) and within shaman's caves, also tell of these practices of pre-hunt dramatization rituals that the Alutiiq performed. Elder John Pestrikoff described in 1998 how the men would make magic for hunting sea mammals by participating in *qasgiq* ceremonies. The hunters would gather at a feast with carved animal fetishes hanging from a pole suspended from the ceiling. "The pole was rocked back and forth by means of ropes attached to it." Each hunter would select an animal that he would then have luck in hunting. The process of rocking the talismans, selecting and then replacing them would make the animal come back, as well as make it so the hunter could catch it (July 28, 1998, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 2, Side B). This hunting magic process is also described by Alphonse Pinart (1872b) in his 1871-1872 explorations of Kodiak and Afognak.

There are other descriptions that Elders tell of the magical spells the shaman's would use to prepare for hunting—*kalla'arluteng*. The Alutiiq term for shaman as *kalla'alek* is defined as "one who has a helping spirit or supernatural power" (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 208). Helper spirits came in many forms and could manifest powers for a *kalla'alek* in many ways. Elder John Pestrikoff tells of his early initiation to these traditions when he says, "Long ago people had a different way of life. They didn't live like us. I know about it because they used to tell me about it. One time Anaanaa (an Afognak shaman) told me, "I'll teach you how to make magic. - *Litnaurciqamken-ruq kalla'anermek.*" (August 11, 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 4, Side B). Although John Pestrikoff did not pursue training as a *kalla'alek*, his curiosity and the knowledge that was given to him and others through storytelling persists to this day through the oral tradition.

Within Alutiiq tradition, there is a history of hunters receiving help from supernatural helper beings such as the *nakernat* or good luck stone beings or charms. *Naker-* is the root for "to be lucky, fortunate" in hunting for example (Leer, n.d., *N*).

Pestrikoff tells of these creatures from his own experience seeing them and their use when he was young (Leer, 1999). He refers to them as lucky stones, describing some as red, tan or gray, while others that were more powerful or dangerous were black. He explains that these chiton-shaped stones were alive and had teeth, “just like shark’s teeth.” Others are described as looking like clam shells. Hunters would receive good luck in hunting if they found and cared for a *nakernaq*. They would keep the small living rock inside a box and feed it, carrying it with them when they hunted. They viewed these living stones as a kind of “good luck charm.”

The *nakernaq* were recognized as living stones because they ate and gave birth to young. Pestrikoff recalls hearing something rattling inside one, which he learned meant that the one was about to be born. He tells of the time he saw his father’s *nakernat* despite being told not to open a mysterious box:

One time the old man said if we don’t tell anybody [about the place we were going] he’ll catch a sea otter. He said, “Don’t you ever open that box. Whatever you do, don’t touch it.” It made me wonder why he said that. I was curious why he told me not to touch that box. It was a metal cigar box. I waited; they went along the shore walking along the bank. I looked at it good first, “I’m going to tie it up just the same it was tied. I’m going to check that box, see why he told me not to touch it.” I opened it. There was a rock with a clam shell, nice and smooth. It had something in it; it was a live rock. But people don’t find those things nowadays. Where’d they get them from? And there was one that looked like a prune, maybe a little bigger than a prune; it had a mouth with bunch of small teeth in it. And there were two small ones, like the one I described first, but small ones. And there was a [piece of] fox fur in there and a little piece of bread. He feeds them; they must have been alive. See, so many years they get young one. They don’t move, but they’re alive. (August 12, 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 6, Side A & B)

The *nakernat* are among several other supernatural beings that were common for our ancestors, but are hidden or no longer show themselves to us today, such as the *sungcut*;

sutseki or little people, who helped or brought trouble to hunters (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 197), and *aula'aq* or outcast wildman/bigfoot, who sometimes warned and protected hunters but also stole people away.

Ancestral Alutiiq cosmological beliefs establish that there were many layers to the universe, in effect many worlds or lands specific to each type of spirit or animal. People could travel to these worlds to seek knowledge, either practical or prophetic, or they could become lost there. One needed to follow certain prescribed processes that typically only the *kall'alet* knew in order to be capable of traveling between these worlds. As discussed more in Chapter 8 as part of a close analysis of the story “The Woman Who Married the Moon,” the mask traditions were an important part of this process of spirit world travel. Similarly, the process of animal transformation is an important symbolic aspect within ancestral Alutiiq culture and its stories. In this way, putting on or taking off animal skins, wearing masks, closing one’s eyes, or limiting vision through seclusion are all significant symbolic actions that brought about spirit travel.

The difference between what is real and what is not real upon earth or within the various spirit worlds was an important distinction for the ancestral Alutiiq storyteller, as the gateway goes both ways. Spirits could transform to appear like people or when people traveled to the spirit world the animals or supernatural beings could appear to be easily confused as real humans. The same is true within traditional Alutiiq stories where the characters are referred to as people but often in fact are supernatural beings or animals themselves. In this way, western audiences can understand the characters’ behaviors as on par with other characters or archetypes, as found in Greek, Roman, Norse, Celtic or Hebrew mythologies. Just as seen within other cultures’ mythologies there are often brutal actions described that are heavy in symbolic portent or are designed to illicit strong emotions. For example, in ancestral Alutiiq society the use of human remains played a significant role in ritual practices that are often misunderstood from a contemporary western worldview. Within the whaling cult Kodiak Alutiiq people had a culturally distinct “use of human remains for hunting power” (Lantis, 1947, p. 51). It is important for an acceptance of this, and an understanding that references to this are intended to

illicit strong reactions and solidarity with the main character, so as not to misinterpret the stories or be afraid of them.

One traditional belief that also appears in the stories is that supernatural beings or transformed animals will not eat foods prepared by humans such as bread and that they must be invited into your home in order to come inside. We see this demonstrated in the story about the stranger who was a weasel (Wilson & Carlough, 1977). Similarly, if a human transforms into an animal or supernatural being (such as a sky demi-god like the moon) if they stay in that form for too long then it becomes harder to transform back. We see this in stories such as “The Woman Who Becomes a Bear” (Golder, 1903a), “The Boy Who Became a Mink” (Golder, 1903b), and “The Woman Who Married the Moon” (Golder, 1903a) where the main characters are unable to transform back into their human form.

There are many similar examples of such manifestations of the spirit world and appropriate interactions within nature to result in good health or good hunts. It is generally not appropriate to refer to Alutiiq representations as “art” because this risks taking it out of context as a spiritual interaction. Rather, carvings, petroglyphs and masks were recreations or pre-creations of events to bring them into being, allow for passage between spirit worlds, or ensure safe and successful resource access. While some objects may have served as toys or for craft practice, the tradition of miniature pre-hunt dramatization would indicate that many of these objects were not toys, but rather important ceremonial tools and figures representing significant roles within adult rituals. Symbolism is an important element of every culture, which cannot be interpreted appropriately by those unfamiliar with the culture, as their own cultural associations will layer meaning upon the symbol that may be completely unrelated.

Another symbol that may be misunderstood or missed in listening to or reading Alutiiq stories is of numerological significance. Five is a sacred number for the Alutiiq, and is featured within most stories, cosmology and ritual practice, as discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8. For example, five appears in the origin story Lisiansky (1814) recorded where the first person to populate Kodiak was a toyon’s daughter who had *five* children

with a canine. In most of the *unigkuat* the repetition of five is interwoven into the actions of the characters or quantities of beings or locations, such as: five eye closings in “The Girl Who Went in Search of Her Lover” (Golder, 1903a), five escapes from death in “The Boy Who Became a Mink” (Golder, 1903b), five children in “The Origin of the Sun and the Moon” (Pinart, 1872a, 1872b), and five types of fish created from wood chips and five swan maidens in “The Sad Fate of Uchatngiak” (Golder, 1903b). In this way the stories are verbal manifestations of the understanding of the universe, and function as *llanguaq* also.

Ancestral Alutiiq people practiced their form of shamanism up to and past the arrival of Russian explorers on Kodiak Island into the 1900s (Oleksa, 1992). Within ancestral Alutiiq society there were several key roles and figures as listed above. Ancestral Alutiiq religion based itself on the guidance of both *kas’aq* and *kalla’lek*. Gideon claims for the Alutiiq,

A child was designated for shamanistic status at birth by his father and mother. These children received female names and were trained to do tasks suitable for the female sex only; later they were apprenticed to a well-known shaman. For this reason, all shamans were single and had their beards plucked. (Black, 1977, p. 99)

A shaman could also be chosen when he or she had a spiritual journey or experience in which they made contact with the Alutiiq spirit world. The spirit journey could be drug or injury induced, or there could be an innate perceptibility to the spirit world. According to many anthropologists the so-called symptoms of the shaman might today be labeled as

Table 5.2: Key Roles in Ancestral Alutiiq Society

Key Roles in Ancestral Alutiiq Society	
Alutiiq	English
kalla’lek; tun’alek	shaman; sorcerer; witch; medicine person
kas’aq	priest; storyteller
angayuqaq; tuyuq*	chief
sakaasiik	second chief
staaristaq*	church warden
ar’ursulek	whaler; whale shaman
paapuskaa*	midwife
*Russian era title or role shifts	

epilepsy or a form of mental illness, such as schizophrenia (Lewis, 1971, p. 184; Znamenski, 2007, p. 100). However, the psychological reasoning behind how a shaman is chosen or how they engage in a spirit journey is not as important for our purposes as what the social or political impact was of their function in the community as healer or terrorist.

In the examinations of Alutiiq and other Alaska Native shaman, researchers have found that the Alutiiq were unique in their rules for choosing their shamans. Typically, throughout Alaska, the position was not hereditary or transferable, but on Kodiak it was often appointed (Oleksa, 1992, p. 105). This element of choosing shamans meant that certain families held the power. The social hierarchical class structure that such dominance lent to community dynamics contributed to the downfall of the shamans.

Once chosen and educated through an apprenticeship, the shaman's duties were to contact the spirit world to see the future and to ask for necessary favors that the villagers needed. When a member of the community became ill, the shaman would use his clout with the spirits and ask for the person's health to be restored; of course this worked both ways. A shaman could also put a curse on a villager if he chose. Because of the immense power shaman held, he or she was both greatly feared or greatly admired.

Many Alutiiq stories tell of shamans and the powers they held, both for good and bad. In fact, my own great-grandmother was convinced that my great-grandfather was killed by a shaman. The legacy of fear about shamans, who wielded their powers for selfish personal gain or anger, is still felt today and is a major reason why the Alutiiq were so willing to convert to a faith without them. Although many of the stories tell of evil *kall'alet*, there are also references to good ones, such as the grandmother shaman in "The Boy Who Became a Mink" who uses her powers to help her grandson escape an evil shaman (Golder, 1903b). In the words of storyteller Sven Haakanson, Sr. in 1997 at an Elders' conference in planning the *Looking Both Ways* exhibit, as documented on the Smithsonian Institution's Alaska Native Collections online database (<http://alaska.si.edu>):

Everybody sitting here—now you're getting scared of these shamans. But I used to be inquisitive when I was small. Why were there shamans? And why did they allow them to stay? Each village had a shaman and a lot of times you hear the

story of the old, ugly, crippled-looking shaman. But they said in Eagle Harbor and some [other] places that, if somebody fell down and maybe broke his hip or back or something, the community wouldn't render him useless. They would take him and let him become a shaman, because he couldn't hunt and fish anymore. He'd hobble around, but he'd learn all the methods. And the shamans were usually good people who helped people when they were sick. They had medicines that they got from the mountains that cured people.

Old man Demetri told me at Eagle Harbor that a girl was out hunting sea gull eggs, and she fell off the bluff. She was all smashed up, and they brought her home. She was just screaming and crying.

And the shaman went up the hill and came down and made some kind of roots and boiled them and let her drink the water. She calmed right down, and she was even laughing while they were straightening her to so she could heal without being all messed up.

So those shamans were really good. They studied their whole lives to be shamans, to help their people, and they were good people. But later on after some Europeans came with all kinds of flu and diphtheria and stuff that killed a lot of people, the people didn't trust the shamans anymore. They went for bromoquinine instead. They went to the white doctor and the Russian doctors. So this made those shamans who were good people pretty bitter. But they knew these powers and medicines and stuff that can put you to sleep, like what made that girl heal. And they could even put you in a sleep so strong that people would think you're dead. And it's because they were mad. They lost their jobs, and they started using that in evil practices. (<http://alaska.si.edu/record.asp?id=231>)

In addition to *kall'alet*, there was another form of shaman within Alutiiq society. Whale hunters, or *ar'ursulek*, who also followed traditional ceremonial processes engaging with the spirit world, to hunt whales. Kodiak's complex whaling cult is described within Ralph Demidoff's (1962) story *Ar'ursulek*. Whaling practices were also abandoned through a combination of colonial pressures and religious rejection of the spiritual practices used.

Our Alutiiq medicine people and whaling ancestors had a deep understand of the properties of plants and minerals, which allowed them for example to concoct poisons to aid in whale hunting. “The *ar’ursulet* or ‘shamans who hunt whales,’ were ritual specialists. On Kodiak, whaling and its secrets were passed from father to son within certain families...Whalers were highly respected but also feared because of their knowledge of deadly poisons” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 167). Alutiiq whalers knew how to brew monkshood roots into an aconite poison, mixed with human fat giving it “magical potency.” Elders today tell stories of these traditions, but none are alive today who witnessed these practices. Traditional whaling on Kodiak ended around 1920 (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 168). However, the traditional whaling story by late Elder Ralph Demidoff (1962) provides a detailed description of the ingenuity, beliefs, and ritual ceremonialism whaling shamans practiced. His story also echoes many of the beliefs and traditions of the Yup’ik whaling tradition, which emphasizes our close cultural ties.

Knowing what materials to use to make hunting tools is an important tradition the Alutiiq passed down and is an integral part of carrying on traditional values and practices. For example, Elders tell of a type of rock that has been traditionally used for whaling spears, which is also referenced in Demidoff’s story. The type of slate rock is located at a place called *Masanasqaq*—“One that is untouchable” (July 30, 1998, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 9, Side A). “*Masanasqaq* is where the whale-hunters used to make the points for their whaling spears. It is the only place on the island where they have that kind of rock. If you fall and cut yourself on that beach, they say it won’t heal. That’s why it is called *Masanasqaq*.” Knowing where to gather such materials and how to use them is critical knowledge for survival through ingenious use of local resources.

Another important figure among the pre-Russian Alutiiq was the *kas’aq*. The *kas’aq*, a ‘master of ceremony,’ sage or wise one, was in charge of keeping the stories of the communities. Since the Alutiiq were a people without a written form of language, they used memory as a storehouse of the old ways. The *kas’aq* thus served the purpose of storyteller and authority on the sacred traditions (Oleksa, 1992, p. 103). Both of the prominent positions of *kalla’lek* and *kas’aq* will be discussed later in reference to their

evolution today. The similarities in their skills and duties and what they represent are present in the Russian Orthodox Church today. This connection is further evident linguistically in Alutiiq as Orthodox priests today are called *kas'aq*. This replacement of the traditional sage or wise man with an Orthodox priest is a contributing factor in the decline in traditional storytelling. Without new storytellers to study and practice Alutiiq storytelling, the stories faded away and are now just memories in our Elders' minds of those traditional *kas'at* they listened to as children or as passed on through their families without perhaps all the original detail that once made the stories so rich.

While some of these traditional practices will likely never again be performed, nor are wished to return, others such as healing practices and weather forecasting may still be relearned, passed on and prove useful in our survival within the Kodiak Archipelago. After just a few generations, the Alutiiq are painfully aware of the rapid transition the culture has undergone and the lasting effects that we are left with in our families. In an interview with Laurie Mulcahy (1987) about the origin of supernatural beings, such as featured in Alutiiq stories, Mike Chernikoff of Ouzinkie explains, "You don't know where they are, how they started, you know. But all that's up, got disappeared. Religion got it all out. Chased away, you see..." (p. 9). The world our Elders grew up in was significantly more mysterious, with life interconnected and intricately balanced in a way that western cultural shifts have diminished.

Transition to Russian Orthodoxy

The Russian Orthodox Church has had a powerful influence on Alaska Native culture. Alaskan Native cultures along the southern coasts of Alaska and the Aleutian chain were shaped and molded into a unique subculture termed 'Aleut' during the period of Russian occupation (ranging from the mid-1700's to 1867). As explained earlier, Aleuts are Alaska Native peoples whose ancestors came in contact with Russians and whose heritage is based on a merge of Russian and Native ideology. In this way we can understand that the term 'Aleut' as more or less a state of mind. The two prominent Aleut

tribal groups are Unangan and Sugpiaq / Alutiiq. Although they are culturally distinct, both self-identify as Aleut because their Russian conquerors called them that.

The Russian influence is still very apparent on Kodiak today in the Alutiiq belief system and lifestyle. How the people live now is strongly linked to the selective assimilation process into the Russian Orthodox Church as a distinct Native institution for the Alutiiq (Rathburn, 1981, p. 12). Given what we know of ancestral Alutiiq spirituality, it is curious *how the Alutiiq moved from their indigenous religion to a seemingly foreign faith, yet still maintain their unique identity even to this day? What were the contributing factors involved in this shift from shamanism to Russian Orthodoxy?*

The first baptisms into the Russian Orthodox faith for the Koniags were done by fur-seeking adventurers or *promyshlenniki* and ship captains. This is important as to the manner in which the Alutiiq accepted Christianity. They were baptized by non-clerical persons because missionaries were not sent until after a decade of Russian occupation. According to the analysis done chiefly by those associated with the church, the Natives often took their new faith more seriously than those who were doing the baptizing in those early days. Besides the strength of their faith, the Natives felt tied to the person who baptized them. Once converted it is said that they considered their godfathers to be their “true fathers” (Nichols & Croskey, 1972). They became willing servants and could not be lured from their converters. They were in fact indebted to that person. Alutiiq called these people “dadya,” which in Russian means uncle. Anything that the dadya wanted or asked, was granted. Thus the Russian reformers easily exploited the slave/master relationship which the religion helped to establish.

In a religious essay, from the later half of the 18th century, Archimandrite Iosaf Bolotov wrote about the acceptance of baptism by the Alutiiq from what he experienced in his coming to the island. He wrote,

All without exception accepted Holy Baptism, but the old people, habituated to their error, do so mostly to avoid altercation with the younger people, who believe it a shame to remain unbaptized. Respect for the holy services and constancy in

Christian virtues are to be more observed among the young, especially among those who associate with the Russians. (Black, 1977, p. 86)

Bolotov's summary encompasses the importance the faith had begun to have in such a short time, as well as brings in several reasons for this attachment, "the association with the Russians" and the feelings of shame at not conforming. In fact, after the missionaries arrived "Nearly the entire Native population of the Kodiak region accepted baptism during the first two years of the mission, a total of nearly 7,000 converts" (Oleksa, 1992, p. 113). While there are many references to how the Natives took baptism, and there were only a few cases of conflict between priests and Natives, on the whole the Natives seemed to be attracted to the priests because of the gentleness they presented to the Natives compared to the Russian fur-seekers and sailors.

