

COME ON UGZRUK LET ME WIN:  
EXPERIENCE, RELATIONALITY, AND KNOWING  
IN KIGIQTAAMIUT HUNTING AND ETHNOGRAPHY

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A  
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty  
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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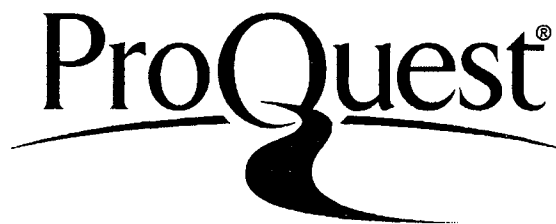
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## Abstract

This ethnography of marine mammal hunting explores linkages between personal experiences and shared understandings of ecological phenomena among a group of Kigiqtaamiut hunters in Shishmaref, Alaska. Specifically it examines the relationships between Kigiqtaamiut hunters' experiences in the world and means by which the experienced world is brought into being through hunters' ways knowing. This work is informed by three spring hunting seasons spent as a member of a familial marine mammal hunting crew and over 20 months of fieldwork. It addresses hunters' ways of learning, knowing and directly experiencing the reality of the phenomenal world.

Exploring a multiplicity of modes and facets of experience connected to the relationships between hunters' processual way of knowing bearded seals (*Eringathus barbatus*) through an experiential ethnographic investigation, I empirically examine the practices of hunting and the ethnography of hunting as linked, reflexive, and ultimately inseparable processes of *coming to know*. Considering the plausibility that a more rigorous presentation of a way of knowing can be realized through highlighting the reflexive and experiential interactions that shape these two concurrent phenomenological inquiries, this work suggests an "ethnography of knowing" to engage these multiple-linked processes of knowledge construction. It is suggested that separating hunters' ways of being and knowing misconstrues the depth and complexity of local knowledge as actualized in pragmatic decision-making processes in context of hunting.

By examining Kigiqtaamiut/bearded seal relations, the set of hunting practices that most significantly shape the hunting mode of being in Shishmaref are explored. Collapsed into this ethnographic and phenomenological analysis of human/bearded seal ecology are the connections between hunters' ways of knowing, local pedagogy, the structure and usage of hunting narratives and topical lexicon to convey information and the significance of place and local histories. Analysis of these intersecting and mutually informative themes highlights how hunters' means of learning and knowing as a continuous process of experience both shape and are shaped by socio-culturally mediated experiences with natural phenomena. This work speaks to dimensions of hunters' ways of knowing both manifest in and shaping lived experiences. In doing so, this work furthers regional ethnography, the anthropology of knowledge studies, human environmental relations and understandings of the human condition of being-in-the-world.

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To any others whom I have missed, my most humble apologies for the oversight.

Dedicated to the Memory of Shirley Magluwiiq Weyiouanna  
September 13, 1951 to January 30, 2008

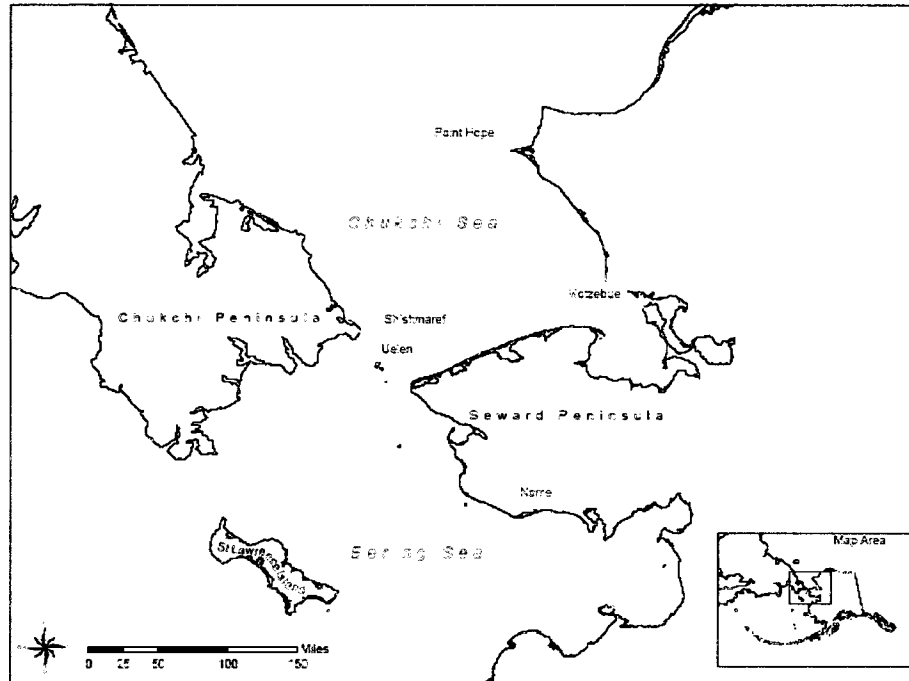
## INTRODUCTION TO AN EXPERIENCE IN KNOWINGS

Sharing is a central social dimension of hunting life in the Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq village of Shishmaref, in northwestern Alaska (see map 1). Whether it is meat, fish, berries, gas, boats, guns, work, money or stories, everything is shared. As I was first getting to know hunters in Shishmaref in 2004, Clifford, who became my primary instructor, pointed out one of his cousins to me. “See Harold, he’s a real subsistence hunter.” What marked him as a “subsistence hunter” was not that he hunted to feed his family, or how much meat or fish he brought back, or how “deadly” he was at catching animals. What made him a “real hunter” was one singular aspect of his hunting practice, namely that he shared whatever he had, that if he caught two fish he’d give one of them away.

Sharing is the central theme that has shaped the research that led to this dissertation. This is an account of shared experiences between hunters and animals, between hunters and hunters, and between hunters and myself. It is a shared account because it would not have been possible without the efforts of numerous people in the field, sharing intimate dimensions of their lives that include complex interactions with animals in the context of the hunt, understandings of which are difficult to comprehend or explain.

Noting the primacy of the shared in this intellectual project, I drew inspiration from the local cultural significance of sharing in order to introduce this narrative. When a hunter returns from the sea ice during hunting, it is implicitly expected that he will share. His experiences, his understandings and what he might have brought back, all is shared through time. I will begin this, my own hunting story, by sharing a story within a story, a story of coming to know.





Map 1. The Study Area

By July 2007, while in the middle of fieldwork, I was attending to the task of rebuilding an old boat for hunting in the ocean, river, and lagoon systems which make up the maritime setting that defines the hunters' landscape surrounding Shishmaref. Repairing an old boat or building a new one is a task most young hunters in Shishmaref must attend to when they begin to hunt for both their own families and others without their fathers, grandfathers, or uncles. As my field work revolved around hunting and learning through direct experience, it seemed fitting that I rebuild a boat for my use and participation in hunting life.

I chose to rebuild a nearly 100-year-old traditional skin-on-frame boat, an *umiaq*. This *umiaq* had been Clifford's grandfather Alloceok's. Alloceok had originally paid one wolverine skin to have it built in the early 1900's. It had been sitting by Clifford's family's meat drying racks for years. By the time spring marine mammal hunting was over I was ready to sew the cloth fabric that would cover the skeletal frame of the *umiaq*. The period following bearded seal (*ugzruk*) and walrus hunting (typically July) is an in-between time in the seasonal round of activities that shapes hunting life in Shishmaref.

The ice was gone. We had finished putting away walrus meat in underground storage pits, but ugzruk meats were taking longer to cure this year, hunting had been late. Air dried meats are usually done curing at the beginning of July, but along the littoral of the northwest Seward Peninsula, unpredictability and variability are the norm and this year hunting had started almost a month later than in previous years. Some people were getting caribou, others were setting nets for salmon and whitefish close to the village, mostly near family drying racks. Berry picking had not started and other people, like me, were attending to chores in and around town.

Laying out the skin (traditionally a split-walrus hide or more recently heavy polyester cloth fabric ordered from Washington state) that will cover an *umiaq* frame correctly is an important dimension of the final stage of building a skin-on-frame boat, and for the uninitiated it is a stressful task. The material must be laid out correctly in order to both maximize the amount of coverage that can be obtained from one piece, while minimizing the sewing of an additional patch of material. There is little room for mistakes without a lot of extra material at one's disposal. Never having worked on such a large skin-on-frame boat before, I was spending a lot of time looking at historic pictures of skin boats from the Bering Strait region in order to glean any details I could from their construction.

After watching me spend more time looking at the books than at the boat in front of me, Clifford eventually came over and quite emphatically suggested that I:

Get rid of that damn book, I don't care what the book says about where to cut or how to hang that skin, the boat is right in front of you and that's all that matters. You can't cut it like it says, don't play look at that book, just look at what you're doing and just cut for *this* boat. I don't care what some damn book says, you have to just work on what's right in front of you. I have built lots of boats, I know. There are no stores for this kind [of fabric]. It doesn't matter if it is from Seattle or walrus skin from Diomedea you don't get a second chance. If you cut it like that book says it will be too short, so quit looking at those pictures and work on this boat.

In many respects this dissertation is an attempt to fully understand and explain Clifford's reprimand in relation to Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing and to examine his (and others) emphasis on direct experience. Clifford's way of knowing and instructing point

to the multiple intersecting and connected domains of experience incorporated into ways of knowing and coming to know in this hunting community. His understanding of animal behavior and environmental indicators were enmeshed in the skills of hunting. They were realized through his persistent, careful, and inherently practical consideration of ever-present unknowable factors involved in hunting and traveling.

“Don’t ever say you’re going hunting”, he would tell me. “Just say you are going to look around. You can’t know what is going to happen when you’re out on the country.” Clifford’s precautions suggest the presence of relationships between human actions and intentions with the unknowable factors or forces present in the world and the practical need to consider potential unknowns when hunting and traveling by careful preparation, flexibility, and cautious humility.

This is an ethnography of coming to know and understand hunters’ ways of knowing. More specifically it explores the meanings of Clifford’s statements within the context and flow of hunting activities. It is an account of learning the unspoken, locally assumptive and intersubjective aspects of experience, which are critical to Shishmaref peoples’ understandings of the world. I examine those domains of hunting practices that are ambiguously hidden in plain sight, and yet are powerfully present, shaping experiences and knowledge.

By examining knowledge in the flow of daily activities I address what Merleau-Ponty (2004) suggests as “the visible and the invisible.” Those are the aspects of life that are not explicitly discernable and are undefined yet rendered all the more significant through their consistent presence in the everyday activities in hunting life. In the chapters that follow I describe what Clifford and other Kigiqtaamiut hunters have taught me about Kigiqtaamiut hunting beyond knowing how to read the ice, to identify seals, to butcher and how to stalk. I address their hunting as a mode of being and a way of understanding relationships and connections with diverse phenomena through directly experiencing them. I discuss learning relational dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut hunting life that are imbedded in actions though experiencing hunting life from, with and alongside these hunters.

This is a directly learned ethnographic account of getting one's hands bloody, sighting in rifles at the village dump, leaning over the side of a boat to push off of ice flows while navigating through ice choked channels during spring hunts. It's about learning to watch and respond to animals that are watching and responding directly to you while you, the hunter-self, are watching and responding to them. It's about experiencing how the phenomenal world intersects and connects different dimensions of daily life. This ethnography of hunters, hunting and of coming to understand speaks directly of engagements with the directly experienced world. It addresses expressions of continuously emerging understandings of a world that is concomitantly and continuously coming into being through a person's being-in-the-world. The ways of knowing explored in this dissertation are personal, intuitive, and realized and fostered in the context of activities and through specific familial, socio-cultural geographical settings and understood in the historical particularities of individuals' life histories in motion. These are the understandings that are at once informed by experience and at the same time shape hunters' understandings of their experiences.

Indigenous people's knowledge of the environment is most often addressed through the analytical framework of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which traces its intellectual roots to ethno-biology and cultural ecology (Berkes 1999). TEK examines indigenous ecological understandings as a collective body of knowledge that is passed on by the decidedly ambiguous process of "cultural transmission" (Berkes 1999:8). This project is not about Kigiqtaamiut TEK. Instead, it is an attempt to suggest an alternative form of engagement with local ways of knowing.

What I am attempting to present is an account of Kigiqtaamiut understandings relative to local conceptualizations of the world as I came to understand them largely through acquiescing to Kigiqtaamiut pedagogy. Through a critical examination of my shared experiences in learning with and from hunters, I explore the relationality influencing Kigiqtaamiut hunting ways of being and knowing. I engage with what Jackson (1998:4) suggests is "the knowledge with which people live rather than the knowledge with which western intellectuals make sense of life." In that respect this is an

ethnography of knowledge that is “not knowledge.” It is “not knowledge” as independent of an equally direct and necessary engagement with processes through which it is acquired. It is “not knowledge” as universally applicable system of information or stored data catalogued for later retrieval. It is “not knowledge” in the sense of René Descartes’ duality, premised on the separation of *res cogitas* from *res extensa* and the separation of a direct relationship between the thinker-being-mind and the substance of the world suggesting a removed and subsequent objective means of understanding the world.

This *is* an ethnography of knowings as personal, individual continuous processual ways of coming to know from within the flow of activities. It is written to speak to ways of knowing and experiencing the world wherein the dualities between knowledge and practice, mind and body, socio-cultural humanity and the natural, between traditional and modern are not forced onto person’s experiences. This is an ethnography wherein the boundaries between the processes of coming to know in hunting and in the ethnography of hunting are collapsed into each other as a topic and focus of ethnographic inquiry.

Insofar as this is an account of Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ ways of knowing, it is equally and by necessity (in order to grasp for some sense of the reality of the ethnographic experience) an account of my own learning *in situ*. Learning through directly experiencing hunters’ ways of knowing on the most carnal and empirical level of full and direct daily experiences with Kigiqtaamiut hunting life-worlds. The challenge faced in writing about this group of hunters’ ways of knowing is to relate these understandings in the most careful and attentive means possible by drawing upon my experiences learning with them, while not allowing my experiences to eclipse analysis of hunters’ experiences. My intent is to describe the experiential understandings of hunters from the vantage of “directly” coming to know something of them through shared mutual experiences.

In rearticulating the experiences of hunting, traveling, and learning, I do not claim or assume an authoritative position as an expert on hunting, sea ice conditions, or bearded seals. I write from the vantage point of the student, or apprentice, who is in the process of learning about reading sea ice and understanding relationships between diverse phenomena in the world. I use my experiences to speak to local processes of learning.

Inclusion of my experiences throughout this dissertation parallels hunters' narrative practices, the shape, character, and structure of which largely emphasize personal experiences. Including my stories partially shapes this ethnography of learning from and with hunters as congruent with "Shishmaref style" hunting stories, qualifying aspects of this written account for judgment and critic against locally determined criteria. At the same time, by emphasizing what I have come to know through my experiences (albeit ethnographically constructed experiences) alongside Kigiqtaamiut hunters, I highlight the interconnected linkages between the broader ethnographic project of exploring Kigiqtaamiut hunters ways of knowing, and how their understandings are in everyday life.

The lived realities of persons in the field, the articulation of a specific argument based on the analysis field data and the processes by which field data are obtained through relations with instructors in the field are intrinsically interconnected. Attempting to say something of the human experience through the investigations of experiences of persons in the field necessitates attending to the linkages between the concurrent processes of knowledge construction in both hunting camps, and at home on the laptop. The processes of learning in hunting, and in the ethnography of hunting dwell within the "coexistences of a single moment" (Mol & Law 2002:11). This "moment" is where practice, theory, method, and experience are not just brought together but are engaged as relationally intertwined preconditions of inquiry in the world wherein "there is no external resting place for those engaged in research and writing" (Mol and Law 2002:20).

This examination of the relational and the visible and invisible dimensions of the experiences of Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing will demonstrate that hunters can teach us much about local historical ecology, resource management and the pragmatic skills of a community of hunters and life in northwestern Alaska today. Equally, it can teach us much about the human condition of being in and coming to know the lived in world.

In the chapters that follow I explore interconnected relations in Kigiqtaamiut hunting practices and in the ethnographic study of them. Chapter one offers a theoretical

discussion of relationality as the condition being-in-the-world as it is used throughout this dissertation. Building on the theoretical context of relationality I discuss the role of acquiescing to local pedagogies as an ethnographic method of examining ways of knowing. I link theory and method toward the suggestion of an ethnography of practice premised upon synthesis of theory, method and practice that is attentive to the analysis of Kigiqtaamiut ways of being and knowing as individually experienced dynamic and continuously changing dimensions of cultural life.

Chapter two focuses upon local history in Shishmaref within the broader context of documented regional history. This chapter begins with an overview of the history of human occupancy and the emergence of marine mammal hunting in northwestern Alaska. I then examine Shishmaref within the context of regional history of historic contacts and expanding colonial interactions. In doing so I provide a synthesis of local historical accounts and archival materials while highlighting the limitations of both sources. This is followed by an overview of contemporary village life and the role of hunting in village life today.

Chapter three is the first part of a two part discussion of hunters' ways of knowing and learning. Opening with an overview of the economic and social role of bearded seals in western Alaska it moves toward a review of quantitative assessments of human and bearded seal ecology. From here the discussion moves toward Kigiqtaamiut bearded seal hunting strategies through time. This is followed up by examination of the cultural concept of *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* or Eskimo Law in Kigiqtaamiut hunting life. *Anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* informs the way hunters interact with animals and forces in the world that can only be understood through experience. Resource conservation and self-regulation are also engaged here relative to local understandings of connections between human actions and the phenomenal world.

Chapter four continues the discussion initiated in chapter three. It focuses on processes of coming to know in the context of hunting activities. Here emphasis is placed on hunters' pedagogy in hunting and ethnography and on how more experienced hunters and elders teach younger hunters through creating contexts for observation and

participation along with verbal instruction and reprimand. It expands understanding the crucial role of experience in learning and knowing, creating links between ethnography and local pedagogy as connected and mutually informing projects in knowing.

Chapter five will provide the final layer of ethnography and focuses on the relationality between place, narrative and narration in hunting stories in the examination of sea ice. It includes the consideration of hunting stories both as narrative events. Concomitantly it will examine how narratives are engaged and understood through hunters shared experience. Hunting stories link experiences to places. Central to the discussion of hunting stories will be the relationships of hunting stories and place. In order to understand the relationship between hunting narrative and place I specifically examine the sea ice landscape as a place, and hunting as a process of place making.

Chapter six provides a synthesis of the ethnography and theoretical possibilities suggested in the previous chapters. It reexamines the connections between Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing and being-in-the-world, and the ethnography of their ways of knowing and being-in-the-world as a relational ethnography. This chapter concludes the dissertation by offering the possibilities and limitations of a relational ethnography of knowing toward both coming to know the world from the position of being in it as a complexity of the human condition.



## CHAPTER ONE ETHNOGRAPHY FOR A RELATIONAL WORLD

### 1.1 TOWARD A THEORY OF RELATIONALITY

In the introduction to his important work on relationality, *Minima Ethnographica*, Michael Jackson suggests that investigating the relationship between specificity and generality, between the particular and the universal, addresses one of the most consistent and omnipresent aspects of the human experience (1998:2). Jackson proposes that relations and relationality as universally shared dimensions of being human should be central to the ethnographic project. He summarizes that “relation is prior to relata” (1998:2) that the self exists in relation to the not self “other.” In consideration of ways of knowing, relationality implies that diverse knowledges exist in relation to the specific epistemological process and theoretical contexts that shape processes of knowing and what can be known. The concept of relationality is used to describe the existential condition of coming to understand phenomena, experiences, and material dimensions of the world through a condition of being-in-the-world. Thus, the hunter’s knowledge of animals emerges in relation to his experiences while his modes of experiencing exist in relation to what he has learned to see within an ever-evolving field of relationships, which develops and takes shape over the trajectory of living and interacting within a world of complex and overlapping social relationships.

Beyond considering factors influencing the always evolving relational understandings of hunters, a focus of this ethnography is on what can be learned through the ethnographic process of coming to know relationally from a position of being-in-the-world. Research and writing exist and take shape in relational fields of research: proposal guidelines, requests for proposals, funding solicitations, and buzzwords such as “resiliency” or even “relationality.” These buzzwords define what is considered cutting edge at any given moment. Fieldwork is equally dependent upon and shaped by social relations. The openness of the researcher to the conditions of field settings, to informants and friends in the field and their willingness to share experiences and understandings

with you, are relational and pose challenges for analysis and method. Equally, once out of the field, writing one's experiences in the form of a dissertation or publications takes place in relation to requirements of the academy and committee members, each of whom is engaged in their own academic projects and languages and has their own interests and concerns. The projects of hunters and the ethnographer of hunters both involve a multiplicity of diverging and converging social relations experienced as a condition of coming to know the world from a position of being in it.

This chapter explores relationality as both a topic of and means of carrying out ethnographic research and writing. To undertake this I review some of the central aspects of relationality informing this ethnography and discuss how I bring them into practice in ethnographic research. My goal here is to describe my usage of relationality within an ethnography of the lived experiences of individuals through a personal and collective engagement with them. I therefore draw upon relationality in order to demonstrate how an ethnography of knowing can be used to speak to broader contexts of the human condition and ways of knowing the world in relation to being in it. Taking intellectual direction and inspiration from Jackson (1996; 1998; 2005) and others, I explore relationality as a shared commonality of the human experience.

Investigating the ways people experience relationships, and subsequently draw upon experiences to understand the world they live in, draws on and supports an existential phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is the methodological study of experience. My usage of existential phenomenology recommends the prioritization of ontology in the sense of Heidegger's *Da-sein* (there being) or being-in-the-world in the analysis of experiencing the human condition. Heidegger's (1996 [1927]) philosophical writings designate the condition of *Da-sein*, or *there being* (Mulhall 1996), as a condition of *being-in-the-world* which must be considered a-priori to the application of any specific epistemology to understanding the world. Any form of knowing the world is existentially and inescapably bound to our being-in-the-world.

Heidegger furthers this argument through his analysis of *dwelling* as an expression of our being-in-the-world. Dwelling here comes from Heidegger's (1977:349) usage of the

German word for “build” *bauen*. Heidegger writes that *bauen* comes from the word *buan* “to dwell, or to stay in a place” (1977:348). This, Heidegger tells us, speaks to our condition of being, that we exist and live in the world, accentuating the priority of existence over essence. “The way in which you or I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on earth is *buan*, dwelling” (Heidegger 1977:349). To build is to dwell, furthermore to build in the world one must dwell in it. Heidegger (1977:349) continues to state “We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is because we are dwellers.” As with *there being*, which is understood as being-in-the-world, dwelling emphasizes the primacy of our earthly existential condition as a starting point for considering other dimensions of experience in and knowledge of the world.

In conversations with Kigiqtaamiut hunters about their success, or lack thereof, in catching animals, hunters often discuss their experiences in relation to their ability to manifest luck. If they were able to catch animals, success was not assumed to solely reside in their skills of shooting or stalking, but in their ability to get luck. Luck/success was viewed as emergent from the hunters’ proper actions and mode of interaction with, and mindset toward, animals. Through their experience of being-in-the-world hunters recognize the presence of a multiplicity of forces that could potentially influence the outcome of a hunting encounter with an animal. Recognition of the presence of unknowable forces through hunting practices, and not assuming or claiming that one could fully know, is a central part of manifesting luck. These relational and processual understandings emerge and take shape through personal experience, highlighting how Kigiqtaamiut hunter’s being-in-the-world is central in their coming to understand it.

Ingold (2000) adopts this notion of dwelling in his argument for a re-conceptualization of persons as locus of creative growth. For Ingold our being-in-the-world is a synergistic “locus of creative growth within an unfolding field of relationships” (2000:4). We are at once ecological and socio-relational beings existing in a relational world wherein ultimately there is no real delineation between the biological, ecological, or socio-cultural domains of human existence, they are all mutually relational dimensions of being. For Ingold the world can ultimately be objectively known and

studied insofar that “Knowing must be reconnected with being, epistemology with ontology, thought with life” (Ingold 2006:19). Ingold (2000) refers to this as a *dwelling perspective*.

The common English language translations and application of Heidegger’s monumental work do not come without complications. The application of his work in relation to the context he addressed necessitates critical analysis of the processes and contexts through which his ideas emerged. Highlighting the presence of the social, historical and biographical particularities of Heidegger’s work make the application of his terminology a complicated if not tenuous undertaking and one that is beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, I offer a specific clarification as to how being-in-the-world is used here to illuminate relationality. Like Heidegger I utilize the concept of being-in-the-world, but I do not assume contiguous overlap with Heidegger’s (1996[1927]) or Merleau-Ponty’s (2002[1962]) usage of the term. Being-in-the-world is used throughout this dissertation to suggest that epistemologies as formalized systems of thought and analysis are contingent upon and shaped by our being-in-the-world, which is understood as our active engagement with and experiences in diverse perceptual and socio-culturally mediated spheres of interaction. Experience in the world and the lenses through which the world and experiences are viewed are continuously emerging in relation to each other. Being-in-the-world and ways of knowing are inescapably intertwined. They interactively shape and are shaped by each other through the activity of being-in and coming to know the world. The hyphenation of this terminology stresses, as Willerslev (2007:20) highlights, our involvement with the elements that make up the world and suggests that these involvements are socio-culturally charged. The material domains of life (the world) take on meaning through our interactions with them. Thus, the valuation and meanings of the materiality of the world are diversely and continually coming into being through the condition of being-in-the-world.

Merleau-Ponty (1964:119) notes that, because of our being-in the-world, ways of knowing cannot be removed from historical trajectories and existential qualities of the human condition. Though we can, on some level, attempt to disengage ourselves from

aspects of it, we can never move beyond its presence. A view from an assumed position of temporary disengagement from being-in-the-world can be applied and understood as a conclusive meta-perspective, yet it is not value-free, pure or an “objective” position from outside our being-in-the-world. It is better to understand this focus as an attempt to see an aspect of the world from *a* perspective, a lateral shifting of the position taken for the viewing. The implication of this impossibility of being outside-the-world, Jackson (1996:9) points out, is that no viewpoint is centrally empowered to offer an authoritative ultimate or meta-reality perspective.

Our being-in-the-world is presented here as an ontologically and socio-culturally habituated position, one to which we are inescapably and existentially bound. This poses the challenging if not slightly unnerving question: how can we go forward toward reporting with any certainty or authority in ethnography?

Ingold (2000; 2006) has stressed that the lack of engagement with our relationality of being-in-the-world is a fundamental problem crippling the academic/scientific endeavor at large, and he has argued for nothing less than the reinvention of the practice of science in order to attend to our existential condition. He suggests that science can and must (in order to remain an empirical objective methodology) abandon its dualistic Cartesian epistemological heritage, and refashion itself around a relational epistemology grounded in the ontology of being-in-the-world.<sup>1</sup> Rather than attempt to come to know the world from an assumed position of objective detachment from subjects of inquiry, science must move forward toward the recognition and assertion of the engagement of individuals within the world. Ingold (2006:19) writes:

But science as it stands rests upon an impossible foundation, for in order to turn the world into an *object* of concern it has to place itself above and beyond the very world it claims to understand. The conditions that enable scientists to *know*, at least according to official protocols are such as to make it impossible for scientists to be in the very world of which they seek

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<sup>1</sup> There are important parallels here between Ingold’s call for a relational science and what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as epistemic reflexivity (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Palsson (1994) likewise highlights important parallels between Ingold and Bourdieu’s (1990) “Logic of Practice” in relation to the experiential processes of learning and knowing in the flow of action, highlighting the similarities in their intellectual frameworks.

knowledge. Yet all science depends on observation, and all observation depends upon participation, that is on a close coupling, in perception and action between the observer and those aspects of the world that are the focus of attention.

In order to attend to the complexities associated with coming to know the world from the position of being-in-the-world as both a topic of inquiry and an omnipresent reality of conducting ethnographic research, I adopt what Jackson (1998) calls an *intersubjective* approach. Broadly conceived we can consider the objectively known as that which is collectively assumed or taken for granted as an accurate “truth” in a given socio-cultural context. Subjective thought, on the other hand, is that which is held to be individually interpretive. An intersubjective approach explores the linkages and space in-between subjective and objective aspects of knowing (Jackson 1998:3). An intersubjective approach examines individual and personal engagements with collectively accepted “objective” truths and considers how experience and individual understandings contribute to and shape collective assumptions as well as being shaped by them.

The intersubjective as used throughout this text refers to individual, personal, and shared experiences and understandings of more widely held cultural-ontological assumptions about the relationships between phenomena in the world. The intersubjective approach does not provide systemic ahistorical characterization of an intellectual body of knowledge that can be isolated from the practices and experiences of everyday life. Rather, it focuses upon how more broadly conceived local understandings of older beliefs or “traditional knowledges” are engaged and considered through the daily life experiences, and how these experiences in turn contribute to and shape the collective or local objectively held truths.

Intersubjective understandings come into being and are shaped through experience, recognizing that continuous experiences result in changes in understandings that occur over life-histories. Intersubjective ethnography therefore explores the knowledge of moments, of actions considered in relation to their immersion within the also concurrently emerging local cultural-ontological fields they occur in and respond too. A key aspect of intersubjectivity in this ethnographic exploration of experience and

meaning are the interactions and mutually emerging subjects and objects in hunting life. These include but are not limited to life and death, luck and its absence, self and otherness extending beyond the limits of *Homo sapiens* to include experiences with sentience in animals, the singularity of personal experience and commonality of mutual and shared understandings.

The persistent reoccurrence of human experiences and interactions with being and personhood transcending human forms led A.I. Hallowell (1976 [1960]:358) to suggest “ethno-metaphysics”<sup>2</sup> in order to engage local ontologies and experiences with what he termed “other than human beings.”<sup>3</sup> Further, Jackson (1996:9) writes that human experiences with being are never limited to human beings. Intersubjective fields include persons, ancestors, spirits and qualities of sentience experienced through material objects. In order to describe Evenki reindeer herders’ non-formalized experiential understandings of ecological phenomena, Anderson (2000:116-147) writes of the relational ecological notion of *sentient ecology*.<sup>4</sup> Ingold (2000:25) describes sentient ecology as non-

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<sup>2</sup> Thornton (N.D.:4) offers that Hallowell’s most enduring intellectual contribution is his movement toward establishing “ethno-phenomenology” as a means of exploring the intersubjective domains of being and knowing and offering a theoretical and methodological synthesis for engaging experienced lifeworlds of others. Hallowell’s ethno-phenomenology reemphasizes the significance of being, and concurrently expands social relationality beyond the domain of human beings. Ethno-phenomenology suggests experience and knowledge be examined from within local analytical environments, emphasizing, the interfaces of lifeworlds or behavioral environments with socio-cultural-ontological conceptualizations which influence and shape experiences and the ways they are understood and explained (Moore & Mathews 2001:16).

<sup>3</sup> Human experiences with beings that transcend human forms is well documented among many nonwestern and preliterate societies (Bird-David 1999; 2006; Brightman 1993; Fienup-Riordan 1994; Hallowell 1955; Ingold 2000, 2006; Jackson 1998; Langdon 2003; Morris 1998; 2000; Poirier 2005; Scott 2006; Viveiros De-Castro 1998; West 2007). Hallowell (1976 [1960]:359) offers the term of “other than human beings” as a “class of being” encompassing a broad experience of personhood. Fienup-Riordan (1994:49) based on extensive fieldwork among the Yup’ik of southwestern Alaska, and partially building upon Hallowell’s terminology suggests “non-human persons” to describe the being of personhood in other material forms. Perhaps the most encompassing and useful framework is Langdon’s (2003:8) “persons in other forms.” The concept of “persons in other form” emphasizes shared qualities of being or personhood and positions humans as co-participants within a relational field with “persons in other forms.” At the same time it deemphasizes humanness as a necessary condition of personhood or being.

<sup>4</sup> A burgeoning literature of human environmental interactions couched in relationality has developed in recent years (Anderson 2000; Bateson 1973; Bird-David 1999; 2006; Brightman 1993; Cruikshank 2005; Feit 2004; Fienup-Riordan 1994; Goulet 1998; Hallowell 1955; 1976 [1960]; Ingold 2000; 2006; Langdon 2003; 2006; 2007; Morris 1998; 2000; Myers 1986; Nelson 1983; Poirier 2005; Preston 2002; Rose 2000; Scott 1996; 2006; Sharp 2001; Speck 1935; Tanner 1979; Viveiros de-Castro 1998; Thornton 2008; West 2007; Willerslev 2007). This body of literature is most completely organized and analyzed by Ingold

formalized understandings rooted in feelings, ultimately consisting in skills, sensitivities, and orientations enhanced through a life-history of engagement in an environmental setting. Anderson's description of sentient ecology emphasizes a mutual interrelatedness between human persons and place (2000:116). Using the example of an Evenki herder's interactions with the tundra environment, Anderson (2000:117) suggests that the hunter is both aware of and responsive to the tundra and animals responding to him. Sentient ecology thus emphasizes active engagement and mutual interactions, but does not dictate or deny the possibility of human experiences with personhood in non-human form. Anderson (2000:118) further writes that sentient ecology is articulated in hunting life through an active and applied "knowing." Knowing in the most pragmatic dimensions of living off the lands persists in personal experiences of self-rescue, surviving bad weather, poor luck or other challenges faced in hunting and herding life. Like Evenki knowings, Kigiqtaamiut relational ecological knowings discussed throughout this dissertation are non-formalized, intuitive, personal, active and experiential.

Thus far I have outlined relationality as both a topic of inquiry and a force shaping human understanding. Relationality has been presented as an existential condition of coming to understand phenomena, experiences, and material dimensions of worlds that are shaped and brought into being through the cyclical nature of being-in-the-world. Through this cyclical process epistemologies of knowing and ontologies of being interact continuously shaped by and shaping the other. Building upon Jackson (1998), I have suggested an intersubjective approach as a means of exploring individual, personal, and shared experiential aspects of Kigiqtaamiut hunters' being-in-the-world and understandings about relationships between phenomena experienced in the world. In the next section I build upon these understandings and turn toward the second dimension of

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(2000) in his book *The Perception of the Environment*. Much of this work, including Ingold's is grounded in the intellectually pioneering work of Hallowell's (1955; 1960) exploration of Ojibwa ontologies and his conceptualization of the behavioral environment as a relational field composed of humans and persons in other form (1955; 1960). Current attempts to engage human-environmental relationality have emerged at least partially through the need to critically challenge the classic concepts of animism advanced by E.B. Tylor (1929[1871]). Secondly, though related to the former, there has been the emergent need to challenge the dualistic characterizations of culture and nature as existent on separable planes in order to develop a more general theoretical framework to more accurately attend to the ways persons experience the world the live in.



this discussion, which addresses how relationality figures in the ethnographic practices of field work and writing that inform this dissertation.

## 1.2 SHARED EXPERIENCE AS RELATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Jackson's (1998:3) claim that "Relation is prior to relata" suggests that relationality as a shared quality of the human condition of being-in-the-world can be pragmatically engaged through examination of the intersubjective dimensions of life. In the previous section the intersubjective was introduced as a substantial entity in between individual/personal-experiential understandings and more broad-based, locally accepted and assumed socio-cultural and ontological "truths" within the different relational fields we participate in through our being-in-the-world. The intersubjective speaks to how we are the one and the many at the same time, and it highlights processes of engagement.

Sartre (1956:102) highlights this space as the difference between being-in-the-world, and *being-in-the-midst-of-the-world*. Using the examples of a waiter and a soldier Sartre suggests the waiter or soldier can be and can act out the part of the "soldier-thing" or "waiter thing" in order to manifest the existence of that thing in the midst of a set of circumstances, working at a café or in armed conflict. Yet the waiter or soldier cannot be the "thing" in and of itself in the sense that an inkwell is an inkwell or a cup is a cup. The soldier and waiter is also a person, a husband, a lover a friend. One can only be a "waiter-thing" or the "soldier thing" to the degree he or she is not the thing. That is the waiter can only be a waiter to the degree they are a person who can play the part of being a waiter.

In the midst of carrying out fieldwork, we work with informants who are equally and by existential necessity "not informants," who only are informants to the degree that they are persons engaged in their lifeworld<sup>5</sup> to whom we ask questions. The ethnographic

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<sup>5</sup> I adopt Husserl's conceptualization of lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) as an intersubjective template in lieu of the more classic cultural constructionist concept of world-view (*Weltanschauung*), and emphasize ontology over ideology. Lifeworld speaks to the "sum of man's involvement in everyday affairs, his knowledge, interpretations, responses and the organization of his experience" (Natanson 1973:127). The emphasis in an intersubjective lifeworld context is on how relationality and the connections between the individuality and commonality evolve and materialize in the directly experiential flow of daily life. Yet rather than suggesting a singular or culturally cohesive socio-cultural lifeworld perspective, I am emphasizing

challenge in exploring the intersubjective is to engage the space in-between the being of an informant and being a “not-informant.” It is to come to know the lifeworlds of informants, in that they are not-not informants. In the following methodological discussion I consider the process of “being in the midst of the field” as a mode by which one may directly encounter intersubjective space.

The approach applied throughout both my fieldwork and data analysis for this dissertation is derived from a synthesis of the theoretical issues raised in the previous section collapsed into the relational condition of my own being-in-the-world in the context of fieldwork and writing. Indeed, though I have separated theory and practice for the sake of discussion, they are largely inseparable in the practices of hunting, conducting ethnographic fieldwork and writing. They are continuously shaping and building upon and contextualizing each other. Here I highlight the advantages of a shared experiential approach in the exploration of hunters’ ways of knowing in Shishmaref and speak to some of the local and larger socio-political dimensions that factor into crafting this personalized approach for this ethnographic setting and topic. This is a version of classical participation ethnography that draws upon my personal experience of learning through participation as topic of inquiry.

“You can follow,” Clifford said to me during one of our first conversations. It was a phrase I was to hear repeatedly throughout my time in Shishmaref. The first time he said that to me I had only been in Shishmaref for a few days. A Park Service ranger in Nome suggested I make contact with Clifford for the subsistence land use research I was doing. When I called Clifford and explained my reason for being in Shishmaref he said his family was going to corral his reindeer herd. I should come over to his house, have breakfast with them, and “follow” them. He would point out some important places to me while we were in the country. I was to learn that phrases like “you can follow” and other common local expressions that draw upon both the Iñupiaq and the English

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lifeworlds owing to the intersubjective relations of multiple individuals experiencing and evolving commonalities. It is in this capacity that the intersubjective and relational lifeworlds perspective must concurrently consider the socio-cultural processes by which lifeworlds emerge in conjunction to and intersubjectively with other lifeworlds.

languages have multiple contextually derived meanings. When Clifford said “you can follow” he was, in addition to inviting me to accompany him hunting and traveling, telling me that one cannot learn about hunting by marking hunting areas down on a map or conducting interviews; instead, you have to come to know it through lived experience. Following, as Kigiqtaamiut hunting pedagogy stresses that one learns through their own experiences and develop personalized understandings, strategies, and practices, based on reflexive analysis of personal experience.

“Following,” or in Iñupiaq “*malik*,” which means “to follow” (Fortescue *et al* 1994:186), defined my research methodology and field experience and remained my primary means of learning throughout the course of field work in Shishmaref as I actively participated in all aspects of daily hunting and socio-cultural life. What I came to learn through fieldwork was that beyond participation in hunting life, if one really wanted to learn as directly as possible both what and how hunters come to know and experience the world, one has to acquiesce as completely as possible to the local processes of instruction and analysis. If I wanted to engage with Clifford and other hunters in any form of meaningful dialogue, I needed to get to know the country, the seasons, the activities, the places and their names and associated stories, as well as the histories of families and individuals relationships with these places. I needed to know these aspects of hunting life not in the abstract, but in the concrete context of what they meant for peoples’ everyday lived experiences. The result is an ethnography of “following,” of directly learning through my own experiences and in relation to my own being-in-the-world, and being-in-the-midst-of-the-world in a field setting.

In his ethnography of boxing and life in Chicago’s Southside, Loïc Wacquant suggests the experiences of boxing within ghetto life can only be fully attended to through grasping it with one’s body, that “...in order to convey the at once precept and concept, the hidden determinations and lived experiences, the external factors and internal sensations that intermingle to make the boxers world” (2004:7). Further, he states that it was through both “total surrender to the exigencies of the field” (2004:11) and participation in every facet of boxing and gym life that he was able to participate in

and come to understand something of the lifeworlds of boxers at the Woodlaw Boys Club boxing gym.

There is no doubt that I never would have been able to gain the trust and to benefit from the collaboration of the Woodlaw regulars if I had joined the gym with the explicit and avowed aim of studying it, for that very intention would have irrevocably modified my status and role within the social and symbolic system under consideration. (Wacquant 2004:9)

Similar to Wacquant, my specific topical focus emerged organically through shared experiences in village and hunting life. I entered the field with an interest in exploring local ways of knowing in hunting, and experiential methodologies. Yet transforming my generalized interests to the everyday realities of daily village and hunting life in Shishmaref was shaped by Shishmaref residents. It was through mentored participation in village and hunting life and my emerging awareness of local histories and complex relationship between people and animals that the Shishmaref village council and the Shishmaref elders council and individual hunters encouraged me to focus on bearded seal hunting practices and dimensions of hunting tied to hunter/marine mammal relations.

Despite being given some formal direction (as a researcher from outside the community) from local governmental bodies and influential individuals, during the course of coming to know about village and hunting life over multiple years I was most often simply Josh whom Clifford sometimes referred to as the son he made in the army, who lives and hunts with “Clifford and them,” who always ate any kind of “Eskimo food,” who talked to elders and works with the school and the village council. Taking the time to learn local personal understandings of hunting activities and histories through shared experiences in hunting life was not simply about building relations in order to do research. It was a process of directly coming to know through friendships based on mutual trust and engaging in hunting activities with people on their terms. This project would not have been possible on any level without the friendships with Kigiqtaamiut hunters in Shishmaref. Village hunters made conscious efforts at different times to offer suggestions if I seemed lost or performed tasks like tying a sled incorrectly. Yet local

instructional efforts primarily remained in the bounds of family and local-socio-cultural protocols which dictated specific modes of interaction amongst co-participants.

Jackson (1996:8) comments that ethnography's vital role in the anthropological project is not founded upon any methodological certainty that ethnography provides. Rather, the process of fieldwork demands direct dialogue with others and allows us to explore knowledge, not as graspable and translatable hidden truths, but rather as a process of sharing experiences and finding commonality. In this capacity methodology is first, foremost and always dependent upon and shaped by our sociality with others. This can be even more significant among societies and social groups for whom the quality of social relations determine and shape all aspects of life. This was and is certainly the case in Shishmaref where family serves as nucleus around which all hunting activities revolve, including the ethnography of hunting.

Yet beyond family in a generic sense forming a fundamental social dimension of hunting, my participation in hunting life primarily emerged through the same personal processes of instruction Clifford expected his sons and nephews to adhere to. Insofar as this is an ethnography of hunting, it is an ethnography of my coming to know primarily from Clifford and through hunting experiences shared with him, his sons and within his larger family in village and camp life. As I came to hunt and travel with other families and individuals in Shishmaref it was through relations I fostered relative to my community position within the extended Weyiouanna family.

Living and hunting with Clifford and his family shaped my experiences in Shishmaref both out hunting and to varying degrees my social relational opportunities, opening up and limiting my social access to other individuals and families in Shishmaref. This may have constrained my field data, at least if viewed through the lens of a fieldworker trying to create objectivity by finding positions outside of personal relationships. Attempting to maintain an objectively neutral position in village life would create difficulty in exploring an activity like hunting which is so heavily imbedded in familial life and is anything but neutral. Many school teachers living in Shishmaref attempt to maintain neutral and separate positions relative to the wider community,

ultimately forming their own sub-community within the community. In doing so they further isolate themselves from the people with whom they are attempting to connect to, and in my experience their knowledge and understanding of village life may not be conducive to understanding Kigiqtaamiut pedagogy. My data is emergent from a position that was grounded within and subject to the daily expectations of Clifford and his family in relation to social behavior, expectations, and opportunities in family and community life, and through those familial dimensions into hunting life.

I therefore came to know hunting life-worlds through the immersive instructional process of Kigiqtaamiut pedagogy from a relational position within a specific field of social relations flowing from my connection to Clifford's family. These relations served as a "mediating context" (Jenkins 1992:86) inescapably influencing many aspects of this work (see also Briggs 1970:187). Throughout the course of field work analysis and writing I continuously remained open for opportunities to learn from as many people as possible whose experiences were informative to my research. However, quite often my position within the field of intra-village relations was influenced and dictated by forces beyond my control. Concurrently my position, as closely connected within a specific family, was also viewed as a culturally suitable way to participate in community life.

Though I suggest I came to know by going through some of the same processes of learning as a Kigiqtaamiut hunter from an assumed father, grandfather, uncles, brother and cousins, I also always remained not-Kigiqtaamiut. Obviously I did not grow up in this setting and had 28 years of life experiences and training before I came to try and learn about hunting life in Northwestern Alaska. In addition, my anthropological training and personal mode of engagement ultimately rendered my experiential position as "constructed." Yet while the context for this participant observation ethnographic experience was in a sense constructed, it is no less an account of participation learning and coming to know within a particular field of social reality.

By positioning this work in a specific experienced social reality, it is important to further delineate its limitations in order to suggest its possibilities. For although this is an ethnography firmly situated in an Iñupiaq village exploring contemporary hunting life, I

do not suggest it is applicable or should be generalized toward all Iñupiaq or Inuit people, or even all Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq people living in Shishmaref. It speaks primarily and directly to the experiential life-world of male Kigiqtaamiut hunters I came to learn from within the specific familial influenced relational field in which I was embedded over the course of fieldwork.

Yet while making clear the generalizations I am not making with this ethnography, this ethnographic account does offer the potential and opportunity to suggest critical insight into contemporary subsistence hunting community life in Alaska and across the circumpolar north. It contributes to literature exploring human-environmental relations, to studies of diverse knowledge practices, of processes of knowing and of coming to know, and concomitantly offers a reflexive methodological critique of the practice of ethnography and the creation of ethnographic knowledge. Contributing to this genre is perhaps the most crucial contribution as it offers questions and challenges to the anthropological and ethnographic projects. These are important to consider if disciplinary epistemological practices are going to continue as meaningful processes of coming to know of and speak to the relationalities, coexistences and complexities of human societies.

How one comes to engage with instructors in the field is additionally and pragmatically significant in relation to the perceived sensitivity of the subject matter being explored. In Shishmaref local experiences, understandings, and engagements with the politics of state controlled resource management, research and law enforcement further complicates engaging local marine mammal hunting experiences. Hunting experiences and ways of knowing are not just socio-cultural, individual, personal and intuitive engagements in ecological settings. They are also shaped and influenced by the wider political and legal contexts within which they occur. Overcoming these factors in order to engage intimate personal experiences poses significant challenges to doing fieldwork. For while the details of local understandings of the legal frameworks for some hunting practices may be unclear, the feelings and reactions that those understandings invoke can be highly charged. It is important to understand the recent political actions

that have affected village and hunting life in order to more fully consider this complexity as an inseparable aspect of research.

In 1971 the territorial basis for indigenous claims for hunting and fishing rights of Alaska Natives were extinguished through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The passage of this act did not propose that Native people could not hunt or use their traditionally and historically occupied lands, but that aboriginal historical-preferential rights of access to lands and animals were settled and that a regional corporate model would be established for local economic development and resource management of occupied lands.

Further Alaska Native resource usage would be subject to Alaska State fish and wildlife management, which does not recognize Alaska Native subsistence hunting as having any form of a privileged status beyond those of any other state resident, outlined in the Alaska state constitution. Yet the committee report that was subsequently submitted with ANCSA suggested that the U.S. Congress did not view ANCSA as extinguishing Alaska Native subsistence interests.

The Conference Committee after careful consideration believes that all Native interests in subsistence resource land can and will be protected by the Secretary through the exercise of his existing withdrawal authority. The Secretary could, for example, withdraw appropriate lands and classify them in a manner which would protect Native subsistence needs and requirements by closing appropriate lands to entry by nonresidents when subsistence resource needs for these lands are in short supply or otherwise threatened. The Conference Committee expects both the Secretary of the Interior and the state to take any action necessary to protect the subsistence needs of the Natives (Conference Report cited in Case and Voluck 2002:284)

Though both the historic and territorial basis for Alaska Native hunting rights are effectively extinguished through ANCSA, they are at least partially defended in the legal interpretation of ANCSA through the Conference Committee Report. The defense of subsistence hunting on federally managed lands in Alaska is further strengthened through the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1981. Section 803 of ANILCA defines subsistence uses as:



...the customary and traditional use by rural Alaska residents of wild, renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of non-edible byproducts of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal and family consumption; for barter, or sharing for personal family consumption; and for customary trade.

ANILCA specifically speaks to Alaska Natives stating that subsistence is “essential to Native physical, economic, traditional, and cultural existence” (Thornton 2008:117), yet in practice it makes no particular accommodation toward Alaska Native subsistence practices outside of placing them under the general protections afforded to “rural” residents engaged in subsistence hunting activities of federal lands. In addition ANILCA only applies to those lands managed by the federal government.

Prior to the passage of ANILCA a large mass of lands along the Northwestern Seward Peninsula, directly surrounding Shishmaref and engulfing the historic and contemporary Kigiqtaamiut hunting territory were transformed into Bering Land Bridge National Monument in 1978. In 1981 with the passage of ANILCA these lands were, along with other lands managed as National Monuments were further transformed into National Parks and Preserves, thereby expanding federal oversight and management over lands that had hitherto not experienced intensive management of subsistence hunting activities. In addition to the passages of ANCSA, ANILCA, and the formation of Bering Land Bridge National Park and Preserve, 1972 witnessed the passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The goal of the MMPA was to ensure the protection of marine mammals. It placed a moratorium on hunting of seals, sea otters, walrus and polar bears, as well as on the import of marine mammal products into the United States. There is however an exemption to the hunting moratorium that allows for the continuation of subsistence hunting practices by Alaska natives if carried out “in a non-wasteful manner for “‘subsistence purposes’ or to create ‘authentic Native’ handicrafts or clothing” (Case & Voluck 2002:279). The moratorium on hunting had considerable impact on local hunting economies throughout coastal Alaska and Arctic Canada (Wenzel 1991; Kalland and Sejersen 2005). Due in part to public environmental concerns primarily over commercial sealing in northeastern Canada (Wenzel 1991;

Kalland and Sejersen 2005) the ban on marine mammal product imports and the sale of unprocessed marine mammal products through the passage of the MMPA and similar legislation in the European Union deflated an important economic component of hunting life across the coastal areas of the North.

Along with trapping of furbearers, the sale of seal skins was an important dimension of local economies throughout the North. In 1923-24, Shishmaref hunters were able to sell surplus bearded seal skins for \$10 apiece, and cordage made from young bearded seals was sold for 75 cents a pound (Keithahn 1963:72). In the Inuit community of Clyde River where, following the ban on seal skin imports, the price of ringed seal skins dropped from \$14 in 1974 to \$10 in March of 1977. The price was down to \$1 by November of that same year (Kalland & Sejersen 2005:76). The loss of this branch of the economy transformed local hunting economies across the North American arctic and subarctic littoral. Hunters went from being able to support themselves, to a large degree through hunting, to needing to find additional wage labor opportunities in order to support hunting.

In addition to destroying an important dimension of the local marine mammal hunting economy in Shishmaref and throughout coastal Alaska, federal regulation initiated law enforcement of local marine mammal hunting practices and a socio-legal context that was not previously part of local human/marine mammal relations. This was experienced most dramatically in western Alaska through Operation Whiteout. Operation Whiteout began in April of 1990 when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) initiated a 20 month sting operation involving undercover agents posing as ivory buyers soliciting raw marine mammal products from Native hunters, the sale of which was banned by the MMPA. The island community of Little Diomedes located just southwest of Shishmaref, with a long historic dependence on walrus hunting was especially targeted. The sale and trade of walrus products from ivory carvings to walrus skins for boats has long been an economic staple of this isolated hunting community. In this sting operation seven hunters were convicted and sentenced to serve time in federal penitentiaries. One Diomedes hunter who was imprisoned described his frustration over

this imprisonment stating “I served two tours in Vietnam, I had to kill people, I didn’t want to, I had too. But I was sent to prison for killing a walrus?” At least one Shishmaref hunter believes undercover agents attempted to coerce a Shishmaref elder into selling ivory as part of this operation as well, though no one from Shishmaref was convicted as part of Operation Whiteout. Yet the regional fallout from Operation Whiteout and the dramatic increase in the presence of a wide range of governmental personnel in the wake of the passage of ANCSA, ANILCA, and the MMPA has fostered a pragmatic skeptical and suspicious caution toward outsiders wanting to study subsistence practices. Particularly as the vast majority of subsistence hunting research is carried out by state or federal agencies to address specific management concerns, which from hunters’ perspectives and experiences could result in potential legal actions (for a comparable situation see Nadasdy 2003; 2003a; 2005).<sup>6</sup>

Hunters’ experiences with the recent political-ecological transformation of historically used and occupied lands is that it has increasingly subjected people to external regulation, and has contributed to the “public secrecy” (Taussig 1993:85-6) of community subsistence hunting knowledge and practices relative to outsiders. Though subsistence as an economic means of production is “protected” under ANILCA and the MMPA, these acts of Congress have concurrently introduced regulation and oversight of hunting practices, subjecting local hunting practices to a non-localized criteria that was not present in the experiences of previous generations of hunters. Hunters are ever mindful of the scrutiny of outsiders. Hunters and their families are self-aware that certain practices and local values are judged against a different set of sensibilities by non-natives and outsiders.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, media presence in Shishmaref has expanded dramatically

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<sup>6</sup> At one point I suggested that the village tribal government apply for a grant to expand the cultural and subsistence research I was doing in collaboration with the tribal government. The tribal administrator responded that the general consensus of the tribal government was that they did not want to engage in any form of subsistence research funded by and answerable to state or federal resource managers out of concern it would bring increased scrutiny of local practices. Thus while people were supportive of my research efforts there remains concern over research that is answerable to non-local entities.

<sup>7</sup> At different times in the recent past as well as in the present, teachers and resident pastors in Shishmaref (and in indigenous communities throughout the world) have referred to hunters’ beliefs about animal behaviors, which were grounded in hunters’ experiences, as superstitious. These characterizations of local understandings, in conjunction with language suppression may have equally contributed to the subtlety

over the past several years as community leaders have sought to use media as a mechanism to gain public support for government assistance to relocate the village. This new attention is separate from and in addition to the regular flow of governmental personnel representing diverse state and federal agencies. With a regular stream of people in and out of the community, many people are even more cautious about what is revealed to outsiders.

People may avoid discussing aspects of hunting, or certain species, or they may downplay particular hunting activities, or claim to not have knowledge of certain practices if they are uncertain about the motivations of the inquirer. Ethnographic investigation into personal, intuitive and intersubjective ways of knowing is a complex and delicate undertaking. The public masking of ways of knowing due to perceptions of the potential legal ambiguity surrounding these knowledge practices further complicated this ethnographic project.

The current political ecological contexts within which hunting takes place accentuates the complexity manifest in the intersections between larger legal and political projects and hunting life. These issues also highlight the ethnographically pragmatic hurdles of relationship building that must be overcome in a contemporary ethnography of hunting experiences that moves beyond the public secrecy of what is present and hidden in plain sight, (such as relational understandings of sentient ecology) and what is generally and typically shared with outsiders. The local socio-cultural and political dimensions highlighted here demonstrate the opportunity that a shared experiential ethnographic approach offers toward exploring contemporary life in this context. Because I was sharing experiences, I was able to move past public secrecy toward a more intimate engagement with local experiences. Concurrently an experiential approach addresses the practical need to learn important contextual skills in order to meaningfully engage skilled

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through which people share experiences with sentience in non-human forms. Equally though, it is valuable to note the argument made by Willerslev (2007:150) regarding contemporary spirituality among Yukaghir hunters. He notes that aspects of spirituality employed for practical purposes of catching animals are not considered beyond their practical application. They are there and used, but not typically considered beyond their immediate practicality. Willerslev's ethnography offers an important context for comparison to dimensions of hunting practices in Shishmaref explored in the following chapters.

practitioners though adhering to local pedagogy. This combination ultimately allowed me to create a firsthand account of shared and mutual experiences and learning processes in hunting life.

By building upon the relational condition of my own being-in-the-world this ethnography is an attempt to methodologically and topically respond to Ingold's (2000; 2006) call for relational science that builds on coming to know an experienced world from the vantage point of directly engaging with the experience of being in it. I now turn this discussion toward previous experiential ethnographies of hunting in similar and differing indigenous hunting contexts in order to examine both their limitations and potential toward informing this ethnographic study.

In Alaskan ethnography, participatory research, or "active or full participation research" was pioneered by Richard K. Nelson (1969; 1973; 1983). Certainly previous scholars who conducted research across Alaska have similarly engaged in hunting life, and to varying degrees incorporated those experiences into their research (Burch 1975; Foote 1965; Giddings 1956; 1961; Hall 1975; Hughes 1960; Lowenstein 1981; Nelson 1983[1899]; Rainey 1947). All of these scholars carried out research in an era which required researchers in remote locals to be proactively involved in subsistence hunting activities to meet their own basic needs while in the field. This is not an uncommon aspect of working in any remote rural ethnographic setting. Nelson's work, however, stands out against these previous and subsequent ethnographic accounts as his focus was the systematic documentation of hunting and hunters' knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of Nelson's ethnography is that it marks the first detailed account that focuses on hunting techniques and understandings of the sea ice environment obtained through first hand experiences of the researcher. Writing of his experiential method, Nelson suggests that observation is ineffective in the ethnography of hunting (1969:394). Instead, learning the techniques of hunting and traveling in order to participate to the fullest possible extent in hunting life is fundamental to understanding it

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<sup>8</sup> Nelson's initial research funded by the U.S. Air Force was a study of Iñupiaq hunters' knowledge of survival in a sea ice environment and was carried out in the village of Wainwright on Alaska's Northern Coast.

as an activity. He notes that one learns by watching others and through reflecting upon one's own experience.

For example, it is possible to learn a great deal about setting traps by listening to descriptions of the techniques given by expert trappers; but somehow the accounts never tell as much as being right there to watch the trap sets being put together. And even after watching the same process time and again, you are almost certain to make a mistake when a man hands you a trap and says, "set it over there." ... You put the set together, your instructor comes over, looks, and starts moving things around. One or two tries later you have it right. Now you are ready to write a description of a trap set. One never realizes how little he knows until someone says, "Now you try it." (Nelson 1973:10)

The role of personal experience in learning and knowing is highlighted by Nelson (1969; 1973) as an important aspect of how his instructors have come to know about hunting, trapping and the ecological settings in which these activities are carried out. Yet because his work focuses on describing the technical aspects of hunting and trapping to the exclusion of all other dimensions of life, Nelson does not address experience beyond noting it as a method and suggesting its role in local pedagogy. For all its detailing of the technicalities of setting traps, sneaking to walrus or stalking moose we learn little of the people and of their experiences and understandings of the activities Nelson so painstakingly describes.