The weather and the elusive nature of sea otters made it nearly impossible for the Russians to acquire the proper hunting techniques themselves. Because of this difficulty, the Russians found a much easier and safer method for themselves—hostage-taking. They recognized the skill that the Alutiiq men had for hunting and also the closeness of family that existed in the culture. By taking women, children, and Elders hostage, the Alutiiq hunters would venture out into any weather to retrieve enormous quantities of furs. "From the beginning of the Aleutian fur trade the Russians had been guilty of great brutality toward the Natives" (Hulley, 1981, p. 59). The brutal behavior of the Russian adventurers was allowed and rationalized by the common saying: 'The sky is high and the tsar is far away.' As their presence on the island continued they changed their techniques and, rather than hostage-taking, established a tax in furs that required all of the Natives to pay the fur companies in a certain number of pelts. The difficulty of achieving the amount forced the Natives to devote all their time to hunting. In the end, they had no time to prepare for winter and thus became dependent on the Russians.

These methods continued for a while, but soon high numbers of intermarriages between Koniag women and Russian men began to provide a stabilizing factor. Creole children were born and the basis for future Alutiiq generations was created (Mousalimas, 1995, 2004). The Kodiak fur trading communities which began to grow on the island had

an internal structure of Creoles running them. Many of the Creole children had been sent back to Russia for education and then returned to work for the fur company. This manner of hiring from within the community was extremely effective and the business prospered.

In 1794, Shelikhov and Baranov realized that the relationships being developed between the baptized Alutiiq and their baptizers could serve as a way of improving the business. So, Baranov promptly wrote away to Catherine the Great and requested missionaries be sent as soon as possible so that he could get all the Natives under his control. His words to her made it seem that he wished to Christianize them in her name. Catherine granted his wish and on September 24, 1794, ten missionaries arrived.

The missionaries were previously educated in Alutiiq by the Alutiiq-Russian Creoles schooled in Russia. They also, in relation to their studies of the Alutiiq, were aware of what Alutiiq culture and religion were like. Both factors will be explored later in reference to how they eased the transformation from one religion to another.

Baranov's response to these first missionaries was not a favorable one. When the monks witnessed the conditions and abuse of the Alutiiq under Baranov, they stood up for them. "Sugpiaq and Unangan hunters were often forced at gun point to search for sea otters in treacherous seas. Women were violated, children abused...An immediate clash took place between Baranov and the monks." (Oleksa, 1992, p. 109). They saw that many of the Alutiiq people had accepted Russian Orthodoxy as their faith and the monks believed that slavery was no way for good Christians to live.

Among these ten missionaries was a man named Father Herman. Herman survived the other monks, who were either martyred, died of natural causes or returned to Russia. He felt it was his duty to protect the Natives from exploitation, and lived his life as their guardian. He became a prominent figure for the Alutiiq. In the early years of his presence on the island the Alutiiq found him to be both a defender of their rights but made it "...clear that when a person lived this Christian life sincerely and intensely, as Father Herman had, one could be restored to the original, 'natural' human condition, and 'work miracles'" (Oleksa, 1992, p. 124). He lived an extremely modest life, was a hard worker, and gave all that he had to those in need (Oleksa, 1992, p. 119). After his service

in the town of Kodiak, in 1818 Father Herman moved to Spruce Island, a few miles north of Kodiak. At first he lived in his own hand dug cave, calling his hermitage New Valaam. Later he built a school, orphanage and garden at Monk's Lagoon, or *Anwik*, remaining 40 years until his repose in 1837. There were several times in his life when he predicted the coming of a great danger and thus kept the people from injury. Among his miracles, he staved off a tidal wave by placing an icon of Theotokos at the beach and a forest fire by creating a narrow trench. He also foretold many events, healed the sick, tamed animals, and upon his death people witnessed a pillar of light at Spruce Island (Golder, 2004; Orthodox Church of America, 1970; S. Smith, 2002). To the Alutiiq, Father Herman was like a shaman. He was the first bishop in Russian America to be canonized (1970) and one of only two saints associated with Alaska, with the other being Peter the Aleut, also of Kodiak who Father Herman was the first to proclaim a martyr. To this day, Saint Herman is revered on Kodiak, where his home and chapel are maintained and annual pilgrimages are honored.

Relations between missionaries and shamans varied. The early monks encouraged the shamans to operate among the villagers in a baptized state. This worked in facilitating the acceptance of Russian Orthodoxy because when the shamans proceeded in a manner compatible with the Orthodoxy Christianity it gained credibility (Mousalimas, 1995, p. 314). However, as the years passed the new priests discouraged the shamans and convinced their new converts that the shamans had no power over them. It is speculated that to the Alutiiq people Father Herman and the new saints that Russian Orthodoxy provided took the place of the shamans.

There were actually many factors that made the Alutiiq people rapidly accept Russian Orthodox faith according to the Russian Orthodox Church. The first existed before any contact with the white explorers when shamans predicted there would be men bringing new truths (Oleksa, 1992, p. 124). Based on this prophesy, it is said that the shamans encouraged the Alutiiq to trust and follow the priests. This encouragement for the people to see the link between the two faiths added credibility to what the priests were

teaching. After much contact and familiarity with the priests the Alutiiq felt comfortable trusting them (Olekxa, 1992).

Another factor was the great efforts the priests made before they came to the island by translating several of the holy texts for services into Alutiiq. The priests' willingness to learn and use the Alutiiq language, and their policy of not enforcing the Russian language as the *only* language was very gentle in comparison to what we later saw during American occupation. The priests' gentleness continued into other areas. The majority of them did not directly condemn the peoples' beliefs. With the kindness of the monks combined with the already large number of baptized Alutiiq, the transformation from shamanism to Russian Orthodoxy was almost complete.

Besides the kindness the monks displayed in their efforts to convert the Alutiiq, they were not threatening or self-righteous toward the Alutiiq. The monks could not assume arrogance because they did not see themselves as having attained spiritual perfection. It is the very nature of Russian Orthodoxy that to attain salvation one must go through a long growth process of sanctification. So the monks, rather than appearing to be in a state of perfection, were an example to the Alutiiq of a possible way of life (Olekxa 1992, p. 74). Much of the documentation on how the Alutiiq accepted the monks is from the perspective of the Russian Church. Therefore, the analysis is weighted toward their perception. Regardless, today the Alutiiq oral traditions remember it the same way.

What is arguably the most important factor aiding the conversion was the *Great Death* that befell Alutiiq communities. As Hieromonk Gideon reported, "many shamans died during the epidemic of 1804 which then raged through all of Kad'iak" (Black, 1977, p. 99). Gideon goes on to describe the epidemic:

The above mentioned epidemic occurred immediately prior to our arrival at Kad'iak and started with the arrival from California of the American-Bostonian vessel O'Cain, which carried a complement of Kad'iak Americans for the purposes of sea otter hunting. At first, there were severe headaches, which lasted about two weeks; the headache was followed by a cough and nasal congestion, so

that the ears became blocked; there were chest pains; finally, the person lost any desire to eat, and weakened. Very few died, except the shamans.” (p. 99)

According to Bancroft (1884), Captain Joseph O’Cain set sail on the *O’Cain* from Boston in January, 1803, and reached Sitka in June, 1804, as part of a three year voyage (p. 317).

Howay (1973) corroborates this when he writes:

This ship was trading on the coast in 1804 in continuation of the work of the preceding year. She now undertook the hunting of sea-otter on the coast of California. For this purpose she obtained from the Russians, on shares, the services of Aleut hunters with their baidars. In June, 1804, the O’Cain reached Alaska with their baidars. In June, 1804, the O’Cain reached Alaska with some 1,100 skins so obtained. Thence she sailed for China and home. References: See entry for 1803; Bancroft’s *History of the North West Coast* (1884), vol. 1, p. 319. (Howay, 1973, p. 57)

The ship stopped in Kodiak and likely many if not all of the Kodiak Alutiiq hunters traveling aboard her returned to their home villages on Kodiak Island, thus carrying the sickness into their villages.

Gideon wrote of his inability to obtain detailed knowledge about shamanism on Kodiak when he explained that most had died in the 1804 epidemic. He went on to explain that “Others were secretive. When I visited Igatsk village, one shaman pretended that he lost the power of speech, from a fright he experienced during a dream” (Black, 1977, p. 99). Clearly, the shamans who remained knew their time was short-lived, and were threatened by inquiries. The questions as to if the shamans were more exposed to the viral epidemic through their efforts to heal the sick? Or were they defeated by their inability to combat these new illnesses? Or was it a convenient time to eradicate them during an epidemic? The answers to these questions will never be known with certainty. Regardless, the Alutiiq were forever changed.

Chapter 7: Alutiiq Values Analysis

Introduction to Alutiiq Values

Starting in the late 1990s, the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR) convened a group referred to as the Academy of Elders from across Kodiak Island to identify a list of Kodiak Alutiiq core values. This effort stemmed from and was supported through the statewide Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI), facilitated by Teresa Schneider in Kodiak through the Kodiak Island Borough School District. Together, and in individual interviews with those Elders unable to participate in group meetings, Elders around Kodiak Island reached consensus on a list of fourteen value statements that represent the Kodiak Alutiiq worldview. AKRSI supported publication of a poster featuring the value statements to promote culturally-relevant education practices and to show how the Alutiiq traditional worldview is still a part of a continuous knowledge stream (NEAR, 2002). The poster and values it depicts provide a framework for culturally-relevant Alutiiq education going forward.

During my dissertation research on Alutiiq storytelling and the history of education for the Alutiiq community, I worked with some of our active fluent Elders at the Alutiiq Language Club to translate the fourteen value statements into Sugt'stun / Alutiiq, as previously they were only in English. As I reflected on the true meaning of the values with this new comparative bilingual knowledge, I also began to see connections between the values that led me to group them into sets of five spheres, as shown in the resulting values map later on the next page. The values model I developed through this process is modeled after the *Ka Huaka'i Well-Being Model* by the Kamehameha Schools, which also depicts five spheres that comprise the Native Hawaiian state of well-being, including five aspects of life: emotional, social and cultural, physical, cognitive, and material and economic (Kamehameha Schools, 2005, 2011). For the Hawaiians, the *pua* or flower with its five inter-related petals and its significance in hawaiian culture is a perfect symbol to represent wellness for them.

As the number five is equally symbolic for the Alutiiq as a sacred number, demonstrated throughout Alutiiq cosmological stories and ceremonial objects, I reflected

on what image might best represent balance, and at the same time demonstrate a holistic state of wellbeing for the Alutiiq. The *Llam Sua* icon seemed ideal as it was used in Karluk as a protective talisman for the village in generations passed, according to Elder Lucille Davis (personal communication). This image of the supreme being depicts the five worlds of the Alutiiq universe (Crowell et



Fig.7.1: *Llam Sua* icon

al., 2001, p. 197), and emphasizes the concept of a human connection to divinity through light radiating outwards as god’s vision is cast down upon the earth. At the center of concentric rings depicting the five sky worlds is a face. This image represents *Llam Sua*, the *universe’s person* literally, or the Great Spirit. This god image offers a visual representation that embodies Alutiiq beliefs and cosmology, and therefore is appropriate to serve as the framework for exploring core values. This iconic image is discussed

further in Chapter 8, along with a photo of the small wooden box from Karluk

(1400-1740 AD) where the depiction of the god image originates (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 198). As shown

in the more detailed values map on the next page, the Alutiiq values surrounding it are

intended to inspire healthy living and establish a self-determined, positive image for

Alutiiq people, thus promoting a

strong sense of identity and greater self-esteem, rooted in spirituality.

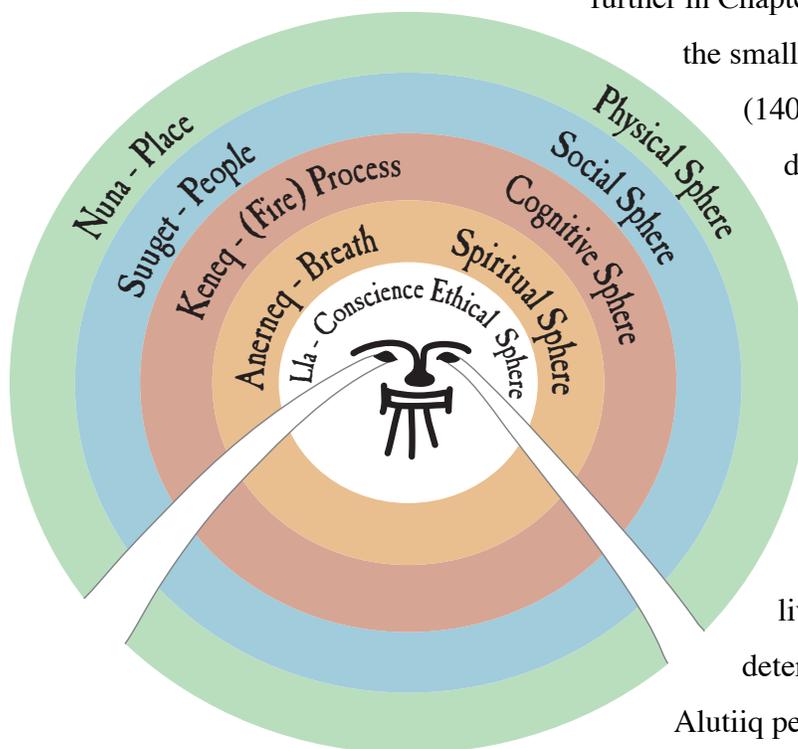


Fig. 7.2: *Llam Sua* Wellbeing Model

Qik'rtarmiut Sugpiat'stun Sug'ucirpet

The Kodiak Alutiiq People's Way of Being Human

the interrelated & valued elements that sustain our wellbeing and worldview



Fig.7.3: Kodiak Alutiiq Values Map

To fully appreciate what culture and values are, it is useful to consider the widely known Iceberg Model of Culture (Centre for Intercultural Learning, n.d., R. Barnhardt, 2005; Hall, 1976). In this model, culture is considered analogous to an iceberg, where ninety percent of the culture is below the surface. It is only by plumbing its depths that we can truly understand the behaviors from within a culture. In this model (as illustrated below), the surface or visible elements of a culture are the obvious cultural artifacts or behaviors of which outsiders are aware. At the iceberg's waterline and beneath it are the embraced values of the culture, sometimes visible and sometimes hidden. The majority of a culture, or its thinking and feeling elements, exists as deep cultural assumptions and knowledge hidden below the surface.

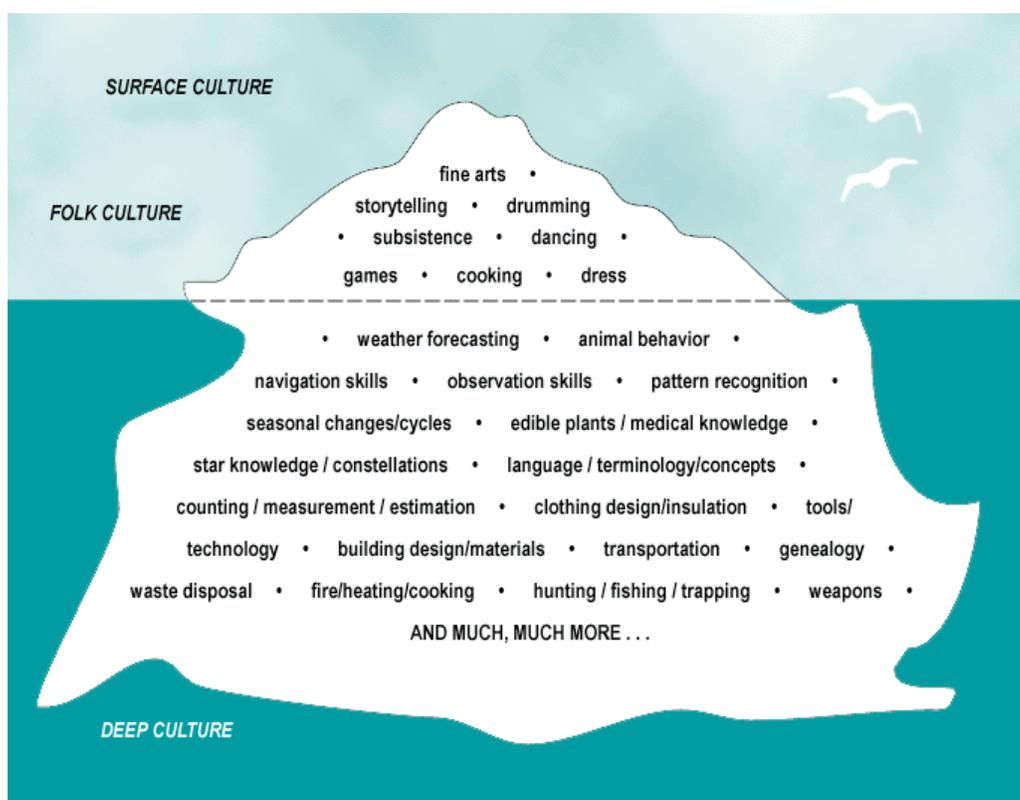


Fig. 7.4: *Iceberg Model of Culture (Developed by Lower Kuskokwim School District)*

Through informal discussions with Elders today, they agree that traditional Alutiig values are still alive, despite over two centuries of oppressive colonization and assimilation. Yet, how the values manifest as lived behaviors today is diminished and

vastly different than when they were young. There is a widespread concern that younger generations of Alutiiq are losing their connection to the core values and that this results in or is evident as their unhealthy life choices. Therefore, this analysis of Alutiiq values is focused on how stories illustrate these values to serve as lessons for our lives today.

As illustrated in the *Llam Sua Wellbeing Model* and in the *Ka Huaka'i Well-Being Model* (Kamehameha Schools, 2005) presented earlier, the lives of human beings are made up of different realms or spheres of wellbeing. The core Alutiiq values embody five spheres: physical (material), social (cultural), cognitive, emotional and ethical. In western mainstream society the elements of good health are often categorized only as mental, physical, emotional and cognitive. This perspective leaves out the significant aspect of spirituality. It is also important to note that a compartmentalized approach to considering spheres of wellbeing does not emphasize interconnection between the elements and can cause one sphere to be weighted as more important or isolated from the other aspects of health and wellbeing rather than looking at one's life and surroundings holistically.