Nelson's work provides an important and nonreplicable documentation of arctic hunting techniques in the pre-snowmachine era. His work is equally important for the emphasis he placed on learning through directly participating in activities, and the need for ethnographic immersion into the lifeway examined. Yet for all that Nelson's early work offers, its limitations are clear. We are only shown the technical side of human land-animal relations as pragmatic activities in terms of a mode of production. Indigenous perspectives and shared local understandings between hunters that are equally informative to pragmatic technique are not attended to.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> One of the factors that may have limited Nelson from engaging in discussion about experiences and understandings of lands and animals in his Gwichin and Iñupiaq ethnographies was linguistic. In both cases Nelson (1969 & 1973) notes that his understanding of the indigenous language and concepts were rudimentary at best. Had language not been an issue he may have been more attentive to other relational

As an advocate of the use of experiential approaches to synthesize ethnographic methods with local pedagogies Nelson's work is clearly important both topically and theoretically for this undertaking. Nelson is widely recognized as a pioneer of ethno-ecological research in Alaska. His work is often cited in TEK studies throughout Alaska. Yet, the experiential dimensions of Gwichin and Iñupiaq hunters' ways of knowing (and those of other Alaska Native Societies) that his work begins to grapple with have not been systematically addressed.<sup>10</sup> Nor have active participation ethnographic approaches been systematically applied in the documentation of local knowledges in Alaska. In part, the current study addresses this gap in the corpus of Alaskan ethnographies.

Willerslev's (2007) ethnography of hunting conducted among another northern indigenous society, the Yukaghirs of Northeastern Siberia, is important and theoretically challenging. He explores the experiential dimensions of the hunters' life-world that shape Yukaghir hunters' knowledge claims. Willerslev's ethnographic account of hunting is situated in the period following the collapse of Soviet Union when subsistence hunting took on renewed importance in the wake of a near total absence of outside resources in northeastern Siberia. He examines the role older beliefs have in hunting knowledge and practices in the context of a reemerging dependence on subsistence hunting (Willerslev 2007:7). Like Nelson, Willerslev predominantly relies on his first-hand hunting experiences to inform his account of Yukaghir hunting life, yet their works differ dramatically.

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dimensions of peoples' experiences and understandings of ecological phenomena. During his later work Nelson notes that the unity between nature and humanity he came to understand among the Koyukon was an element of peoples' lives he could not access in his other studies (1983:238).

<sup>10</sup> It is important to further mention Nelson's final ethnographic piece and probably his most well known publication *Make Prayers to the Raven*, which portrays a Koyukon Athabascan natural history, marks a departure from his earlier focus on the technical dimensions of hunting and trapping and focuses on Nelson's informant's understanding of the world they inhabit. *Make Prayers to the Raven* can be viewed as the complementary text to Nelson's earlier works, though with a different Alaska Native society. Nelson describes it as a study of Koyukon intellectual culture (1983:250). As an ethno-natural history it presents an array of ideas about plants, animals, ecological and spiritual forces. Yet we do not see the story of how these are manifest in and part of the experience of hunting detailed in his earlier works. The world of work, of being on the land, of hunting and trapping is delineated (intentionally or not) from an idealization of Koyukon peoples' relations with and in the natural world. Therefore, while Nelson suggests Koyukon ontology emphasizes the existential linkages between humanity and the natural world and the supernatural (1983:240) he does not systematically attend to how these life dimensions are integrated and experienced in activities. Instead he engages the pragmatic and ideological as primarily separate intellectual projects.

Focusing upon the ontological dimensions of Yukaghir hunting practices Willerslev draws upon Taussig's (1993) discussion of mimesis in order to advance the theoretical argument that Yukaghir hunting is a form of animistic mimesis. Willerslev argues that through mimesis, acting like an animal while not being an animal, hunters transform into animal-others yet maintain distance, and hold power over animal-others (Willerslev 2007:11). In effect, hunting—and in particular stalking moose—is a process of what he calls *not-not being* an animal, and hunters mask their human personhood in order to appear as animals to animal persons. The “technical” dimensions of hunting in Willerslev's account of Yukaghir moose hunting are transformational. In order for hunters to bring about successful hunting encounters they turn themselves into moose while carefully maintaining their human personhood, lest they abandon their humanity to the world of animals. Willerslev offers phenomenological account of moose hunting, noting that hunters' understandings of moose as sentient beings are ultimately grounded in their experiences with animals during hunting encounters.

Whereas Nelson's ethnographies are thick descriptions of technique (to the exclusion of relatively all other dimensions of life), Willerslev's accounts of hunting are much more directed and focused on the analysis of particular events and highlight specific encounters with animals and hunters' responses in order to advance a specific theoretical argument.<sup>11</sup> The force of his theoretical argument ultimately overpowers the ethnography. Rather than developing a theoretical argument based on detailed ethnography Willerslev provides a series of ethnographic vignettes in support of a theoretical argument. These ethnographic limitations do not however detract from the important experiential

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<sup>11</sup> By way of example, in Willerslev's discussion of Yukaghir resource management and self-regulation he suggests there is no conception of waste among hunters. The “inclination to indiscriminate slaughter” (Willerslev 2007:49) is counter-balanced by a desire to maintain benevolent relations with potential helping spirits. Spirits, who may try to kill hunters through providing an over-abundance of animals to them. The ethnographic basis for this argument is largely based upon the singular and briefly described account of hunting with an elder on a summer day when they take seven moose while only utilizing a part of each one. Without providing additional contextual information Willerslev uses this account as the basis for his discussion on Yukaghir resource management strategies. In contrast, Nelson (1973: 84-114) provides over a twenty page description of the technicalities of Gwichin moose hunting. Feit (1978) likewise provides a significant discussion of Cree moose hunting and management strategies. Willerslev's lack of detailed ethnographic descriptions and comparison with similar works in order to legitimize his arguments limits the applicability and comparability of his work.



methodological and theoretical linkages toward considering hunters' experiences. Willerslev brings forward hunters' experiences with sentient animals and human-animal transformations not as "traditional" or historic concepts facing existential challenges from outside colonial forces. Instead he suggests they are (and historically have been) pragmatic, ambiguous, evolving and personal understandings couched in hunters' on-going experiences in the world. Thereby he offers an important and critical challenge to how "traditional knowledges" are conceptualized as collections of older beliefs that are passed down inter-generationally. He argues instead that traditional knowledges are active experientially informed understandings.

Sylvie Poirier (2005) engages local understandings of the world as emergent in the flow of activity in her ethnography of contemporary Aborigine hunting and gathering knowledges and experiences in the Australian desert. As with the two previously mentioned ethnographies, Poirier's is one of exploring local understandings through immersing herself in the flow of resource harvesting activities. It is one of traveling across the desert, hunting and gathering, and traveling to visit other remote communities (Poirier 2005:11-12). Poirier notes her method as one of careful attention paid to peoples' stories and their varied narrative forms and events. These range from those of the everyday interactions to those detailing the creation of directly encountered mythic landscapes. Poirier's experiential method highlights a subtle and complex experiential-analytical approach toward the examination of narrative content, style and meanings concomitant with specific and individual narrative events. Unlike the ethnographies of Nelson and Willerslev, which focus on activities, she complicates experiential local knowledges suggesting the importance of engaging local history, or more specifically citing what Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) term "endogenous historicity." That is the ethnographic consideration of the processes by which historicity both informs and is informed through and in local knowledge practices, experiences and modes of being-in and relating to the world.

Like Willerslev, Poirier is directly concerned with ontologies as they are lived, realized through and shaped through modes of being-in-the-world and relating to it. She

suggests that the process of objectification by which an ethnographer comes to develop understandings of local ontologies and epistemologies requires that one take seriously what others say about their social world and their experiences. On the other hand the ethnographer must continuously keep in mind that the ethnographer-self is not experiencing the world as it is perceived by a socio-cultural other (also see Geertz 1983:55-59). Poirier (2005:12) offers that this requires “a degree of humility.” An ethnographer must continuously take into consideration that local intersubjective modes of objectification can be highly interpretive and creative relative to an individual’s personal life histories and experiences. This point cannot be overstated. Though Poirier only mentions it briefly here. I would suggest that the degree of humility that she speaks of is a dramatically under-noted dimension of the field experience. It is highly personal and difficult to *epistimize*; perhaps it for that reason alone that it is not explicitly attended to. However, it demonstrates one more means by which the personal and social are intertwined in production of knowledge. Therefore Poirier proceeds cautiously but also deliberately as she pays careful attention to diverse stories and their various narrative forms emphasizing narrated experiences and events as well as narrative events. She pays equal attention to the stories of the mythic landscape, of historic events, personal life histories and those of everyday life experiences in the world. Examination of multiple narrative dimensions, forms and experiences provides entrée into the articulated aspects of local knowledge and emphasizes the “structuration of experience”, the creation and transmission of understandings, and localized interpretations and objectifications (Poirier 2005:11).

Nelson’s focus on active-participation emphasized directly learning technical activities and detailed ethnographic description of technique. Technical competence is an important and foundational dimension of coming to know (Coy 1989; Ingold 2000; Palsson 1994; Shannon 2003; Wacquant 2004) in hunting life but it is only one dimension of it. Participation is dependent upon a level of competence. While drawing upon Nelson’s attention to technique, I equally attend to Willerslev’s examinations of hunters’ intersubjective understandings of animals as manifest in hunting actions and

techniques. Willerslev importantly argues for the unification of spiritual/cultural categories with the technical/natural as emergent and subsistent in the flow of activity (Willerslev 2007; Ingold 2000; Scott 2006 Sharp 2001). However, I go beyond examining hunters experience and their analysis of experience. I also explore how local socio-cultural understandings influence and shape how hunters come to experience intersubjective life-worlds. It is in that vein I draw upon Poirier's critical narrative analysis. I examine how the narrative events of hunting stories are brought forth and experienced as narrated events that influence and shape future experiences and subsequent reflexive phenomenological analysis of personal experiences.<sup>12</sup> I engage these intertwined dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut hunting life in conjunction and concomitant with the reflexive analysis of my experience of coming to know from, with and alongside hunters over the course of participating as a member of family marine mammal hunting crews over three consecutive spring hunting seasons.<sup>13</sup>

Though I take direction from these authors, I depart from their ethnographic examples in important and significant ways. All three ethnographers highlight learning

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<sup>12</sup> Writing of hunting life among James Bay Cree Scott (2006:54) suggests that young Cree hunters are "pre-equipped" with stories, songs and instructions which shape their future experiences in the bush. Therefore as a young hunter encounters a bear (a powerful being in Cree ontology) for the first time his experience of that meeting, the details he notices, his interpretive framework and the subsequent stories he tells about it later will involve all he learned to imagine through earlier experiences and instruction prior to the event reverberating within the actual experience of the event itself. Hunting experiences are not raw but highly mediated engagements. Understanding these engagements requires the process of mediation be attended in equal measure with hunting experience itself.

<sup>13</sup> I first went to Shishmaref in 2004 to conduct a subsistence land use study in conjunction with community relocation efforts. I returned in 2005 to expand that work as part of a multidisciplinary study of the use of terrestrial freshwater systems on the Northwestern Seward Peninsula. Through these projects I came to rely on active participatory methods. Therefore in 2006 when I participated in my first year of spring marine mammal hunting activities I already had strong relational ties and an experiential understanding of some dimensions of hunting life. Therefore in addition to three seasons of participation with family hunting crews I conducted over 24 months of field-work over a five year period to inform this study. Following the 2007 spring hunting season (my second year of full participation in the Weyioanna hunting crew) I maintained primary residency in Shishmaref until the completion of the spring hunting season in July of 2008. During 2007-2008 while in Shishmaref with the Weyiouanna family I hunted as often as I could. Indeed hunting was my main occupation in conjunction with all the village chores and maintenance activities involved in arctic hunting life. During that year Clifford was often gone. Thus the group of hunters I worked with expanded as I had more opportunities to hunt with a wider group of hunters, whom I knew from village and hunting life but had not previously shared many experiences. During the spring hunt of 2008 the Weyiouanna hunting crew was once again together. While not in Shishmaref I conducted archival work in the Eskimo Heritage Foundation archives in Nome, and made trips to Anchorage to visit hunters and elders who traveled there for health care and other family issues.

through active engagement and direct experience in those aspects of life being examined and provide important pragmatic thematic and topical dimensions to consider. Although these ethnographies are informative and demonstrate the value of experiential ethnography, they are nevertheless presented from a removed position, meaning that the ethnographer is rarely present in the text. Yet these ethnographies are based upon the direct experience of the ethnographer in the field. Thus, the ethnographer is always present albeit not acknowledged. Indeed, the omnipresence of the ethnographer is central and essential to the practice of ethnography. Understandings are shaped through interactions with people in the course of fieldwork.

I take practical direction from Nelson's emphasis on technical competency, Willerslev's concern with the individual experiences with sentient forces and Porier's attention to the role of local historical narrative events. Yet in the ethnography I present here, experience and participation are not used as methods of collecting ethnographic data. Rather, the interactions and shared experiences between myself and others are ethnography. My own being-in-the-world, in the flow of doing ethnography is brought to the fore. This is not to elaborate personal stories of being in the field in the form of a travel narrative eclipsing the story of Kigiqtaamiut hunting life. Rather it is done as means of rendering the ethnographic process transparent by highlighting the inescapable connections between hunters' ways of knowing, and my process of learning directly from them learning of them as mutually intertwined and relationally inseparable.

Thus, through this text I provide direct excerpts from my field notes, and recorded interactions and conversations between Clifford and myself, and other hunters, as well as conversations between both elders and other hunters. I provide these in as direct and unmodified form as possible in order to relate specific and particular contexts of moments be they sitting on a couch in a hunter's home having tea, walking through the village, sitting on the ice edge waiting for seals or being scolded for improperly tying a sled. I believe these interactions and mutual shared experiences provide a more rich account of experience in hunting ethnography than writing from a removed perspective, which would also be ethnographically inaccurate. Doing so speaks to and seeks to

inform the relationality in the lives of hunters and in the process of doing ethnography as intertwined and mutually informative to understand how we come to understand knowing from positions of being-in-the-world

This is an approach that recognizes the mutual (Ingold 2000; 2006) coexistences of ways of knowing in structuring and shaping this experiential project. Positioning this personal ethnographic process of coming to know within the broader ethnographic project of exploring Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing provides some subjugation of the ethnographers' knowing to the same critical analysis as that of the object under inquiry (Barnard 1990:75). At the same time it opens this ethnographic account to Kigiqtaamiut hunters' critiques. This dissolves the distinction between ethnographic subject of research and the research process itself highlighting the inherent relationship between exploring the phenomenal world from a position of being in-the-world as an aspect of doing research that requires attention.

### 1.3 CONCLUSIONS

Through this ethnography I want to address important theoretical concerns regarding the social production of anthropological knowledge, issues pertaining to the intellectual conceptualization of diverse local ecological knowledges, and social studies of knowledge in general. Likewise, this work conforms to the genre of *Critical Inuit Studies* as proposed by Stern (2006). I have by necessity responded to potential Kigiqtaamiut critiques of it. It takes as a starting point that Kigiqtaamiut hunters' perspectives are valid accounts of their experiences. Emphasis is placed here on understanding ways of knowing as they are actualized in the meaningful context of peoples' lived experiences. Stern (2006:265) suggests that critical Inuit studies expose implicit theoretical assumptions shaping research and in order to situate it historically. Going a step further, Stern also suggests that critical Inuit studies explore Inuit experiences to illustrate more wide-ranging events and social processes. In focusing on the intersubjective and relational domains of Kigiqtaamiut experiences, this ethnography seeks to do just that and attempts to engage with "Things As They Are" (Jackson 1996).

Discussions in this chapter centered on the condition of relationality, connecting and intersecting a multitude of domains of being and knowing. Through the exploration of relationality, I have sought to position this work in-the-world of both Kigiqtaamiut and academic relational fields. In a manner similar to how I am subjecting my ethnographic writing to the scrutiny of the academy, I have offered it to my Kigiqtaamiut instructors and hunting partners. The inclusion of my stories of coming to know—as a means of describing hunters’ ways of knowing—is in direct response to Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ emphasis on the personally experienced. It is directly and explicitly done in order to structure this ethnographic narrative so that it qualifies for Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ judgments in relation to their specific modes of knowing the world. It is in consideration of both the Kigiqtaamiut and academic relational contexts that the following chapters exploring converging qualities and dimensionalities of Kigiqtaamiut hunting life are oriented.

The demands of these two contexts are not always reconcilable and it is achieved better in some parts of this thesis than in others. Determining the success of this project in relation to Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ critiques will not end with the conclusion of the academic one. It will be processual and extend beyond that of qualification as a dissertation. Kigiqtaamiut responses are no less important for determining the success of this project, and in many ways are more significant for determining how successful this work is beyond qualifying as a thesis. For it will be local responses to this work that will determine if this and other projects in Shishmaref will continue and what the shape and character of those projects will be.

CHAPTER TWO  
THIS PLACE CALLED SHISH:  
HUMAN OCCUPANCY, LOCAL HISTORY  
AND MODERN HUNTING LIFE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I noted some of the social, political and legal frameworks that both complicate and suggest the value of an experiential approach for investigating ways knowing in a community like Shishmaref. In this chapter I provide a background history and descriptions of the contemporary community as one setting, against and within which contemporary hunting activities should be considered. In doing so I also suggest it is important to adopt a broad temporal perspective. One must consider not just recent colonial encounters and locally important historic events. Contemporary hunting activities in Shishmaref should be considered against the long human history of hunting in western Alaska to provide temporal basis for considering the cultural-ontological significance of being a hunter and of the act of hunting as a mode of being-in-the-world.

In very pragmatic ways the practice of hunting is a direct engagement with constant change. Where animals are one day, they may not be the next, ice conditions can change in a matter of minutes due to a change in the direction of the currents or the winds. Rivers freeze overnight and in less than a week the primary modes of transportation can change from boats to snow machines. Indeed one may begin a week hunting seals in the open ocean and end the week 30 miles inland fishing through a hole in the ice for grayling.

Yet hunting is equally an example of continuity through change. It has remained central to the lives of western Alaska residents for thousands of years. Hunters pursue the same animals in the same places with many of the same techniques to fulfill some of the same purposes. The material technologies and political dynamics surrounding resource access and management may change, yet the emphasis for many hunters remains the same: to catch animals and feed one's family. To that end, I do not consider contemporary hunting practices in relation to an academically defined, though ultimately

un-knowable, pre-contact or early contact model of Kigiqtaamiut “traditional” society. That would involve establishing an abstract duality between the present and an arbitrary reconstructed conception of a pre-selected moment in the past against which hunters’ actions are compared, judged, or held accountable. Rather, my goal here is to understand experiences in the contexts of persons’ lives at the contemporary moment and the relational factors contributing to that. For readers wanting more on regional history there is a growing body of literature focused on historic “traditional life” for Northwestern Alaska (Burch 1998; 2005; 2006; Ellanna & Sherrod 2005; Kaplan 1988; Lowenstein 1992; 1993; Schweitzer & Golovko 1995; Ray 1992 Simon 1998; Spencer 1959) to which to turn. In particular Ellanna & Sherrod (2005) and Simon (1998) discuss Shishmaref ethnohistory.

My goal in this chapter is to provide a broader historical context and then to suggest some historical factors worth considering in order to understand Shishmaref today and the role of hunting in contemporary life. Exploring how hunters understand their actions in the circumstances of their experiences does not explicitly suggest or deny historic continuity of older practices. Instead, it emphasizes individual and personal engagements with older cultural ideas, describing and understanding forms of being and their meaning within the current moments of hunters lives.

In the following chapters I do *not* explore whether contemporary Kigiqtaamiut hunting cultural practices are grounded in “accurate” rearticulations of older ideas, though to the degree those connections materialize they are important to engage. There are overlapping and intersecting historical and present relational contexts which have shaped the contemporary moment and require consideration. These include local and regional historical contexts of human beings making livelihoods through hunting in the Bering Strait and across western Alaska. I begin by offering a brief portrait of the depth of human occupancy in the region, and of early colonial encounters, leading up to recent significant local events and a portrayal of the opportunities that hunting affords individuals today in the contemporary community of Shishmaref. To do so I examine both local and regional historical accounts partially through the stories of previous



generations of hunters as well as through written accounts of teachers and governmental representatives and other ethnographers. This chapter will provide both historical and ethnographical background for the practice of hunting serves as a mechanism for actualizing shared cultural understandings of lands and animals through individual personal experiences.

## 2.2 THE COUNTRY

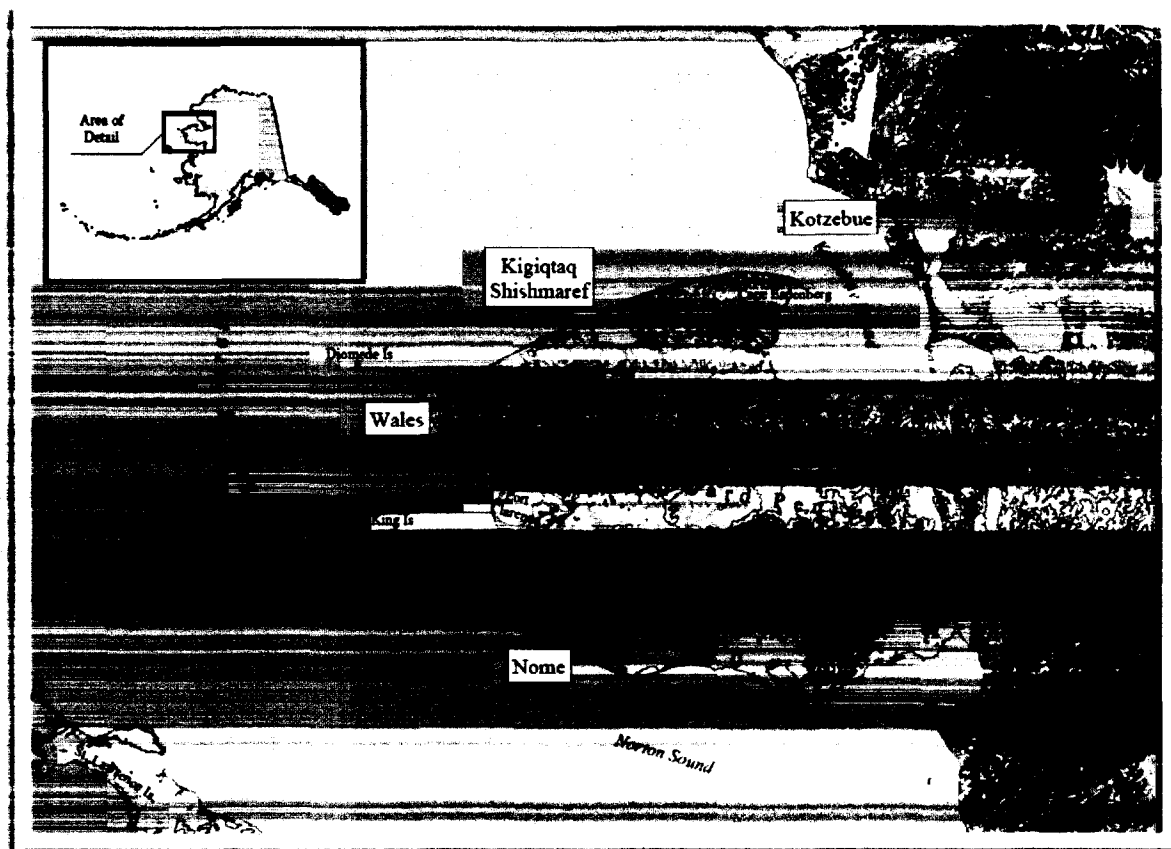
It is impossible to talk about hunting life, stories, and experiences—historic or present—without first talking about the country: the lagoons, the rolling tundra, the creeks and the temporally present and always changing sea ice landscape. To know something of the country is to develop an understanding of multiple places connected in ecological terminology, as a complex of micro-ecological edges and patches, and the intricate variables that intersect and connect them. To the untrained eye, or to one who has not grown up among the lagoons, creeks, tundra, ponds and the seasonally present sea ice landscape of the Northwestern Seward Peninsula coast the country might appear homogenous even monotonous (see Map 2 for an overview of Seward Peninsula). Yet to live through the seasons and to travel through the Kigiqtaamiut hunting territory is to come to understand it, partially as a landscape of extremes and subtleties, and equally one composed of intimate personal stories and experiences, connected to camps, fishing holes, lookouts, shelter cabins and landmarks. Place experiences existentially connect individuals to the continuously emerging local history of the country, and these instances make more complex one's experience of the country in processual and unpredictable ways.

From late fall through winter and into the spring the country is covered with snow, yet “snow” is a gross over-simplification. Older hunters draw upon a lexicon containing over 16 Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq terms<sup>14</sup> to describe their experiences with different snow conditions that they encounter through the seasons and while traveling through the country. *Piqsiq* describes a form of blowing snow, which is a condition experienced

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix 1 of local sea ice conditions, snow conditions and other common hunting expressions.

when it is not snowing, but when surface snow is blowing, which can make travel dangerous. *Piqsiq* differs from *natigvigtuaq*, which describes blowing snow that is right above the ground. The depth of their meaning is realized in the context of their specific usage.



Map 2 Topography of the Seward Peninsula

As the sea ice moves out at the end of June the coastline is revealed as a series of lagoons bordered by barrier islands on one side and a tundra landscape on the other. Traveling by boat “down coast,” heading west and south from Shishmaref through the lagoons, one crosses *Sinjaazruaq* “West Channel.” On the mainland near *Nunataq* Clifford’s reindeer corral at “West Camp” comes into view as the land rises from the lagoon edge to form a low bench. One can also see places where the land folds downward and one by one the creeks *Kuugaasiaq*, *Kuugaagzruk*, and finally *Qagaagzruit kuzrgat*

come into view. One can take boats up these shallow muskeg colored rivers deep into the tundra until they narrow to the point where the willow-covered banks prohibit further boat travel. Heading further down the coast, one comes to the spring hunting camp about 30 miles from Shishmaref. According to local history *Sinḡazaat* had been a village, but the people there all perished after they improperly butchered beluga whales. *Sinḡazaat* is one of the historic camps families from the formerly occupied village of *Ikpik* would use for spring hunting. It is still an active hunting camp used by Shishmaref hunting families. Continuing down the coast ones come to *Ikpik* lagoon where the clear flowing *Nuluk* and *Pingu* rivers empty into the Chukchi Sea. At *Ikpik* large whale bones, old sod homes and a few graying, wood framed buildings are all that is left after last of the *Ikpikmiut* moved to Shishmaref and to Brevig Mission.

Going “up” toward the Serpentine River through Shishmaref Inlet one passes *Ipnauraq* and *Iglut*, where the large pits that were used for storing fall fish can still be seen. This area continues to be a good spot for fishing in the fall and for hunting *anmiat*, young bearded seals that swim into the river mouth during the fall. From on the hills overlooking the river valley one can watch for caribou or moose in the river flats. In the winter people go up to the shelter cabin at Grayling Creek to fish for grayling through the ice, or to rest on the way up to *Iyat*, Serpentine Hot Springs, to hunt caribou. Other creeks wind out of the tundra and drain into Shishmaref Inlet on the West side of “Serp.” Closest to Shishmaref, in the vicinity where the community has voted to relocate if they can get the necessary state and federal support to establish a permanent community there, is Tin Creek. Past Tin Creek are Jealously, and Arctic rivers.

Heading “up coast” toward “Cape” (Cape Espenberg), one can once again travel through the lagoons between the barrier islands and the mainland. Going past *Sinḡaq* (“East Channel”) and *Atigii Tuaq* (“Second Channel”), where people hunt seals in the fall, and continuing through the lagoon toward what is labeled on standard topographic maps as “Cowpack Inlet,” one enters the large lagoon *Kuupak*. At the southern headwaters of the lagoon, one can go up the Kuupak River. Finally at the eastern end of the lagoon, one can see *Qividluaq*, where the *Qividluamiut* had a winter village, and

where James Moses' old cabin sits. The lagoon system ends as one passes *Sinik* and the land becomes lower and drier going past the Kallik River and "Lighthouse" where people go crabbing through the ice in early spring. One continues on past the historic Reindeer camp and winter camp at *Ublazaun*, finally reaching the Espenberg River and the Goodhope Reindeer corral and camp. The shallow waters of Cape were made when the mother of *Ilagniq* (a powerful hunter from the deep past who killed many creatures in order to make the area safe for people) sought revenge for the murder of her son by filling a caribou skin mitten with sand and dropping it in the water on a day with a strong north wind, starting a process of sedimentation that continues into the present.

These places and geographic features represent just some of the major places that hunters travel to and between throughout the course of a year, and also represent what most people in Shishmaref locally recognize as "our area," the lands used predominantly by Shishmaref hunters. Though hunters from the nearby communities of Wales and Deering may occasionally use some of these lands, they are most fully used by Shishmaref hunting families whose use primarily focuses on areas where individuals grew up hunting and camping. Historic familial-use areas are informally recognized by other hunting families who maintain relations with other and often overlapping areas. Many factors have disrupted individual and family ties to lands and local tenure and management practices, yet the act of hunting itself remains central in community life. To fully consider what hunting and the continuity of hunting life means in Shishmaref, it is necessary to step back and consider a broader historical perspective that predates even the earliest of colonial encounters.

### 2.3 A HISTORY OF HUNTING AND HUMAN OCCUPANCY IN WESTERN ALASKA

With its proximity to Asia, Bering Strait and Northwest Alaska have long been areas of scholarly interest as the route through which humans established themselves in the Americas. In complement to the peopling of the Americas, the peopling of the arctic has

also been a force driving regional research.<sup>15</sup> The regional models of human occupation are complex and often contradictory and emergent. Discussing contemporary hunting life would be incomplete if it were not considered in relation to the long history of human occupation and livelihood through hunting in the region.

Indeed it is important to recognize that contemporary hunting practices and the relationships of human beings with lands and animals today are on one hand dramatically influenced by rapid changes following the incursion of Euro-Americans into Alaska. Equally, however, they are activities and modes of being linked to thousands-of-years-old practices. The parallels and connections between contemporary and historic hunting practices should not be overlooked from the perspective of an historical-cultural ecology. My purpose here is not to create or argue for direct connections between specific historic regional populations and contemporary ones as does Burch (1998). My point is to make clear the temporal depth of hunting and in particular human-marine mammal relations in western and Northwestern Alaska, and particularly in Bering Strait.

Archeological research organizes its findings at various sites in this region into four essentially overlapping periods. To date archeological investigations have resulted in the establishment of four broad temporal categories that reflect perceived significant material and technological and aesthetic variances in local practices (Anderson 1984; Harriet 1994; 2004; Mason 1998; Mason & Gerlach 1995; McClenahan 1993).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> It is important to note how archeology has come to be a dominant, if not the dominant, anthropological research focus in the region. This is partially due to the fact that the Boasian ethnographers turned away from the Bering Strait region, viewing the “Eskimo Wedge” as breaking North Pacific cultural continuum and exchange, which linked northwest coastal and interior Athabascan peoples with those of Siberia (Krupnik 1996; 1998b). Following the Jesup Expedition 1897-1902, archeologists led in part by archeologist/physical anthropologist Hrdlička (1913) who had been researching the peopling of the Americas and viewed Bering Strait as an important part of the world on which to focus that research. This has continued to drive much of the regional work, with ethnographic research often occupying a secondary dimension of archeological investigations that were focused primarily upon historic aspects of life in order to inform archeological studies (Giddings 1956; 1961; Rainey 1947; Hall 1975; Lucier 1954; 1958). Of equal importance to consider in the analysis of ethnographic data from Northwest Alaska is how it changed and developed in relation to changes in archeological theory and physical anthropology (see Ellanna 1983; Foote 1965; Laughlin 1966).

<sup>16</sup> The earliest archeological periods do not emphasize maritime-based hunting practices; however, it is worthwhile to consider them in order to examine the temporality of human dependence and utilization of wild resources in Northwest Alaska and the Bering Strait region as a whole. The earliest appearance of humans in northwest Alaska is the American Paleo-Indian Tradition ca. 11,500-8,000 before present (BP).

Post-Pleistocene warming contributed to successive rises in sea levels to 50 meters below current levels ca. 10000 BP and within 2 meters of current levels ca. 5000 BP. Human populations have occupied eastern Bering Sea shores for a minimum 9,000 years. The earliest evidence of human coastal settlement comes from the southern edge of the Bering Sea in the Bristol Bay region (Koggiung, 9000 BP). During this period of warming, characteristic boreal plant communities became established in the Kobuk, Noatak, and upper Selewik valleys of northwest Alaska. These environmental changes are credited with influencing technological changes represented in the Northern Archaic tradition (ca. 6000 to 4000 BP), which has strong parallels to other North American boreal material assemblages (Anderson 1984). Faunal remains highlight use of diverse resources including, though not limited to, large game and fish. The Tuktuk site in Anaktuvuk Pass is the oldest Northern Archaic site and included implements such as side notched projectile points, bifacial knives and microblades.

Following the relative stabilization of the sea level (ca. 4500–4200 BP) coastal sites further north began to appear. This does not suggest that maritime adapted societies were not actively developed prior to this time as faunal remains from the Koggiung site demonstrate. Rather, as Mason and Barber (2003:75) note, the lack of earlier coastal sites in Bering Strait region reflects the lack of sea level stabilization in Bering Strait. Mason and Barber (2003) further stress that even in the temporal period following sea-level stabilization historic periods of closely spaced storms can cause rapid erosion in particular regions depending on landform orientation and storm direction.<sup>17</sup> Thus recent

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The Paleo-Indian tradition was first identified by Louis Giddings in 1941 in the Kobuk and Akmaq assemblage at the now famous Onion Portage site in the Kobuk valley in Northwest Alaska (Anderson 1984). It was also identified at Trail Creek caves on the Seward Peninsula (West 1998:620) and more recently at the Mesa site in the foothills of the Brooks Range (Kunz, et al 2003:61-62). The Akmaq artifacts also share close resemblances to other sites in central and southwestern Alaska as well as those from the Aldan region of the Russian Far East (Anderson 1984:82).

<sup>17</sup> This continues into the present. A 1974 storm in the Bering Strait resulted in the loss of 30 feet of the shore line of Sarichef Island where Shishmaref is situated. The island has consistently lost land in the ensuing years, at varying rates, with an additional 30 feet being lost during a 1997 storm. Along the entire littoral cell of the Northwestern Seward Peninsula (see Map 2) former villages, camps, and prominent geographic features have been, and are being, washed away. Conversations with Shishmaref elders make very clear that people regularly moved spring and winter settlements in response to geomorphologic change. While dramatic impacts associated with climate change cannot be dismissed or belittled, local

warming and cooling periods such as the Little Ice Age or the Medieval Warming can contribute to rapidly altering coastal landscapes following periods of temporary stability in sea levels. Paleo-climatic and paleo-ecological data may provide more insight into regional opportunities in lieu of available site data (Mason and Gerlach 1995).

Dramatic technological innovations occurred around 4200 BP beginning in the Norton Sound region (Cape Denbigh). Practitioners of this ecologically adaptive technology (the Arctic Small Tool Tradition) spread eastward across northern Alaska, Canada and into Greenland. The Arctic Small Tool Tradition (ca. 4250–1050 BP) is subdivided in Alaska into the Denbigh flint complex, Old Whaling, Choris, Norton and Ipiutak traditions. Based on micro-blade core and bruin technology, this tradition is found throughout the arctic from the Alaska Peninsula to Greenland with the earliest sites being in Northwest Alaska, from where the tradition spread south and east (Hemler 1998:28-29). The Denbigh flint complex was first discovered at Cape Denbigh in Norton Sound. This technological tradition demonstrated flexibility with seasonal movement between spring seal hunting camps along the coast and trips inland to fish and hunt caribou. It is here where the first evidence of winter ice seal hunting first appears (Dumond 1998:207).

The “Old Whaling” tradition identified by Giddings (1967:224) at Cape Krusenstern in Northwestern Alaska was based on the discovery of multiple house structures utilizing whale vertebrae for construction. The presence of whale bones established the basis by which Giddings termed the occupants as whale hunters. Recent work by Darwent (2004:97) shows that faunal analysis does not support whale hunting characteristics. Rather, faunal analysis overwhelmingly identifies ringed seal (which form 90% of the faunal record) as the predominantly hunted animal at Cape Krusenstern (2670–2800 BP) suggesting the site as a seal hunting camp with a possible secondary focus on caribou hunting (Darwent 2004:97).

The Choris tradition identified by Giddings in 1956 on the Choris Peninsula near Eshscholtz Bay in Kotzebue Sound contrasts the Denbigh assemblages, which

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historical ecology suggests that settlement patterns were at least partially premised on the dynamic physical conditions of Bering Strait.

demonstrated a large degree of homogeneity across different ecological settings. In contrast to Denbigh sites, Choris toolkits and settlements highlight the development of more specified local knowledges with coastal, interior and woodland sites demonstrating varied technologies adapted for specific local ecological adaptations (Anderson 1984:86). Choris sites are found throughout northwest Alaska in the Brooks Range, at Engigsticiak in Canada, and at Trail Creek Caves on the Seward Peninsula (Anderson 1984:86; Gerlach 1998:150). A variant of Choris traditions are the wide spread Norton technological traditions which appear around 2500 BP. Norton traditions are marked by an increase in coastal settlements though this must be interpreted in light of sea level stabilization after 4500–4200 BP (Mason and Barber 2003:75). Norton traditions are marked in particular by the presence of clay and stone lamps, and an increase in marine mammal hunting along the coast and in the development of fishing technologies south of the Being Strait along the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. Around 2000 BP, strategies necessary to utilize multiple seasonally variable and relatively small-sized sets of resources were being practiced in the Yukon-Kuskokwim river delta (Anderson 1984:86, Shaw 1998).

Mason (2000:230) has suggested that from AD 500 to approximately AD 1,000 that the shores of the Bering Strait were covered with a mosaic of complex and diverse societies with converging and diverging cultural practices, ecological adaptations and trade networks.<sup>18</sup> These sets of overlapping technological adaptations are often lumped under the category of the Northern Maritime Tradition. Some of the most potentially complex (and at the same time mystifying) maritime traditions are those sites and remains classified as Ipiutak technologies. The Ipiutak tradition is most fully documented at Point Hope, at Cape Espenberg, at Onion Portage along the Kobuk River and at Deering in Kotzebue Sound (Anderson 1984:88, Gerlach 1998:392).

Complex burials, including burial masks and detailed artifacts, allude to possible connections between Scytho-Siberian, and Chinese eastern Chou artistic traditions as

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<sup>18</sup> Burch (1998:317) has suggested that the diversity of the archeological record suggests the possible inception of the socio-political territorial form of *nunaqatigiitich* “people related to each other through possession of the land” had already been in place for 1,000 years by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. See Map 3 for a model of historical socio-territoriality on the Seward Peninsula



well as with those from the North American Northwest Coast (Arutiunov and Fitzhugh 1988:125-6; Mason 2000). These sites also provide some of the first possible material evidence suggesting the possibility for well-developed trade networks across the Bering Strait and beyond by 2000 BP. One of the best-developed Ipiutak finds at Deering demonstrates the first uses of iron in northwest Alaska in an engraving tool with an iron inset with a beluga whale shaped profile (Mason 2000:239). In addition to the refined artistic material objects, Ipiutak remains suggest a notable departure from oil lamps characteristic of Norton traditions indicating the use of wood as the primary fuel source for Ipiutak settlements. These findings have led to broad ranging speculations as to whether Ipiutak people were perhaps more oriented towards terrestrial resources rather than marine.

Based on excavations on Saint Lawrence Island, Collins (1937) concluded that “Eskimo Technologies” were clearly established by 2500 BP (Arutiunov and Fitzhugh 1988:123). The recalibration of existing dated material has led Mason and Gerlach (1992:54) to suggest that Ipiutak, Old Bering Sea/Okvik, Punuk, and Birnirk were overlapping and contemporaneous technological traditions noting that stylistic variations may be representative of socio-political groupings and boundaries. Materials from this era forward, from hunting equipment to items of daily household usage are decorated with animals that display human like expressions. Viewed in light of oral traditions documented in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bogoras 1901; 1904-09; Curtis 1930; Nelson 1983; Murdoch 1988; Rasmussen 1952), these objects appear to suggest that local understandings of sentience not being limited to humans were well developed in Bering Strait and Northwest Alaska by 2000 BP.

Further zoo-archeological evidence indicates the development of whale hunting in the Bering Strait by 2300 BP (Dinesman and Savinetsky 2003). Based on data from sites on the Chukchi Peninsula,<sup>19</sup> Western Thule hunters’ (1050–600 BP) innovations are

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<sup>19</sup> Some Shishmaref elders have suggested to me that residents from the village of *Ikpik* where many contemporary Shishmaref families originate might have hunted whales during the fall, south of the village toward Wales. Archeological evidence does not appear to support these arguments and in general, conversations about local whaling history do not emerge very often in local hunting discourse. However

believed to have further developed open water whaling technologies and dog traction, thus facilitating a North American arctic ethnogenesis that led to the high degree of linguistic and cultural homogeneity that spans from the Bering Sea to East Greenland. Mason and Barber (2003) suggest gradual ocean-warming may have weakened biological productivity in the Bering Strait. This warming, interspersed with cold periods and heavy storm intervals, continually reshaped the littoral landscape, further complicating the ethnogenesis.

The Northern Maritime tradition (ca. 1500 BP to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century), like the preceding Arctic Small Tool Tradition, can be further distinguished temporally into the Birnirk, Western Thule, and Kotzebue traditions (Harriet 1994, Anderson 1984). The temporal range of the Birnirk tradition is estimated to be between 1600 to 1200 BP (Mason and Gerlach 1992) and relates directly to assemblages on the eastern side of the Bering Strait.

Warmer weather is believed to have contributed to a decline in seasonal sea ice coverage and an expansion of open water whaling. Regional human ecological models suggest that surplus food supplies obtained through whaling spurred population growth, thereby increasing stress on local resources and contributing to migrations to higher latitudes. Concurrently, Mason and Barber (2003:71) note that ethnographic literature indicates that warmer weather and a lack of an ice platform renders hunting more difficult. While whaling may have emerged in response to an increase in open water, warmer weather and larger areas of open water did not simplify open water whaling but rather had the opposite effect and rendered it an extremely labor intensive resource procurement strategy. The factors contributing to Thule expansion are therefore no doubt more multi-dimensional than can be illuminated by the data that are currently available.

Contemporary indigenous marine mammal hunters across the Bering Strait region today perpetuate a regional tradition that may be at least 4,500 years old. The archeological record also points to cross-Bering Strait economic exchange and artistic influences by 2000 BP (Arutiunov and Fitzhugh 1988:125-6). At the same time, artistic

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oral historical accounts suggest whale hunting occurred at Cape Espenberg prior to the current processes of sedimentation that make the area shallow and not conducive to large marine mammals.

personal expression of sentience as transcending human beings—and possibly articulated in historic myths and oral traditions—are reflected in material remains dating back 2,000 years. Individual, personal and broader societal expressions of relations between human and non-human forms in western Alaska have developed and changed both through time and the changing circumstantial contexts for encounters between hunters and animals. It is therefore important to position contemporary hunters' relations and understandings of animals (which develop and change over the course of an individual's life history) within the context of regional history.

Butchering bearded seals on a large piece of ice slowly drifting northwards through Bering Strait may in the moment of getting one's hands bloody seem just like pragmatic actions when viewed solely in relation to the execution of the task. However, when these activities are examined in light of regional human history of marine mammal hunting and human animal relationships, they take on deeper significance. Local cultural understandings and engagements with lands and animals are both markedly diverse across western Alaska, the Bering Strait, and across the circumpolar north, yet they also demonstrate a degree of homogeneity. Native hunters who continue to go out on the sea ice every spring to try and catch animals to provide food for their families and communities continue thousands of years of tradition. The significance of hunting marine mammals as a way of making a living will become more clear throughout this dissertation.

#### 2.4 A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS: EXPLORERS, WHALERS, TEACHER-MISSIONARIES, REINDEER, INFLUENZA AND LOCAL NARRATIVES

Numerous recent publications have provided regional descriptions and analysis of historic contacts and interactions between Euro-Americans and Iñupiat of Bering Strait and northwest Alaska (Bockstoe 1995; Burch 1988; 1998; Ellanna and Sherrod 2005; Ray 1992; Simon 1998). Here I focus on aspects and dimensions of colonial encounters and prominent regional historic events leading toward the establishment of Shishmaref as

a permanent settlement. Analysis of these events is important toward understanding Shishmaref as a contemporary hunting community in Bering Strait.

The first known encounter between the people of the island, the *Kigiqtaamiut*<sup>20</sup> and other *Tapqaqmiut* societies occurred when Russian explorer Otto Von Kotzebue, who was searching for the Northwest Passage, landed on present day Sarichef Island (a small barrier island on the northwest coast of the Seward Peninsula) on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1816 (Ray 1992:57). Upon landing on the island and identifying a community, Kotzebue's sailors threatened village residents with weapons, causing the villagers to flee. Kotzebue and his crew thus found the village "uninhabited." They went inside several empty houses, took inventory of the hunting equipment, and surveyed the local architecture. Among the household items they noted were pieces of "black blubber" which were more likely dried bearded seal meats. After exploring the island, Kotzebue took his ship into Shishmaref Inlet, and the Kigiqtaamiut had their first direct armed conflict with the Russian sailors. Ray (1992:57) notes that as Kotzebue's two boats came to rest near the north end of the island (east channel, *Sinŋaq*) two men wearing gut-skin parkas approached in kayaks. According to Kotzebue, they began counting how many men were present. After the men briefly interacted with Kotzebue and his men from a distance, an interaction that included launching projectiles toward the Russian sailors, Kotzebue's men retreated. Soon after, as Kotzebue and his survey crew were returning to their ship, two large skin boats, or *umiat*,<sup>21</sup> almost over took one of Kotzebue's boats, and only retreated after one of Kotzebue's men brandished a sword (Kotzebue 1967:204).

Following these initial encounters in Shishmaref Inlet, Kotzebue made contact with

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<sup>20</sup> Kigitaq is the Bering Strait Iñupiaq word for island. The base word "miut" refers to "people of." Tapqaq has two meanings. Dorothy Jean Ray (1992) translates it as the sandy shore, which could imply the sandy beaches that make up the barrier islands along the northwestern Seward Peninsula coast. Shishmaref elders however say Tapqaq refers to the mainland coastline not the sandy beaches of the outer coast of the barrier islands. A second meaning of Tapqaq is "heavy rope" that is taken from the sides of a female bearded seal. Both definitions are significant toward describing the residents of the area as bearded seal hunting makes up primary subsistence resource. The shallow bathymetry of the northwest Seward Peninsula make excellent habitats for the benthic feeding bearded seals, as reflected in the first definition. The second meaning, referring to a product derived from bearded seals, further highlights the relationships between hunting practices and local ecology. Both definitions connect to the value of bearded seal hunting for peoples whose lives were centered along this stretch of coast.

<sup>21</sup> Umiaq is an open boat that uses walrus and or bearded sealskins stretched across a wooden frame. Umiat is a plural form of umiaq.

Tapqaqmiut living around Cape Espenberg who were interested in trading fox skins to Kotzebue and his crew. Kotzebue, however, was ultimately unable to meet local prices of preexisting cross-Bering Strait trade.



Map 3, Historic Iñupiaq socio-territoriality circa 1848 adapted from Burch (2006)

In addition to bringing about the first armed conflict between Europeans and Kigiqtaamiut, a secondary result of Kotzebue's brief encounter with the Kigiqtaamiut and Tapqaqmiut was the renaming of *Kigiqtaq* to Sarichef Island, after Gabrill Sarychev (Vice Admiral of Russia). *Kigiqtam Imagzruk* was renamed Shishmaref Inlet after Sarychev's lieutenant Gleb Shishmarev. These areas, along with many other landscape features, were renamed during these initial encounters (Kotzebue 1967; Ray 1992:62). It is these non-Native names that are put onto maps and begin to redefine the region according to European nomenclature and practices. Further it is these names that continue to define the landscape for non-Natives. While for those who speak Iñupiaq and

grew up hearing *Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq*, its names grounded in local naming practices that continue to be drawn upon to describe local geography.

The second documented interaction between Kigiqtaamiut and Europeans occurred in 1826 when Fredrick Beechy, in command of the HMS Blossom, was sent to Northwest Alaska to intercept and resupply the British Navy's Franklin expedition, making its way from the Mackenzie River region to the Bering Strait (Bockstoce 1977; Ellanna 2005). Once again, trade formed a central dimension of their interaction as hunters traded bows and arrows for iron and tobacco. In 1827, Beechy's interactions with Iñupiat further south in Port Clarence resulted in armed conflict, during which one Iñupiaq man was taken hostage in an attempt to have stolen items returned.

Following these initial encounters, the next period of more intensive colonial contact was the rapid development, expansion and subsequent decline of the western arctic whaling industry (Bockstoce 1995). The period of commercial whaling and walrus hunting in the western Arctic was from 1848-1914. During this period approximately 150,000 walrus from an estimated population of 200,000 animals (Bockstoce 1995:135, 346-347) and an estimated 18,650 bowhead whales were killed (Bockstoce 1995:346-7). Commercial whaling brought about the dramatic depletion of bowhead whales and walrus in the western arctic. This caused periodic interruptions in the subsistence hunting of these animals for communities that directly relied on them. These marine mammal depletions would later provide the impetus for the expansion of government services and the creation of the Alaskan reindeer herding industry. Whaling also influenced changes in existing indigenous commercial trade practices as many whalers used trading as means of supplementing the costs of their voyages. Indeed, many vessels that came to the Bering Strait solely for trade were registered as whaling vessels as they cleared U.S. customs. The dramatic increase in the presence of Euro-Americans in the Bering Strait area also influenced demographic shifts across the regional indigenous political-geographic landscape. Equally, whaling provided opportunities for personal advancement within local cultural contexts that did not previously exist.

Shishmaref is generally located off the main migration path of bowhead whales and, subsequently, the path of commercial whaling ships, which would usually bypass the shallow coast near Shishmaref. Kigiqtaamiut hunters, like others throughout the region, found innovative ways to take advantage of the new opportunities that whaling brought. During the late 1880s, as shore-based whaling became an increasingly more economic way to hunt whales commercially, several Shishmaref area families moved to the commercial shore-based whaling community of Jabbertown, which was established just south of Point Hope (Burch 1994:81). These families worked in varying capacities at Jabbertown shore-based whaling enterprises for a few years before heading back south toward Shishmaref. Some families settled for a period of time in the Kivilinamiut area north of Kotzebue Sound for several years before some returned to Shishmaref (Burch 1998:53). Similarly, some Shishmaref elders believe that hunters from the Shishmaref area also established themselves on the arctic coast in the Mackenzie River delta region after having worked on whaling ships overwintering in the area. This belief was based on the experiences of individuals from Shishmaref who had visited the community of *Tuktoyaktuk* in the Northwest Territories and noted the similarity in their respective Iñupiaq dialects<sup>22</sup> and their style of butchering bearded seals, which was said to parallel the “Shishmaref style,” a unique method when compared to other northwest Alaska and Bering Strait communities. In support of this claim Bockstoce (1995) notes that it was common for whaling ships overwintering in the Arctic to hire native hunters to supply the crew with fresh meat throughout the winter, as well as to hire women to sew fur and skin clothing to outfit the whalers. Many ships made regular annual stops at specific communities on their way up to and through the whaling grounds such as at Little Diomede to get specific clothing items such as waterproof boots. A single steam whaler

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<sup>22</sup> The Bering Strait Inupiaq dialect noticeably differs from the dialects of Kotzebue Sound and the Kobuk and Noatak river communities, as well as with Arctic Slope speakers in terms of the meaning of certain words, meter, and tonality. For example, Shishmaref people will often utter *atta*, meaning “I don’t know” over the course of a discussion. I uttered *atta* in the course of our conversation with a Barrow resident in Shishmaref, he paused and then said, “I always forget Shishmaref people say ‘atta’, in Barrow that means shut-up.” Having studied Iñupiaq for two years at UAF from instructors from Barrow, and more than once having professed my ignorance through uttering “atta” I was at least partially mortified to learn that my responses were the equivalent of telling my instructors to shut up.

overwintering in the arctic might try to procure up to 500 pairs of boots (Bockstoce 1995:270), demonstrating what a lucrative annual endeavor outfitting whaling ships may have been for many native families living in or near villages frequented by whaling ships. Bockstoce (1995:274) also notes that during the winter of 1894-95 many of the Point Barrow hunters had moved to Herschel Island (near the Mackenzie delta) in order to hunt for the 15 whaling ships overwintering there, highlighting once again the local diversity of economic opportunities hunters found in commercial whaling. It was common practice for hired native hunters to set up satellite hunting camps away from the ships and further inland for caribou hunting in order to supply whaling crews with fresh meat throughout the winter. Indeed with the establishment of a “permanent” overwinter commercial whaling community on Herschel Island many native people from across the western arctic moved to take advantage of the trade and other lucrative economic opportunities there (Bockstoce 1995:275). Thus the plausibility that some Kigiqtaamiut established a permanent presence in that region during this era is not outside the range of possibility.

The preceding examples suggest some of the opportunities that came through expansion of commercial whaling in the Bering Strait. Essential to understanding how new externally originating opportunities were drawn upon and incorporated into local practices and notions of prestige is the role of the *umialik* in the social organization of Iñupiaq maritime hunting practices. Like many Iñupiaq linguistic terms, *umialik* has a variety of related contextual usages, such as “boat owner,” “leader,” or “rich man.” *Umalialgich* (pl) were and are individuals who through their hunting skills, knowledge and strength of character can influence the organization of a wide range of social activities connected to hunting and social life. In addition to being exceptional hunters, through their social and economic successes they would organize and orchestrate complex communal marine mammal hunts and the distribution of the catch. The subsequent distribution of animals caught during communal hunts were historically and remain contemporaneously a central relational component of being an *umialik*. This is particularly important for maintaining relationships with the community hunters for



material support and the labor network necessary for realizing *umialigich*. Spencer (1972: 114-115) writes of *umialigich*:

The hunt leader occupied an achieved status; he might, it is true, have inherited some of the surplus goods with which he might buy a following, but in general, ability to attract others to his banner depended on his demonstrated success. The would-be *umealiq* was required to make a tremendous sacrifice of time and property to enlist a crew for whaling expeditions [and other cooperative activities]. This was especially true since he stood on a footing of competition with other hunt leaders in the same area. But if sacrifice was necessary to achieve the leadership role, the rewards were worthwhile. An individual, by becoming a recognized *umealiq* could assume the most prestigious place offered by the society.

The leadership of an *umialik* isn't limited to hunting activities, but intersects with wide ranging dimensions of social life. The wealth and success of an *umialik* was, and remains, directly connected to the individual's ability to maintain a successful hunting crew and support network through the distribution of resources. The status of an *umialik* is directly connected to the distribution of wealth to one's support network. Cassell (2003:390) stresses that even in relatively large Inupiaq communities few individuals achieved the recognition of *umialik*. He noted that between two closely related winter villages in the Barrow area in 1853 there were approximately 500 residents, only five of whom were recognized as *umialigich* who maintained *qargich* "community houses" (Burch 2006:105).

Participation in commercial whaling, as a meat hunter for a whaling ship or as a crew member or captain of a commercially supported shore-based whaling crew, generated opportunities to both accumulate material wealth and experiential knowledge. These components are central toward building or expanding a social network and attaining the material wealth necessary to build an *umiaq*, enabling a person to communally hunt seals, walrus, and whales; obtain resources; and further expand their social-relational network.

A central tenet of Inupiaq hunting practices was the recognition of forces beyond human control and the need to attend to these forces through various prohibitions. Violation of prohibitions might limit a hunter's participation in different aspects of organized hunting activities, such as whale or walrus hunting. Following the expansion

of commercial whaling, however, hunters who could not for various reasons participate in communal hunts were often recruited by commercial whalers, particularly following the establishment of commercial shore-based whaling stations like Jabbertown in the 1880s (Cassell 2003:394). Commercial whalers thus adopted and utilized Iñupiaq whale hunting strategies and social recruitment techniques in order to maintain Iñupiaq whaling crews. According to Cassell (2003:391) commercial whalers attracted and recruited potential hunters in a manner parallel to Iñupiaq umialigich. Through the distribution of commercial foods and goods provided by commercial whalers, Iñupiaq hunters could focus on whaling exclusively during hunting season. While prohibitions often limited the ability of an umialik to maintain their support networks at different times, commercial whalers were in contrast willing to hire skilled hunters with a greater degree less concern over local sanctions. The ability of commercial whalers to recruit hunters with little to no regard to local prohibitions, and the ease with which they provided them with foods and materials shipped up annually put them in direct competition with indigenous umialigich. The traditional umialigich depended both on extended family networks and subsistence resources accumulated over the previous year to provide material support for their whaling crews. Not only did commercial shore-based whaling operations undermine and compete with traditionally organized whaling crews, they dramatically expanded the number of whaling crews. They accomplished this through outfitting and supporting new whale hunting crews who in turn worked for their respective commercial whaling companies. In doing so, new mechanisms were created for individuals to accumulate resources and expand support networks to obtain umialik status. The organization, management, and control of hunting activities, as well as the subsequent distribution of resources, was the primary mechanism of being an umialik. The expansion of trade with Euro-Americans occurred as part of the broader commercial activities tied to whaling. Serving as a middleman by organizing the procurement and facilitating the flow of native and non-native resources and trade goods emerged as a new and central dimension of realizing and maintaining one's position as an umialik (Cassell 2003:401).

Commercial whale hunting and participation in Euro-American trade created opportunities that ambitious Iñupiaq hunters took advantage of and incorporated into local sociocultural practices as a means of achieving umialik status. The state supported reindeer herding industry, which was originally established by the federal government to address the biological impacts the whaling industry had on regional hunting economies, is one such example. Resource depletion served as the impetus for the development of reindeer herding. It ultimately served as a central tool in transforming and acculturating Alaska Native societies according to prevailing 19<sup>th</sup> century social evolutionary philosophy.