This Alutiiq model of wellbeing offers a holistic perspective on the unity of the various elements, or spheres of life, and allows us to consider how aspects overlap or rather exist within the others. For example, notice in this model of the Alutiiq worldview that the concept of physical health is not distinguished as separate from the natural world. Another way to define these spheres is to look at them in how they relate to the whole person, as indicated in this chart below:

Table 7.1: *Aspects of Alutiiq Wellbeing*

Elements		Whole Person		Spheres	
English	Alutiiq	English	Alutiiq	English	Greek
earth	<i>nuna</i>	body; surface	<i>qaik</i>	physical	soma
people/water	<i>suuget/imaq</i>	emotion (v)	<i>ellpeklluku</i>	social	pathos
fire	<i>keneq</i>	mind	<i>umyaaq</i>	mental	logos
air	<i>anerneq</i>	energy body	<i>anerneq</i>	spiritual	spiritus
conscience	<i>lla</i>	soul	<i>surneq</i>	ethical	ethos

In Alutiiq the concept of worldview or values, is *Sug'ucirpet*, or “our way of being human.” *Sug'uciq* means “humanity [or] integrity as a human being” (Leer, n.d., S), and in this way encompasses the universal concept of wellbeing. Another related term is *luumaciq* which is defined as “nature; the way a person or thing is” (Leer, n.d., L). Within the Alutiiq worldview or *Qik'rtarmiut Sugpiat'stun Sug'ucirpet* (literally: The Kodiak Alutiiq people's way of being human), how the five spheres correlate are explored in the remaining five sections of this chapter. Each section reflects on the values within that aspect of wellbeing as taught through Alutiiq stories and traditions.

As a product of this dissertation research process, I prepared a catalog of archived stories, which is intended to serve as a resource for the Alutiiq community and educators to use and expand upon. (See the *Values Catalog of Kodiak Alutiiq Stories* in Appendix B). This catalog contains all documented Kodiak Alutiiq stories from the earliest documented story in 1805 to 1910, as well as a growing list of additional archived stories collected and transcribed from 1910 to the present as publicly available in print or recordings. It is my intention for this catalog to be used as a living resource for the Kodiak Alutiiq people to continue to grow as they engage in future storywork and as contemporary oral history recordings are transcribed and the Alutiiq storytelling oral tradition is revitalized.

While Margaret Lantis (1938a) also cataloged archived Alutiiq stories, her analysis was comparative in nature in relation to versions within other Indigenous cultures and motif. While a comparative analysis is informative, there is ultimately no way to say which cultural group a story truly originates from. Nor is it really important who told it first, although this quest was a large motivation for Pinart (1872b) in his collection of stories, as he sought to prove the connections between cultures and migration from Asia. What is important to remember is that traditional stories reflect a culture's value system and were chosen as a significant part of each culture's teachings. While many of the stories labeled as Kodiak Alutiiq stories also are told by other Indigenous cultures, these stories exist as versions that include culturally relevant or artistic variations made by Alutiiq storytellers.

Note: Within the bulleted lists of values that appear in each sphere below, the italicized word is an Alutiiq translation of the core value statement; the parenthesis is its literal translation; and the quoted statement is the original NEAR published statement.

Nuna — Earth: Physical Sphere

Starting from the outside and looking inward, keeping the *Iceberg Model of Culture* metaphor in mind, the first sphere in this wellbeing model is most obviously external. This physical surface sphere consists of physical health, material objects, economy, and our relationship to the ecosystem. In essence it represents the core ecological values that sustain wellbeing and general physical health for the Kodiak Alutiiq people. Another way of thinking about the physical or material sphere is that it represents all that exists tangibly on the surface of the earth. In Alutiiq the word used for ‘earth,’ ‘land,’ and sometimes ‘village,’ is *nuna*. It represents this values group as it embodies the concept of place and is the field upon which all life manifests. Another keyword appropriate to this sphere is *qaik* or body surface. This word is also connected to the concept of ‘on top of it’ as in *qaingani*. The physical sphere lives in the first world: earth, or *nuna*. The following three of the fourteen Alutiiq values relate to the physical sphere:

- *Nunapet* (Our land) “Ties to our Homeland”
- *Nunapet Carliarluki* (Taking care of our land) “Stewardship of animals, land, sky, and waters”
- *Unguwacirpet* (Our way of being alive) “A subsistence lifestyle respectful and sustained by the natural world”

The underlying question these value statements answer is: *How do the Alutiiq relate to their environment?*

Nunapet - Our Homeland

For the Kodiak Alutiiq people, after over seven millennia on Kodiak, our homeland establishes our sense of identity (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 26). Several of the earliest stories collected from the region are origin stories that tell of the creation of this

land and how the people came to live here. Excerpts from publications by Lisiansky (1814) and Holmberg (1985 translation) provide summaries of these origin stories, as do Pinart's (1872a, 1872b) field notes. One story tells of how first man and woman fell from the sky in a large bladder which they shaped and formed to create the land (Lisiansky, 1814). This story describes Kodiak as a rock that the child of first man and woman played with. Each of these land creation stories are noted in the Values Catalog within the "Ties to our homeland" column as (creation).

The strong tie to home is evident throughout many Alutiiq stories. In other *unigkuat* where the hero journeys away from their homeland into the spirit world, there is a great sense of loss, inner conflict and longing to return home, which ultimately spurs their leaving the pleasant, new home. Journeys to the sky worlds or Bird Heaven as found in "The Girl Who Married a Star" (Golder, 1903a), "The Unnatural Uncle" and "The Sad Fate of Uchatngiak," or animal worlds as in "Boy Who Became a Mink," (Golder, 1903b) all cycle back to a journey home. While some of the heroes find that the separation from their homeland has changed them, most return home. In "The Unnatural Uncle," for example, the boy hero finds that his "thoughts would very often wander back to his former home, the people there, his parents; and the thought of his uncle's cruelty to them would make his heart ache" (p. 93).

Particularly for the communities of Kaguyak and Afognak, which were destroyed during the 1964 earthquake and tsunami, Elders tell of their sorrow at the disconnection they experience from their home communities. Just as Elder Nina Olsen said during a student interview in "Growing Up in Afognak" within the second issue of the Iluani (1976) project, "As I get older I think of these times and I wish I could just live back there again" (p. 7). The same is true for those who today suffer a physical ailment that requires them to live in Kodiak or Anchorage close to medical care, rather than their home village, as well as for those who must live away because of economic, education or wellbeing reasons. With over half of the Kodiak Alutiiq nation now living off-island, this same longing is frequently a reminder that something is missing from their lives. The connection to the land, sea and their heritage often calls them home or leads them to seek

resources that will remind them of this connection wherever they may be on the planet. As Alutiiq Elders say, “This is the land that we belong to, not the land that belongs to us” (Retrieved from <http://www.mnh.si.edu/lookingbothways/data/pages/people.html>).

Nunapet Carliarluki - Stewardship of Our Land

Respect and care of our homeland, or stewardship, is a significant value for the Alutiiq people. The Alutiiq relationship to their ecosystem is established in their oral tradition and cosmological stories and is strongly reinforced through their lived traditional harvest practices. As summarized in the Alutiiq curriculum unit produced by the National Museum of the American Indian Indigenous Geography project from Pinart,

According to a legend recorded by an anthropologist, our animals came from the body of a young woman. One day she lay down and gave birth to all the creatures of the sea and land. As she delivered, her two uncles threw the animals into the water or onto the land—wherever they were meant to go. The woman was married to a star, a spirit man from the sky world, who told her that they would have to kill some of their animal children to feed themselves. (Manosa, 2005)

Stories that reference the origin of animals and land formations all establish a close relationship to human actions and an interdependence that manifests in family terms.

Traditionally, in order for a hunter to be successful, his own behavior at all times was important, but equally important was the behavior of his family. Like many other Indigenous peoples, the Alutiiq followed strict rules or taboos about proper behavior and its relationship to success in hunting. If the land, waters, animals, people and tools were well-respected and the rules for appropriate behaviors followed, then good fortune would be assured. Without this respect for other life and the lands and waters we share, the balance of nature is lost and difficult to regain—a lesson many are beginning to realize worldwide as pollution and over-harvest or habitat destruction is perpetrated across our globe. For example, Elders described these traditions of honor and respect for the land when they talk of their own Elders’ teachings:

The Elders used to say, “Don't throw anything into the creek. If you keep the creek clean, lots of fish will keep coming.” They never threw anything into the

creek. They said that if they threw something into the creek, the fish would disappear in Karluk...Now the fish are trying to return, but I don't think they will ever be the same (June 6, 1997, Leer Conversation with Julie Knagin and Clyda Christiansen, Tape 6, Side A).

Avoiding pollution and maintaining proper care of waste is a tradition that has not been respected within our homeland by newcomers, particularly during the past century of military installations and their subsequent pollution during World War II, followed by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. We can see the ramifications today of our local history of pollution and poor resource management in lower fish runs, high cancer rates, unusual animal behavior, and radical climate shifts—all of which our Elders attribute to what happens when we do not pay respect or follow the rules our ancestors tried to pass on to us through their stories and actions. Respect for the environment and our responsibility as stewards of it is an ancient tradition, particularly among traditional harvest cultures whose people understand the interrelatedness of their care of the environment as the home of the animals and plants who sustain the people.

Alutiiq traditions of right behavior and avoiding contamination of the environment also extend to the power of women. Specifically there are a number of traditional beliefs around the power that women hold when menstruating, and the need to respect prescribed taboos to protect the life of hunters and their success in hunting. Elder Lucille Antowak Davis talked often of the beliefs she was raised with as the daughter of one of last traditional chiefs of Karluk. She tells a personal life story about how as a girl she went with her father to trap fox at Karluk and recalls what she learned on this first hunt with him (L. Davis, 2000). He told her, “‘Pretty soon when you hit your teens you’re not going to go with me no more because you’re going to dirty the ground where I trap.’ Menstruating women could not cross the bridge over the Karluk River, for fear that the salmon would cease swimming upstream” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 142). Traditions of the power women hold, particularly when menstruating, are common among Indigenous peoples. They indicate a strong belief in the reproductive power women possess, as well

as the ability animals have to be highly sensitive to humans, conscious that in order to give themselves up in a hunt they expect to be respected.

We also see a display of animal stewardship that leads to magical results in the story “The Grouse Girl,” when the old lame man “took [the grouse] in his hand, began stroking her, and finally decided to keep her as his pet. Before retiring, the lame man made a nest for the bird near him, and then all turned in for the night” (Golder, 1903b). He is later rewarded for his kindness.

Afognak Alutiiq Elders tell of traditional subsistence resource management practices that established protocols for requesting permission to hunt and instilled respect for territorial boundaries, including the proper allocation of resources to hunters within each territory. These protocols were monitored by specific Elders acknowledged as the area’s chiefs or resource managers, maintaining an effective resource management system based on respect and spiritual influence prior to the American acquisition of Alaska and creation of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, which striped the Alutiiq of their rightful ability to manage their homeland’s traditional harvest resources.

Afognak Elder, John Pestrikoff (August 10, 1999), tells a story about an old couple at Terror Bay (*Quluryaaq*) near Uganik Island on the west side of Kodiak Island, known as the chiefs of that area, who “would allow people to hunt in their territory, and controlled how many animals were caught” (Leer Transcripts of Tape 1, Side A). Pestrikoff describes how “hunters couldn’t pass by without stopping there and getting permission.” However, these Elders had more power than just a social understanding that they granted permission to the hunters of the area. They were able to limit the luck of hunters who did not obey their quota decision. Pestrikoff attributes this ability to shamanistic practices that the couple used to control harvest within the area (August 10, 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff and Dennis Knagin, Tape 1, Side A). Through this power they were able to ensure each hunter only caught their allowed quota.

Pestrikoff goes on to describe how the couple once gave two hunters permission to hunt, saying “‘Alright, go ahead. You can catch so many,’ they instructed them, so many fox, so many land otter...” After the hunters had gotten their limit, the couple told

them “don’t get any more than we gave you permission to get.... You won’t catch anything after that. After you have caught [your limit] you can come back here’ ... So those two went hunting and caught their limit. They tried to hunt for another [animal] but couldn’t catch a thing.” When the hunters returned to report back to show the couple what they had caught, the couple said, “You were gone a long time.” The hunters had to admit that they had tried to catch more than allowed. The couple admonished them and said, ““Yes, remember we told you, you wouldn’t be able to get any more than that.’ So they sent them on their way back home” (July 28, 1998, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 3, Side A; and August 11, 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 4, Side B). The couple was able to protect their territory by controlling how many and what kind of animals other hunters were able to catch through a combination of their accepted role as territorial chiefs of the area and their spiritual influence over the animals within their familiar environment.

Clearly, the Alutiiq maintained a delicate ecological balance within their homeland and guaranteed the appropriate care and use of the land and its resources through an established practice of resource management. Elder John Pestrikoff’s stories of the old couple who were stewards of their territory tells of a tradition of resource protection where Elder caretakers successfully monitored visiting hunters, who would defer to their instructions before doing any hunting (August 11, 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 4, Side B) in a way that arguable surpasses our state mandated resource management system today.

Unguwacirpet - Our Subsistence Lifeways

The subsistence way of life, or traditional harvest as some Elders prefer, is a pervasive, all-encompassing way of life where its practitioner maintains a regular interdependency with the natural world, living off the land, as a source for food, shelter, clothing, transportation and fuel, through hunting and gathering practices used to gather and process resources firsthand as passed down through the generations. However, this way of life is integrated into a person’s overall way of being and touches all aspects of life: spiritual, mental, ethical, physical and emotional and social. A traditional subsistence

way of life is based on “sustained interaction with the [SIC] immediate environment over generations” as Mercurieff (1990) describes in his explanation of his own Unangan upbringing (p. 4), which is at the core of all Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and practices. The collective survival skills developed by peoples who sustained themselves on a specific landscape for millennia has an inherent richness that cannot be fully understood in a short period of time, and can only be learned by living on that landscape for decades alongside Elders. Further, Native cultural traditions and primary food sources are intimately tied to subsistence ways (McLean, 1998). The subsistence way of life is not to be confused with the modern U.S. governmental term ‘subsistence’ for the practice of merely engaging in hunting and resource gathering, which has spurred some Elders to request calling their more comprehensive and spiritually-based practices “traditional harvest lifeways.”

There are many associated ways of knowing that enable and sustain traditional harvest lifeways. For example, as Ross (1992) points out in his chapter *Being Indian is a State of Mind*, a true subsistence hunter does not go after his prey, he receives it (p. 77). There are core skill sets and understandings necessary to live in close daily connection and interaction with the land and sea, which enable a person to make accurate predications for successful hunting and gathering results, and to engage appropriately with their environment. Ross (1992) explains that “[t]he ability to make accurate predictions rests on the accumulation of individual memory, observation and pattern-thought skills” (p. 78). “Observational skills had to be accompanied by a storing of those patterns in memory and by a skill at comparing those stored patterns, in their incredible diversity, with the ever-changing patterns of the day at hand” (Ross, 1992, p. 74). These observational skills are used to draw conclusions or predictions, by sensing and imagining the environment, weather, and the animal or plant behaviors within that environment to know where and how to position oneself on the landscape to receive. Ross (1992) emphasizes that these observational skills actually develop another thought process not generally acknowledged or appreciated within western culture. Over time,

these skills developed into established practices and rituals that carry this Traditional Ecological Knowledge, as well as the respect for engaging with nature appropriately.

Stories about Alutiiq hunting traditions appear within many archived collections, including recordings of Kodiak Island Elders who met with Jeff Leer in the late 1990s to share their knowledge of traditional lifeways. One of the most well known traditional stories about specialized subsistence practices is *Ar'ursulek - The Whaler*, as told by Ralph Demidoff (1962). The Alutiiq form of whaling was a unique practice where, “whalers summoned spiritual power for the hunt through special songs, talismans, and complex, secret rituals” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 166). The Demidoff story is a 75 stanza story of a young initiate observing and learning the whaling practices.

As among other Indigenous cultures, the Alutiiq people have closely observed environmental conditions and animal behaviors as indicators to foretell events and guide their safe travel for hunting and gathering. During a conversation among several Kodiak Alutiiq Elders, they talked about how animals can sense future events, such as an impending earthquake or a death in the community (June 7, 1997, Leer Conversation with Julie Knagin, Dennis Knagin, Clyda Christiansen, and Kathryn Chichenoff, Tape 8x, Side A). The Alutiiq people learned how to read the messages animals give, as they were taught by their Elders the meaning behind the animals' behaviors. Some Elders recalled sea lions charging up the beach toward someone as a sign that that person was going to die soon. Others recalled what a bad sign it was for a bird to fly into a house, foreboding death as well. As times have changed, however, and we encroach into animal habitats or feed them, many wild animals no longer behave in their natural manner, and therefore the messages they once gave us are now confused. As one Elder says, “This is why people used to say that it was bad to feed wild animals.”

Beyond reading animal behavior, the Alutiiq believe strongly in an animal's ability to read human behavior and communicate. Elders tell about how killer whales and porpoises specifically can understand people, and have frequently told stories that demonstrate the animal's ability to form bonded relationships. I also remember hearing from my great-aunt how she used to talk to the birds and get information from them about

what was coming, and I have heard this same story from others. “Elder Phyllis Peterson reminds us, that wherever the animals came from, bears (*taquka’aq*) are very different. They were once people. [She says,] ‘...My grandpa used to tell me...people run away a long time ago. They wanted to be bears...The bears, talk to the bears, they’ll understand you’” (Manosa, 2005). These communications tell us of the Alutiiq perception of animals both as kin to humans and as messengers. For the Alutiiq, the environment is full of messages and ways to understand what is happening or what is to come through our interactions with animals and the natural world.

Within Alutiiq tradition, weather watching or being able to forecast the weather is also an important observational skill for survival, particularly in knowing when travel is not safe or when it is the appropriate time to harvest a particular resource. Elder John Pestrikoff of Port Lions and Afognak calls an individual who possessed this skill a *llaatesurta*, or weatherman, who could “watch the sky and forecast the weather” (July 30, 1998, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 9, Side A). As researcher Craig Mishler (2001) reports, he was impressed by “the special sensitivity local people have to wind direction and wind speed, things largely ignored or misunderstood by outsiders and mainlanders” (p. 150). He provides numerous examples in his essay of how the Kodiak Alutiiq can use their observation and knowledge about the direction of the winds and the weather to determine appropriate times for hunting and gathering. He explains that “[f]or subsistence purposes, especially the gathering of shellfish, one must know about the complex interaction between winds and tides” (p. 150).

Alutiiq knowledge of the weather, tides, and animal behavior has been gathered over millennia through observation and stories passed down through the generations. Today, Alutiiq people still use some of this knowledge to be successful hunters and fishermen in our modern context. However, as our language contains much of this rich knowledge, we stand to lose a great deal of these understandings our ancestors relied upon if we are not successful in sustaining the language. Our Elders admit that while they know of some traditions their Elders practiced, they no longer know the ones that haven’t been practiced since the last generation of Elders passed on. Many of these traditions are

only hinted at in the artifacts or stories we have, in the descriptions by judgmental colonial observers, or in our comparative understanding of our Yup'ik or Inupiaq relatives' traditions. Being a good hunter, gatherer and cook are highly valued skills in Alutiiq culture. To this end we see characters go to great lengths to meet these expectations in stories such as "The Sinew Rope" (1909) or "The Boy Who Became a Mink" (1903b). The ability to live off the land is still an important value for Alutiiq people as summertime harvest is a major occupation so that we can enjoy year-round traditional foods.

Suuget — People: Social Sphere

Central to the social or emotional sphere is people. In Alutiiq the word is *suuget*, or *suk* for one person. In referencing the inner spirit of all living beings, this term is used as *sua* or literally 'its person,' which further emphasizes the spiritual congruity between species and the implied spirituality for all living beings. Another word appropriate for this sphere could be *imaq* or water as it is a core element that sustains human life and is a central element of our island's ecosystem. Further as the Alutiiq are also known as the 'people of the sea,' it stands to represent the social sphere as the water is what gives us life. For our understanding of this sphere in relation to the whole body, we can identify emotions or feelings as *ellpeklluku* or 'to sense.' This word is also closely related to the pronoun *ellpet* or 'you,' emphasizing perspective. The social sphere exists in the second sphere of the model, where three of the fourteen core Alutiiq values relate:

- *Suupet* (Our people or community) "Our people: we are responsible for each other and ourselves"
- *Cuqllipet* (Our Elders) "Our Elders"
- *Ilaapet* (Our family) "Our family and kinship of ancestors and living relatives"

The underlying question that these value statements answer is: *Who do we build respectful relationships for and what does it mean to live together respecting our relationships rightly in the world from the Alutiiq perspective?*

Suupet - Our people

Kodiak Alutiiq Elders selected “Our People” as a value, but then further clarified the statement as “We are responsible for each other and ourselves” (NEAR, 2002). This value is closely linked to the value, “Respect for self, others and our environment is inherent in all of these values.” Caring for our people and ourselves, goes much further than just being polite. It is about interdependence with each other and the need for each person to fulfill their role or responsibilities to others in their family and community. The inclusion of “ourselves” or “self” in these value statements is important to note, as deterioration of self is a sign of an imbalance in wellbeing within the community or family. Chronic health issues, domestic violence, substance abuse, and suicide are unfortunate realities that all Alutiiq communities suffer. The importance of human life is one value that often falls into shadow when outside pressures become overwhelming for individuals and families, or when our traditional values are not lived or taught to our younger generations. Most Alutiiq stories explore this value to some extent. Although some of the stories appear to have a disregard for human life, given the level of violence and death that is portrayed, these are akin to mythological stories across the world that include harrowing topics. In fact, the stories that feature death are arguably the most reflective of the sanctity of human life. The drama of these stories is intended to illicit an emotion of fear and surprise to emphasize the wrong doing. For example, in “The Sinew Rope” (Golder, 1909) and “Tutga’urluq at Devil’s Lagoon” as told by John Pestrikoff (Leer, 1999, Transcripts of Tape 4, Side A), the heroes barely escape from the sinister cannibals within both of these stories.

In classical Alutiiq society, the community governance structure had safety checks built in to make sure that everyone held up their responsibilities and that the people were cared for. In the Russian era and start of the American era still, each community had a chief or *tuyuq* (although this name of chief comes from Russian), a second chief or *sakaasiik* (chief’s assistant) and later a church warden or *staaristaq* (Steffian & Counciller, 2012). These leadership positions were a heavy responsibility, highly respected, and necessary for community wellbeing. Elders today remember the strictness

of some *tuyuq* as they held high expectations for their village and made sure the people were safe and that community decisions were made to benefit all.

Within the Alutiiq culture there were several types of healers and spiritual guides, as discussed in Chapter 6. Each community had at least one midwife or *paapuskaaq*— “a healer versed in herbal medicines and the arts of bloodletting, surgery, and childbirth” (Steffian & Counciller, 2012, p. 101). In pre-contact times they also had *kalla’let* (shamans) and *kas’at* (wise ones, priests or masters of ceremony) who oversaw all aspects of ceremonial life before Russian Orthodoxy. The term *kas’aq* transferred meaning, with the coming of Russian Orthodoxy, to now be used for “priest” in the Christian sense, as explored in Chapter 6. Collectively, these leaders served as both guardians and healers and thus were capable of sustaining wellbeing for the community prior to colonization and all that it brought with it. Joanne Mulcahy (2001) describes traditional healing for the people as:

... a pivotal metaphor, emblematic of deeply held cultural values and often invoked for the social as well as the physical body. At the heart of Kodiak women’s stories is the concept of healing or ‘making whole’ ... healing seeks balance in the community or between human beings and a higher being (p. xxviii).

She recognizes that for the Alutiiq people, wellbeing occurs as a holistic state when harmony is brought between the various spheres of life, including spirituality.

While narratives are the most widely recognized form of storytelling, songs are also a major form of storytelling. One traditional song from the Russian era of Alutiiq history that responds to the social sphere is *Ukut Skuunat* – These Schooners. Mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, this song tells of the dark days of forced hunting and enslavement after the massacre at *Awa’uq* or Refuge Rock. Accompanying the recording of the *Ukut Skuunat* song on the Generations CD, Elder Mary Peterson tells the story behind the song that she had heard about the cruel treatment suffered by the Alutiiq (Alutiiq Museum & Blanchett, 2007, Generations CD, Track 25). This song echoes the story that Arseni

Aminak told Holmberg in 1805 of the Russian conquest of the Alutiiq people in 1784 and the forced sea otter hunting that led to the loss of many Alutiiq men.

Cuqllipet - Our Elders

While there are many old men and old women or grandmothers within the stories, who play the role of advisors or caregivers, it is interesting to note that *unigkuat* and early *quliyanguat* typically do not feature Elders as the main characters or highlight the importance of respect for them. This is likely due to the fact that in the past children were inherently raised with this value impressed upon them in many other ways which did not require it be taught through stories, nor was the value threatened then by a conflicting worldview that merit youth over old age, as the western worldview does. Because extended families lived together and Elders played an active role raising children and educating them on a daily basis, their importance was obvious. The practices of providing the first of any catch or any meal, helping Elders with chores, and listening to them attentively were commonly understood as givens. Today, however, after generations of western assimilation that emphasizes individualism, school education separate from family, and the nuclear family unit over extended family, there is a growing lack of respect and appreciation for the value of Elders, as their presence within the lives of younger generations is limited. Therefore more life stories now are told that include examples of respect for Elders as an important Alutiiq value.

As Jim Dillard (2003b) explores in his essay on “Caring for Elders” in the *Sharing Our Pathways* newsletter, he summarizes his thoughts on the subject after talking with Cup’ik educator Cecilia Martz. Reflecting on his past interactions with Elders, he says “that a fairly strict set of guidelines [such as Cecilia described] could have made that sharing much more meaningful for both the Elders and myself” (p. 7). Perhaps this is a way that modern Alutiiq storytellers can assist families in helping revitalize this value and the practices associated with it.

Stories told to admonish young people and scare them into culturally acceptable behaviors are common across cultures. For the Alutiiq, one such story tells about the

horrific results when young people did not heed their Elders' warnings. This story about the Northern Lights was told by Jennie Zeedar in an issue of the Iluani project:

In the olden days everybody danced every night. Young people didn't believe their mom and dad when they told them about the Northern Lights. The more the old people told the younger people not to dance too much, the more they danced when they were not supposed to. The Northern Lights swallowed them up and when that happened the people started believing their parents.

There were two old people that were scared because all the other people were dancing and the Northern Lights were out. When those old people didn't want to be among the younger kids they went to a banya and stayed there because they were scared of what might happen to all the other people who were dancing. Finally when they didn't hear anything they came out of the banya and they saw all those people's heads cut off. That is what the Northern Lights did. (Zeedar, 1978)

Elders today still tell such stories about the northern lights or *qiugyat*. These stories stretch back through the oral tradition and were also recorded by Pinart (1872a, 1872b). They emphasize the need to listen to your elders or the consequences can be severe.

Ilaapet - Family and Kinship

One of the best stories to convey the value of family for the Alutiiq, and the lengths that people will go to save their family, is the true life survival story of the Skonberg family from Chignik. In 1947, just after Christmas, ten Skonberg family members and friends were crossing the Shelikof Straits in a storm, headed to Kodiak for a wedding (Skog, 1985). After attempts to seek shelter during the storm, they hit a rock pile on New Years Eve and their boat the *Spencer* went down. Stranded for five days until the Coast Guard could rescue them, they huddled together with no fire to warm them because the winds were too strong. Despite their attempts to build a makeshift shelter from hatch boards and bedding they had salvaged, the men on the outer ring of the huddle were badly frostbitten, while protecting the two women, a child and an Elder. Remarkably in their desperate situation the survivors were racked with worry about their other family

members waiting for them at home who did not know that they were still alive. Six of the younger men had to have their legs amputated three weeks later without general anesthesia; they only had spinal anesthesia, leaving them awake. It took Dr. Bob Johnson four days to complete the operations, taking one leg in the morning and one in the afternoon. Despite the traumatic and life changing event, all survived and after six months of recovery most of the men went back fishing that next summer. As Bill Skonberg describes, “Well, we surprised everyone in Chignik when we came walking off the boat” (Skog, 1985, p. 30). In the face of life threatening situations, the closeness of family and selfless acts to protect and preserve one’s family members is a testament to this value that Alutiiq people hold dear. In a place where help may be slow to come or never arrive, survival requires this strong connection be maintained.

Within Alutiiq ancestral literature there are also many stories that emphasize the importance of family. The story of the swan maiden, known as “The Sad Fate of Uchatngiak,” is a story about family. When Uchatngiak’s cruel sister drives off his wife, she later flies back to take their son and Uchatngiak journeys to find them. When he finds them in Bird Heaven he gives up his freedom, and returns to his childhood state of captivity just to be with them.

A matrilineal society, Alutiiq family dynamics have been challenged through western assimilation, where now some families struggle with domestic violence. A balance in gender and family roles is an important aspect within a family’s state of wellbeing; although within our modern context, family structure and gender roles are frequently different than they once were. Regardless, the value of family, both immediate and extended, is extremely important in Alutiiq culture. In fact, no distinction is made between first, second or third cousins, as all are considered cousins, akin to siblings.

Knowing one’s genealogy is important as well. My great-grandmother used to tell my father long lists of all the people he was related to, and one day he asked why she was telling him all this. She said, “so you don’t end up marrying one of them.” Intermarriage between villages was common, as people were typically closely related to each other in each community, and so men typically found a mate outside of their home village.

Family dynamics are also often challenged in Alutiiq stories. For example in “The Unnatural Uncle,” while maternal uncles traditionally played a father role for their sister’s children the uncle in this story was noted as unnaturally jealous and cruel. In the sister sun, brother moon story told by Clyda Christiansen (Leer, 1997-1999), she tells of how the two were ashamed when they realized they were brother and sister in the steam bath. Stories such as those featuring evil characters or inappropriate behaviors often function as a release for young people to consider inappropriate behaviors without acting upon them.

Keneq — Fire (Process): Cognitive Sphere

The essence of the mental or cognitive sphere is the metaphorical fire that ignites and drives us from within. The word for fire in Alutiiq is *keneq*. I selected this title for this values group as fire is the central natural element that engages process, provides warmth or vitality, produces sustenance and inspires creativity. Symbolically, fire brings change because it is capable of transforming things from one state into another.

The mental or cognitive sphere exists in the third sphere of the model, where three of the fourteen core Alutiiq values relate:

- *Liicukukut* (We learn) “Learning by doing, observing, and listening”
- *Piciipet Uswituu’uq* (Our way is wise) “Traditional arts, skills and ingenuity”
- *Sugt’stun Niuwacipet; Yugnerpet* (Our heritage language) “Our heritage language”

The underlying question that these value statements answers is: *What thought processes sustain the Alutiiq knowledge system?*

The location of this values group seems no accident. While we only know a little about the sky worlds within ancestral Alutiiq faith, the third world is where *Kas’arpak* resides, the ‘chief of the wise ones.’ *Kas’arpak* is “a spirit who created all of the different birds and animals from a single ‘little man,’ (i.e., a *suk*). He was also the ancestor and advisor to human *kas’at* on earth...[who communicated] the wishes of *Llam Sua*” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 197). The *kas’at* were the masters of ceremony, who “taught the oral traditions, and composed dances and songs” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 189). The third world is also the world that the *kall’alet*, healers or shamans,

communicated with their spirit helpers. The Alutiiq traditionally believed that spirits communicated through whistling. This belief is illustrated in the original *Llam Sua* icon itself as the third world is depicted with four whistling lips at each of the four directions.

It is also interesting to consider how the cognitive aspect and Alutiiq cosmological beliefs relate to Freudian psychoanalytical understandings of cognitive processes. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the Ego is “the part of the mind that mediates between the conscious and the unconscious and is responsible for reality testing and a sense of personal identity” (*New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2005). We can also consider this aspect as where the development of intuition and common sense generates. It is the seat of knowledge, intellectual functioning, and applied learning and innovation.

Liicukukut - Learning by Doing, Observing and Listening

The traditional Alutiiq way of learning is built upon the practice of applied knowledge acquisition and apprenticeship. Explored in Chapter 5, Indigenous education prior to contact was both practical and structured. There were prescribed rules and processes for the right way to go about learning something new, which included earning the right to access knowledge and demonstrating proficiency. Today, these same processes are still culturally-appropriate for Alutiiq students within modern contexts and should be encouraged as effective ways to engage students and help instill knowledge. Alutiiq stories often feature these traditional learning processes.

For example, one of the best stories that illustrates beliefs about traditional learning processes is the story *Ar'ursulek* - “The Whaler” (Demidoff, 1962). In it the boy “wanted to be a whale hunter too when he grew up...so he decided to watch everything the old whaler did” (stanza 3). The whaler proposes to take him out so he can learn how, as long as he follows his instructions. Throughout the story the boy watches the old whaler, but not as directed. He sneaks behind him to watch all of his mysterious actions, taking in all that he witnesses. What the boy learns, he learns by spying against the whaler’s permission. At one point the boy also asks a question and the whaler grows at him and says, “Never ask any questions. Just do what you are told. Young hunting partners learn by watching what is done and by doing what they are told to do. But never

by asking questions” (stanza 24). Later again he asks more questions and the whaler simply says “I don’t know” in response (stanza 66). The boy is very frightened by what he witnesses and never fully learns the secrets or becomes a whaler himself. In the end the whaler leaves him and he never sees him again. Although the boy was observant, he did not engage in the learning process the way his teacher invited him, and so he was denied access to further knowledge. The traditional process of learning by doing, observing and listening, was and is an effective method for gaining mastery in a skill, as explored further in Chapter 5 on Native education. But as in the case of *Ar’ursulek*, ethics and protocols determine the right way to do it (Demidoff, 1962).

The transmission of this knowledge through apprenticeship was controlled by the individual who chose to initiate and mentor whoever was worthy. This sharing had its own code of ethics ingrained in youth, so that the knowledge would be respected and used appropriately. In our modern day of multicultural interactions, technology and multimedia influences, we have seen rapid transformations and abuses of Indigenous knowledge. What sometimes are innocent usages of Indigenous knowledge out of context, can become very harmful for the community.

Most of the other stories that feature learning as a theme include it as learning through observation and experimentation. For example, in the story of “Light,” Raven seeks to steal the light from the chief’s house (Golder, 1903b). He undergoes an elaborate plan to be reborn to the chief’s daughter so that he will gain access to all that is in their house. After much observing he learns where the light is hidden and then prepares to steal it when no one is around. Careful observation is similarly rewarded in other *unigkuat*, such as: “The Sad Fate of Uchatngiak” (1903b), “The Sinew Rope” (Golder, 1909), “The Grouse Girl” (1903b), and the “Unnatural Uncle” (1903b). Knowledge acquisition through deductive reasoning is also explored in “Hunting First Fox” (L. Davis, 2000), “Shuyak Island Surfaces” and “Red Cedar of Afognak” (Leer, 1999). Ultimately, learning is both about how you learn and what you can do with the knowledge you attain.

Piciipet Uswituu'uq - Traditional Arts, Skills and Ingenuity

Being able to outwit or solve problems through ingenious solutions is highly valued in Alutiiq culture. While trade was important for ancestral Alutiiq communities, essential and specialty items were necessary for survival and success in daily life. The Alutiiq Museum houses many examples of tools that demonstrate Alutiiq ingenuity at its finest. For example, within Alutiiq tradition there is an endless list of tools and processes that demonstrate this ingenuity, such as: flexible sea kayaks, hydrodynamic paddles, v-shaped halibut hooks, atlatls, waterproof gutskin rain gear and patching disks, as well as unique whale hunting practices using poisons and ocean currents, just to name a few. Although the Alutiiq do not produce these items today for the same purpose as our ancestors did, they still hold a purpose within education. As Joanne Mulcahy (2001) explains, “Today, village children carve a kayak, not for fishing, as their ancestors did, but to remind them of who they are, ritually re-creating ancestral spirit” (p. 132). Appreciating the ingenuity of our ancestors by studying and recreating cultural artifacts is one way to reconnect across time, but it also develops the process of learning to problem solve using local resources, which is an important skill set for survival.

Jim Dillard (2003a), a woodworker, teacher and participant at the 2001 Dig Afognak Academy of Elders/Science Camp, wrote a reflective essay in the *Sharing Our Pathways* newsletter on the ingenuity that he witnessed among Alutiiq Elders. He writes,

As several of the Elders were building a skiff in camp, I noticed that there were no plans, no blueprints, no sort of device to keep everything to scale. I was to learn that these items, had they been there, would have only hindered the process. All measurement was by the length of parts of the human body, an arm span, a hand span, nose to fingertip and so on. The finished project was beautifully balanced in form and was totally symmetrical—custom made. (p. 6)

When he questioned another Elder about how he had learned the trick he used to drill for and lock in place a dart head on another project, the Elder explained that, “...he had never really learned the method, as a matter of fact, he had never used that particular method before, but said, ‘That’s just what I happened to have.’” Dillard (2003a) concludes,

...I frequently saw similar incidences of on-the-spot ingenuity. From my experiences I learned not to limit myself so much to using only the “proper tool.” I have learned that common items found in any camp or boat can be used as effective tools. I discovered that an acceptable tool for a given job may be in my pocket or even on the beach right in front of me. I have begun to experience the special humor-laden pleasure of completing a job by improvisation. (p. 6)

The skill of Alutiiq people to make do is evident. Integrated into the children’s book *A Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwoods Journey*, that expands on Elder John Pestrikoff’s story about a red cedar log cast behind Afognak village centuries ago from a tsunami, has many examples of the types of ingenuity that Alutiiq people are known for (Drabek & Adams, 2004; August 1999, Leer Conversation with John Pestrikoff, Tape 4, Side A).

There are many examples of trickery within traditional Alutiiq stories and the ingenious ways that heros survive them. For example, in “The Sinew Rope” story the hero seeks out to change his luck in hunting by risking his own life to be captured by supernatural, cannibalistic people (Golder, 1909). Despite great suffering as they cut off one of his toes, he continues to play dead until he is able to narrowly escape with the magic rope, which later proves to be serendipitously the thing that makes him a renown hunter, thus bringing his journey to a successful close. In several of the stories, such as “The Unnatural Uncle,” “The Boy Who Became a Mink” and “The Sad Fate of Ucatngiak,” the heros are given a seemingly random assortment of objects which inevitably are the perfect fit for their escape (Golder, 1903b). Ingenuity and the ability to make do with what you have on hand or can find beachcombing are critical for both Alutiiq survival and comfort. As an island with limited resources it is understandable why this value would appear repeatedly as a common theme within Alutiiq literature.