Three schools were established in the Bering Strait and further northward in 1890. One at Cape Prince of Wales among the Kijikimiut, one at Point Hope among the Tikigagmiut, and one at Point Barrow among the members of diverse Iñupiaq societies who settled there to take advantage of the commercial whaling and other economic and social opportunities that whaling presented. These schools were initially developed by Sheldon Jackson, the first Commissioner of Education in Alaska. They were created as “contract schools,” whereby Protestant denominations received federal support for establishing churches that concomitantly provided schools and supervised development of commercially viable reindeer herds. This combination of education, Christian doctrine and employment were to serve as an interconnected approach to transform Alaska Native hunting societies into commercial pastoralists with a strong grounding in a Protestant work ethic focused on individual success as opposed to communal distribution. Teachers at the contract schools were expected to provide a broad curriculum that included domestic skills, Christian morality, carpentry, health, and sanitation. In addition to teaching the English language, writing, and basic mathematics, they also provided supervision and management of village mission reindeer herds. Thus, Jackson’s program created an apparatus for federal support for missionary activities by contracting with missionary organizations to provide schools.

The introduction and initial management of reindeer, and the federal policy on the administration of reindeer herds were in Jackson’s control. The original stated motive for

Jackson's importation of reindeer from Chukchi herders across the Bering Strait was to feed coastal Iñupiat whom he perceived as, or presented as, starving as a result of the commercial harvest and depletion of whales and the walrus. Several reported cases of mass starvation are known to have occurred across northwestern Alaska. During the winter of 1880-81 mass starvation took place on Saint Lawrence Island as weather conditions were not conducive to hunting, and by that time walrus (a staple for Saint Lawrence Island communities) had been dramatically depleted as well.

A similar disaster struck in 1890-91 when King Island (another community with a strong dependence on walrus hunting) was plagued by especially poor weather. Bockstoce reports that when the U.S. Revenue Service Cutter *Bear* visited the island in 1891 the population had been reduced by two thirds. Hunters had taken only two walrus during the year, and people were surviving on a diet of seaweed and dogs (Bockstoce 1995:141). Burch (1998: 47-50) offers that much of northwestern Alaska was struck by a dramatic collapse of both marine and terrestrial resources between 1881-83. Some oral traditions relate the cause to the murder of a shaman (Burch 1998:47). Regardless of the cause, Burch argues that this famine resulted in a dramatic decline in population and reorganization of the social landscape. This occurred as people fled from areas with no animals to other areas where they had relations with other peoples less affected by the collapse. Therefore, Jackson's pragmatic impetus for importing reindeer to feed "starving Eskimos" was not wholly without merit.

However, Jackson also inflated early population reports in order to strengthen his cause. He selectively misquoted Beechy's 1831 report of his exploration in the Bering Strait. Beechy notes that Shishmaref was the largest community they visited in the first part of their journey (since they had not made landfall at any other mainland villages yet). Based on his entire exploration, Beechy offered a population estimate for the entire coast between Point Barrow and Port Clarence at approximately 2,500 people (Beechy 1831:568). Jackson used Beechy's comments about the relative size of Shishmaref as "the largest villages visited" and applied his regional population estimate as the historic population of 2,500 people as relating specifically to Shishmaref. Loop's 1892 estimate

for Shishmaref was approximately 80 people. Jackson misquoted Beechy for historic context and then cited Lopp to provide evidence of regional population decline. This example highlights one way Jackson modified data to lobby for the importation of reindeer and the development of a state managed reindeer herding program (Ray 1964:63).

Yet during the initial years of the reindeer industry few deer actually made it into the hands of the “starving” natives. By 1901, ten years after the first reindeer were imported into Alaska, there were ten “mission” herds across western Alaska even though only 20 Iñupiat of the original 30-35 who had participated in apprenticeship programs owned deer. The first reindeer were imported from Chukotka in 1892. Paying little attention to the historic animosity and history of cross-Bering Strait warfare, Jackson brought four Chukchi herders across the Bering Strait and established the Teller Reindeer Station in Port Clarence to train Iñupiaq herders. Later on Sami herders from Scandinavia (who later established a Sami community in southern Norton Sound) would be hired to train native reindeer apprentices. In 1894 Wales teacher William Lopp, who had spent 1893 managing the Teller reindeer station, returned to Wales in order to establish a herd and drove 118 reindeer there with the help of five herding apprentices from Wales: James Keok, Stanley Kawerak, George Otenna, Thomas Sokenna, and Netuxite. All of these men had spent the previous year learning herding at the Teller Reindeer Station. In the absence of Sami herding instructors, Iñupiaq herders took on local Iñupiaq apprentices. This allowed for the development of a Kingean (Wales) reindeer elite, as control of reindeer herding was maintained by only a few families. These herders in turn took on relatives as apprentices, and in doing so these individuals expanded their respective social-economic networks and spheres of influence as reindeer umaliagich.

In 1904 a “colony” herd of 389 reindeer from the Wales Mission herd was moved to Shishmaref Inlet. The herders who established the colony herd were Thomas Sokweena, Joseph Eningowuk, Frank Iyatunguk, John Sinnok, Walter Kiyuktuk, Woodluk, Harry Karmun, and James Keok. Local history from Shishmaref suggests that many of the herders who came up from Wales in order to tend to the herd were herders from

Shishmaref and/or closely related winter villages who had gone to Wales or Teller Reindeer Station to become reindeer apprentices (Simon 1998:125). In 1906 a school was opened in Shishmaref and the management and supervision of the Wales colony moved to Shishmaref. Subsequently, as governmental reindeer management reformed in 1907 in order to increase native ownership of reindeer, the former Wales colony herd became the Shishmaref “government herd.” From 1907 through the mid 1920’s the larger mission-owned herds were disbanded in order to expand individually owned private herds.

By 1913 representatives of most of the common family names in Shishmaref today had at least some reindeer (Simon 1998:140-1). By the period of reindeer collectivization in the mid-1920’s nearly all families had deer (Simon 1998:156-7). This period of reindeer herding (prior to collectivization) is often referred to as “close herding,” which referred to the practice of closely following herds. Families would live close to the herds, control their movements and keep them safe from predators.

In contrast to Sheldon Jackson’s vision of the regional reindeer industry as means of socio-evolutionary transformation, an oral tradition from the Wales area suggests an alternative local explanation of the relationship between humans and reindeer. The story offers a social-relational basis for close herding practices, as well as the incorporation of reindeer herding into regional hunting life. This story was told to Shishmaref elder Gideon Barr by his father Thomas Barr. Thomas Barr herded in the vicinity of Cape Espenberg but had heard this account in Wales as a young man:

A young man was once hunting caribou, but without killing them. He merely followed them, appearing every time they tried to escape from him; in this way he tired them.

In the end the animals were so exhausted that they no longer avoided him. Thus, they became accustomed to his voice and were no longer afraid of him.

At length the young man married, but still followed the caribou, which accumulated and became more and more numerous. The only time he came back to the house he had built was when his clothing was worn out, his wife made new clothes for him, after which he went back to the caribou and kept following them, so they might become familiar with him.

He was wise in his ways of handling them, and he never made them afraid or chased them, they became almost tame.

Summer and autumn passed and winter came. But still the young man was with his caribou, which were now multiplying while other herds joined his. Then he moved his tent out to the herd and thus he became the first caribou herdsman. The caribou were no longer shy like the wild ones. They were very fond of eating frozen urine, and when they began to eat human urine, their hair became speckled with white.

His wife became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and the son grew up. And when he was old enough to help his father watch the caribou they took turns at it; when the father was with the herd the son slept, and vice-versa.

Wolves were numerous in the land where they lived, and they bit the caribou to death. One day the father complained that the son slept too long, which was the reason why the caribou were killed. The son took this accusation to heart, and so one evening when his father had returned to the herd, the son dressed himself in festive clothing and asked his mother to give him a substantial meal. Later mother and son retired to rest, but during the night the son thrust a knife into his heart and killed himself—out of anger at his father's reproach.

Next morning his mother saw the blood on the platform; she lifted the caribou skins and saw her son lying dead. This caused her deep grief, but as she wanted her husband to find his son dead, she dried up the blood and covered the body again with sleeping skins.

That evening the father came home. He inquired after his son and was again angry at his sleeping so long, and when he had eaten the food his wife had prepared, he went to waken him. He flung the skin aside and found the boy lying dead on the platform. His grief was great, and his mother made it greater, for she cried: "It's your fault; you killed him yourself with your reproaches!"

Autumn came, and the father traveled to some people living nearby and urged young men to accompany him; he wanted them to help him kill long-horned caribou bulls.

So they killed long-horned caribou bulls, many of them, and the father then had two large vaults of caribou antlers laid criss-crossed and then these were covered with skins; and in one of them the father laid his dead son.

Then he mounted to the top of the other and spoke thus-wise to the young men standing around him:

"Let this, the land of the tame caribou become your land; do not sell them off, but let them become more and more. Use them; kill of them what you require in order to live without sorrow and anxiety, but never more than that!"

Having said this, he divided his herd among the young men who had helped him to build the vaults; then he stabbed himself with his knife as his son had done, and he was buried in the other vault of caribou antlers.

Thus says the tale, died the first man to tame caribou; from him descended all the other herds.

The two burial chambers are still shown as a monument over the people to live on tame caribou.<sup>23</sup> (Barr 1991 in Ellanna & Sherrod 2005)

The above oral tradition suggests a social relational underpinning for how Bering Strait Iñupiaq understood some dimensions of their relationships with reindeer following their introduction.

The observations of village teachers and of government officials connected with reindeer administration offer some insight into the incorporation of reindeer herding into local hunting life. Shishmaref teacher Thomas Schultz expressed his frustration with Kigiqtaamiut hunters. He expresses his concern in this 1916 memo:

The reindeer industry has done much for the natives, both physically and financially. I'm sorry that the Eskimos do not take more interest in the deer quite often in winter it is their only means of living. They realize this, but when game comes they forget all about deer and it takes a great deal of persuasion to keep them in at the herd. I believe that some means should be arranged to root out inefficient herders. I find the best herders are the best trappers. Only a few think of their reindeer as a business proposition. Most of them think of their reindeer as a seal, and at a certain time, and at a certain place, they can get some meat to eat, or kill a deer and sell it to get provision and clothing, without any exertion on their part. Nevertheless, with a looseness of herding the reindeer industry is thriving. Every man in this village owns reindeer; all boys from sixteen years up have deer. (Schultz 1916)

What Schultz failed to comprehend was Kigiqtaamiut forms of agency and the strength and significance of hunting life. As with Iñupiaq whalers and the Wales reindeer

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<sup>23</sup> This story of the origins of the relationship between human beings and domestic reindeer is closely connected to Chukchi oral traditions. The Kijikimiut (Wales Iñupiaq) were active participants in cross-Bering Strait trade, and may have learned this account from there. In addition, when the first reindeer were imported to the Teller Reindeer station, four Chukchi herders came to Alaska as well to train Alaska Natives in the herding arts. One of the Chukchi herder "Nootadl got" was married to a Kijikimiut woman and lived in Wales. Therefore when Thomas Barr heard this account of human reindeer relations there is a possibility he heard it either from men who had apprenticed under Chukchi herders at Teller, or even possibly from a Chukchi herder living at Wales.



aristocrats, some successful Kigiqtaamiut hunters were able to draw upon reindeer herding as a means toward achieving and maintaining umialik status.

Two Shishmaref herders in particular who maintained and expanded social and labor networks and economic success through reindeer herding in the early twentieth century were William Allockeok who maintained his herd in the Serpentine and Arctic River drainages near Shishmaref, and Thomas Makiaqtaq Barr who with his brothers kept a herd in the vicinity of Cape Espenberg. Along with other reindeer herds across Alaska, these herds went through varying restructurings in response to changes in reindeer policy. They are important to highlight here because both herders were perceived as “a little above the rest” (Barr 1979). Gideon Barr further noted:

There was my father, *Makiaqtaq* at Espenberg, Allockeok at Shishmaref [and] Olarruk from Ikpik... They were like chiefs. People didn't mix in with them too much, but they would rather listen to what they had to say, to their advice. They weren't called chiefs though. They always had enough money to buy something. They always had a dollar in their pocket. Whenever they wanted to buy some equipment, well they weren't stuck. They could buy it right now... All of those men died around the same age [close to 80 yrs.] and they worked hard all their lives. As hard as they worked to make a living, and yet they lived that long! That means it's a clean way of living, which is true (Barr 1979:73,74,77).

William Allockeok's grandson was Clifford Weyiouanna, my primary instructor and hunting partner, who started his own reindeer herd in 1971. Gideon Barr recognized his father and Allockeok as men who achieved a unique status as umialigich above that of other herders. Just as innovative Iñupiaq hunters were drawing upon reindeer herding as a mechanism toward participating in expanding economic opportunities, Sheldon Jackson and other government administrators were using reindeer herding in order to advance their own moral and social engineering agendas. To do so they drew upon their understanding of the social power of umialik and usurped it as a social mechanism for justifying and enforcing punishments upon Iñupiat, who violated previously non-existent U.S. federal laws. In 1895, the superintendent of the Teller reindeer station William J.

Kjellerman and Lutheran pastor T.L. Brevig,<sup>24</sup> who referred to themselves as *umaliagich*, punished an Iñupiaq hunter from Nuuk<sup>25</sup> who killed a reindeer to feed himself and 10 others who were starving. These “*umaliagich*” believed that all who had eaten the reindeer, not just the one who killed it, should be punished, and the Iñupiaq were forced to pay one fox skin for the deer and return the reindeer skin (Jackson 1896:58-59). In another incident Brevig and a U.S. Marshal from Teller arrested and convicted six Iñupiat for killing and eating 12 reindeer. The men were sentenced to serve between one and two months in jail (Ellanna & Sherrod 2005:92). These events overlapped with the expansion of U.S. governmental presence from 1880 onward.<sup>26</sup> It was during this period when the U.S. Revenue Service began conducting annual cruises through Bering Strait in order to police the illegal trading of alcohol to Native communities and to support the pelagic whaling fleet operating in the region.

During the mid-1920’s government policy toward reindeer and Native herders shifted yet again. Village teacher/reindeer agents were instructed to establish village-based and centrally managed reindeer companies and promote “open herding” reindeer management. This plan called for the consolidation of privately owned reindeer herds into one centrally managed herd. Consolidated village herds were established in order to impose a more sedentary lifeway on Native families, in particular those families that spent most of their time on the land following their reindeer. Whereas “close herding” was based on the premise of closely following and caring for the herd as outlined in the previously mentioned oral tradition, open herding was founded upon a purely economic conceptualization of human-reindeer relations. The driving theory was that herds would grow and prosper more if left to their own devices and were only occasionally corralled for marking and butchering. Most significantly, this would encourage families that lived with their herds to move to mission/school/herding stations. Edward Keithlen, who was

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<sup>24</sup> T.L. Brevig was a Lutheran pastor who originally moved to Teller to provide services to Sami herders. He later established the Teller mission subsequently named “Brevig Mission”

<sup>25</sup> Nuuk is near Cape Nome on the southern Seward Peninsula

<sup>26</sup> The United States government purchased Alaska in 1867. However it was only after 1880 when regular cruises through the Bering Strait by U.S. Revenue cutters began that the impact of the purchase of Alaska was felt in the Bering Strait and northward.

the government teacher in Shishmaref between 1923 and 1924, discusses trying to organize a local cooperative store and collective herd:

At first we had a terrible time convincing the stockholders that they still had to pay for their groceries even though they owned stock. What made this doubly hard to put across was the fact that heretofore on several occasions they had pooled their resources for a cargo of winter supplies. And when they arrived each family took its share and went home with it without paying anything. Now they found they had invested their money in stock but no groceries. How come? What kind of racket was this anyway? But little by little the good and sensible villagers came to understand that part of their investment was represented by the building and the rest by the goods on the shelves which would earn money for them as stock was turned over. And besides, from now on there would always be a good supply of groceries, hardware and dry goods on hand at reasonable prices.

Organizing the collective herd was even more complicated, as individual herds were central to the domestic and daily life of reindeer owning families. Keithlen further illuminates some of the other difficulties connected to the organization of collective herds:

The trouble at Shishmaref aside from the natural reluctance of the natives to leave the seashore was the fact that these little herds were scattered over some 3,000 miles of range and nobody was raising enough steers to drive to market, provided there was one, which there was not. So my job was to talk the deer owners into organizing a co-operative, get the deer into one big herd and employ paid herders. Then at an appointed time and place they could butcher the marketable steers, load them on the *Boxer* or a cold storage barge, and eventually market them in the states. (Keithlen 1963:88)

Simon (1998:206) notes that the collectivization of reindeer herds in absence of markets and a decline in domestic usage ultimately contributed to a dramatic rise in the population of herds on the Seward Peninsula and ultimately served to collapse the reindeer industry.

The Alaska Reindeer Act passed in 1937 and allowed for the re-privatization of Native reindeer herds. Privately owned reindeer herding returned to the Seward Peninsula when Fred “Oldman” Goodhope re-established a herd in the Cape Espenberg area in 1958. This was where his family had participated in herding with Thomas Barr in

the early part of the 20th century. After Goodhope died his son Fred Goodhope Jr. took over responsibility for the herd. Though the herd is largely feral today the Goodhopes maintain their camp there and regularly return to the area for hunting. In 1971 Clifford Weyiouanna established a herd in the Shishmaref area near where his grandfather, Allockeok, had historically herded. It is significant to note that the two re-established private herds were connected to the herds whose owners Gideon Barr had previously noted as umalialgich. The primary market for reindeer products in this period was for the velvet-covered antlers, which were harvested for a Korean aphrodisiac market into the mid-1990s. Indeed Clifford has often implied “only half joking” that the development of the male sexual enhancement drug Viagra also had a dramatic impact on the price of antlers as reliance on more exotic aphrodisiacs were replaced by scientifically developed ones.

During the mid-1990s the western arctic caribou herd expanded its range down toward the Seward Peninsula and “stole” the reindeer, effectively collapsing much of the local reindeer herds as the reindeer comingled with and followed the wild caribou. Some reindeer remain in the vicinity, however there is currently no active reindeer herding around Shishmaref. Inland caribou hunting, which into the 1880s had been an important dimension of the seasonal round of subsistence activities throughout Northwestern Alaska, has once again become an important part of local hunting activities.

Most people who have participated in reindeer herding in varied capacities can distinguish between caribou and reindeer meat. People are always pleased to get any form of wild meat, yet reindeer meat is viewed as a special food and is generally preferred over caribou. Reindeer herding was originally introduced as a form of industrial development designed to raise Alaska Natives out of their state as hunters and transform them into industrious herders supplying market demands. Reindeer herding was ultimately incorporated into and served to facilitate subsistence hunting activities in Shishmaref and has been absorbed into Kigiqtaamiut history as a dimension of local

heritage and identity.<sup>27</sup> Both family histories and life history experiences of Reindeer herding, corralling, and growing up at camp are active components of older Kigiqtaamiut hunters' oral histories.

In conjunction with the dramatic spread of Euro-Americans throughout northwestern Alaska after 1848 came the rapid spread of epidemics. The first to strike northwest Alaska was in 1851 (Burch 2006:2). On Saint Lawrence Island, one of the first stops whaling ships would make on their way north in the spring, severe outbreaks of respiratory diseases were common there throughout the 1890s (Fortune 1992:212). Outbreaks, like those experienced on Saint Lawrence Island, were often highly localized and corresponded with the visits of whaling ships. Those communities (Wales, Point Hope, Barrow) that were often hit the hardest by non-indigenous diseases were also the ones that received the greatest economic benefit from the presence of whalers. Wales experienced several outbreaks in 1890 and 1894. Point Hope experienced dramatic outbreaks in 1894 and again in 1896 (Fortune 1992:211). King Island was struck by an epidemic in the fall of 1897, and Barrow just one year later in 1898 (Fortune 1992:212). It is unclear how affected Shishmaref residents were by these outbreaks as they were not whaling grounds and largely off the travel routes of commercial whaling ships. There was also not a teacher or permanent non-Native living at Shishmaref before 1906, so there is no written record during this period. Local oral history does not offer any account of the prevalence of sickness during this period.

A major epidemic swept across the region in 1900 (Wolfe 1982; Fortune 1992). This epidemic, referred to as the "Great Sickness" of 1900, arrived just two years after gold was discovered near Nome in 1898, and came north with prospectors bound for the area. Composed primarily of influenza, but exacerbated by measles and small pox, the Great Sickness was particularly devastating to the region. During the period following the discovery of gold, over 30,000 people came to the Seward Peninsula for prospecting (Ray 1992:251). In addition to providing a vector for disease, this dramatic influx of non-Natives also contributed to a shift in regional commerce as the southern Seward

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<sup>27</sup> For a more complete discussion of reindeer herding practices through time in Shishmaref and on northwestern Seward Peninsula see Simon 1998; Ellanna and Sherrod 2005.

Peninsula began to emerge as the regional economic center, replacing the traditional indigenous international *Qat̄ut* and *Sisulik* trade fairs of Kotzebue Sound.

The combination of influenza and measles in 1900 was devastating to western Alaska, yet more devastating still were the impacts of the global influenza epidemic of 1918. This event strongly figures into local history in Shishmaref, for while communities such as Wales to the south were devastated by the influenza, not a single resident of Shishmaref perished or even contracted the flu during the 1918 influenza outbreak. Rapid local action by Shishmaref hunters was fundamental toward stopping the northward expansion of the influenza. The government teacher stationed in Shishmaref during the outbreak outlines some of dimensions of local organization to quarantine the community:

During the latter part of November a messenger came from Deering with a notification of the death of our superintendent Walter Shields at Nome and also stated that native villages were being depleted by deaths caused by the Influenza and that the village of Wales which is nearer to us than any other, had been wiped out of existence.

As my native assistant had a wife and six children at Wales he thought best to go at once to their relief. He left at once for Wales and I learned later he died the week of his arrival.

On December 12<sup>th</sup> a relief expedition arrived from Deering, composed of Mrs. Ada Evans, a trained nurse, and J.G. Brown with a driver who had been sent here under the supposition that our village like many others had disappeared from Influenza.

We immediately established a rigid quarantine of our village by erecting an outpost some eight miles down the coast toward Wales where Native men were stationed day and night to prevent travel in any direction, also having men to watch the trails to the east and southeast.

School was discontinued and trapping forbidden. The nurse and myself took extra precautions at once of seeing to the thorough cleaning of the igloos and the personal cleanliness of the natives and their children.

Daily inspections were made of all people and igloos with community meetings in the school room where lectures were given to women only by the nurse, who explained the necessity of sanitary measures and personal hygiene in order that no one would get ill. I spoke at the men's meetings, using the anatomy charts supplied as school accessories.

In spite of all the precautions we took there was a great amount of petty illness which we attributed to fear of the terrible disease. However, we kept up our untiring efforts until March 1<sup>st</sup> when we learned the

sickness had finally abated over all of Alaska and I am now happy to announce that not a single death occurred in Shishmaref during the winter (J.P. Jones 1919).

The lack of illness or death in Shishmaref serves as a testament to the strong local leadership and organization of the Kigiqtaamiut community to diligently enforce the armed quarantine around Shishmaref for three months. The experiences of maintaining this blockade and the fear and uncertainty of the sickness and over the possibility of violence and armed conflict with persons who might try to break the blockade is further stressed in the following historical narrative from Shishmaref:

Jack Ningeulook:

And then, in 1918 the “flu” finally came at that one time also. Then, in the early fall, when they said that they had the “flu,” it came from Deering, or Sitnasuak (Nome), the white man brought it from somewhere. A woman and a man, now these two let us take medicine. We would rub this through our nose when we were going somewhere and when we wake up. We would put cotton into our nose with medication on it. That’s why, after we had been somewhere and when we get home we would “smell” the medication here at Shishmaref in the air. Ohh, when we reach home, the nose would smell it. The smell in the air was like that, then able to smell it...they let us gargle too because back then, over there, there was not much communications. They had no telephones. So then, those villages—to where there was sickness and when it comes, there would be mass death the next day. It was a real “strong sickness”—that one was. So, they would catch it the next day after they come from where they had that sickness—those ones, when they come back. It started from the newcomer when they first meet them. Then, some of them would be all “wiped out” and die. Sometimes, there would be a child, or children, but not many. Sometimes, two would be left and no one to take care of them. They would die with no more parents and they would be left helpless—those ones.... Back then in 1918, he would be watching across there, at *Ijigagiirami* two of them in 1918 when they had the “flu.” This was where there was the “mass death.” That’s why too that Wales had almost no more people. There was just a few probably left, only down west of here. And here the school teacher was suppose to be right here. Back then *Aloat*, that one got here in the fall time by boat. And down west were his kids at Wales—*Aloat*, back then, was from Wales—an Eskimo.... He was suppose to be a school teacher here. Now, he started, this one, when they have the “flu.” Now, back then after he had gotten here we heard that Wales people then down west, have “mass death.” We came from down west yesterday, back then, that one mail person, they went to rescue him

when he didn't come home. What happened was that some place in the boondocks, some place, he had died.

Marie Ningelook:

Now that one—our uncle *Aloat*, he came one time to my father at night. When he came in, he said to my father that he was coming in grief and to bring him down to Wales, even though they were dying “mass death” that they were having. And so, when they couldn't be helped, my father then use to answer when he couldn't help them, that he would just bring the “sickness” here. Then he would just cry like this when he say that to him. Now, maybe he'll take him, but he will not reach the village over there. He would only drop him off there. And then, he would just cry lots! Their mother too down west, her children probably give her hard time. That's why he wanted to be brought down because his small children probably give their mother hard time. So, back then they took that one from here. And before they reached over there, they dropped him off.

Jack Ningelook:

His Children—those, they did live. But, the one that went back to them, he died. His mother too, they were there. The mother and children were not parted by death, Back then he would have lived.... Then, over here it was good that we never had the “flu” because they had good watchers across there. Two people would take turns across there at nighttime. After they were across there, they were unable to see the marker from down there that had a big sign on the trail they'd go home from *Ijigagiirak*, across there. Then, after the “flu” was gone, maybe after a month went by, I think it was maybe in March, because in the fall, in November, they started. They started. It started by having “mass death” from Wales, from down west has an ending. This came from down west. And, back in those days, those people never had happiness. They didn't use to have been crying all right, those who have lost loved ones. The ones who have lost loved ones. Back then, maybe it was probably in March, it was early spring, or just about then...

Marie Ningelook:

Now this one, Cross, back then *Noonhak*, they called our uncle he went trapping. Back then he went to pull his traps by dog team. He met a whiteman that was not from Shishmaref. And maybe this one had been travelling behind him. And this one, he was going to kill. When he gets to him over there. When he got there he'd pass him. When he got over there, finally he'd pass him. Finally when he was about to reach Shishmaref, he was going to kill him when he reaches there. So what happened was that the sickness was over and it wasn't contagious anymore. Now it was a good thing that he didn't kill him. He was



thinking that he'd do it over there. When he reach him he would pass him. And here he had been saying that he would kill him over there when he reaches him. Then after this one, the "new-comers" coming like that, they stopped doing like so. And even across there, we stopped watching because it wasn't contagious anymore. And the sickness had passed— what was going around back then. Now, to here this story probably ends. (Shh. EN 83-038 Jack Ningelook)

This local historical account of the 1918 influenza highlights both the actions of individuals and the personal loss and tragedy people experienced. *Aloat* dies upon his arrival at Wales in order to help his wife and family, who survive the epidemic. Concurrently a hunter has to debate the possible need to take human life in order to protect the community and his family. Yet more significant than the linkages between oral and "official" accounts is the power of personal experiences and memories of events in the shaping of local history in Shishmaref. The role Shishmaref residents played in slowing down and stopping the spread of the influenza has become a part of the collective memory and heritage of the community and this event remains present in local stories as an example of the power of those historic leaders.

Concurrent and central to Sheldon Jackson's development of the reindeer herding and contract schools was the use of these missionary schools as platforms for evangelization. The continuing occurrence of epidemics and disease, resource fluctuations and collapses, times of shortage, and the development of new economic opportunities through whaling, reindeer herding, and mining have led Burch (1994); Spencer (1959); Oswalt (1963); Vanstone (1980) to suggest that wide "acceptance" of Christian ideology across the western Arctic was due at least in part to timing and its introduction during a time of intensive social change. Shishmaref School reports from between 1906-1919 show that evangelizing was a regular if "unofficial" dimension of the lives of many of Shishmaref's first teachers in mission contract schools as the following excerpts from letters by Shishmaref School teachers' indicate.

Dear Sir:

After sending you my school report for December it occurred to me that you might be interested in knowing how we celebrated Christmas

at Shishmaref. We had nothing unusual I suppose but we were amply rewarded for our effort by the spirit of appreciation shown by the Natives

For some time I have been holding a series of meetings at the regular time of our services i.e., twice Sundays and once Thursdays, but with the distinct object of evangelistic work among the people. At these meetings I have endeavored to give them such messages from the Word of God supplemented with a short talk of my own as would lead them into closer fellowship with our Master and with each other. I have especially endeavored to get them to unite with the church at Wales as an expression of their desire to “live for Jesus” as they say. These meetings have been attended with more or less success and I am sure have helped a few at least in the road to future happiness.... I am at present making a trip to various villages within in thirty or forty miles of Shishmaref with a view of starting school work and religious work among the people. Many of these isolated Natives are even now in the lowest depths of sin and degradation as regards their private lives. I did some of this last year but have more time for it now as I can leave my sister in charge of my school during my absence. (Truman Northup Jan 16, 1908)

In another letter by Shishmaref’s resident teacher dated some nine years later we receive another update of local teacher evangelical work.