Sugt’stun Niuwacipet - Our Heritage Language

Obviously, during ancestral times the Alutiiq language was important in terms of offering the ability to tell stories using the language. However, the very language itself offers a story, as words are embedded with metaphor and readily apparent etymological roots that carry meaning and linkages to larger concepts that are frequently lost in

translation. I have yet to find an ancestral story that indicates how the language was first given to the people or the significance of the language to the people. Yet, within our modern context and colonized state of communication, there are many life stories from Elders today that focus on the value of our heritage language and their painful experiences as it was devalued when they were young.

Although language is a part of all storytelling, this column in the catalog is not intended to include notations for stories as containing the value of language unless they explicitly addressed language loss or oppression through colonization. A recent UAF student came to Kodiak to begin a study of Elder stories of punishment in school for speaking their Indigenous language, which most likely will not be released for public access. However, the Alutiiq Museum National Science Foundation Language project also collected life stories from these same fluent Elders who suffered this persecution during their lives.

Anerneq — Breath: Spiritual Sphere

The essence of the spiritual sphere is breathe, air or *anerneq*, which also translates as spirit in Alutiiq. The concept of *anerneq* as spirit is most similar to the concept of an energy body, not a ghost (*tanraq*) or a soul (*surneq*). The spiritual sphere exists in the fourth sphere of this wellbeing model. Two of the fourteen core Alutiiq values relate to the spiritual sphere and comprise parallel but antithetical approaches for communicating spirit:

- *Agayumaukut* (We are prayerful) “Faith and spiritual life from ancestral beliefs to the diverse faiths of today”
- *Englarstaisngukut* (We like to laugh) “Sense of Humor”

The underlying question that these value statements answers is: *How do the Alutiiq cope with challenges and make meaning of life?*

Agayumaukut - Faith and Spiritual Life

Spirituality and faith are significant aspects within both ancestral and contemporary Alutiiq culture. Ancestral Alutiiq people perceived their world as full of spiritual interactions and messages from the spirit worlds. They believed that spirits and

supernatural beings walk among us and are difficult or nearly impossible to differentiate from real people or animals as explored in Chapter 6. In fact, their identity, connections to each other and the land, as well as their own mental and physical health were all intertwined with spiritual processes at work within daily life. Spirituality for the Alutiiq was not reserved solely for ceremonial events, but were part of all aspects of daily activities. In addition to lived practices based on faith, they also had a rich ceremonial life that helped keep individual and community wellbeing in balance. Mask ceremonies, rituals and demonstrations of shamanic power in the gathering house or *qasqiq* were all methods for communicating with the spirit world to bring good luck in hunting or to heal the sick. The Alutiiq spirit world was made of a complex arrangement of deities and supernatural beings influencing people and the environment at all times. The value of faith and spirituality is rooted in the understanding that physical, mental, social, and ethical life, are inseparable from spiritual life. Hence, the model of wellbeing and values-based story analysis is represented by concentric spheres within each other, imitating the Alutiiq spiritual perception of the universe.

Most of the *unigkuat* or cosmological stories are spiritual or faith-based in nature, as they recount stories of the origins of life and the interactions or influences of spirit beings. Many of the characters in these stories and the mask songs are deities or supernatural beings who comprise the Alutiiq pantheon and cosmology. In essence, Alutiiq *unigkuat* provided both life lessons and descriptions of the origin and reasons for life itself. Stories of the sun and the moon, stars, land formations, volcanos, and animals all help demonstrate the Alutiiq cosmology and the interactions that can be expected. Many of the recurrent themes or motifs in ancestral Alutiiq stories explore spiritual aspects such as foretelling, transformation, and miraculous escapes.

In many cases the indication that a story is about a supernatural being is very subtle. For example, in both “The Girl Who Married a Star” (Golder, 1903a) and “The Sad Fate of Uchatngiak” (Golder, 1903b), the main characters are introduced as having been raised in seclusion, which echoes other stories, such as “The Woman Who Married the Moon,” where characters who visit other worlds must follow prescribed rules or

seclusion in order to remain in that world. Arguably in the case of both the Star-wife and Uchatngiak, both come from other worlds than in which they were raised, and hence in their adulthood undertake inevitable spirit journeys between worlds. The transition between worlds manifests through several processes, but frequently comes from closing their eyes as in the “The Woman Who Married the Moon” discussed in Chapter 8, and in the “Girl Who Went in Search of Her Lover,” when she closes her eyes five times and sings, she is transported through rapids safely to the shore of the evil shaman who killed her lover and all the other hunters of the village who had gone missing.

In the *Values Catalog of Kodiak Alutiiq Stories* (see Appendix B), the two columns listed before the fourteen value columns designate the inclusion in each story of animal communication or transformation, or the type of hero or god featured. Within the transformation column, I have also noted the names of animals or objects that the story characters transform into, or the name of the deities or supernatural beings encountered. For example, the *Ar’ursulek* story “reveals the Alutiiq belief that every creature had a human-like consciousness, represented by a small person that lives inside of it. Whalers told such stories when training their apprentices” (Steffian & Counciller, 2009, p. 42). Chapter 6 of this dissertation also further explores the meanings or beliefs within ancestral Alutiiq cosmology and the transition to Russian Orthodoxy that is reflected in more recent Alutiiq stories.

Perhaps one of the most powerful post-colonial stories about the strength of the Russian Orthodox faith among the Alutiiq is the story of St. Peter the Aleut, who was martyred in 1815 in San Francisco by Spanish Roman Catholic colonists threatened by Russian encroachment into California. Peter, whose Alutiiq name was *Cukagnaq*, was a fur-hunter from Kaguyak on Kodiak Island who had been baptized by Russian missionaries (Cady



Fig. 7.5: *St. Peter the Aleut, unknown provenance. Retrieved from www.allmercifulsavior.com*

& Webber, 2006; Bucko, 2007). The following account is according to Simeon Yanovsky, son-in-law of Alexander Baranov and his successor as general manager of the Russian American Company from 1818 to 1820. Yanovsky was a convert himself of Father Herman, later to become a Russian Orthodox monk and author *The Life of St. Herman of Alaska*. In this letter available via the Orthodox Church of America's website, he writes of the story of Peter as told to him by Ivan Kiglay, the surviving captive who witnessed Peter's torture:

On another occasion I was relating to him how the Spanish in California had imprisoned fourteen Aleuts, and how the Jesuits (actually Franciscans) were forcing all of them to accept the Catholic Faith. But the Aleuts would not agree under any circumstances, saying, 'We are Christians.' The Jesuits argued, 'That's not true, you are heretics and schismatics. If you do not agree to accept our faith then we will torture all of you to death.' Then the Aleuts were placed in prisons two to a cell. That evening, the Jesuits came to the prison with lanterns and lighted candles. Again they tried to persuade two Aleuts in the cell to accept the Catholic Faith. 'We are Christians,' the Aleuts replied, 'and we will not change our Faith.' Then the Jesuits began to torture them, at first the one while his companion was a witness. They cut off one of the joints of his feet, and then the other joint. Then they cut the first joint on the fingers of his hands, and then the other joint. Then they cut off his feet, and his hands. The blood flowed, but the martyr endured all and firmly repeated one thing: 'I am a Christian.' He died in such suffering, due to a loss of blood. The Jesuit also promised to torture his comrade to death the next day.

But that night an order was received from Monterey stating that the imprisoned Aleuts were to be released immediately, and sent there under escort. Therefore, in the morning all were sent to Monterey with the exception of the dead Aleut. This was related to me by a witness, the same Aleut who had escaped torture, and who was the friend of the martyred Aleut. I reported this incident to the authorities in St Petersburg. When I finished my story, Father Herman asked,

‘What was the name of the martyred Aleut?’ I answered, ‘Peter. I do not remember his family name.’ The Elder stood reverently before an icon, made the Sign of the Cross and said, ‘Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us!’ (Orthodox Church of America, Retrieved from <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=102713>)

Not only does this story represent a steadfast commitment to the Russian Orthodox faith, but it also marks a significant turning point for the Alutiiq, as following this tragic event they entered a period referred to as the Golden Age as discussed in Chapter 5. There is no doubt of the impact that this story had upon Simeon Yanovsky and his the subsequent development of a relationship with Father Herman, which ultimately greatly improved the living conditions of Kodiak Alutiiq within the Russian territory during his term as manager of the RAC.

Englarstaisgnukut - Humor

As an antithesis to the somber countenance of prayer, the ability to laugh and find humor is a strong value within the Alutiiq heritage. In the face of sorrow or the hard times that life can bring, humor makes it bearable or can be what saves us. Joking and teasing within Alutiiq culture is pervasive. In storytelling today there is nearly always laughter and play on words, and so it would be extremely unusual for this same jovial nature common and highly valued as a character trait not have been a major part in storytelling during ancestral Alutiiq times. We do have reference to this where Davydov noted in his critique of ancestral Alutiiq poetry in 1805 how the stories and songs he witnessed were only either love poetry or satire (Davydov, 1977, p. 184).

Among the *unigkuat*, humor is interwoven into stories, although in their English form it is diluted or absent as the Alutiiq language has humorous connotations that are lost in translation or enigmatic for modern audience to pick up on. Thankfully some ironic elements remain to hint at the humor implied in the story. In the written English it is easy to miss that a situation was supposed to be humorous, for example as in the story “Raven and His Grandmother” (Golder, 1903a). In this story, Raven is angry at the stingy and greedy people of the village, including his ungrateful first wife who ran away from

him because she thought he was too stinky. Upon his delivery of a whale to the village his first wife is showing off their child, now that she thinks he is important. Raven is disgusted by her behavior and calls her nearer. His revenge is to defecate on them as he flies overhead. This leaves her speechless and drives her away. Likely the original telling of this tale was full of laughter at imagining the ungrateful wife covered in filth and the selfish villagers punished by their own gluttony after being so stingy to Raven and his family. I suspect this story was an uproarious one when told in Alutiiq.

Within the same story publication by Golder (1903a), the story of “Two Inquisitive Men” appears to also have once been a very humorous tale. At the end when the two men are paddling for home, the old man P’tingyuwaq (Petingyuwock) plays a trick on them by tying a line to their boat to pull them back to shore each time they think they have set off. The two men were too curious and nosy, yet are oblivious to the trick being played on them. In the end when their boat tips over they transform into two capes or points of land, thus explaining why capes are always so noisy and bothersome to get around, just like overly inquisitive people. As in the previous Raven story though, the humor is not readily apparent in the English written form, removed from an oral performance.

Another example of silliness within Alutiiq literature is a humorous and playful traditional song still sung today. The song and dance is called *Neresta*, or Louse, about lice taking banya and making a big show of *taariq*-ing or whisking as they splash water on the rocks and sing (Alutiiq Museum & Blanchett, 2007). The song is sung with great humor and verve, bringing laughter to the dancers and audience for those who understand what this playful song is about.

There are many Elders and leaders known for their humor. Two Elders remembered fondly, and widely known for their storytelling and good humor, were Sven Haakanson, Sr. of Old Harbor and Dennis Knagin of Afognak. Those who knew them both remember fondly their irreverent comments that would make you laugh even at inappropriate times. Sven’s wife Mary Haakanson recently described life with Haakanson in an interview when she said, “I used to try to get mad at him and he would say, ‘You

won't be mad long, I'll make you laugh.' And he did" (KANA, 2012). Humor was a great part of their life together.

In storytelling reclamation efforts that hopefully will develop in the coming years, the traditional stories that have been documented in English text only will need particular attention paid to re-imbue the humor that likely was a major part of many of the stories.

Lla — Conscience: Ethical Sphere

The essence of the ethical sphere is *lla* or conscience. *Lla* is defined as “outside, outdoors, universe, world, weather, awareness, consciousness, wits, (common) sense” (Leer, n.d., *LL*). It is in the final sphere, where the great spirit or *Llam Sua* resides, that the most complex ethics-based stories generate. While there are other values embedded within the core Alutiiq ethical values, such as honesty, cooperation, loyalty, or integrity, they all fit within these prioritized statements. Three of the fourteen core Alutiiq values that relate to the ethical sphere are:

- *Ilakuisngukut* (We favor sharing) “Sharing: we welcome everyone”
- *Sugtanartukut; Uqwarnartukut* (We trust) “Trust”
- *Ling'aklluki* (We Respect Them) “Respect for self, others and our environment is inherent in all of these values”

The underlying question that these value statements answer is: *What principles determine the Alutiiq sense of right and wrong or morals?*

Sharing

Sharing is an extremely important value within the Alutiiq culture—a culture based on survival in what can be an unforgiving climate. This value is explored through many traditional stories through the consequences of not sharing. In “The Raven and His Grandmother,” the story starts with how Raven and his grandmother lived on the outskirts of a village, almost as outcasts (Golder, 1903a). Although “Raven would come and beg a fish, [the villagers] would never give him one.” Instead he and his grandmother were left to live off “any sick fish or refuse that may have been left,” in essence living on garbage. As the story develops, during one particularly harsh winter the people are hungry and hunting was sparse. Raven seeks a wife and provides food for the village in

exchange for the chief's daughter. Despite his proof that he is a good provider his first bride shuns him. Upon his second effort to win a bride he is successful, but this time she stays because "with him she would have enough to eat, at least" (p. 18). The curious conclusion to the story is death to all the gluttonous villagers, who before were selfish and did not share, and then gorged themselves without acknowledging his generosity.

While looking at the list of Alutiiq values it may appear that the values are similar to or the same as western values by name, yet the prioritization or importance of the values is often very different between cultures. For the Alutiiq, sharing is one of the most important values, even more sacred than the sanctity of life. A murderer can be forgiven, but someone who is habitually stingy will be cast out or put to death. In "The Unnatural Uncle" (Golder, 1903b), when the hero returns to the village to check on his parents and brings them a whale as a gift to share, his gesture is thwarted. This story explores an important value priority that conflicts with western values, and therefore may be confusing for some unfamiliar with the importance of sharing in the Alutiiq culture. The hero says to his selfish uncle, "I could have forgiven you the death of my brothers, the four attempts on my life, but for the cruel treatment of my parents [for not sharing] you shall pay" (Golder, 1903b, p. 94). The hero proceeds to transform into an eagle and kills his uncle by dropping him from high above the sea.

Another story that focuses on the value of sharing is "Light," also known as "How Raven Stole the Light" (Golder, 1903b). In this story there is a selfish chief who will not share light with the other villages. After great cleverness on Raven's part he is successful in bringing the moon and the stars to the world in exchange for a wife. Raven is a bit greedy himself, as is only human, and is able to also negotiate a second wife in exchange for the sun. His reward of two wives is a small price to pay for the gift of light unleashed.

I will not go into depth here on the concept of respect, trust and sharing as told through the story "Woman Who Became a Bear" as it is explored more in-depth in Chapter 8. This story offers a strong reminder of the importance of all of these ethical values, and the duties we have to share with our families and our community.

Trust

Stories of trust speak of a power that generates from a place of confidence. Recorded by Alutiiq language apprentices with the Alutiiq Museum, Elder Nick Alokli tells a story of his first bear hunt with his father that illustrates the value of trust. After he shot his first bear, Alokli's father led him through an Alutiiq rite of passage, instructing him to put his arm down the bear's throat so that he would not be afraid of bears after that. When he tells this story you can sense that it is with great pride and love for his father, built upon the trust he felt for him as well as the development of his own sense of self-trust established through this rite of passage.

In turn, stories of broken trust or betrayal, and the negative feelings or consequences that this elicits, are also an indicator of its significance as a core Alutiiq value. A well-known story of betrayal from historic times is told by Arsent Aminak to Holmberg in 1805 (1985 translation) about how Kashpak betrayed the Alutiiq people at Refuge Rock when telling of the "unknown portage across the island to the Russians" (p. 59). His betrayal cost the lives of hundreds that day in 1784 and resulted in the conquest of the Kodiak Alutiiq. Perhaps Kashpak saw no other option after witnessing other atrocities during his own captivity and hoped that the people would surrender. Regardless, his name has gone down in history as a traitor.

Just as we see the deadly consequences of betrayal in "The Woman Who Became a Bear" (discussed in Chapter 8), the same broken trust appears in the "Old Man of the Volcano" (Golder, 1909), "The Girl Who Went in Search of Her Lover" (Golder, 1903a), "The White-Faced Bear" (1907) and "The Unnatural Uncle" (Golder, 1903b). In the "Old Man of the Volcano," we see the first in a series of betrayals after the mother transforms into an eagle. She seeks vengeance upon her faithless husband, and then flies home to equip her son with the means to survive trickery that will one day befall him. She gives him a feather, a pebble and a needle to each help him escape the various betrayals he will be faced with. In "The Girl Who Went in Search of Her Lover" there is an interesting cycle of trust and betrayal that the heroine goes through in order to defeat the evil shaman who killed her lover (Golder, 1903a). Arguably, her willingness to trust him, and his

betrayal of his promise to not seek to harm her, renders him powerless against her evasions. In the “White-Faced Bear,” the bear gives his trust to the hunter that he will cease hunting bears if he spares his life, but in the end the hunter breaks his promise and suffers with his life (Golder, 1909). In “The Unnatural Uncle” we see a strong sense of self-trust when the boy is confident that he will survive his murderous uncle’s attempts on his life (Golder, 1903b). Trust as an ethic manifests differently depending on context.

Respect

Similarly, respect for others is an overarching value that varies depending on its context within Alutiiq culture. In some cases it plays out as tolerance or patience, which are embedded values within respect, in others it is thoughtful actions or inactions done in reverence for that which is worthy of respect. We see the first form illustrated in the Karluk story of “Ughek” (Golder, 1909), where the main character is described as half-witted and of a great annoyance to the people. Yet in the end, it is their impatience with him, their lack of respect, and their cruel isolation of him that ultimately leads to their demise. This story offers a lesson in being patient and respectful even when someone is an annoyance, particularly when they cannot help it.

The ethic of respect also plays out as a central theme in the story “The Grouse Girl,” when the grouse gives herself to the kind old lame man who is respectful toward her and not to the handsome young man who is rough and cruel (Golder, 1903b). In the end, when the young man’s jealousy and disrespect leads him to kill the old man in order to have the grouse girl as his wife, she flies away from him, leaving him in isolation.

In “The Boy Who Became a Mink,” the boy is disrespectful to his grandmother and her warnings, which leads him into life threatening dangers (Golder, 1903b). Despite her warnings to not venture into one specific bay, “he laughed at his grandmother’s fears” (p. 95) and is caught in a series of traps by the shamans of the bay. He eventually heeds her warnings as conveyed through the mink skin and is successful in his escape.

Through the Alutiiq worldview and reflection on our core values through stories we are able to teach meaningful lessons. Just as the value statement says, "Respect...is evident within all these values" (NEAR, 2002). Therefore, it appears as a theme in most

of the stories, particularly *unigkuat*. In fact, respect must exist within each of the spheres for a balanced state of wellbeing. Respect appears in the physical sphere in how we engage with our environment. Respect for other people and oneself in the larger sense are what preserves social order and family harmony. Respect through our specific actions is shown in how we honor our traditional ways and our teachers, and in how we communicate with each other. Respect is evident in how we cope with challenges and understand our purpose in life. Respect comes from deep within us to preserve our personal and communal integrity. Our ability to find center, where respect resides and manifests, is the balance point.

Conclusion

While many of our Kodiak Alutiiq traditions are fragmented in the telling or memories of our Elders, and are often no longer practiced in their original form, together they illustrate a rich and complex traditional values system. This values system influences our lives today. The stories our Elders tell, the artifacts we have from our ancestors, and our own observations and experience of our traditional homeland continue to teach the Kodiak Alutiiq today how to live within our traditional homeland and elsewhere in the world. While our traditions have changed with modern and cross-cultural influences, our sustained existence in this place where our ancestors have thrived for millennia carries with it the core values of our ancestors.

Chapter 8: Close Reading Samples

Values-Based Analysis of Story as a Learning Tool

The following chapter offers two story analysis samples that support my hypotheses about exploring Alutiiq storytelling within the context of traditional Alutiiq values, as well as their educational function. The sample analyses of the traditional stories *Woman Who Became a Bear* and *The Girl Who Married the Moon* are prepared as a means to demonstrate how we can orient each story for teachers and youth today through Alutiiq values.

Folklorist F. A. Golder (1909) first published a summary of *The Woman Who Became a Bear* in his article “Eskimo and Aleut Stories from Alaska” within the *Journal of American Folklore*, retelling stories originally collected from Kodiak Island and Unga. Versions of the story also appear among Yup’ik peoples (Kawagley, 1999) and are still told today by Alutiiq Elders on Kodiak Island. The enduring elements between the versions tell the story of a woman scorned who seeks revenge and stands as a lesson of respect and right relationships. Golder’s retelling of the story was further reprinted in another small volume called *Stories of the Aleutians and Kodiak* (Solomon, 2003).

I selected *The Woman Who Became a Bear* story because one Alutiiq Elder still tells it today, as recorded in several versions (Christiansen, 2007, 1998) and it also is a story that Golder (1909) published in the *Journal of American Folklore*. The most recent Alutiiq audio recording appears as track 26 on the *Generations* CD. As an Alutiiq language apprentice and project volunteer, the Museum staff requested I transcribe and translate this telling of the story for use on their web portal project to provide community members greater access to Elder storytelling, traditional knowledge, and language learning opportunities. This process is what drew me to explore the story more in depth as a start to my proposed study. With multiple versions at hand, we are better able to explore the core messages and content being conveyed. In reviewing and comparing different versions, patterns and themes also arise that lead to meaning-making. This analysis of the *Woman Who Became a Bear* story is done through textual and audio recorded resources, as it has been published in several versions from oral transmission by

Alutiiq and Yup'ik Elders, as described. However, it would further be useful to explore it beyond transcribed versions of the story to make culturally appropriate meaning of its lessons, which requires discussions with Elders as partners in research as recommended in the conclusion.

Woman Who Became a Bear — Alutiiq Right Relationships and Ethics

Oscar Kawagley (2006), a Yup'ik educator and storyteller, also shares a Yup'ik version of this story in his book *A Yupiaq Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit* (pp. 24-31). His version, told in English, is more detailed than the Alutiiq versions and incorporates introductory creation story elements, but largely is the same story as found in the Alutiiq region. As Margaret Lantis (1938a) identified there are other versions of the story from St. Michael, Anvik, Belkovsky, Unga and Hinchinbrook, and likely within other cultural traditions as well, proving that the story has been widely exchanged. The story most likely originates elsewhere than among the Alutiiq because in one of Clyda's tellings she explains that one of the characters says something in another language that is unfamiliar. Regardless, it functions as a traditional story that embodies Alutiiq values, has been passed down for generations, and conveys lessons significant to the Alutiiq people.

In an effort to recognize story themes, the following is a summary of its plot. Between the various versions of the story across cultures there are repeating elements or events that move the plot forward. The main characters of the story are a husband and wife, living in isolation away from any village connections. The couple has just started a family with the birth of a child, and in the Yup'ik version twins. Several versions of the story open with the husband giving instructions to his wife about his potential death, which engages a sense of foreboding and significance. Intended as an ironic coincident, but later we find premeditated, the husband dies mysteriously and the wife proceeds to tend to his body as requested, and begins her mourning process. Mysteriously, the husband's body disappears from the beach. In the Alutiiq version by Clyda Christiansen (1998), the husband does not die but has started to divorce himself of her by not providing food after his hunts (having given it to a new wife) until one day he no longer returns. As time passes, the wife and child(ren), without a hunter provider, enter into

starvation, as the family unit is now out of balance. In all versions of the story, at this point she learns from a little bird that her husband is still alive. There is great significance to a little bird conveying messages, as it represents a link between the animal spirit world and human existence. In some versions, the bird tells not just that he lives over the mountains, but also of his infidelity and remarriage. The wife decides to set out on a journey to follow the bird's guidance. In the Yup'ik version, she transforms into a bear to enable her to make the long journey quickly.

In all versions of the story, the wife finds the husband's new home and comes to meet his wife or wives while he is away hunting for them. A significant detail, the wife or wives are described as "white skinned," which is a feature they find inferior to the darker and redder complexion of the first wife, who they believe is a stranger in their meeting. The first wife uses this wish for greater beauty as her/their demise. She instructs how boiling water can be used to make cheeks redder and more attractive. As the new wife or wives follow her instructions, she plunges her replacement(s) into the scalding water until dead. Now dead, she props her/them into a pantomime for the husband to find upon his return and waits for their reunion.

In the story's climax, the wife transforms into a bear by pulling its skin over herself. In some Alutiiq tellings she also engages the child in transformation. Initially, the husband is furious and sets out to hunt his ex-wife for what she has done; however, she succeeds in making the husband apologize, admitting his wrongdoing in abandoning his first family. In his shame and fear, once the wife confronts him on his lying and abandonment of her and their child(ren), he promises faithfulness. However, transformed as a bear, the wife's anger takes hold, cementing the transformation, and she kills the husband. In the Yup'ik version, the wife returns home, unable to transform back into a woman, and kills her child(ren), retreating into the forest to live as a solitary bear. All versions of the story however end in tragedy where the wife is unable to transform back into a human, locked forever in the animal world.

This story, like other traditional stories, encapsulates cultural lessons in a way no descriptive analysis can accomplish fully. My discussion as follows only hints at the

embedded lessons and values that can be explored. As Phyllis Fast (n.d.) explains, “Language is a vehicle of culture” (Native Ways of Knowing #4). In an effort to unpack these lessons, this study explores the implied lessons and attempts to discuss how its themes reflect Alutiiq cultural values and traditional knowledge.

Elders from the Kodiak Alutiiq nation have identified fourteen core Alutiiq values that shape traditional Alutiiq lifeways and are still vital to our current sense of well being (NEAR, 2002). They identified these core values to inspire healthy living and establish a self-determined, positive image of Alutiiq people, thus promoting a strong sense of identity and greater self-esteem. Elders today agree that our traditional Alutiiq values are still alive, although how they manifest and how we live our lives today may be vastly different than when they were young. Therefore, the following analysis is focused on how this particular story illustrates these core values and how we may translate these lessons into our modern existence.

One essential lesson of this story is the value of reciprocity and its sharing practices required for survival. The story implies that there is a right way of living and an established set of roles that husbands and wives should follow. These roles sustain life for a family, but the husband in the story has transgressed. Within ancestral Alutiiq homes, as within most subsistence based societies, the husband was the hunter and chief provider, and the wife was the caregiver and homemaker. The appropriate distribution of gender roles was not based on a paternalistic view of inequality or weakness of one sex over the other, rather as a matrilineal society the Alutiiq traditionally divided survival roles by gender according to how they best contributed to child rearing and empowered each with equal responsibilities for the family unit as a whole. When this structure goes out of balance the family suffers through starvation or succumbs to violent emotional crisis, both of which this story portrays. The wife in this story claims great wrongdoing on the husband’s part as he neglected his duty to the family by abandoning them for apparently selfish reasons. The healthy function of family and cultural practices of sharing resources are clearly one of the central themes depicted within this story.

Another core Alutiiq value is trust (NEAR, 2002). Trust is based on honesty, and truths. Lying is an extremely negative transgression, as it puts the community in jeopardy as the individual elevates self above others. Alutiiq culture, like other Indigenous subsistence based cultures, relies heavily on interdependence, which requires trust by all members. In the story we see the husband has broken the wife's trust as he lied to her and went back on his word to care for her. In the end, his lie is punished by death. His wrongdoing risked lives in a culture where values are based on survival.

Within this story is also an exploration of anger and extreme emotions. In every culture there are proper socially accepted expressions of emotion, based on what will sustain the group. The wife is driven to an extreme act of murder through her transformation as she gives in to her animal nature. It appears that this story is an exploration of right behaviors, where none of the characters succeed in living appropriately, thus becoming a cautionary tale. Elders today tell this story as a warning, which further supports the idea that stories of this nature were told to help educate people about right relationships.

Within ancestral Alutiiq traditions, animal transformation or shapeshifting is a common practice and symbol for the interrelationship of all life. The relationship between humans and animals is familial and deeply valued, with a thin veil between their world and ours. Living in close relationship to the land and animals, the Alutiiq value a kinship that once enabled direct communication and travel between these worlds as they engaged in their traditional subsistence lifeways. The first element of this comes in the communication between the wife and a bird messenger, where important information is passed on to her because she is attuned to the land. Animal relationships are complex and hold deep cultural and environmental significance. Stories that portray this relationship are opportunities to explore subsistence lifeways still practiced today, demonstrating this as a lived value.

Specifically significant within this story is the wife's transformation into a bear, which is a common theme and vehicle for escape among other Alutiiq stories. The Alutiiq relationship to bear is comparative in nature, as the bear resembles humans in the way it

walks, moves through the world, and raises its young. This story has also been used to explain proper respect for bears, as the Alutiiq have had to share their lands with their cousins the Kodiak Brown Bear, the world's largest brown bears. Elder Clyda Christiansen (1998) explains that the story teaches the importance of respect to give room to a mother bear with one cub, recognizing that she will viciously protect her cub at the slightest provocation—just as the wife in the story is forced to do.

This story, as with other traditional stories, is a wealth of knowledge for exploring traditional cultural practices and values. It contains within it a complex pattern of concepts and metaphors about how to live, survive, relate and engage in the world. To pass this complex knowledge on to future generations, requires a vehicle that is illustrative and relevant. Using stories like this one, teachers and families can continue this traditional teaching process by engaging youth in deeper cultural learning, at the same time as building upon skill sets.

Girl Who Married the Moon — Correlation of Reality, Light and Vision

The Alutiiq perceptions of reality, core values, and traditional beliefs about how the world functions and what constitutes right relationships manifest throughout the Alutiiq oral tradition. These same core Alutiiq traditional beliefs and values are also depicted within cultural objects such as stone petroglyphs, wooden crafts and even within traditional Alutiiq regalia. In an effort to better understand the meaning and intended lessons within traditional Alutiiq literature it is important to take a holistic view across many aspects of the Alutiiq culture in order to get to the heart of what our Alutiiq ancestors valued in their time and how these values transcend time today despite our rapidly changing environment and social climate.

Within the Alutiiq culture and traditional worldview the concept of reality is complex and multilayered. An understanding of shifting forms of reality appears evident within the Alutiiq language, as it is frequently distinguished with the use of the postbase - *piar* within a word to indicate its status as a “real” entity. The Alutiiq people’s traditional name “*Sugpiaq*” itself contains this designator, translated literally as “the real people,” with *suk* meaning “a person.” This designator makes the distinction that humans,

specifically the humans who share a common language within the southcentral Gulf of Alaska, are different than all other creatures or spirits. To be able to identify oneself or others as *real* is significant because while one may appear to be real, countless Alutiiq stories tell of how it is nearly impossible to tell the difference between humans and other beings that can take on human form. In the Alutiiq tradition, “A *suk* spirit has, or can assume, individual human form, and the word [suk] refers as well to this kind of visible manifestation” (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 192). Our Yup’ik or Yupiaq cousins similarly use the postbase designator *-piaq* to distinguish themselves as *yuk* (a person) from others, carrying the same concepts of multilayered or alternate realities within their culture (Fienup-Riordan, 1994).

Alutiiq stories of animals and celestial beings describe individuals, communities and landscapes as identical in appearance to humans and human villages. This practice goes beyond a western literary tradition of anthropomorphism in that Alutiiq spiritual beliefs and the experience of reality from within a shamanic tradition confirmed that the humanized appearance of animals or other supernatural beings was a literal manifestation from an alternate state of reality, parallel to the *real* world that humans regularly occupy. Within the ancestral Alutiiq culture it was widely understood that beings could transform between states of reality or different worlds, and that within their realm of existence the animal, celestial entity or spirit manifested in a human form. In moving from one state of reality or realm to another, once transformed, it was difficult to discern which beings or worlds were real. Many Alutiiq stories tell of transformation between human and animal forms in this manner.

Conversely, this concept is further supported by the belief that at quick glance it is possible to see the *person* or *suk* spirit of an animal manifested as a human face. Within the *Looking Both Ways* collection exploring aspects of the Alutiiq culture and history, Crowell et al., (2001) gives examples of how within “stories from the Alutiiq oral tradition, [where] a bird opens its beak or an animal peels back its snout to reveal a human face inside. A *suk* that may otherwise appear completely human is sometimes revealed by a remnant tail or beak-shaped mouth, or because it gleams with a bright

light” (p. 192). As explained, this belief is based on the understanding that animals and spirits manifest in human form, and that they can be impossible to visually discern from their *real* state.

Prior to Russian conquest and conversion to Christianity, the Kodiak Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people viewed the universe as consisting of layers of multiple distinct worlds (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 197). Specifically, the Alutiiq believed in five sky worlds and five lower worlds that are each inhabited by different types of beings. Between these layers shamans, as well as those who died or were experiencing an altered state of reality, would typically journey. Now housed at the Alutiiq Museum, panels of a small wooden box (1400-1740 AD), as show here, illustrate this concept (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 198). At the center of concentric rings depicting the five sky worlds is a face. This image represents *Llam Sua*, the *universe’s person* literally, or the Great Spirit. This god image offers a visual representation of core Alutiiq beliefs and cosmology.

In addition to the *Llam Sua* icon clearly indicating the concept of multilayered states of reality or worlds, the image further depicts light radiating outward through all the worlds from the being’s eyes. In the Yup’ik tradition *Ellam Yua*, is also recognized as an omniscient supreme being. Further, in order for humans to travel between these altered states of reality or worlds, shamans had to restrict their vision in some way to establish a connection or pathway between worlds. As Ann Fienup-Riordan (1994)



Fig. 8.1: *Llam Sua* box panel, Karluk 1 collection, courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum

documented within the Yup'ik heritage as shared to her by her informants, there is a powerful dichotomy between supernatural sight and restricted vision (p. 266).

Across Alutiiq language, art and stories, there is a strong relationship between sight, light and states of reality. As a means of distinguishing a celestial or spirit entity, Alutiiq illustrations frequently show the eyes of the being as radiating light outwards as a symbol of omniscience or the ability to perceive between the many layers of the universe, as shown in Afognak petroglyphs (drawn above), Alutiiq masks (photo at left) and the Llam Sua icon as already discussed. For the Alutiiq and Yup'ik equally, vision is not just an internal process of viewing what is being



Fig. 8.2: Afognak village petroglyphs

looked at, but on a deeper level it is a projection of energy or power outward and a potential pathway between worlds or alternate states of reality.

In looking at the etymology of the words *light* or *tanqik* in Alutiiq and the word for *vision* (to see it) or *tangrlluku* they appear to share a common root word base that further supports the notion of their interrelationship. Arguably, the eye can serve as a gateway between realities, and is therefore a feature of the human body to be highly respected and more importantly engaged as a means of transportation between the layers of reality.

Fienup-Riordan (1994) conveys such a process within the traditional Yup'ik ceremonial and healing practices, where healers would



Fig. 8.3: Afognak ceremonial mask, photo courtesy of the Alutiiq Museum

obstruct their vision, generally by covering their face with a mask intentionally without eye holes in order to shut off light or vision to engage a transformational process or to be transported between worlds or states of reality, and thereby communicate with helper spirits to discern the cause of illness and offer healing.

Another example of this belief is within traditional regalia practices, in how an Alutiiq woman's ceremonial beaded headdress should be worn. Traditionally, the beads should dangle over her forehead to cover her eyes, perhaps done for respect or for honing inner powers within the ceremonial process. Today, some Alutiiq dancers still respect this tradition, but as Alutiiq dancing has shifted from a ceremonial practice to one for entertainment, the ceremonial purposes and processes are not followed nor understood in most cases (Hof & Prince, 2009).

As the Alutiiq people were colonized by Russians over 200 years ago and later by Americans, the Alutiiq heritage has changed most rapidly within the past 60 years, since World War II occupation. Many Elders today grew up hearing traditional stories, but with only approximately 30 Alutiiq speakers living, all over 70 years of age, the traditional practice of storytelling is endangered. As few opportunities within our modern context seem to allow space for the oral tradition, Alutiiq traditional stories are greatly threatened. For those that have been recorded or passed down it is clear that the ceremonial cultural knowledge embedded is now mysterious to most or viewed as quaint or offensively as superstitious. Within our community we thankfully do have a collection of audio recorded stories and transcripts of several Elders telling stories, which need to be explored and shared with our youth, as they are largely inaccessible in their unpublished or unknown by many. In addition, there is a collection of stories, commonly referenced as Alutiiq stories, which were greatly filtered by the ethnographer who published them in the early 1900s. This collection of stories is occasionally drawn upon or referenced within our school system by educators or through the Alutiiq Museum, but out of context from the oral tradition these stories can be challenging and easily misunderstood.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, Frank A. Golder worked as a teacher in Unga, southwest of Kodiak Island from 1900-1902. During his three years on the small Aleutian

island he filled several journals full of stories from various informants, including three Alutiiq people from Kodiak Island. Although Golder appears to have never been to Kodiak, he went on to publish six articles on Kodiak Alutiiq and Ungan stories. These stories were all handwritten in English, which he developed from field notes that were discarded after he revised them for publication, or wrote from his memory. As Golder describes in his journals his process for listening to stories was to later develop write ups. It appears his method was to listen attentively to the Russian tellings, and then directly after the story he would work on writing a storytelling session from his memory into English. This process obviously meant that the story he retold on paper was filtered through how he understood or envisioned the stories himself. In this way he focused on what lessons or images he thought were important to convey, as well as through several layers of language. In this context, he was really writing his own story of how he heard their story. Further, his perception of Native peoples and frontier living, also colored his storytelling. As described throughout his journals, he felt himself a great explorer of characters, living life as if he were in a James Fenimore Cooper story. Despite this context of the Golder collection, many Kodiak Alutiiq stories only survive through his retellings. Although they are greatly moralized and have the flavor of a Cooper or Hans Christian Anderson story, authentic elements of the stories appear to have persisted.