#### Mission Work

There being no resident missionary here we have taken the work upon ourselves and had two services every Sunday and one on Wednesday. I have made a practice of having a short lecture made by an interpreter at each meeting and my subject has not at all times been on a religious topic, but along the general line of progress, ambition, and good citizenship.

We have had a splendid choir for singing and we are proud of them. We have had choir practice every Friday evening. During the winter Dr. Fosso, missionary at Teller, and a native preacher of Unalakleet held services while here. (J.P. Jones 1919)

A school in Wales opened in 1890 and Thomas William Lopp, who was the first teacher there, actively evangelized in Wales and throughout the Bering Strait. Though he was not an ordained minister he held regular church services along with his colleague Harrison R. Thornton. Thornton was subsequently murdered in Wales in 1893. The Lutheran minister T.L. Brevig originally came to the Seward Peninsula to provide spiritual support to the Sami reindeer herders who were to train Iñupiat reindeer herders at Teller Reindeer Station in Port Clarence. Though his work there a Lutheran sphere of

influence grew on the western Seward Peninsula and in the early 1900's Lutheran evangelists began making regular annual trips to Shishmaref by dog team, and later by plane, to offer church services. They also served Wales after the Congregationalists who originally supported the Wales mission withdrew their support. Despite, or because of, Shishmaref's close proximity to churches in Teller Mission and Wales, a mission station was not built in Shishmaref until 1930.

In 1929 The Lutheran Daughters of Reformation (a Lutheran ministry student organization) began work to obtain funds for a permanent mission station in Shishmaref, and in 1930 Shishmaref's first minister Reverend H. Dahle organized the building of the church and station, which included facilities for a resident nurse (Hidy 2001:45). Today Shishmaref, Wales and Brevig and Nome all have Lutheran churches, though Nome has several other denominations as well. There have been several pastors in Shishmaref who have served for varying lengths of time since the inception of the church but few have stayed for more than two to three years. The community regularly goes without a pastor for long periods of time. During the period I carried out fieldwork in Shishmaref, a new pastor had just come to serve the community but left after approximately 18 months of service. He was replaced shortly thereafter by another new pastor. However, many residents believed that the most recent pastor was not up to the physical demands of living in the arctic, and by the time I left the field a search was underway for a replacement for him as well.

As previously noted, Christianity was introduced during a time when Iñupiaq societies were experiencing dramatic upheaval in the wake of epidemics, resource collapse, and as newly emerging economic opportunities were rippling through pre-existing social structures. Burch suggests this combination of factors (1994:81) helps explain Christianity's rapid and wide scale growth among the Iñupiat so that by 1910 acceptance of Christianity was essentially "universal" across northwestern Alaska. Burch (1994) proposes that one of the key dimensions leading to a region-wide acceptance of Christianity in varied forms was the inability of shamans, as local spiritual practitioners to effectively combat disease and resource collapses. Additionally persons such as T.L.

Brevig in the Port Clarence area, and Robert and Carrie Samms of the Friends Church, with the help of Iñupiaq evangelist *Uyaraq*, would actively break Iñupiaq rules and taboos as well as directly challenge the authority of shamans while holding up the bible as a means of demonstrating the power of Christianity. Through these acts they sought to undermine the effectiveness of traditional spirituality.

Fienup-Riordan (1990) and Jolles (2002) suggest a more nuanced characterization of the acceptance of Christianity throughout western Alaska. Fienup-Riordan (1990:69) suggests that many Yup'ik people (of southwestern Alaska) feel that Christianity does not represent a fundamental change from historic spiritual forms. Rather they contend Christianity was embraced as it gave a new outlet to parallel conceptions of older ideas. Therefore the relative degree of “change” of internal components of spiritual ideology was less profound. However this does not deny the role of the church in undermining traditional seasonal spiritual practices such as masked dancing and the formal ritual treatment of animals. Froelich Rainey (1941; 1947) conducted field work in Point Hope during 1940. He suggested that personal experiences, and individual expressions of religious feelings—understood through personal connections to and experiences with phenomena—imply a strong connection between Christian practices and older ideas of personal spiritual helpers, personal spiritual power and direct experience. His analysis offers strong parallels to Fienup-Riordan (1990:69-122).

Burch (1994) argues that the Yup'ik indigenization of Christianity proposed by Fienup-Riordan is not the case for Northwestern Alaska. He suggests instead that the influential Friends Church Missionaries operating out of the Kotzebue Sound area of Northwest Alaska (including Point Hope) were particularly skillful toward inserting Christian concepts into Iñupiat experiences. In contrast to Fienup-Riordan's argument, he argues the insertion of Christian ideas into Iñupiaq experiences created an illusion of syncretism where it ultimately didn't exist. Rather, Burch (1994:100) suggests that the Samms and *Uyaraq* imposed Christian ideas upon traditional Iñupiaq ideas that had dramatically different meanings. Burch goes on to suggest that they used the illusion of syncretism in order to realize widespread conversion (Burch 1994:100). Writing some 50

years after Rainey (1941; 1947) conducted fieldwork, Burch (1994:99) suggests that the forms of spiritual communion Rainey witnessed as examples of older spiritual forms did not reveal syncretism of Christian practices with older Iñupiaq ideas. Rather, Burch argues that Rainey's (1941; 1947) ethnographic descriptions more accurately describe standard Friends Church services as they are conducted across Kotzebue Sound and other Northwest Alaska communities.

Despite the powerfully influencing role of The Friends Church in Northwestern Alaska, they were unable to establish their practices in Shishmaref. During the early 1900's they tried to expand their area of spiritual influence into Shishmaref but their strict fundamentalist interpretations of scripture met strong resistance in Shishmaref as the following letter from a Reindeer agent visiting Shishmaref describes.

Some Natives had come to Shishmaref from Deering to proclaim a new Gospel they thought they had received. The main features of the doctrine were that all Christians would have to give up smoking and dancing if they wished to get to Heaven. (This is the idea current among the natives of Kotzebue Sound) The people at Shishmaref were being much worked up over these ideas until Nagozruk<sup>28</sup> took hold of the matter. In telling me about it he referred to the Deering people as "The Deceivers." He preached a sermon on the verse from Revelations regarding those who add or take from the words of the Book. Then he told the people that there was nothing said in the Bible about smoking and no prohibition against dancing. He then left the people to draw their own conclusions. The "Deceivers" left the village. (Shields 1913)

This letter highlights not just local resistance to a fundamentalist religious doctrine by residents of Shishmaref, but also the power of Friends Church to so dramatically alter the practices of those communities under their influence in a relatively short period of time.

Despite Burch's claim otherwise, my ethnographic research in Shishmaref suggests that while Christianity has a prominent and present role in village life it is also limited. Older ideas that predate the presence of Christian ideas and highlight the connections between phenomena and the natural world continue to be looked to and drawn upon for explanations of events and experiences in people's lives, particularly as they relate to

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Nagozruk was a Native Teacher from Wales, who taught at Shishmaref in 1913 during the absence of a white teacher.

hunting. The Lutheran church is the only church in Shishmaref today and contemporary Christian spiritual practices take on a distinct local flavor in the domains of community life to which they are applied.

Typically, unless there is a funeral to attend or other important church activities such as an annual regional church conference or singing, church attendance is fairly low. However when there is the occasion for a large turnout, such as a funeral, then the church will be filled and may have standing room only as families show up to offer their support to those who have lost a loved one. Following the mass, the choir service is a central part of church services and there are several choirs that participate. There is an elder's choir, the "mixed choir" and the "next-generation choir." Singing hymns often lasts longer than mass and is a central and primary dimension of funeral services. Local choir history is an important dimension of the history of the church in Shishmaref. Many elders living or deceased are partially remembered for their role in the choir and the seriousness with which they participated in choir activities. In addition to occasionally participating in church and choir some families host singing in their homes and get together regularly to sing hymns. Clifford would often play the accordion when his family occasionally hosted such a get-together. Though only some families regularly attend church every Sunday, many families observe the Sabbath on Sunday morning by listening to Gospel music broadcast from the Kotzebue (KOTZ FM 89.9 or AM 720) public radio station. This Sunday morning gospel music is primarily performed by Alaska native choirs and singing groups from across Northwestern Alaska, and songs are sung in both English and Iñupiaq.

A central aspect of how many Shishmaref families celebrate the Sabbath is by resting. While I lived with Clifford's family, doing "paid" work on a Sunday was strongly frowned upon. This household rule was largely passed down from his mother, who never sewed on Sunday.<sup>29</sup> Clifford's wife Shirley didn't sew on Sundays and their eldest son John-Boy never carved on a Sunday. However, Alex, Clifford's father, said it was not wrong to hunt on a Sunday, particularly in the spring if the weather and ice

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<sup>29</sup> Burch (1998) notes that taboos against sewing at different times and when different activities were taking place was not an uncommon occurrence among historic Iñupiaq societies.

conditions were good. Thus, if someone in the family was going to do some work that fell outside of regular chores and domestic activities on a Sunday they would usually consult first with Clifford in order to make sure it was a form of work that was acceptable. We would sometimes do some work processing meats on a Sunday, if we were home from hunting, and perform general maintenance of hunting equipment, such as working on boats. Typically beginning a new project on a Sunday was avoided. Other families or individuals who violated this general rule and would engage in paying work like carving items for sale on a Sunday were disdained.

In the current ethnographic context the primary function of the church in Shishmaref is to offer support when a family experiences a death. Following a death, most nonessential activities in the community instantly stop, children still go to school, and the stores remain open, but hunters stay home while bone and ivory carvers stop work as the community focuses upon supporting the family until the deceased can be buried. This may last up to a week. Fienup-Riordan (1994) notes that it was common practice for Yup'ik people also to halt working in the period following a death until the deceased had been buried.

Men did not chop wood in the village and women did not sew or cut fish while the corpse lay unburied... "If there was a death in the family, one of them would visit around telling people while the dead is not buried not to work at all. While a person is lying dead the whole village could not do anything at all. They could not work with any tools, and even if it was a needle one could not poke it anyplace. But after the dead has been buried the village could then use knives and could also sew." (Theresa Moses in Fienup-Riordan 1994:229)

In Shishmaref, as in Yup'ik communities, the central community focus during the period of time following a death is to support the family of the deceased until the body of the deceased can be put into the ground. As family members grieve together, other community members organize themselves to offer spiritual support through "singspiration" the singing of hymns in the deceased family's home in order to provide spiritual support to the family experiencing loss. Much like a church service, singspirations can last several hours and may take place over multiple days leading up to

the funeral. During deaths that are viewed as particularly tragic, such as that of a young person who “was taken before their time” through a hunting accident, suicide or other accident singspirations are particularly visible forms of community support. While a family grieves other groups and individuals take charge of digging the grave in the church cemetery and others will construct a cross and prepare a plywood box to be placed over the casket, which is typically shipped up from Anchorage. If an individual passes away in the community, the deceased’s family takes charge of dressing the body for burial. Caribou soup (or reindeer if it is available) is brought over to the grieving family and people make regular trips to go sit and visit with family members. Effort is made to help the family get the body buried as quickly as possible. This is viewed as a necessary step for both family and community life to proceed. The following excerpts from my field notes describe some of the events surrounding the loss of life of a young hunter in 2007:

Clifford and I had been planning on trying to go out hunting this morning. However when Clifford went out to check out ice conditions he ran into Dennis and came back in reporting that Boy (Norman) Kokeok had bumped his head when he went through thin ice crossing east channel from the mainland early this morning on their way back from duck hunting. He had tried to jump from his sno-go to the ice edge and use his knife to pull himself out of the water. Dennis and Warren Jimmy had to go back to the channel and ultimately had to retrieve Boy’s body with a sink hook. Soon after we heard the news Clifford and Shirley went over to Clara and Shelton’s to offer support to them. I went over later on to sit and be with them along with other visitors. Later that day Clifford made reindeer soup for them and both he and Shirley went over for singspiration, which lasted for several hours...

On Monday the call went out for grave diggers to go the cemetery at noon. John Boy, Wilbur, Cal, Jeffery, Glen, Archie, and Dickey and myself all showed up. Archie had already located a suitable spot. After we dug up the sod and carefully stacked it out of the way in order that we could place it back over the burial mound after the casket was covered. After the first four feet of earth was uncovered we reached permafrost, and it took us several hours to inch by inch chip through the frozen ground with pick axes. Everyone wanted to make sure we went down the full six feet “for the family” so they would know we worked to make sure we went all of the way down. Even though we started around noon I didn’t get home



until six that evening. After we were working for a few hours Dennis showed up with a case of Coke. Part of the routine of grave digging is that all the diggers take turns. Since only two people can be in the hole at one time we would regularly spell each other. While not digging we sat on the grass and smoked cigarettes. Later John Sinnok showed up with fruit juice. He and the other elders who came by to monitor our progress, offered advice and friendly teasing while they sat in the sun and told hunting stories...While the process is certainly far from fun, it is a clearly social occasion. Older people watch at a distance and keep kids out of the way of the diggers. In between taking turns at digging there is lots of teasing between diggers and there is time to visit with others diggers and with the old folks watching. After we finally finished digging the grave we covered it up with plywood. After I went home Clifford said I was gone so long he was even going out to look up the street for me. That night there was another singspiration at Clara and Shelton's. The next afternoon was the funeral service. (Wisniewski, June 2-4, 2007)

Lutheran Christian practices are most prominently articulated in context of loss and funerary rites, yet they are also realized in other areas of community life as individuals and small groups and families congregate together and offer each other support through prayer and singing. While out on the land some individuals may draw upon prayer or sing hymns in order to protect themselves from exposure to unknowable forces connected to a sentient presence experienced at abandoned village sites, or old graves, or known shaman burial sites that are charged with spiritual power. Indeed many places, sites where shamans are buried or abandoned villages, can often expose one to unexplainable powers. Historical traditions and life histories offer accounts of travelers becoming disoriented after burning wood taken from a shaman's grave, or having their travel disrupted by not visible forces that pull travelers off trails or lead them into the country and away from their destination.

Events that are not fully explainable are present in the lives of many hunters and their families and both directly and complexly make up relational contexts for the world people live in. Forces such as these are not limited to the country or space outside of the village; even the town itself is filled with a sentient presence. During the 1930s when the church was first constructed it marked the far eastern edge of the community, and the cemetery was located on the far side of the church. As the community has grown, and

even more recently as homes have been moved in response to erosion, the community has moved eastward and expanded around the church and graveyard.

On the east side of the cemetery stand the remains of two whale ribs that stick vertically out of the ground marking what many people say is a shaman's grave. More than one time I was warned that I should not walk between those ribs or I would "go straight down to the bottom." The individuals warning me told me this was the same reprimand they had received. They did not all share parallel interpretations of what that might mean, yet all were univocal in suggesting that to meddle with unknown forces could bring undesirable results.

In addition to the village expanding around the cemetery, the first runway was built on or near an older village site. As many houses have been moved or built on the east side of town they also have been built atop the remains of former houses. People occasionally experience "spooks," ghosts, or have other encounters with unexplainable phenomena viewed as connected to the building atop old homes and the close proximity to the cemetery, which previously had been much further outside the domain of the social space of living persons. Other areas in and around the community such as west channel have at different times also manifest power such as transporting persons who fished there after dark to *Iyat* (hot springs surrounded by rock spires in the interior of the Seward Peninsula) for violating varied social and relational prohibitions. Rather than seek or demand empirical explanations or draw upon Christian theological explanations for these experiences, the encounters are generally accepted as dimensions of a world filled with ultimately unknowable phenomena. Local engagements with aspects of life in the world that are not fully explainable can only be fully considered through personal understandings of the connections between human actions and the consequences of these actions in a world of responsiveness. It is in this mode of engagement that the role of Christianity as a means of explaining causality in the world remains limited in contemporary village life. Whether or not contemporary Kigiqtaamiut spiritual practices comply with Burch's analysis of the expansion of Christianity in the western arctic is beyond the scope of this brief discussion. What is clear, however, is that contemporary

Kigiqtaamiut draw upon multiple sources and explanations in coping with loss and to understand encounters with supernatural forces. In drawing upon and synthesizing traditions from divergent historical contexts, Kigiqtaamiut spiritual forms are continuously being brought into being in new creative ways.

## 2.5 HUNTING IN THE POST CONTACT ERA AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

In the forefront of Kigiqtaamiut daily life from the past and into the present is the hunt. Hunting continues to operate as the key means of providing sustenance, and as a unique local and particular way of being in and knowing the world. Through time, life is organized around seasonal changes; the movements and changing availability of animals has remained central throughout. Thus, in order to understand hunting dynamics today it is important to consider them in the past. The seasonal round of hunting activities described below is based on the practices and characteristics of hunting during the first part of the twentieth century, and is reconstructed here based on local historical knowledge.

The hunting year began in spring, when hunters begin to go out on the ice and look for bearded seals. It was during spring when families begin catching foods to put away that would carry them through the year until the following spring. The most critical resource during that time of year were bearded seals, which were used for immediate consumption and for rendering precious seal oil. Beginning as early as mid-March or April, hunters would begin travelling along the coast studying ice conditions in order to determine where they would establish their spring seal hunting camps. On clear days some hunters might also climb the 1,500 ft. elevation of the nearby Ear Mountain in order observe the conditions. The distance families traveled to set up their spring camps varied annually. Some families maintained camps just across the eastern and western channels separating Shishmaref from other barrier islands, while others traveled greater distances, usually toward areas where families had historic ties. Though most families had regular, frequently used sites, ice and wind conditions ultimately determined where people would camp for the spring. Families that wintered at Ikpik or whose heritage was from there

regularly used Sinᑭaazruat and Pinupak. Those living at Ublazaun or Qividluaq may have hunted at Sinik or at Cape Espenberg. This generalized pattern of movement continues into the present, though in a more compressed form.

By the first of May Sarichef Island would be virtually deserted, aside from the school teacher and those too infirm to travel. When families left Shishmaref in early spring they would load all their camping and hunting equipment onto sleds, along with umiat and qayat. Elders who remember travelling out to spring camps with dog teams talk about having to run alongside the sled pulling all the gear, and the challenge of trying to grab and hang onto the umiaq tied on top of a flat sled as it bounced along the trail. Once at camp, men would go out onto the ice either on foot or with dog teams, as the weather permitted, and hunt in small ponds of open water along the edge of the shore ice. At the same time young boys still too small for early spring sea ice hunting might hunt ground squirrels for parkas, and hunt for ducks in thawing tundra ponds. As the snow melted they would collect berries that had survived the previous winter's snow coverage.

As the season progressed and leads (ice-free trails of open water in the pack ice) began to open up closer to shore, men would drag their umiat across the shore ice and hunt bearded seals in open water, along with walrus when they happened across them. While bearded seals were the predominate seal hunted for human consumption, people also hunted smaller seals in order to make sealskin storage containers (*puuqataq*) or "pokes." As the snow on the mainland continued to melt people also began collecting seagull and duck eggs on the mainland.

As the sea ice drifted northward, followed by the remnants of the broken up shore ice, marine mammal hunting ended. Once meats were processed and seal oil rendered, families would return to Shishmaref, usually around the end of June or the first part of July. Upon returning to the island families would set up their canvas wall tents on the backside of the island facing the lagoon. Around the fourth of July the community would have qayaq races and other competitions.

Soon after these events the entire community would move up to the mouth of the Serpentine River in umiat and qayat for a communal drive of molted ducks. This was a

highly organized hunt. Prior to this communal hunt travel up the river was forbidden by village elders because it was important that nothing disturb or frighten the ducks and cause them to scatter. Leading up to the communal hunt experienced hunters would occasionally be dispatched upriver to report on the quantity and locations of the largest groups of ducks. After the village was assembled at the river mouth runners and qayaqers would be sent upriver and begin herding the flightless ducks downriver to an appointed location where the remainder of the villagers would be hiding and waiting. The ducks would be driven by hunters in qayat and runners would funnel the ducks toward the remaining hiding villagers. The ducks could thus be surround and clubbed. After the drive, the community would all cook and eat together. The remaining ducks would be divided among the participating families. During this time *surra* (fresh willow leaves) were also picked and mixed with seal oil for preservation and for taste.

After the duck drive another central summer activity was the arrival of Little Diomedes islanders who would come to trade and camp on the island for a period of time as they worked their way up the coast toward Kotzebue during their annual trading trips. A crucial item of trade that Shishmaref people would obtain from the Diomedes Islanders was split walrus hides, which were used for covering *umiat*. Walrus skins were obtained through trade for local products like reindeer skins and fat, wolf and wolverine ruffs, and other local products unavailable on Little Diomedes. Little Diomedes people regularly visited Shishmaref into the 1960s as a regular part of travel to Kotzebue where they sold carvings to visiting tourists. This practice ended after an incident when the Kotzebue residents cut through the skin coverings of the Diomedes boats. It was shortly after this time, in conjunction with the availability of marine plywood in Kotzebue, that *umiat* began to be replaced by plywood boats in Shishmaref. By late July and extending into August, families would move back up the Serpentine River for salmonberry picking and setting nets for salmon and white fish. Berries ripen more quickly in the warmer interior weather than along the coast. After picking berries upriver, people would move to other berry picking areas up and down the coast. After the salmonberries, people would pick blackberries in the fall during duck hunting.

During the fall as the weather began to cool and snow appeared on Ear Mountain families would move back upriver to the fall settlements of Iglut and Ipnauraq at the mouth of the Serpentine River for fishing and owl trapping. People would seine and set gill nets for herring, which were stored in large pits near the river. The remnants of these storage pits can be seen today. Seals followed the fish and hunters would pursue them in the lagoons, channels, and river mouths. Families would camp at the mouth of the Serpentine and other rivers, fishing until the snow fell in late September or early October. Some families would stay at Ipnauraq and Iglut until October, but most families would return to Sarichef Island and move back into their winter homes. During this time some families had timber homes, but most residents continued to live in semi-subterranean sod homes. School would begin around the first of October. After families moved back to Shishmaref men would continue to hunt seals and set seal nets. As the lagoon and river systems were the first to freeze, hunters could still hunt seals from shore in the channels and retrieve the animals they caught with small umiat or with qayat. Seal hunting would continue in the open ocean and in the lagoon and channels until the ocean froze. Seal nets, however, could continue to be set under the ice even after the ocean froze.

Fall seal hunting could at times be very productive. A successful crew hunting from an umiaq might be able to catch 40-50 seals during a successful day of hunting. These were caught both to feed dogs and to use the skins, which could be sold and/or used for making clothing like pants. In the early 1920s hunters could get \$10 for a bearded sealskin. Once the lagoon systems were frozen enough for travel by dog team (usually by mid-October people would return to places like the Serpentine River and Whitefish Lake to set nets under the ice for whitefish), some hunters might go further upriver toward Graying Creek to jig through the ice for grayling and burbot. Whitefish Lake near Cape Espenberg provided an important winter fishery, particularly for people from the Cape Espenberg area. Down the coast from Shishmaref, the Nuluk River was an important place for trout fishing, particularly for Ikpikmuit.

Once the ocean in front of the island froze, people would also set nets and jig behind the island for tomcods, and later in the winter they would fish for smelt. As winter

progressed hunters would go trapping for fox, wolf, and wolverine. Fox trapping in particular was an important source of income. Throughout the winter hunters would also take their dog teams out on the sea ice in order to hunt for seals and to hunt polar bear. Legendary Shishmaref hunter Davy Ningeulook, who only recently passed away, killed over 80 polar bears in his life. As the days lengthened and the weather improved people would also travel to visit friends and family in other villages before returning home to begin preparing to leave for spring camps.

This general description portrays the basic sets of activities that hunters from Shishmaref and the nearby related communities engaged in over the course of a year of hunting and resource procurement. It does not provide a thick description of all species pursued or the hunters' associated techniques. Nor does it highlight many of the lesser, though well-used, drainages and lagoons frequented by families that lived in those places. The patterns described here, however, do apply in general to those places as well.

## 2.6 “SHISH”: A MODERN HUNTING VILLAGE IN BERING STRAIT

Shishmaref, or “Shish” as it is referred to by most regional residents remains a small Inupiaq Eskimo community located on a small barrier island in the Chukchi Sea just south of the Arctic Circle. In the 1920s approximately 131 people called Shishmaref their seasonal winter home (DCED 2008). Shishmaref was historically a seasonally occupied winter village. As suggested in the previous section, people would typically leave the village in the early spring for hunting camps along the coastline and return sometime in October. The timing for this pattern became increasingly prominent after the establishment of a school in 1906. Some contemporary families trace their regional heritage back to Shishmaref or *kigiqtaq* (island) while others link to the nearby but now abandoned communities of *Ikpik*, *Ipnauraq*, *Sinik*, *Qivaluaq*, *Ublazaun* and *Inuinit*, and Cape Espenberg. Though these places are no longer continuously occupied they continue to be used as seasonal camps. Other Shishmaref families trace their heritage to the Wales area to the southwest and came to Shishmaref after the establishment of a reindeer herding station there in 1904. By 2000 the population of Shishmaref was 562. Hensel

(1996:23) notes that it has only been in the last 30–40 years that child mortality rates have decreased among Alaska Natives, allowing populations to begin to recover from the impact of early twentieth century epidemics. In 2008 the population was 609 and is likely to continue growing.

Most contemporary nuclear families are large with four or more children living in small crowded homes (less than 800 sq ft.), and the present village population is almost entirely Iñupiaq. People self-identify as *Kigiqtaamiut* (people of the island). Historically people from Shishmaref and the surrounding related villages were collectively referred as *Tapqaamiut* “people from along the shoreline” (Burch 1998; 2005; Ray 1964; 1967 1992). Residents of Kotzebue Sound and areas further north often refer to Shishmaref people as *Sakmaliagruitch*, which is locally translated as “people from out west,” or “big people from out there,” and is viewed as a somewhat derogatory term. Today, at basketball tournaments or other regional gatherings, Kigiqtaamiut are generally referred to as “Shishmaref People.”

Outside of the school, teacher housing, and the washateria, there is no running water in the village. Burch (2005:197-8) notes that water has always been scarce for communities situated on the barrier islands of northwestern Alaska. The problem is rendered increasingly complex as the community continues to grow. The few small lakes on the island have been filled to meet the spatial needs of a growing community. During the summer people collect rainwater off rooftops and store it in plastic trashcans. Water is also collected from the “man-made lake,” a reservoir that is manually filled with snow during the winter months. The water from this lake however is mostly used for wash water. Water is also collected on fishing and hunting trips into the river systems, especially the Arctic River. With gas prices over \$5.25 a gallon in 2008, a 20 mile roundtrip by boat to fill water jugs and collect 50 gallons of water is not an insignificant financial undertaking when the average per capita income for working adults is under \$11,000 annually (DCED 2008).

During the winter months hunters travel to frozen lakes with snow machines and chop blocks of ice, which are stored outside the house until needed. Selling ice provides



a modest source of supplemental income to a few industrious hunters. The going rate was \$50 for a sled load in 2008. During the winter people historically collected ice from large multi-year ice formations that had leached all of the salt content out of them. However, as Clifford suggests below, ice conditions have changed in recent years and this is no longer the norm.

Clifford: There are changes in the currents out here too, we don't see those big icebergs in December like we use to. Man that used to be good drinking water.

Josh: From that blue ice?

Clifford: Yeah, we used to get. When I was a kid I used to help daddy, get good drinking water from that ice, never mind lakes! Man used to be good drinking water too alright. From out there, those icebergs. We never get that kind any more, I don't know what happened, some kind of change or something or.... (Wisniewski June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008)

In the spring after travel to the mainland is limited by the breakup of the lagoon, freshwater can be collected in the form of snow from the sea ice. "Quarter water" from the reservoir can be purchased at the city-run washateria but is not preferred for drinking water due to inadequate water treatment.

In addition to the relative lack of water, the disposal of human waste is equally problematic. Most homes are on the "Honey Bucket System," or a bathroom with a small box and a hole on the top of hinged lid. Inside the box, a 5-gallon bucket lined with a glad trash bag serves as a receptacle for human waste. Outside most homes are storage containers the waste can be dumped in that are emptied by the city for a fee. Otherwise, if one has a working snow machine or four-wheeler and a trailer or sled, buckets can be taken to the sewage lagoon and dumped manually. This is easier in winter when they can be left outside to freeze overnight. When the community was much smaller and the degree of material waste was much lower, trash use to be piled on the shore ice and would simply be carried away with spring breakup. Today there is a landfill, however it is inadequate to meet the demands of the contemporary population and there is not enough room on the island to expand it. Despite the growth of the community the

situation pertaining to water has not changed much since the establishment of modern homes and electricity. The materiality of storage and disposal has changed, but the issues and constraints are fundamentally the same. There is no clear indicator that the situation will change anytime soon, and the issue is further complicated by the uncertainty of Shishmaref's future presence on Sarichef Island.

The community is faced with dramatic shore erosion of the island and a pressing need to relocate to a more stable site. Thus, in conjunction with population growth, the actual amount of space for people to live on continues to shrink. In recent years several homes have been relocated due to erosion, and the town is growing eastward across Sarichef Island and expanding onto the old runway located on a previously occupied village site. In 2002 community residents elected to relocate to a site on the mainland near one of the branches of the nearby Tin Creek. Or, more accurately, those who were present and decided to vote elected to nominate the Tin creek site when the regional not-for-profit group Kawerak organized a community vote to address the issue. Some residents have felt the decision to project a united community front in support of relocation is inaccurate. Others have suggested the site is not good and access to the site will be too expensive to have fuel and other necessities delivered because barges will not be able to access the site. There are feelings that other potential sites, which had been ruled out, should be more carefully considered.