Perhaps the most popular or widely known of these stories is his retelling of *The Girl Who Married the Moon*. We must explore traditional beliefs and processes that are hinted at within just such a story in an effort to reconnect to the story from within an Alutiiq worldview. Further, this story has been republished in several forms, including a recent DVD animated film created collaboratively by Kodiak High School students and the Alutiiq Museum (2010).

In the story *The Girl Who Married the Moon* vision as a process and its effects play a major role. Understanding the significance and interrelated concepts of vision, light and states of reality is important for our understanding such a story. Within this *unigkuaq*, or traditional Alutiiq origin story, two young girls fall in love with the moon and after spending many nights staring at him, the moon visits them in human form

(Golder, 1903a). He offers to take them to the sky world if they can keep their eyes closed. However, one opens her eyes and is dropped back to earth. The other more patient girl keeps her eyes closed and makes it to the sky world. Once there and living as the moon's wife, she becomes lonely and bored as she wonders where her husband goes every day. Realizing that his wife is so unhappy, he agrees to allow her to explore the sky world as he works if she can follow one rule: not enter his storage *ciqlluaq* or sodhouse.

In her journeys she comes upon men lying on the ground with their faces in holes. She later finds that these one-eyed men are stars, shining their vision down upon the *real* world through holes in the first sky world. Upset that the men won't turn to speak to her, she starts kicking them. After she tires of this, her curiosity leads her to break her promise as she enters one of his *ciqlluaq*. She finds beautiful masks, depicting the different phases of the moon. She puts on the full moon mask and is frightened when she cannot take it off. Later after hiding from her husband to conceal what she has done, he finds out and sympathetically removes the mask and agrees that perhaps she can help him in his work. He invites her to finish out the moon phase each month to give him rest, and together they share the duty of serving as the moon. This summary offers an abbreviated version of the story but highlights symbolic aspects related to our exploration of the story's meaning.

Of first significance, we see that the girls are commanded to close their eyes in order to make it to the sky world. Following our understanding of traditional Alutiiq beliefs that restricted vision offers a means of transportation between realms, it makes complete sense that in order for the moon to transport the girls they must respect a commonly held practice or process for such a journey. From a western perspective the moon's command may be viewed as merely an indication that this story is about patience and obedience, as Golder moralizes. However, while both appear to be central lessons, the act of closing their eyes is far more significant from within the Alutiiq worldview.

Next, once allowed to explore, the girl comes upon beings who are later understood to be stars. It is significant that the light from each star shines from their eye, as both are an outward projection of their supernatural vision and a connection to the earth or *real* world. In order to do their work of shining down upon the earth they must

direct or restrict their vision/light through a hole in the floor of the sky world. The starlight from their eyes in essence becomes a connection between the two worlds. As the girl comes upon the star men she wants to be seen by them, and in her frustration as they ignore her she begins to kick the men. They are busy with their work and do not acknowledge her existence in the sky world, which aggravates her growing frustration. The stars are casting their light or vision down upon the real world, which she has both left behind and yearns for as she is caught in a liminal zone. Not acknowledged by the star men of the sky world, she leaves them unfulfilled and breaks her promise by succumbing to her curiosity, breaking her husband's trust.

After leaving the star men, the girl enters the forbidden *ciqlluaq* to find moon phase masks concealed behind a curtain. She puts on the full moon mask, in turn restricting her vision and recognizability as a human. As discussed earlier, in the Alutiiq ancestral tradition, masks were used within ceremonies to transport the wearer between alternate states of reality. This process follows a belief in physical visualization, whereby reenactments or pre-enactments could be conducted to influence the future. Both the Yupiaq and Sugpiaq/Alutiiq tradition share a ceremonial practice of engaging in a pretend universe or *llanguaq* (Crowell et al., 2001, p. 197). By using masks or miniatures, practitioners believed they could ceremonially connect across time or between worlds. The moon man's actions in the story makes sense within this tradition in how he uses masks to enact a process to manifest himself as the moon for the real world.

The girl's use of the mask without proper preparation or permission could also be construed as part of an irreversible transition or initiation into the sky world as her permanent departure from a *real* world existence. Once she has covered her face with the mask, only the moon man is able to remove it. After this mask removal he finally sees she has the potential now to help share in the duties. She has been initiated into the process they will continue to follow in sharing the role as the moon in the sky to reflect light down upon to the *real* world. Just as other stories speak of the potential for humans to be trapped within an alternate state of reality or spirit world, this story shows the girl as making such a transition.

Beyond the symbolism, ancestral traditions and core belief system that are the foundation of this story, to fully understand it one has to consider the values or moral lessons the storyteller intended to convey to the audience, while being respectful of the past beliefs and symbols. Traditional stories are a wealth of knowledge for exploring ancestral cultural practices and core values, and should be approached with respect and recognition for the changes between the story time and the Indigenous community's current social practices. Outside of the rituals or beliefs within traditional stories, they contain complex ideas about how to live, survive, relate or engage in the world.

As teachers engage with and use traditional stories, they must be mindful of how they evaluate or discuss stories with their students. It is important for any educator of Indigenous students to gain a background experience of cultural contexts and values that are integral to the community. Without personal exposure to deeper cultural knowledge, teachers risk inadvertently making judgements about what they may think are "ancient" traditions, believed dead, or may evaluate the culture based solely on metaphorical stories, which can perpetuate the harm long prevalent in the western educational system.

Within a story like *The Girl Who Married the Moon* we can recognize several of the core values that Elders emphasize today. The Alutiiq value of "faith and spiritual life from ancestral beliefs to the diverse faiths of today" is the central focus of this story, as it clearly reinforces ceremonial practices and cosmological beliefs. Further, as the girl stumbles through her early married experience, she explores the three core ethical values our Elders have identified: trust, respect, and sharing. At the risk of over-moralizing the story, as Golder appears to do in his telling as he emphasizes his interpretation and Christian values system, such a traditional story would not have been explained or analyzed for the audience. However, given that traditional aspects of Alutiiq culture are often mysterious to even Alutiiq people today after two centuries of colonization, following a process to reclaim knowledge from a traditional story is valid as a decolonization effort. Exploring Alutiiq stories, we can see that story and art emulate social structures and incorporate cultural metaphors or motifs as a way to convey meaning and purpose that ultimately contributes to our sense of wellbeing.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Rising from the Ashes

In 1784 when Gregory Shelikhov conquered the Alutiiq in battle and established the first Russian outpost on Kodiak, he came to a place already highly populated with thousands of Alutiiq people in approximately 65 small communities along the coastline of the Kodiak Archipelago; communities who had lived for millennia in a balanced relationship with the other thousands of Indigenous co-inhabitants of our islands. We were blessed with a vast diversity of plants who share their healing energies with those who know how to work with them. We enjoyed our partnership with hundreds of species of birds, many of whom listen to us and carry messages, as our ancestors knew how to communicate with and through them. We survived in a shared homeland on the generosity and richness of sea life, including our now threatened fish and sea mammals, as well as the seven indigenous land mammals of the archipelago (*taquka'aq* - bear, *kaugya'aq* - red fox, *aaquyaq* - land otter, *amitatuk* - weasel, *keneryaq* - brown bat, *quiriq* - groundhog, and *ugna'aq* - vole). Our indigenous spiritual and traditional harvest practices maintained a complex network of interdependency and respect. The life our Alutiiq ancestors lived was hard at times given our climate and location surrounded by other warring tribes along the coast of the Gulf of Alaska. But it was one our children grew to thrive in through the example of lived values and the stories that their Elders and community taught them.

In less than a hundred years, Russian colonists led by Shelikhov, Rezanov and Baranov were responsible for the deaths of over two-thirds of the Alutiiq and decimated sea otter populations in their blind pursuit for economic gain and cultural superiority. Thankfully there was some mercy brought in the guise of religion, as those who converted were then considered citizens, worthy of receiving a wage for their hard labor under the Russian American Company enterprise.

During this time the Russians were successful in imposing a new worldview through intentional social engineering efforts to control and extract profit via their three most powerful tools: education, wage labor economics and religion, all tied neatly

together through intermarriage. The Russian American worldview made it not only preferable but justifiable to transform the people and landscape, establishing new traditions of exploitation and detachment as they built elevated rectangular log forts and houses in rows, not well suited for our environment but which were successful in separating man from the land in a way more accustomed to them. They enslaved the Alutiiq and Aleuts to hunt the sea otter for them to near extinction within the gulf of Alaska all the way to California. They established schools and promoted intermarriage and baptism with the intent of growing a new generation of cooperative workers for their economic ventures. Yet despite their investment into this place, after they had depleted the natural resources that they believed justified their colonization, they surrendered their rights to this stolen land to the American government in 1867, thinking at the time that they had gotten a good deal for what they felt was worthless property after their extraction of all its known usable resources. With this action, the indigenous inhabitants of the island were perceived as sold along with the land into an even worse fate.

Now under American colonization for the past one hundred and forty-five years, the Alutiiq people have been again subjected to similar tools of social engineering but in new guises and with goals of even more detachment from the spirit of the land. Our American colonizers disapproved of Russian Orthodoxy over the more conservative Baptist and Protestant forms of Christianity. They worked hard to supplant the highly evolved subsistence-based barter system of economics with larger scale commercial extraction of natural resources and wage labor as the main socially-approved variety of economic viability. For those Natives caught in the economic and resource extraction and control crosshairs, they were pushed into dependency on social services, which further diminished traditional harvest practices. This new culture of entitlement and dependency on government services established new traditions of addiction within most Native families. The choice became either to participate in the wage labor workforce, often stomaching culture-shock and humiliating racial discrimination through chemical addictions, or to live in government subsidized housing and become reliant on a welfare check, which also led to formation of addictive behaviors. I am not aware of a single

Alutiiq family that has not had this scenario play out for at least one of their family members, which still haunts them to this day. Looking back you may wonder how our ancestors could have let this happen; yet knowing the stories of their conquest and assimilation reminds us that families struggle to survive in whatever means they can.

Hitting us hard at home, they used their education system to crush our voices. They took our Sugt'stun language, abusing and stealing our children, until only a few could remember how to talk to their mothers. It is no surprise that there is distrust or disinterest in participating in their schools as many feel inadequate, uncomfortable or shy — never quite realizing the ancestral history that established their perception.

This is the legacy of colonization and exploitation of Kodiak and its indigenous inhabitants. Yet, we have survived, although at less than half of our original population two hundred years ago. Why is it that the majority are still blind to the pervasive colonization efforts surrounding us even today? Clearly the daily influence of a powerful worldview holds a strong magnetic force: that economics are the priority in decision making; that the earth we live upon is not itself a living being, rather should be allocated and transformed for the benefit of human consumption; that group process is possible with only a fragment of the group present or heard; that western medicine is superior and is the only trustworthy method of healing, when in fact over-medication of a vast majority of our community has further increased addictive, unhealthy behaviors and death. I could continue listing the systemic crises that we have experienced under American colonization, but the point is that these realities were in large part designed to control us. And they worked.

A major step to change this disturbing consensus reality is to reclaim the education process and revise the content of the western education system that was created as a tool of the government to perpetuate its heritage of industrialization and colonization. Another step would be for the current bureaucratic systems to undergo some life changing shifts, through the wisdom of Elders who were immersed in what is left of our traditional knowledge systems.

Reflecting on Gary Snyder's (1995) chapters *Reinhabitation* and *A Village Council of All Beings* in his collection of essays *A Place in Space*, I think about the history of the Kodiak region as I have described it and the massive social, economic and environmental transformations that have befallen its inhabitants. As an island, it functions in a unique dichotomy, simultaneously a place of isolation and a place of transfer or a way point. These two aspects represent an elemental conflict for a place that is both of beauty and privacy for its inhabitants, at the same time as a place to be exploited for convenience and profit by those from the outside. When we look at who has come to our islands and what they have changed in their coming to stay or their coming to pass through, it is clear that a place such as this cannot be governed adequately with only the perspectives of the newcomers. While we share our homeland and are of mixed heritages now, it is only through the wisdom of generations of experience in a place that you can as a community coexist fairly with the other animal and plant inhabitants of the island in a sustainable manner.

When sitting and visiting with Alutiiq Elders about life and the happenings in the world, or local events, I have repeatedly experienced astonishment at why their wisdom is not more recognized when they can so effectively point out the missing perspective on why something is coming to pass or won't work in the long run. They have this knowledge because of their sustained existence in this place along with their parents' and grandparents' sustained existence on the island through the stories they were raised with. Those who were fortunate to also receive a traditional education of story, living through example and observation, know more than any scientist, economist or philosopher could ever know about what is right for this place and its people.

I have often had these same Elders chuckle at my pursuit of higher education through the western education system; although they do value what this experience brings as a means for navigating and helping communicate across cultures. While they recognize that it helps develop programs to create new openings for their knowledge to gain respect, they chuckle at those who think they have attained a higher level of knowledge above those who learned to live off the land, in close relationship with the animals and

plants around us—those who have sustained a lifestyle of healthy co-existence that was their birthright. While this book brings closure to my pursuit for a doctoral degree and all that it offers those I work for and my family, I know I am still just a baby in what I know and that sitting with them and walking the land is still the best education.

My cousin Olga is fond of saying that when trouble comes down, it is those of us who listened to the stories and live close to the land who will survive. Self-preservation aside, an even greater reason for pursuit of traditional knowledge and lifestyle is in how it honors the lives before us, the lives around us, and in hope for a future where the land will continue to be bountiful for us.

There is a symbol in the Alutiiq culture, also commonly known to the Yup'ik and Inuit peoples as Sedna, which I have contemplated a lot lately as I consider our core values and traditions. It is of a sweeping outstretched arm, with a hole in the middle of its palm. The image appears on masks and in petroglyphs. As I understand it, this hand represents the spirit of the sea—*Imam Sua*—who watches over us and the sea animals within her. When we are gracious about our harvest and respectful in following the proper ways of hunting, or handling and preparing foods, she will continue to guide the animals in their journey from this world to the spirit worlds and back again to be re-harvested; keeping the hand open so the animal spirits can pass through the gateway. But when we are selfish, unmindful of our harvest, or do not

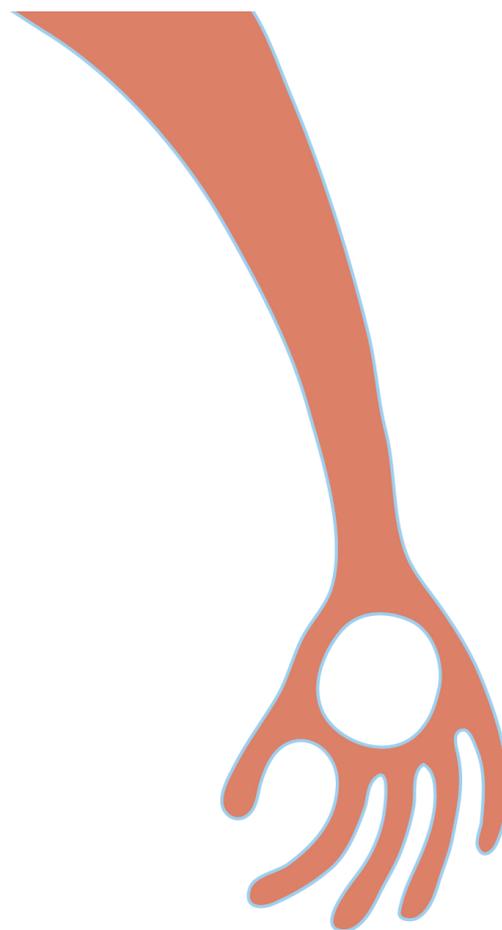


Fig. 9.1:
Hand of Imam Sua

properly respect the animals who feed us, the fist will close. The moral of this story can also be understood as ‘don’t take more than what you need.’

This is what we see now. The fist has closed for many, and bounty has not returned as it should. The disrespect we pay with our pollution, and the lack of sacred respect that many demonstrate in our ways of life now are making it so this relationship is out of balance. The concepts of freedom of religion and self-determination are unattainable as long as economics determine natural resource management; as long as our lives and environment are viewed as sectors; as long as our Elders are forced to go hungry for their traditional foods or as their children are educated, or employed, or social serviced away from them. This discordance can be repaired, but it will require a massive awakening to our history over the last 228 years of the over 7,000 years we have lived in this place. It will require a conscious blend of traditional knowledge within our modern context, so that our children will again learn to live in close relationship with the land, and will choose their priorities based on values our Elders still hold dear.

Harold Napoleon (1996) describes this process of interaction or system of protocols within the Yup’ik culture as *Yuuyaraq* or the “way of the human being.”

Yuuyaraq defines the correct way of thinking and speaking about all living things, especially the great sea and land mammals on which the Yup’ik relied for food, clothing, shelter, tools, kayaks, and other essentials.... *Yuuyaraq* prescribed the correct method of hunting and fishing and the correct way of handling all fish and game caught by the hunter in order to honor and appease their spirits and maintain a harmonious relationship with them. (Napoleon, 1996, p. 5)

In Alutiiq, the term is *sug’uciq*—defined as “humanity, way of living, or integrity as a human being” (Leer, n.d., 5). By not following the prescribed protocols and ways of being a person we invite imbalance into our lives, becoming detached from the environment and no longer true human beings. This explains how dysfunction occurs for Indigenous people on spiritual, mental, physical, emotional or ethical levels, where they have disengaged from their environment, their heritage, to become soul-sick as their integrity as human beings is broken. This largely comes about through western influences

that have disoriented Native peoples in their way of life, making it challenging to reconcile the two divergent worldviews that they are caught between.

Living under the influence of western culture and technologies, at the same time as trying to sustain a subsistence way of life, brings a number of conflicts that continually challenges how to blend the two worlds, and often leads to a shift away from subsistence lifeways since these practices are not valued as highly within the western worldview and have been consciously and unconsciously limited through regulation and the expectations of a cash economy. As McLean (1998) writes, “Trying to ‘live in two worlds’ and learn the ways of the western system creates new social demands that are not always compatible with traditional Native ways” (p. 7). With the introduction of stores and trade goods from other areas the need or value of local resources has diminished. As the need diminishes so does the regular practices of hunting and gathering. Younger generations of Alaska Natives have increasingly become less familiar with their family’s traditional harvest practices because of these shifts in their access to subsistence resources. Where once all young boys and girls were raised actively participating in daily harvest practices alongside their adult family members, now few have these opportunities as media influences, sedentary vs. nomadic living patterns, wage labor, school commitments, pollution, and subsistence resource regulations limit practices.

Western schooling has diminished the subsistence way of life over time, as discussion or respect for these lifeways has been absent from the structured learning process that consumes a large portion of young peoples lives (Ongtooguk, 1992). Thankfully the American education system has begun to shift away from assimilation at any cost toward an openness to cultural complexity and a willingness to incorporate traditional knowledge and Native worldviews, although some educators still admit ignorance at how to do this. Because of this opening though, it is possible for schooling to now offer new opportunities to engage students in developing their awareness of traditional practices regularly. This shift is an important change because “By connecting the ‘naturalistic’ knowledge that children have to subjects taught in the classrooms, children/students can see the significance of their education, both inside and outside of

the classroom” (McLean, 1998, p. 21). Learning math, science and language arts is more easily integrated and relevant when based on the local environment and experiences they find familiar (McLean, 1998, p. 26; Kawagley, 2006).