This is not the first time Shishmaref residents have come to face this issue. In 1974 a large storm swept across Northwest Alaska and over 30 feet of shoreline was washed off Sarichef Island. Community leaders began discussions with various state and federal agencies over the plausibility of relocating the community. However, the possible sites considered for relocation were deemed inadequate from a geomorphological perspective. Those same sites, including the community selected one at Tin Creek are under consideration again today.

Some older residents suggest that the primary reason people elected to stay on the island following the 1974 relocation debates was that they would be unable to procure State funding for a new school building if they left the island. Thus the decision to stay,

regardless of the shoreline erosion, was at least partially grounded in a perception of what would be best for the children. With the support of varying state and federal agencies, sea walls were built. These walls have lasted for various lengths of time before either eroding or being destroyed by fall storms. The remains of dilapidated seawalls can be found along the beaches of the island. One seawall, which after its construction was referred to as “the great wall of China,” was quickly destroyed during its first year of existence and its remnants now serve as a navigation hazard for boats returning from spring hunting to unload on the north-facing beach. Beginning in 2003 the U.S Army Corps of Engineers began building a series of linked riprap seawalls to protect the most vulnerable parts of the community. Since that project was completed it has protected some particularly vulnerable structures. It has not been tested by any especially severe fall storms, though several sections have subsided noticeably. Ultimately, however, the Army Corps of Engineers’ sea walls were designed to be temporary structures in order to give the community more time to work with different governmental agencies to organize and implement a relocation plan.

For several years, community leaders have interacted with multiple State and federal agencies to generate financial and logistical support to relocate the village to a new site. Yet despite discussions over the plausibility of different proposed village sites, no agency—state or federal—has emerged as an adequate leader equipped to initiate a community relocation project. Further, as separate government agencies are responsible to their own internal bureaucratic processes, they have in general had to be more attentive to those processes than bringing about a cohesive community relocation project. As a result, actual progress toward realizing relocation has been tenuous at best. While discussions continue among varied agencies about the most cost efficient means of protecting the community, the Shishmaref Relocation Coalition, composed of representatives of the tribal government, the city government, and the village corporation, have launched a website ([www.shishmarefrelocation.com/index.html](http://www.shishmarefrelocation.com/index.html)) to highlight the needs of the community. The website includes a PayPal button that visitors to the site can use to offer a monetary contribution to support community relocation.

A 2005 relocation study conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers suggested that the cost of upgrading infrastructural facilities (such as sewer and water), the runway, and the fuel tank farm to current regulatory standards, in addition to erosion protection, would cost \$42,277,500 (Tetra-Tech 2004:23) over a period of five years. However, the ability of the existing seawall to even effectively halt erosion in any sustainable form was and remains highly questionable, as that is not what they were designed to do.

Relocating the community to the mainland, which would require building a school, a barge landing, sewer and water, a fuel tank farm, a runway, and an electrical grid, would cost over \$179,320,500 over a span of 15 years (Tetra-Tech 2004:40).

In the meantime, while hunting and daily life continue against a background of existential uncertainty over its future, the community itself continues to grow as more families move to Shishmaref from other communities. Two families moved to Shishmaref from Teller while I was conducting fieldwork, the reason being that Teller was closer to Nome and that the pressures surrounding alcohol abuse<sup>30</sup> there are perceived as more difficult to negotiate than in Shishmaref. Shishmaref, in contrast is regionally viewed as a more “traditional” community where one can more easily live a “traditional life” that revolves around subsistence hunting.

Though hunting is central to the lives of many individuals, it is by no means an inexpensive undertaking; village unemployment is high and supporting a hunter is a family effort. The majority of jobs connected to the school are as janitors, kitchen staff, or teaching assistants. There are also a few village health aids that work in the local clinic. The few non-Natives who live in the community are teachers, the majority of which only live in the community during the school year and integrate themselves to varying degrees into community life. There is also limited employment in the city government, the tribal government, and with the ANSCA village corporation. One person was employed as the local agent for airlines that fly into the village. There is also

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<sup>30</sup> Shishmaref is a “dry” village, meaning the importation or sale of alcohol is banned. Teller in contrast is “damp.” The sale of alcohol is banned, but importation for personal consumption is permitted. Teller is also much closer to Nome and can be reached by a road, so there is regular traffic of alcohol into the village. Alcohol may be problematic for some, but since Shishmaref is further away it is easier for many individuals to avoid those pressures and focus instead upon hunting life.

some seasonal and irregular construction work associated with regional housing programs. The majority of new homes are built by local crews employed by the Bering Strait Housing Authority and funded through state and federal funds. Additionally, annual seawall construction since 2005 has provided limited seasonal summer employment for the few residents with heavy equipment operating experience. There is a tannery that is run by the tribal government, which tans skins and seasonally buys sealskins from hunters and sells them either locally or to other Alaska Native artisans. Many of the women have their husband's sealskins tanned and sew slippers, hats, and knick-knacks, and several men also carve ivory and whale bone. Many of these items are bought locally by one or two local entrepreneurs, who sell them at various venues across the state or in Nome. Several hunters from Shishmaref moved to Nome during 2007 and 2008 to work for the Alaska Gold mining company on a large nearby goldmine before returning to Shishmaref to hunt for their families and others in the community.<sup>31</sup> Before the expansion of the caribou into the Shishmaref area, reindeer herding offered periodic employment to young hunters, particularly during corralling and fawning. With the loss of reindeer herding as a source of income, one hunter, Clifford, turned to big game guiding in the spring and fall for muskox, brown bear and moose. He is currently the only state licensed guide in the village.

There are two stores in Shishmaref presently. One is the cooperatively owned ANICA Store, and the other is the privately owned Nayokpuk Trading, or "Walter's" as it is more commonly referred to. Both offer limited employment.

Most people who are employed participate to varying degrees in hunting life. Indeed, some form of income in either paid wages or welfare support is necessary to participate in hunting life. Governmental statistics suggest the median household income in 2000 was just under \$30,000 annually. This statistic needs to be considered carefully. In 2008 there were nine full time non-Natives working at the school, seven teachers, a principal and a vice principal. Only one teacher was married into a local native family. Aside from the one teacher, the income generated by the other school did not generally flow

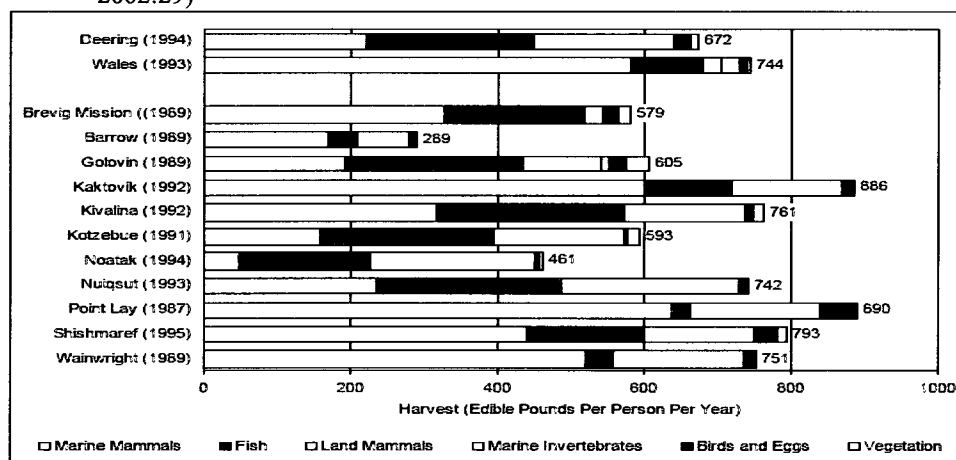
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<sup>31</sup> Mining operations subsequently shut down in early 2009, but resumed partway through the year.

throughout the community, but it did contribute to the analysis of median household incomes. The \$30,000 is therefore not fully representative of Kigiqtaamiut household incomes. In addition, income generated by Native families is generally used much more collectively than a nuclear “household” framework to support extended familial activities, including participation in hunting life.<sup>32</sup>

The 2000 census data also suggests unemployment at 16.4%. This may also be misleading. Many of the employment opportunities that arise for individuals over the course of a year are temporary or part-time. An individual may work for a short period of time in order to make enough money through ivory carving to buy gas for hunting, or be engaged in seasonal work like sea wall or housing construction. Thus, a reported unemployment rate of 16.4% does not speak to fluidity of economic opportunities. Though hunting requires consistent investment of time, labor, and difficult-to-come-by monetary resources, it also offers an important economic and dietary contribution for many families, as seen in Table 1. Yet while the dietary and economic impact of subsistence foods is significant, it only represents one aspect of contemporary hunting life.

**Table 1.** Estimated harvest of wild food consumption in 14 Northwest Alaska Communities (Magdanz et al 2002:29)



<sup>32</sup> This has been particularly well documented by Feit (1991:223-268) in the context of James Bay Cree hunting families, by Wenzel (2000:61-85) among Clyde River Inuit families and by Bodenhorn (2000:60) among Arctic Coast Alaskan Inupiaq families. The processes of distribution of resources, cash, material goods and subsistence foods vary considerably in these different settings, yet there is a strong commonality of disbursement and distribution of resources in order to mobilize familial hunting activities.

Hunting today both varies dramatically yet remains strikingly similar to the annual seasonal hunting round described for the early twentieth century. Many of the changes in hunting practices are connected to the transition from dog teams to snow machines, though several hunters in Shishmaref maintain dogs for local races and some use them for light-duty chores like getting ice from frozen lakes on the mainland. Locally made plywood boats powered by large four stroke outboard motors have replaced umiat and small two cycle outboards. These technological changes allow hunters to travel extensive distances to and from the village over the course of 24 hours. Rapid transportation does not preclude the need for essential skill sets or understandings of country and ice conditions. More often than not the incorporation of new technologies requires broadening the intellectual hunting kit to include small engine repair, and the ability to adapt technological improvisations to an increasingly mechanized tool kit.

The resources are generally the same as in the past and, to the degree that changes in the local ecology have not led to particular places being less productive or accessible to current modes of transportation, they are also being sought in the same places. Their availability may fluctuate on an annual basis as well. Hunters also suggest there are more systemic changes in the timing of certain seasonal events and processes such as freeze up, break up, the direction of prevailing winds, and the character and quality of the sea ice. Many former winter villages that are no longer occupied see continual use as hunting camps and as shelter cabins.

New resources are also targeted. Moose, which were not present on the Seward Peninsula until the 1950s, are now regularly part of the hunting year. Muskox, re-introduced by the federal government and against the wishes of locals, are now hunted by some families while completely ignored by others. Caribou, which were essentially absent in the early twentieth century, have dramatically returned from the mid-1990s forward and provide an important source of meat year-round. In the marine environment bearded seals remain the most important animal to hunt. From the 1970s forward, walrus migration patterns have brought them closer to Shishmaref. Following bearded seal hunting, walrus hunting has increasingly become an important spring hunting activity.

Optically enhanced high power rifles have replaced ivory-tipped harpoons for seal and walrus hunting. However, toggle-headed harpoons (now with brass harpoon heads and stainless steel tips) remain essential to retrieving animals shot in the water. Rifles enable hunters to shoot from much farther distances than they could with harpoons. The basic techniques of stalking seals on ice are the same, and the ability to read ice conditions is just as necessary. Hunters still make early spring trips up and down the coastline to study ice conditions, yet when and where they go is now greatly determined by analysis of satellite imagery updated daily on the internet. Local landmarks and travel routes are supplemented by hunters' use of GPS. It was more than once pointed out to me, however, that having a GPS to tell you where Shishmaref is and being able to safely navigate through shifting sea ice in the fog to get home are two very different things. New technologies and tools are incorporated into and supplement hunters' intellectual tool kits, but to view these changes as "replacing" other modes of knowing is to mischaracterize technology in northern hunting societies (Ridington 1990:84-99).

Willerslev (2007:7) points out that in the early 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet State farm system, when virtually no wages were being paid and the price of imported goods rose by several hundred percent, there was a dramatic increase in the level of subsistence meat hunting in the Russian Far East. Because of the relative lack of other means there has been an ensuing increase in the reliance on older techniques and technologies for hunting. It is uncertain that the current dramatic increase in the price of gasoline and stove oil in rural Alaska will trigger a move toward less petroleum dependent modes of transportation in northwestern Alaska. In some capacities this may have already begun in Shishmaref and other villages. In 2007-2008 I witnessed a higher degree of energy invested in the collection of firewood than I had previously seen. More than one elder suggested such firewood collection had not taken place in several decades. Equally, between 2006 and 2008 I rebuilt an umiaq structural framework and covered it with a synthetic cloth fabric. Both myself and the Weyiouanna family hunting crew used the boat. Part of the impetus for rebuilding the boat was that its lightweight framework coupled with its large carrying capacity and the ability to use a small outboard motor



would make it an extremely cost effective hunting boat to use for spring and fall marine mammal hunting. There was a high level of interest throughout the hunting community in both the fabric used to cover the boat and its durability against rough ice conditions. It will take some time to see if an increased emphasis on utilizing this and other older technological ideas with modern materials increases in popularity.

As in the past, the hunting calendar begins in spring. In April Shishmaref hosts a weeklong spring carnival, which includes basketball games and dogsled racing. These activities, along with similar events in other communities across western Alaska, occur in a manner that parallels historic patterns of spring travel and visiting practices (Burch 1998; 2006; Fienup-Riordan 1983). After the spring carnival, Shishmaref people begin preparing hunting equipment and may even begin towing boats around the island to stage them for marine mammal hunting as soon as conditions allow. As the weather begins to warm up inland hunters go to area lakes and ponds for duck and ground squirrel hunting. At this time hunters begin paying close attention to local ice conditions in order to see where the ice may be opening up. Some hunters make scouting trips along the coast to study the ice as well. In the not-too-distant past, Clifford and two other hunters owned small airplanes until operating them became cost prohibitive. In the early spring they would fly out, check ice conditions, and locate open water in order to begin hunting as early as possible. Once open water was located they would lead hunters on snow machines out to the ice edge, traveling over 50 miles from Shishmaref. If possible, hunters like to travel onto the ice with their snow machines to hunt ugzruk in small “ponds” of open water early in the season before the ice begins to rot and break up. This form of hunting is much less labor intensive, both for hunters and their equipment, than trying to drag boats across several miles of rough shore ice to open water. However, this form of hunting has not been as productive since the early 1990s, as the shore ice and nearby pack ice do not have the stability of the past when hunters could take snow machines far out onto the ice.

Today, much of spring is spent waiting for a strong south wind to blow pack ice away from the shore ice and scatter the sea ice enough for boats to go out and hunt

among the drifting ice flows. Hunting lasts until the ice is gone, which is usually by the end of June, but in recent years it has disappeared by mid June. After the ice leaves the Shishmaref area coastline, some hunters will “chase the ice,” hunting farther north in the vicinity of Kotzebue Sound. After people have caught all of the ugzruit they need (most families want to catch at least four in order to make enough seal oil to get through the year), hunters will turn their focus toward walrus hunting. Typically by July—if not before—marine mammal hunting ends until the fall. As the ice moves out, families set salmon nets in the ocean in front of their meat-drying racks and begin to set whitefish nets behind the island, or at the mouth of small creeks along the coast. Some hunters will go along the coast to hunt for caribou during this time as well. As most families are waiting for berries to ripen, this time is important for boat building and repair of hunting equipment. During the fourth of July there are foot races for everyone from toddlers to elders including the “marathon” race around the island. As July progresses families will collect sour dock (*Rumex arcticus*) from around tundra ponds. However, these ponds are also preferred habitat for muskox, which are blamed for trampling upon and destroying some families’ historically preferred sour dock harvesting areas. By the end of July many families will head up to their cabins and camps along the Serpentine River to pick salmonberry and set up nets for pink salmon. Families stay upriver for varying lengths of time. Some will travel up for a weekend, while others stay for a week or more. As the summer progresses families will begin to travel to coastal areas to pick blackberries.

Going into fall, hunters will try to hunt caribou, particularly before the males begin to rut and their meat starts to “stink.” Along with hunting caribou, those who have moose hunting tickets will travel up the varying rivers that drain into Shishmaref Inlet, including the Arctic, Jealousy and West Fork (a branch of the Serpentine River). Concurrently, people begin setting nets for herring at the mouth of the Serpentine River and jigging for tomcods during late August and early September. Along with the fish, seals begin to return to the inlet. Young bearded seals will even occasionally travel some ways up the rivers, looking for fish. After the rivers freeze up by end of September or middle of October, hunters will be out hunting seals almost daily. Some hunters will travel down to

Ikpik, while others will go up the coast and hunt in Kupak inlet or along the islands off of Cape Espenberg. Whereas spring hunting currently focuses almost exclusively on bearded seals, fall seal hunters avoid shooting at mature bearded seals, instead focusing on ringed and spotted seals and the occasional young bearded seals or *anmiak*. Though fully mature bearded seals are present and can be hunted, seals shot in the fall are used for immediate consumption and for the skins. The rendering of seal oil is not part of fall seal hunting and for that reason people generally refrain from hunting fully mature ugzruit in the fall. Seal hunting continues until the ocean lagoon is frozen, and it is not uncommon for hunters to continuously move their boats back and forth between East and West Channel depending on ice conditions. As soon as the lagoon is frozen enough to cross with snow machines, which often entails closely following the shoreline, hunters will begin making day trips or overnight trips to fish for grayling and to set nets under the ice for whitefish.

Families typically set their Serpentine River whitefish nets in the same places, or close to them, every year. Therefore, a hunter returning from Grayling Creek can check his net and that of another family and bring them their fish, especially if they lack the means to make the trip up river. After grayling fishing, many hunters head down the coast to fish through the ice for trout at the Nuluk River. Once the ocean freezes, which has been as late as mid-December in recent years, nets for tomcod will be set behind the island. Many families spend parts of winter weekends jigging for tomcod behind the island. Once the land is frozen and snow-covered enough for snow machines, hunters go out looking for wolves, wolverines and caribou. As the days get longer again in March hunters who have tickets will go look for musk. Many families will make a trip up to Serpentine Hot Springs to soak in the waters and to hunt caribou and ptarmigan. Inland hunting continues into April, but gets harder as the inland temperatures warm. Creeks begin to flow and the snow begins to soften. April brings a return of spring carnival events and attention once again turns toward getting ready for ugzruk hunting

## 2.7 “I JUST LOVE TO HUNT”

With such high unemployment and limited opportunities for advancement in village life, the economic poverty and other social pressures of modern village living can feel inescapable. Reality shows on cable TV, access to which is provided by the village corporation, highlight the distinction between self and other, between village life and contemporary America. Non-contextualized access to these portrayals of modern life influence the experienced differentiation people feel in everyday life, and perceptions of the life and opportunities outside of a village. Such access serves to further the marginalization many people feel in the wake of little-to-no economic opportunities and the uncertainty about the future of Shishmaref.

Many people complain it is too easy to “sit around” and do nothing in village life. Hunting life therefore provides an opportunity within the context and values of modern village living to create one’s own livelihood grounded in community relations, local history, and traditional practices. Most hunters say it is better to keep oneself busy in hunting life because it is easy to just sit around and “be lonely” in town. When people talk about sitting around they refer to only staying in town, but also about dwelling upon the negative dimensions of village life. These can include personal loss, the lack of local opportunity, alcohol abuse, deaths in one’s family, break-ups in relationships, and uncertainty about the future. Therefore, aside from the obvious economic and dietary benefits of subsistence foods, hunting offers men (and, seasonally, whole families as well) an important opportunity to transcend the limitations of village life while staying connected to the core values of family and community that are central to village life for “Shishmaref People.”

Wacquant (2004:40) notes that boxing and the allure of prize fighting for young men living in the urban ghettos of North America provides them with the opportunity for social advancement within ghetto society. For some it even provides a way out of the existential realities of the intercity poverty of ghetto life while reaffirming and anchoring them to ghetto culture. Similarly, hunting offers the opportunity for village men to advance themselves and achieve social status in the community. The men provide meat

for families and community elders while contributing to both the household and community economies. In the process of doing so, hunting allows one to get out of town and off the island in a way that offers prestige, title, and social status as a “hunter” in village cultural context.

There is also a strong sense of satisfaction that comes from the self-sufficiency that arctic travel necessitates, which is an important self-actualizing aspect of hunting. Hunting can be dangerous; travelling in an arctic environment requires attentiveness to the environment, just as the pragmatics of hunting involves intuitive and personal understandings of animal behaviors and intentions. Knowing how to take care of oneself in a variety of unforeseeable circumstances is part of hunting. Anderson (2000:120) likewise highlights the value of self-sufficiency in Evenki reindeer herding life, writing that competent displays of knowledge bring respect and establish an individual’s status. Indeed, beyond social status among one’s peers, competency provides entree into an individual’s personal relationship with the land. Separate from any social status that is conveyed upon hunters, the act itself, of getting out of the village and out onto the land, is considered a healthy and positive activity that offers an escape from the pressures experienced in village life. The following journal entry describes spring activities that indicate some of the ways that hunting is valued for breaking the monotony of village life.

Still no ugzruk hunting yet. The ice still won’t open enough to let us go out hunting. Everybody in town is just waiting “No fun to just sit around” that is what all the hunters are saying, and it is true. Once everything is ready to go just to sit and wait is taxing. So instead of just sitting around at home Clifford decided he and I should go to West-Camp and fix the roof of the cabin there. I took my shotgun, thinking that if we are up on the roofs some ducks might fly over us. They don’t, at least not when I am ready for them. We spend part of the next two days roofing the cabin with materials we salvaged in town. In the meantime the ice conditions don’t change or open up at all. The north wind just continuously and persistently holds all the ice in place so no-one is hunting. It has been blowing from the north all spring. The little south wind in April was short lived. Everyone has been ready for weeks and until the wind changes there is little to do. After we finished the roof cleaned the cabin and went home

Clifford turned to me and in his casual and laid back manner style said “Well, at least we fresh got air anyway” (June 3 2008).

Though many hunting trips do not result in catching animals, these trips out on the sea ice or on the country are not generally viewed as wasted. Getting out and “getting fresh air,” and of course the hunting itself, are pleasurable and are viewed as the proper activities men should be engaged in at different times of the year.

Within the genre of environmental literature there is a growing body of work on the values and ethics of “nature hunters” (Kerasote 1993; Nelson 1989; Petersen 1996; 2000; Posewitz 1999; Swan 1995). Swan describes nature hunters as:

The nature hunter who takes the time to learn to work with nature’s way, must develop an acute sympathy with the animals he hunts. He must not only have a good deal of knowledge about them he must have a feeling for them, which is a reflection of how he views himself. The path of the nature hunter then leads him not toward violence and mayhem but toward respect, awe, humility and even more love for the animal hunted. (Swan 1995:33)

Swan (1995:186) goes on to suggest that for this creed of hunters, hunting is about “maximizing the intensity of the experience” of being in the natural world. The nature hunting genre is written primarily to attend to the values and practices of non-Native environmentalist-hunters. Its purpose is to connect hunting, conservation, “fair chase,” and a respect for the “wild” in the modern world as part of the universal heritage of human beings.

The values and benefits realized through getting out on the country “getting fresh air” should not be downplayed in the context of village subsistence hunting life. Hensel (1996:103-111) highlights that throughout western Alaska, the very act of “getting out” and going subsistence hunting, the practice in and of itself, is viewed by both Native and non-Natives as important. It serves as a primary and crucial purpose for making a living in the otherwise economically marginalized setting of rural Alaska. As one hunter in Shishmaref told me while we stood looking out over ice conditions in late May waiting for conditions to change:

I dunno what I would do if I wasn't hunting, just sit around be bored all the time I guess. That's why this north wind is bugging. No good just to stay home. I like to hunt as much as possible even if we don't get luck just to get out on the country see those places remember the names, and all that history of old folks. It's just like spring you know. See all those animals and to try and go after. You know, you always follow and go with Clifford and them. Lucky you get to see and learn our way. It's the only way to know what its' about for us. Same for us too growing up. We always learn by following. That's how I learned to love hunting, by being at camp and going out. (May 24, 2008)

Getting out on the land highlights a local value of hunting life, and hunters can be identified by their dark faces, tanned and burnt by the spring glare of snow and ice. During winter their frost burn scarred faces set them apart. Likewise, it is easy to identify hunters' homes while walking through the village. The collections of drying racks, snow-machines, and other forms of hunting equipment decorate people's yards. Caribou and muskox skins hang outside houses on racks, and bundles of air-dried tomcods hang next to the door or in the *qanitaq* (storm shed) through which one must walk to enter a home. Inside the house fur lined parkas, sealskin and beaver fur hats, sealskin mittens, warm boots, insulated Carhartt brand bib overalls, and assorted jackets hats and boots hang on the walls and spill onto the floor.

Rifles of a variety of calibers hang on the walls or lean up in corners. Calibers vary with the personal preferences of hunters. Some hunters have large collections of rifles. Others, in particular younger hunters, may own only a few rifles, having inherited them from a deceased family member. Most hunters have several rifles of different calibers for swimming seals and small game: .22 magnum, .17 Hmr's .223s and .22-250 calibers are standard. .22-250, .223s and .243s are also used for seals and ugzruit on ice, for caribou on land, and also for fur-bearing animals like wolves and wolverines. For larger animals including moose, muskox, bears, and walrus most people hunt with larger rifles: .308 .30-06, .45-70's and others. Most hunters also own one or two shotguns for hunting ducks in the spring and fall as well.

In addition to rifles, GPSs, binoculars, hunting bags, homemade ice fishing equipment, coffee thermoses, grub boxes, tool boxes and other personal equipment are

organized and kept ready for use when a hunter is ready to go, which can be at a moment's notice.<sup>33</sup> On the walls hang photographs of hunters and family members at previously occupied villages and camps. These offer a pictorial display of local history and further celebrate hunting in family and village life.

The practice of hunting connects and realizes several interwoven dichotomies between the country and the village, between limitation and opportunity, between self and other, between those who know and those who don't. The opportunities of the country manifest through hunting are intimately connected to, dependent upon and realized to support the village. Jobs in the village support hunting; to get out on the land one needs the support from the village. At the same time, the purpose for going out on the land is to bring animals back to the village. The self-sufficiency of the hunter is realized out on the country, while the social status that self-sufficiency offers occurs in the village.

In tandem with the relationship between the village and the country, hunting reinforces other relations as well, between self and other, insider and outsider, those who "know" and those who don't. As an act, hunting serves to both transcend and reinforce relationships. Travelling out on the land, or out on the sea ice, hunters directly engage with and interact with animals. Indeed, existentially hunting involves paying very close attention to animals, their actions, behaviors, predispositions and preferences as will be indicated from hunters' conversations later in this chapter. Conversations between and among hunters in Shishmaref imply that, in part, one can only come to know animals by learning to see things from animals' points of view. Hunting can be an act of what Viverios de Castro (1998) refers to as *perspectivism*, a practice of adopting the view of another. Willerslev (2004; 2007) suggests that perspectivism is realized through the ability of the individual to oscillate empathetically between the self and the other. It is only by coming to see things from the point of view of animals that hunters can come to understand them, and to some degree make informed predictions about what those

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<sup>33</sup> This practice of perpetual preparedness is richly illustrated in James Barker's 1993 photo essay on Yup'ik subsistence entitled *Always Getting Ready*. Derived from the Yup'ik notion of *Uperrlainarluta*. Likewise, readiness is central to Kerri Ann Shannon's (2003) doctoral research with Coral Harbor Inuit, in the Canadian Arctic.



animals may do in different situations. Cautious Shishmaref hunters suggest this is not one-sided. They suggest that animals concurrently observe hunters' actions and, to varying degrees, are aware of and responsive to human intentions. Mutual perspectivism is thus played out through and during hunting encounters between humans and animals. For as hunters observe and respond to animal others, so too are animal-selves observing and responding to hunter-others. In doing so, the boundaries between self and other, between human and animal, may become partially and temporarily diluted and suspended, as the self perspective is suspended in order to partially adopt and see things from the other's point of view. This realizes what Schutz (1970:183-4) refers to as a "reciprocity of perspectives." And yet through the act of hunting, squeezing the trigger, or throwing the harpoon, the boundaries between self and other, between humans and animals, are maintained. Hunters do not become animals, nor do animals become humans.

Hunters from Shishmaref treat animals as sentient beings who are aware of and responsive to their actions and intentions. Both Iñupiaq and Yup'ik oral traditions suggest that social interactions between both humans and animals have occurred (Fienup-Riordan 1983; 1994; Curtis 1930; Lowenstein 1992; 1993; Merkur 1991; Nelson 1983; Rainey 1947; Spencer 1959). Even within living memory, personal oral histories from Shishmaref suggest occurrences where animals have intervened in human social life outside the context of hunting interactions, even contributing to or bringing about human deaths. Fienup-Riordan (1994:88) writes that historic Yup'ik experiences suggest the world was previously configured so that the boundaries between humans and animals were not as rigid as they are today. However, for interactions between humans and animals to occur now, hunters must leave the village and go into the country, a realm of animal space, and concurrently animals are brought back by hunters into the human space of the village. Thus hunting allows for and provides a context for social interactions between animals and humans, yet maintains the differentiation and boundaries between them.