With the development of culture camps, as Oscar Kawagley (2006) calls for in his book *A Yupiaq Worldview*, there are a number of models for how to integrate traditional practices and knowledge through storytelling and observation. As a force that contributed to the loss of some of these practices, schools have an obligation to reverse their prior approach, and allow communities to engage their students in experiential, locally-relevant learning about the environment and our survival in it. The traditional teaching method for gaining skills are based on observation and storytelling, which makes this learning process one of the most familiar and effective ways for Native students to learn. As Peter John says, “If you can’t do it on your own, you just have to see how the other people are doing it. By looking and listening. It’s the way we understand” (Yarber & Madison, 1984, p. 27). Schools can develop curricula so that students engage with community members upon the land regularly, learning through their stories and the familiar method of observation, living a balanced life closely connected to the processes within nature as the foundation for their expanded understanding of scientific knowledge.

As McLean (1998), Kawagley (1999) and many other educators and Indigenous writers demonstrate in the growing volumes of place-based curricula and resources, the process of engaging in traditional practices as part of school can be very enriching for Native students and offer healthy growth for Native communities (Sobel, 2005). Just as a subsistence way of life is an all encompassing aspect of life, so can it be a pervasive, positive focus within education as students learn stories and use their traditional practices and knowledge to better understand the world around them.

Collaborative Storywork Recommendations

In comparisons between Indigenous and western cultures, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) describe that Indigenous cultures as rooted in “[c]ommunication of metaphor and story connected to life, values and proper behavior” (p. 16). Therefore, if

we hope to make a difference in our wellbeing, then Alaska Native education must engage students in learning through metaphor and story within their own cultural contexts. The usage of storytelling is an effective way to build a common experience for Native students that is essential for their sense of self-esteem and identity at the same time as it instills community values. It further prepares them to make a life for themselves that is rooted in Alutiiq cultural values as supported by the stories.

To encourage expanded research and educational application, this study was intended to serve as a starting point for more in-depth explorations into storytelling traditions, the meanings of spiritual and cultural metaphors and the effectiveness of teaching through story. In this way, Alutiiq traditional stories, and other Indigenous stories, should become more accessible to regain their standing as essential learning tools, allowing the space necessary for storytelling to once more flourish as a lived tradition.

The storywork needed to revitalize Alutiiq oral traditions and reintegrate the practice into our children's daily lives is beyond the scope of what can be accomplished within a single dissertation project. In sharing the original vision for my research and development objectives, several professors aptly informed me that my plan was a lifetime of work. However, we did agree that providing a proposal for the next steps as my conclusion would offer helpful guidance and further empower the community to determine what we want to do with all the resources we do have. Therefore, with this final chapter I explore four recommended steps for Kodiak Alutiiq community members to consider as potential recipes for action. With the model I designed and the background research I have completed, we will be able to confidently move forward in developing the following efforts in partnership with Elders, educators and our community.

Individual Story Analysis, Translation and Expansion

An important next step in our process to revitalize Alutiiq storytelling is to complete close reading analyses of the individual stories we wish to share with our children, as demonstrated in the Chapter 8 samples. By studying each individual story further to identify the key elements or themes, the cultural traditions that they include, and to complete translations in both English and Alutiiq for each story, we can better

prepare future storytellers to do storywork in educational settings such as at culture camps, community gatherings and in schools. With any analysis comes concerns about avoiding intellectualization, and staying true to our Indigenous worldview as we focus more on the life practices and values we seek to instill rather than on deconstructionism and acquisition of knowledge for knowledge sake.

Through expanded close readings we can articulate the values and meanings in the stories as it contributes to curriculum design. This will help stay true in how we and other educators use the stories with students. It will also help prepare our Elders to guide adjustments to interpretations that may be influenced by a western worldview, given that our perspectives today often come from multiple heritages and experiences within higher education and mainstream western culture. In past interactions with Alutiiq Elders, they appreciate hearing what you think first and then choose to make comments and respond. Inevitably this positions you as vulnerable, which is in fact the best position as it places them in the power role to choose to either impart knowledge or not.

Elder Analysis Review and Story Recovery

There is significant opportunity to expand fragmented and filtered stories so that we can restore them to fully developed stories with an Alutiiq perspective and message. This is an extremely creative and non-scientific process where a fragmented or filtered *unigkuaq* is translated back into Alutiiq and expanded upon through comparisons to other stories, artifacts and our understanding of Alutiiq cosmology, traditional beliefs and practices. As we study and translate fragmented or filtered stories that are not already told in Alutiiq, this can best be done by working with our Elders as co-researchers, not as subjects to study. There are challenges inherent with this process, as we are a culture with a long history of assimilation to western ways and Christian ideology. But some early work in discussing full versions of stories will assist in keeping the group focused on the intent of the original story as we expand it from an ethnographer's summary.

Following a collaborative research model, this stage should engage wider community participatory research methods (St. Denis, 1992), using this dissertation and my initial sample analyses of stories as examples for how we can work with our

traditional stories to use them as learning opportunities in a respectful and exploratory manner. Applying stories once again as learning tools within our modern context will honor and teach our heritage values and traditions. Following Jo-ann Archibald (2008) and her Indigenous storywork processes, the Elder discussion groups we convene can produce materials and activities that will enable teachers to engage students in Alutiiq cultural knowledge regularly through traditional Alutiiq stories. The resources in this book will help us explore how stories serve as learning tools. By conducting talking circles with Elders about storytelling and exploring specific Alutiiq stories as presented here, this analysis can be further expanded so that it can stand as an accessible, detailed resource for educators to bridge between cultures.

As we discuss storytelling with Alutiiq Elders, we can better understand how they heard stories and what they meant in their lives. To accomplish this, we can facilitate Elder story review sessions of selected story fragments in hopes of their remembering the stories told when they were young. By selecting specific stories they feel are appropriate to integrate into schools, we can also discuss together what these stories convey from their perspective as we work to retell them as fully developed stories. While some Elders will not wish to engage in philosophic analysis of stories, some will and there is value in supporting them in this effort so that this knowledge about their perceptions can be shared with young people in school, and within the Alutiiq community's oral tradition revival efforts. As Linda Smith (1999) recommends, we can focus discussions about how traditional stories provide an historical example of Indigenous beliefs and understanding of the world (p. 175). By empowering Alutiiq Elders in this process, they will be able to direct what lessons they want conveyed to our youth through storytelling.

It will also be important for us to learn more about if there were specific time periods for telling certain stories or notions of appropriate behavior or selection of audience. These discussions will give us a better understanding of which stories are considered sacred stories and what protocols we as a community need to be mindful of in how we proceed with sharing them.

In large part, we can play off existing models of cultural materials review that are accepted strategies within the Kodiak Alutiiq community for engaging them and gathering a consensus perspective, such as done through the Alutiiq Words Council, the Alutiiq Museum in exploring the Alutiiq language, and tribal organizations in developing cultural education materials and the Alutiiq Values list over the past decade. Only together in a collaboration of voices can we find meaning and purpose for the whole group (Mindell, 1995). While I may know my own voice or perspective, by myself I cannot restore balance for anyone else but myself. Only through a conversation and sharing of a multitude of perspectives can we represent all the aspects of a whole group or community. Otherwise we will run the risk of ignoring or oppressing in favor of more dominate voices. Research about a community is only effective if it is community-driven and community members serve as co-researchers within the process (Wilson, 2008; Brayboy, 2005; L. Smith, 1999).

A Storyteller and Apprentice Network

As we increase our understanding of Alutiiq storytelling as a community, growth of our human resources is an important next step in revitalization if we are going to foster our oral traditions as lived practices. One way to do this within our modern contexts is to establish a network of storytellers able and willing to visit classrooms and to perform for the community. Such a process must include recreating oral tradition practices—not just offering a library-style reading hour—but truly reintroducing the performance-based storytelling tradition that captivates audiences and includes ceremonial aspects that engage the senses and connect us to the story. While some Elders may be interested in serving this role, we also need more adult and young adult storytellers or culture-bearers to revitalize a tradition, building further momentum within the cultural revitalization movement. Part of this network development should include creation of storytelling apprenticeships for youth with our best remaining storytellers. While ultimately the revitalization of the Alutiiq language should be central to this process, there are many Alutiiq Elders today who do not speak Alutiiq given our history of language oppression, and yet are powerful storytellers in English. Fostering the Alutiiq oral tradition should not

limit their potential role in this process, as their skill as storytellers should not be dependent on Alutiiq language fluency. Apprentices to English-speaking storytellers can become bridges as they study the art of storytelling and learn to do it bilingually.

In Oscar Kawagley's (2006) *A Yupiaq Worldview*, he calls for a shift in educational practices that includes reestablishing cultural traditions as the context for all learning within schools. Further, Shawn Wilson's (1996) study of Gwitch'in Elders and the need to consciously foster the development and respect of Elders to support a healthy community is congruent with Kawagley's recommendations. As Wilson suggests, it is the schools' responsibility to bring Elders back into the center of education, to heal the wounds created since Western conquest disenfranchised Elders as our main teachers.

While Wilson (1996) does not explore the specifics of how Elders will become more integrated into education, Kawagley's (2006) specificity in creating the "fish camp" model as the context for science education illustrates just how the schools can empower Elders and culture-bearers to help teach and heal their communities. Both authors emphasize the fact that culture comes through our Elders and our language, and only the perspective of both past ways and modern survival can create a holistic life to combat social problems that are rife in our Alaska Native communities. Both Kawagley (2006) and Wilson (1996) conclude that culture should not be a supplement to education, but rather the context and filter for it. This is a challenging notion for non-Native educators to accept, as it requires a significant shift in their approach or attention, and is a greater responsibility as they must become facilitators for the Native community on a regular basis within their classrooms.

The prediction that both authors hint at is that without this shift in educational practice our Alaska Native communities will continue to suffer the social and economic problems that have persisted despite well-meaning interventions. Only by empowering culture-bearers to engage regularly with Native youth can culture truly play its appropriate role within education. Involving Elders, culture-bearers, and traditional storytellers in schools is important for students, as intergenerational and community-based learning is a rich experience that connects students back to their families and

contributes to a strong sense of wellbeing. Building relationships with Elders is an essential part of growing up well-balanced. To give students more opportunities to build these bonds and learn from the wisdom of those who have survived a lifetime of adventures helps students see their own situations within the larger context and gives them additional role models to pattern after. There is no other way to effectively expose students to their cultural knowledge, and the framework for their community's worldview, than by building connections between young people and culture-bearers.

Alutiiq Storywork Curriculum and Story Access

My goal for this study was to prepare the Alutiiq community to collaboratively design Alutiiq stories curriculum for use within our Kodiak Island schools as a means of decolonizing our education system and helping revitalize Alutiiq oral traditions. Despite transmission barriers that have blocked Alutiiq storytelling in the past, we can establish understanding between teachers and community members on the value of traditional storytelling. To accomplish having our young people exposed to traditional stories, we will next need to produce story curriculum for application back into educational settings.

Thankfully there are Indigenous story curricula available to model after as we look at integrating traditional stories across the curriculum, in different contexts and among different age groups (Archibald, 2008). There are also mainstream storytelling curriculum units available to model after (PBS, n.d.). For our region, we currently have a companion guide for studying about the Alutiiq people and general understanding about storytelling for elementary and middle school teachers (Manosa, 2005), a unit that incorporates Alutiiq mythology into the Kodiak High School World Literature course by Alutiiq teacher Tonya Heitman (2010), as well as a number of community-based curriculum resources developed over the past decade (Geophysical Institute, n.d.; NEAR, 2002; Drabek, 2009a; NVA, 2009a, 2009b; Steffian & Counciller, 2009, 2012; <http://ankn.uaf.edu>). What has been missing is a comprehensive resource and guide to our traditional stories. This dissertation is the starting point for what is potential for building an anthology that is accessible for teachers and students, yet encourages the active practice of oral traditions.

Modeling after similar resources, this potential Alutiiq stories curriculum will demonstrate how to reintegrate Indigenous local literature into schools, as well as serve as a resource for teaching across the curriculum within Kodiak's schools. Such a curriculum must simultaneously meet Alaska State Language Arts and History Standards (ADEED, 2006) and the Alaska Culturally Responsive Standards (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1998, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2003). It should also answer the questions: 1) *How can Alutiiq stories and traditional knowledge be **integrated into schools across the curriculum to motivate and positively impact** student identity and wellbeing?* 2) *How can traditional stories be **used to engage and inspire students** to love storytelling and writing?* Possible lessons using literature to teach across the curriculum may include:

- (1) Exploring the writing and storytelling process;
- (2) Literary elements and versions of events and stories – mythic vs. life experience;
- (3) Traditional arts, skills, and technology;
- (4) History, social studies, leadership and economy;
- (5) Alutiiq cosmology, spirituality, worldview and values;
- (6) Family dynamics and genealogy; and
- (7) Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and stewardship.

Supporting this next step, Elders and Native educators, along with Kodiak Island Borough School District staff can help teachers meet real classroom and community needs, but do so through our traditional knowledge, practices and story. As we pilot storytelling curriculum within our schools, community events, homes and camps we need to also be mindful to video record the storytelling sessions and related activities for posterity and for access by others not able to participate, so that the revitalization work we begin today has further opportunity to be sustainable.

In any Indigenous story use and distribution effort, it is important to be mindful of cultural intellectual property rights and to the community vs. individual ownership of stories. For example, this dissertation focuses on stories that are already publicly available in print or in audio recordings, in an effort to explore the background of where they were collected and how they are true to community values or not. However, any

plans to retell these stories in a revised format should be presented to the community and Elders for their approval of how the stories appear and will be used. For some community members individual or family ownership of life stories should be respected in acknowledgments and in permission to reprint such stories. Some educators in the past have been warned not to use or teach traditional stories if they do not share an Alutiiq cultural background. However, given the endangered nature of our stories and language, it is important to recommend ways that teachers of any background can engage their students in learning traditional Alutiiq stories. By developing story curricula collaboratively, the community should recommend appropriate usage of the stories and hopefully empower local Kodiak teachers to integrate stories across the curriculum.

Reflecting on the concept of story as survival (see Chapter 1 diagram) coupled with the Alutiiq values model for wellbeing (see Chapter 7), these visual representations justify why storytelling is important and how a holistic approach is essential within Indigenous education. Collectively our stories provide us the looking glass through which to learn how to be human beings and how to survive, both figuratively and literally. Stories reinforce our identity, our unity as a people, and help shape our sense of purpose in life (Eder, 2007; Kawagley, 2006; L. Smith, 1999; Cajete, 1994). Native authors, such as Blaeser (1993) and Cook-Lynn (1996), claim that stories are a responsibility to carry forward, retelling and honoring the memories of loved ones whose voices may otherwise be left unheard. In this way, we are able to correct inaccuracies in written history and reclaim or validate ways of life and traditions that have been oppressed. When a worldview collapses, so collapses a community's wellbeing. Reclaiming our Indigenous literature as an creative expression, educational exploration, and lived practice is another important step toward cultural revitalization and survival. As Alutiiq Elder John Pestrikoff often ends his stories, "Do you believe it to be true?"

Appendices

Appendix A: Frank A. Golder Papers Notated Index

Hoover Institute, Stanford University

Frank A. Golder Papers Index

Summary of Notes on Relevancy of Each Box to Golder's Alutiiq Story Collections

Box	Content	Review Notes
1	Biographical File (1914-1929)	Biographical details on Golder.
2	Diaries 1914-1922	Little reference to Alaskan experience or Alutiiq stories. All post Alaskan experience and publications.
3	Diaries 1922	Not reviewed, as post Alaskan experience, like box 2.
4	Diaries 1925-1927; Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	General writings on Alaska, folders 6-7, Unidentified drafts & notes. Copies made and notes on: 4. Essay on Life in Alaska as a teacher written by Golder 5. "Daily Journal of F.A. Golder" 1901 journal of his summer fishing. 2 other journals of life in Unga as a teacher and his contacts, and story notes. 8. Untitled Fragments - Alaska notes for synthesis of his knowledge of claims on Alaska's boundaries 9. Untitled Fragments - Alaska - 2 stories from Unalaska 10. Veniaminov Journal transcripts - Golder copied
5	Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	1. Alaska Social Customs - Unalaska, Atka, Tlingit, notes possibly from Veniaminoff's journal 9. Father Herman of Alaska - Handwritten manuscript of saint's life, believed to be same as later published 16. Ross, California - Handwritten notes on history - reviewed due to Kodiak Alutiiq presence at Fort Ross 23-26. JAFI Kodiak & Unga Story publications 27. Survey of Alaska by Golder in <i>Washington Historical Quarterly</i> in 1913 - made a copy as not available through UAF online library
6	Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	Mostly Russian history - Not relevant
7	Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	Mostly Russian history - Not relevant

Box	Content	Review Notes
8	Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	1. <i>Aim in Life or a Career in Life</i> , San Mateo Union High School Commencement Speech - 1924. (Made a copy) Very interesting speech about the development of his own interests and his perception of what he valued. 6. <i>Autobiography</i> - glosses over his experience in Alaska (took some notes, but didn't copy)
9	Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	Mostly Russian history - Not relevant
10	Speeches & Writings: 1914-1928	Reviewed. Not relevant
11	Correspondence, 1902-1929	Reviewed names, all correspondence files are after Alaskan experience, and not names of community members from Unga or Alaska that are recognizable at this point.
12	Correspondence, 1902-1929	61. Marie Jensen, 1902. Not relevant - written to Golder when he lived in Unga, but not Alaska related. No others reviewed, same as box 11.
13	Correspondence, 1902-1929	57-58. Miscellaneous correspondence. Not relevant. No others reviewed, same as box 11.
14	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Chose not to review, as focused on general Alaskan history and Russian imperial archival records
15	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Chose not to review at this point, same as 14
16	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Foreign policy with Alaska/US - Not relevant
17	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Foreign policy with Alaska/US - Not relevant
18	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Not reviewed, not relevant
19	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Not reviewed, not relevant
20	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	7. Russians in Alaska; Russian American Company, 1857-1867 8-11. Alaska and Fort Ross Russian occupation. Interesting but not specific to research.
21	Russian Archives, 1904-1923	Only reviewed index, not relevant
22	American Relief Administration, 1919-1929.	Only reviewed index, not relevant
23	American Relief Administration, 1919-1929.	Only reviewed index, not relevant
24	American Relief Administration, 1919-1929.	Only reviewed index, not relevant

Box	Content	Review Notes
25	American Relief Administration; Subject Files, 1861-1929	Alaska references not relevant
26	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
27	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
28	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
29	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
30	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
31	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
32	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
33	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
34	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
35	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
36	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Only reviewed index, not relevant
37	Subject Files, 1861-1929	Reviewed 6-8 miscellaneous, not relevant
	Envelops: Photographs	A. Prints of Frank A. Golder, ca. 1928 (copied)

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