Animal behavior is closely scrutinized by hunters. Animals that behave outside the range of normative behavior are attended to with caution. The animals that wander into the village *uninvited*, the foxes that cross the frozen lagoon from the mainland, and the polar bears that have wandered in to scavenge at the dump or wander through the village are shot and killed. Under those circumstances their interactions and presences in the world of human society is dangerous and outside the range of normative human–animal interactions. Animals that are shot and killed are brought back into the village and celebrated through distribution and consumption. Determining and understanding animal behavior is a subtle, intuitive, and personal process. What seems mildly curious to one hunter may seem dramatically out of place to another. As their range of experiences with animals grows over the course of their life, a hunter’s ideas may change. What was once abnormal may become more understandable, while other events may take on heightened significance. The following description suggests some insight into the diversity of individual understandings of animal behaviors.

Fred Charlie wanted me to follow him to look for seals today  
 We left soon after it got light, seemed kinda early for those boys, but I was happy to go. We boated through the thin ice coating the lagoon and Fred “got luck” and shot a couple seals. Mimic got one too. At one point as we were stopped and looking around I turned and saw a seal watching us not two feet from the outboard. I told Fred to shoot at it.

Josh: You gonna go after it?

Fred: I dunno, I’m not sure, it is being kinda funny. Coming up so close like that. Maybe not suppose to go after that kind, or what? You know, when they are some kind of way. It is pretty tame though. Or maybe we have enough ah? We might see more after a while anyway....

We boated around and hunted for several more hours and Fred got one more seal. Afterwards we went back and Fred mentioned the event to his father. Johnny said he had heard things like that might be true sometimes. That seals or animals sometimes act different and you have to be careful around them. He suggested it was probably better to not take a chance if you feel “funny” about an animal, we were probably right to not try and kill it. Sometimes when animals act like that, it better not to do anything if it feels a little wrong or something that you just sense. He did not offer

anything further and as he left at that and we sat down to eat. (October 25 2007)

These types of experiences, and others that will be shared in the subsequent chapters, offer some insight into the subtle and highly personal understanding hunters have of their relationships with the animals they experience. The practice of hunting transcends, maintains, and allows for movement between *oppositional relations* (Fienup-Riordan 1994:88; Jackson 1998:50). Although opportunities for advancement in village life are limited, success in hunting, which requires that one leave the space of the village for that of the country, ultimately allows for opportunities and the achievement of status that would not exist if one did not leave the village. Likewise, hunting requires that hunters directly engage and interact with animals in order to come to know something of them. Empathetically knowing animals involves some “oscillation” between humans and animals, self and other. Hunting also insures that boundaries between humans and animals are maintained. When the trigger is pulled the boundary of self and other between humans and animals is maintained and reinforced.

Another set of local social boundaries hunting manifests are between those who “know” and those who don’t. Hunters who “get” catch animals regularly, are knowledgeable, and regularly provide for others are the *real* hunters. They occupy a privileged social position differentiated from those who hunt occasionally or just engage in a couple of seasonal activities.

Clifford pointed out Harold to me the other day. He said that Harold was a real subsistence hunter. Because no matter what Harold got, he always shared. Ducks, caribou ugzruk, seals, berries, anything. If Harold got two fish, he would give you one. That’s what made Harold a hunter to Clifford, how he hunted and how he always shared whatever he caught. (July 2, 2004)

The differences between self and other in village life are not limited to humans and animals. There is a clearly delineated separation between “real hunters” and those who hunt sometimes. Real hunters quietly and proudly wear their frostbite scars during winter; they are always working on something or going somewhere. Even relaxing at home watching TV they are working on fishing equipment, or looking at ice conditions on the

internet. The difference between these hunters and those who only occasionally hunt can be understood in local conversation as those who know and those who don't. The novice *follows* or *maliguaqtuq* (to accompany, follow someone) the experienced hunter travelling on the sea ice, and waits while an older hunter studies animals or conditions. The novice hunter who, while butchering a walrus prepares to chop out the tusks, may be stopped because "he doesn't know". The novice hunter waits, observing, until invited or told what to do by a more experienced hunter. This social organizational aspect of hunting is largely unarticulated, but widely understood and acknowledged throughout the Kigiqtaamiut hunting community. It further delineates the difference between self and other, between the hunters who know and those who don't.

"Come in, have *kupiaq* [coffee]. Sit. You all ready eat?" Visits with and among hunters have their own social ritual and hierarchal structure, which further accentuates the differences between knowledgeable hunters from their less experienced brethren. Among a group of visiting hunters it is usually the oldest or most experienced hunter who leads discussions, usually engaging the person who has most recently been out on the country. During a typical visit among a group of hunters I nearly always found myself at the bottom of the hierarchy, unless I happened to have just returned from some on-the-land-activity and had my own first-hand experiences to share. However, as my range of hunting experiences and depth of my local understandings were more limited than those who had grown up hunting around Shishmaref, the perceived value of my offerings was limited. It was only when conversations turned toward something I was attributed as having a deeper and visibly experiential understanding of like *umiaq* or *qayaq* building that I was encouraged to speak more fully. Even when I was asked to speak more fully, I remained cautious and shared only what I knew from my own experiences. Generalizations, speculations and exaggerations tend to be looked down upon. There is a good deal of teasing and joking during visits between hunters, however sharing information is viewed seriously and specific experiences are given more consideration than other forms of information. To one not versed in the "telegraphic shorthand" (Rosaldo 1986:108) that makes up hunters' communication style, important

conversations might appear trivial or simplistic. Conversations are composed of place references, individuals, the weather, inside jokes, local history, personal experiences, and current local happenings and are articulated in a mixture of Iñupiaq and English. These conversations express the tough individualism of hunters as knowledgeable practitioners who consider events according to their own personal and emerging understandings and at the same time anchor them to a modern Shishmaref village and hunting cultural context.

Johnny: Carson Tingook had that kind, and Verne me and Jack Herman come down with skin boat. We come down with skin boat real calm day. That motor wasn't running right so Jack Herman take the plug off. It was hot and he drop the only spark plug we have and we can see it in the bottom on the beach under it, the water. We had no divers so we oar. Try to get it. Jack Herman laugh like anything after he sink that spark plug accidently. I know it's by Egg Island. Those 9 horse use to have spark plug on each side. Those Coast Guard when they came they had 22 horse they were real fast they came with some kind of Zodiac. Really travelling fast, lots of 9 horses 5 horse. Fred Davis is the one that had 16 horse, that was fast....

Josh: Oh, I know they always say that about those big skin boats. What was Harvey saying yesterday some kind of walrus that you can't go after if they are in water up and down stay awake with their flippers in front?

Johnny: That's what he say, not to hunt them or leave them alone? That's what he call them must be like king of walrus or some kind of guardian or something. But some people see those spotted seal dogs they say they can really run on top of the water. Like among a big herd of walrus. When we hunt walrus one time. I mean spotted seal, yeah, spotted seal. One time Verne he claim that one before we get it, the prettiest one, spotted seal and we have to shoot other one us. We would shoot ours but his would go down that one he claim. I don't know why he must of do something like what Harvey said not to?

Fred Jr.: One year a couple years ago when me and JJ go out there. You know those real big giant spotties there was a whole sheet of nothing but those big ones, there was a whole bunch I say "what do you think bro," and he say "I dunno" because we were going after *anmiak* and *ugzruk*. That's when Thomas Brad go help us but we saw those spotted out there, lots of animals those common seals all over one sheet we saw those spotted seals out there real big almost bigger than me and real loud you know fall time. Lots of ice all over with different marine mammals, one sheet with just *ugzruk* and we try to go after them but they just go down.

So we try to go after some other ones just one lonely one by itself we put in the boat and we already had two anmiaks and we put two ugzruk in and we were already loaded already.

Johnny: One time Stephen and I went out there we thought those were seals they were young ugzruk we got two of them that time. And same way when we came back from Cape, ah, we saw a group of young ugzruk by *Sinik* fishing together in a group one time too.... (March 29 2008)

Conversations about hunting, like the practice of hunting itself, actualize and illuminate the social boundaries between hunters and animals. The differences between hunters who know and others who don't know are realized through conversations and social interactions. To follow along and understand the shifting contexts and topics and to see the threads of connection between the diversity of topics is to know. The differences between knowing and not knowing are not pointed out over the course of discussions, and they may not even be alluded to later. Rather, these observations are simply folded into part of knowing as a dimension of the differences between self and other and between the hunter and not-hunter.

## 2.8 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explored historical changes and developments in Shishmaref and some aspects of community and hunting life today. As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, this glimpse into Shishmaref history and into Kigiqtaamiut experiences through the unfolding of regional historical events and changes is highly imperfect. Taking a regional approach and using the classical regional ethnographic literature (Burch 1975; 1998; 2006; Nelson 1983; Ray 1964; 1967; 1992) and applying it toward the history of Shishmaref lacks the specifics of Kigiqtaamiut understandings of historical events. It would not be a Shishmaref history, in the way local historical understandings are emergent in Shishmaref today. Jackson (1998:140) writes that phenomenologically separating the historic and the mythopoetic, the "objective fact" and the interpretive event, is untenable. History, in the western epistemological framework, is a series of successions of events known to have occurred. In that vein history is itself a mode of

experience, one of continuously re-presenting the past. Written historical accounts of Shishmaref are sporadic and incomplete. Shishmaref was not a centrally located stopover location for early explorers and later commercial whalers. Likewise, oral accounts of recent historical events are emergent and limited. To that end a complete rendering of the history of the Kigiqtaamiut from the period of contact to the present is still nascent. In providing a historical discussion of Shishmaref I have sought to allow Kigiqtaamiut stories to tell the history of Shishmaref. Local oral histories and personal experiences explore the relationship between humans and reindeer, experiences during the local influenza quarantine, blue icebergs, and the value of getting fresh air. These accounts illuminate Kigiqtaamiut experiences and connections to the past and present while letting local history and experiences tell the story of Shishmaref. I have sought to connect these to the wider context of regional changes from the period of first contact with Euro-Americans leading up to the present in a way that speaks to the way Shishmaref people talk about and engage with the past. I also directly quoted the stories and opinions of teachers and reindeer agents about their experiences in Shishmaref. These accounts likewise provide glimpses into aspects of events in Shishmaref, not as data, but as a complementary set of experiences to be engaged in exploring the past.

Equally, I have attempted to demonstrate how, through time, hunting both as means of procuring wild resources and as a form of relating to lands and animals has been the fundamental mode of making a livelihood in this region from 4500 BP onward. Hunting has continued as a Kigiqtaamiut way of being-in-the-world from the period of contacts with early explorers and the expansion of US hegemony, through land claims, expanded state resource management and regulation, climatic change, and into the present.

Kigiqtaamiut have responded to the expansion of U.S. hegemony with resistance, accommodation and indigenization. The earliest explorers were met with armed response. Later interactions with whalers and traders resulted in the use of new social and economic opportunities to accumulate wealth and status according to local models of *umaliagich*. Likewise reindeer herding, originally conceived to help Bering Strait communities following the destruction of the western arctic bowhead whale and walrus

stocks, and as a mechanism to bring about state acculturation goals, was incorporated into local hunting practices. Reindeer herding did not serve the purpose of transforming hunters into industrial market pastoralists, but was instead incorporated into Kigiqtaamiut hunting life. The historic colonial context of the introduction of reindeer herding is not dismissed by Shishmaref residents. However, by and large the history of reindeer herding and of Kigiqtaamiut participation in it, both as individuals and in families, is considered by people in Shishmaref as part of their indigenous identity as Kigiqtaamiut, and not as a colonial apparatus.

The role of Christian ideology in explaining events remains tempered by older ideas about relationships between humans and unknowable forces present in the world. The ideologies of the church and of those presented through government projects continue to be grounded in externally derived notions of progress. Hunting and the values connected to hunting in Shishmaref remain firmly locally determined. Hunting continues to be carried out in new forms in relation to continuously changing circumstances.

Hunting today serves as a mechanism for connecting people, place, past, present and future in a manner similar to the role Hensel (1996:49) suggests subsistence practices provide for Yup'ik people as a critical means of realizing fundamental cultural ideas. I would go further than Hensel, however, and suggest that within the individually and collectively experienced Kigiqtaamiut lifeworlds, hunting as a way of knowing transcends and creates linkages between a multiplicity of aspects of the directly experienced world.

Hunting creates opportunities in village life that otherwise would not be available to men were they to not leave the village. Through “getting fresh air,” bringing home meat, and being among the select few who “know,” hunting manifests opportunities that cannot be realized within the confines of village space, yet hunting is dependent upon village support and reinforces village values. Hunting is a mechanism for realizing opportunities, for transcending dualities while maintaining the boundaries between them. Interactions between hunters and non-hunters highlight the differentiations between those who know and those who don't as one aspect of self and otherness. In the unfolding of



the relational interactions between hunters and animals, hunters must come to know animals through seeking to understand their (animals) experiences, preferences, qualities and predispositions. Hunting nurtures relational, empathetic–practical and personal understandings of both animal others and the environment within which one encounters them.

In contemporary Shishmaref, hunting and local histories connect and intertwine throughout multiple dimensions of modern life. Hunting must also be considered within a deeper temporal regional context, for hunting in the contemporary moment is connected to a long history of humans engaging with animals. For individuals and families for whom hunting is central to their way of being, hunting allows for a range of relational opportunities. Hunting life creates opportunities to achieve social status and prestige not obtainable in a strictly village-based life and provides a cyclical structure connected to seasonally dynamic changes in the availability of animals. Hunting allows for movement within and between the boundaries among humans and animals, while concurrently maintaining them. More broadly conceived, hunting also connects people to place, family, and community history, as exemplified in the pictures adorning the walls of many hunters' homes. As in the past, hunting life today remains a central aspect of life in Shishmaref today. In the next chapter I will expand this discussion of hunting and consider hunting as a relational way of knowing and being-in-the-world.

CHAPTER 3  
 “LET’S GO LOOK AROUND”  
 KIGIQTAAMIUT HUNTING: BEING, EXPERIENCING, AND KNOWING

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to address the terms *hunting*, *being*, and *knowing*—as I experienced them during my time with Clifford and other Kigiqtaamiut hunters—I open this chapter with an ethnographic description of the process of experiencing, learning, and knowing during the flow of hunting activities that this chapter explores.

Clifford and I went out hunting this morning. He, John Boy, and myself had luck yesterday and caught two ugzruks on our first trip out. We were the first crew to bring back ugzruk this spring so Clifford was happy. This morning we left early, he and I drove snow machines out to the ice edge where we’d left the johnboat<sup>34</sup> yesterday. John Boy had gone hunting again last night after we brought our ugzruks back. He went with Stanley Kensworthy and Jeffery last night but they didn’t catch anything. Clifford tried to call John Boy on the VHF radio but no answer. So after waiting for about 20 minutes Clifford looked at me and said “well let’s go”.

We cruised around the edge of some large ice pans for several hours. We stopped only once when we ran into Tony and Don-Don, but they hadn’t seen any animals yet either. After about eight hours we stopped on a large ice pan to make coffee. We were at the head of a long lead and so were somewhat ideally positioned if an ugzruk was swimming nearby. I only realized later that it wasn’t just by chance we decided to stop, and happened to be at a choice spot. It was intentional. While we sat relaxing Clifford started to talk about ugzruk.

Clifford: Sometimes in early spring, like now, you can hear em. Ugzruks they kinda make some kind of a whistling sound, underwater. If you listen to them you can follow them around that way. You know, kinda track them I guess, but underwater.

-One minute later-

Josh: I just heard that. I mean like you said a whistling sound.

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<sup>34</sup> A johnboat is a shallow draft planning skiff that is commonly used in North America to travel through shallow waters, such as wetlands for waterfowl hunting. Clifford often uses it for early spring hunting when the ice is tightly packed and there are small narrow leads to hunt in.

Clifford responded without saying anything, by just raising his eyebrows “Oh, where, which direction?” I looked back and nodded, and we both pushed the boat back in the water, and headed in the direction where I had heard the sound. I heard it again, and looked at Clifford, who seemingly reading [sic] my mind and went forward 20 yards to the right to where I heard the whistle coming from. Again we waited. Once again I heard a whistle. Looking at Clifford I nodded. Again he instinctively moved the boat toward the direction I’d heard the sound originating from. We continued this non-vocalized exchange of information for another half hour, as Clifford waited for my cues and without needing to speak moving [sic] the boat toward the direction I heard the whistling sound originate from. All of a sudden right in front of us a large ugzruk surfaced, Clifford quickly shot it in the nose with his Remington .17 mm.

Usually when ugzruks or seals are wounded like that they cannot stay down long. So we quietly waited. We cruised around the general area looking for any sign for an hour or more.

Clifford: Damn! No luck ah? I sure hate to waste. Maybe I hit it too hard and it died, or something? Man that was a big bastard too alright. Would be good to have three already, you know before we have to wait for the ice or something.

Soon after, the wind started to pick up. Since we were several miles off shore, in a boat that while perfect for hunting in small leads was less than ideally suited for open water we headed back to the shorefast ice. As we were coming in Yabo saw us coming in through heavy chop and motored out to check on us.

Clifford: You guys get luck?

Yabo: (raising his eyebrows) we get one, almost ugzruk, *aklunaqshraq* [a not fully mature ugzruk whose hide is good for making rope]

Clifford: Lucky guys, well at least we get to hear one anyway....  
(May 16, 2006)

This chapter builds upon the contextual foundation of the previous one. It explicitly address hunters’ ways of knowing as they are articulated and realized through a range of activities connected to spring marine mammal hunting in Shishmaref. The central topic of this chapter is the examination of hunters’ ways of knowing. What do hunters know,

and how do hunters come to know what they know? To that end I explore local phenomenological frameworks that shape hunters' knowledge claims. Here emphasis is placed upon how individuals interact with their experiences, including how hunters' ways of knowing are composed of (though not limited to) engagements with local historical knowledge, elders' oral histories and both individual and shared personal experiences in order to understand the phenomenal world. In doing so I aim to demonstrate how hunters' personal experiences are rendered meaningful in the context of the relational human condition of being-in-the-world.

Therefore this chapter explores how the practice of hunting, as an engagement in the world, is an experiential mechanism that connects meaningful human actions and experiences across multiple generations. It also considers how cultural understandings of lands and animals take shape through experiential reflexivity in the context of Kigiqtaamiut marine mammal hunting. Ethnographically this accentuates the connections between what hunters know and their ways of knowing, stressing how I came to know something of what hunters know through mutual engagements and shared experiences with them.

Central to this process is articulating the experience of learning through direct participation and shared experience in conjunction with making ethnographic knowledge claims. I seek to accurately contextualize the methodological and relational circumstances out of which this ethnography has emerged. Throughout this and the following chapters I have adopted a literary pattern employed by Fred Myers (1986:73) in his ethnography of Pintupi ontology which shifts between past tense and present tense to distinguish between an "ethnographic present" and true present. I use the past tense to describe historic practices that are no longer active. The present is used to describe ongoing practices. Within this narrative structure I insert my own stories of coming to know from, with, and alongside hunters over the course of three marine mammal hunting seasons. The ethnographic arguments presented here are thus augmented both by my own experiences of coming to know, and through examples of casual discussions of hunting experiences past and present between hunters and elders.

Presenting a theoretically informed ethnography through a mosaic of experiences across different temporal tenses complicates reading. I think that doing so creates a more complete and accurate ethnography of both hunting life and the learning process by which I came to understand hunting life. This provides a clear delineation between theoretical arguments, ethnographic descriptions and the specifics of the experiential process that informed the ethnographic descriptions upon which they each are premised. As such, the rationale for the suggested ethnographic and theoretical linkages are made clear as are the experiential/methodological processes by which such linkages were developed.

Examining hunters' ways of knowing and the ethnographic study of hunters' ways of knowing through experiencing hunting life with them collapses the boundary between theory, practice, and ethnography. It highlights the relationality inherent in processual learning from a position of embeddedness as a condition of coming to know in both research and hunting. This is central to Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing. The ethnography of Kigiqtaamiut hunting is also inescapably intertwined with these shared experiential processes. The key here is highlighting the mutual and intersecting processes of coming to know through an ethnography of shared hunting experiences in order to directly encounter Kigiqtaamiut hunters' lifeworlds of everyday hunting experiences. Jackson (1996:26) suggests the task of anthropology is to "recover the sense in which experience is situated within relationships and between persons." Speaking to Jackson's social relationality, my goal here is to suggest that Kigiqtaamiut hunters' understandings must be engaged through their ways of knowing, which prioritize direct personal experience. Weaving the personal ethnographic experience as a concomitant reflexive process inseparable from ethnographic description and analysis seeks to avoid essentializing this ethnography and to give it a structure that is not solely based on non-local intellectual frameworks.

Thus this chapter does not offer the documentation of a determinate body of knowledge. I suggest that to attempt to do so would mischaracterize Kigiqtaamiut ways of knowing and misconstrue local knowledge to fit within non-local epistemological

frameworks. Therefore, in contrast to Berkes' (1999) model of TEK as a body of knowledge that can be analyzed and critiqued against a western academic epistemological paradigm, I follow the lead of my Kigiqtaamiut instructors and hunting partners. They emphasize personal experiences as central to the linked processes of both knowing and coming to know from a position of situatedness. I focus on shared mutual engagements between myself, Kigiqtaamiut hunters, and shared experiences in hunting activities in order to explore hunters' ways of knowing as in situ forms of corporal, intimately personal, intuitive, pragmatic, and meaningful action.

Several recent ethnographies have offered nuanced understandings of socio-cultural processes of knowledge construction in different social settings: Cruikshank (2005); Goulet (1998); Mol (2002); Poirier (2005); Scott (2006); Sharp (2001); Wacquant (2004); West (2007) and Willerslev (2007). Through a synthesis of a wide range of hunting and gathering ethnographies, Ingold (2000:42) writes that knowledge should be considered as *knowledgeability*, as understandings emergent and in-flow. This suggests knowledge as meaningful action that arises out of the human condition of being-in-the-world.

Knowledge for Ingold is not applied. Rather it is continuously coming into being within contexts of the practical engagement in the tasks of making a living. Similarly, Edward Casey (1996:45) suggests that localized knowledge forms detailed understandings of general truths within the "locally obvious." The mutually occurring interactions in the world and constructions of the world which one is interacting with and in are both active dimensions of what Ingold suggests as the ontology of dwelling. It is through acting in the world Ingold (2000:316) argues that a skilled practitioner comes to know.

It is in direct contact with materials, whether or not mediated by tools in the attentive touching, feeling, handling, looking and listening, that is entailed in the very process of creative work that technical knowledge is gained as well as applied. No separate corpus of rules and representations is required to organize perceptual data or to formulate instructions for actions. Thus skill is at once a form of knowledge, and a form of practice, or—if you will—it is both practical knowledge and knowledge practice. (Ingold 2000:316)

Knowledge for Ingold is then not obtained, it is realized. Moreover it is through the actualization of knowledgeability that one comes to know. Likewise, Palsson (1994) has suggested knowledge and applied practice as mutual processes of *enskillment* wherein one becomes skillful and able to attend to the tasks at hand within a social-natural field of engagement. This is the condition of our immersion in a world of practical day-to-day, not the “mechanistic internalization and application of a ‘stock of knowledge’ or a ‘cultural model’” (Palsson 1994:901). Experience, writes Ingold (2000:98) is the “crucial test.” Knowledge is realized through action within the environment, “...by watching listening, and feeling, actively seeking out the signs by which it is revealed” (Ingold 2000:99). Experience thus serves as a mechanism of “sensory participation, a coupling of the movements of one’s own awareness to the movement of aspects of the world.”

This form of experiential knowing does not lend itself toward hypothetical beliefs or statements about the world (Ingold 2000:99). Knowing or knowledge viewed in this light is personal, both revealed and actualized through an experiential sensitivity to differential ways of being and to the particular movements, habits, and temperaments of other not-self forms, which through experience reveal each other for what each is (Ingold 2000:99). “Experience therefore cannot mediate between mind and nature, since these are not separated in the first place. Rather it is intrinsic to the ongoing processes of *being alive to the world*, of the person’s total sensory involvement in an environment” (Ingold 2000:99 italics in original).

Building upon Ingold’s relational ontology of and his attentiveness to the crucial role of experience in coming to know the world, I examine hunters’ ways of knowing and coming to know, and the ethnography of coming to know hunters ways of knowing through shared experiences as mutual relational processes of knowing.

### 3.2 HUMAN-BEARDED SEAL ECOLOGY AND VARIABILITY IN BERING STRAIT

Across the Seward Peninsula and much of western Alaska, marine mammal hunting forms an essential, albeit variable, dimension of local maritime subsistence economies. Yet, from the southern terminus of winter sea ice coverage in Bristol Bay northwards across western Alaska, bearded seals fulfill a central subsistence need.

Dorothy Jean Ray (1964; 1971; 1992) has suggested that three generalized spatial subsistence patterns were/are practiced on the Seward Peninsula since European contact. She refers to these models of seasonal movement as: 1) the whaling pattern, emphasizing bowhead whale hunting but which also included walrus and seal hunting as well as fishing; 2) the small sea mammal hunting pattern, which emphasized seal and beluga whale hunting as well as fishing; 3) an interior pattern, which emphasized caribou hunting and fishing. The articulation of these differential harvest patterns were and by and large continue to be determined by geographic location of communities and local ecological conditions that determine the presence of animal species.

Communities located near prominent headlands, capes, or islands (Saint Lawrence Island communities, Wales and Point Hope) are best situated to pursue large whales and walrus moving north along predominate Bering Strait currents. Those communities, which historically focused upon fishing and caribou hunting, were naturally located more centrally to pursue those resources and remain so. What Ray failed to fully attend to, however, was the central and crucial role bearded seals had and continue to have in the annual round of seasonal activities in hunting communities across western Alaska.

While in general agreement with Ray's argument, Burch (1998; 2005; 2006) offers a more complex portrayal of historic and pre-contact seasonal resource procurement practices by demonstrating the pivotal economic role of bearded seals in historic Iñupiaq hunting life. Burch (1998; 2006) points out that even for communities that engaged in bowhead whaling, bearded seals were and remain essential for skins for umiat, boot soles, harpoon line, and other aspects of hunting equipment. Shoe soles throughout western Alaska are made from bearded seal skins. The term "mukluk," used across Alaska and



North America to describe winter boots, is derived from Yup'ik ethno-ecological terminology (*maklak*), which identifies a specific life stage of bearded seals during which their skins are ideal for making shoe soles.

Burch's ethnohistoric analysis suggests that, across northwestern Alaska, extended familial units maintained regular or semi-permanent winter villages from which over the course of a year hunters would travel extensively to take advantage of wide ranging resources, often situated in socio-territorial space where one was not a member. This was particularly true for groups who lived predominantly inland up the Kobuk and Noatak river drainages but who would travel to the coast in the spring for bearded seal and beluga whale hunting prior to attending regional trade fairs. Even for groups that fell under Ray's categorization of interior adapted would annually travel to the coast for bearded seal hunting.

Kigiqtaamiut historic seasonal movements to spring hunting camps parallel the general seasonal spatial temporal model Burch (1998; 2006) proposes for much of coastal northwestern Alaska. When historic annual movements are viewed in light of decision making in response to annual and seasonal changes in sea ice coverage and hunting conditions, these spatial temporal movements are further complicated. This demonstrates how regular annual variability in ice coverage and character has been and continues to be a fundamental dimension of hunting practices

As indicated in chapter two, archival records for Shishmaref are limited. However, sporadic archival data make clear that the school would usually close down for the year by the first of May when families would leave for spring coastal hunting camps. Umiat would be used for hunting following the breakup of the shore ice, as well as to transport families back home with all their seal oil and meats later in the summer. During early spring hunting, prior to the breakup of the shore ice, hunters would travel off the shorefast ice with dog teams or on foot onto the sea ice to find ugzruit either in open water or resting on the ice (if the ugzruit found a hole to climb through). This form of hunting is today referred to as "potholing," likening small bodies of open water to

potholes. When ice conditions permit, this remains the preferred form of ugzruk hunting in Shishmaref today.

The stability of the pack ice is crucial to this mode of hunting, and elders have reported that within living memory they had to travel for two days to reach open water. Shishmaref is situated along the northwest, facing littoral of the Seward Peninsula. Thus a light northerly wind would hold the drifting pack ice close against the shore ice, allowing hunters to cross onto the pack ice for pothole hunting. If the wind switched to a southerly direction, hunters would have to hurry back to the shore ice in order to avoid drifting out with the pack ice. Getting caught on the pack ice was not an uncommon occurrence and some elders have spent more than a week out on the pack ice before making it back to shorefast ice. This form of hunting would continue until a strong southerly wind would bring high water and break up the shore ice, or until the shorefast ice became too rotten to travel across (see also Burch 1998; 2006). After this time hunters would use umiat to hunt among the scattered flows.

This general pattern of hunting did not change dramatically until the early 1990s. After snow machines replaced dog teams in the early 1970s, hunters continued to travel out to pothole in the early spring, often spending the night on the pack ice while sleeping in their basket sleds. Once the shore ice broke up, hunters would switch to boats. By the early 1990s this general pattern began to change. The quality and character of the ice had changed. It became less reliable, and venturing far out onto the sea ice with snow machines became increasingly dangerous. Hunting practices were adapted to a new set of sea ice dynamics. Rather than relying on a north wind to hold the pack ice in place, which was no longer consistently safe, hunters instead began waiting for a south wind to spread out the pack ice. Hunters then used their snow machines to drag their boats across the shore ice and to hunt in leads and on large floating ice pans called *iluqnaut*. This is the general spring hunting system in Shishmaref today.<sup>35</sup>

Using boats in order to hunt among scattered ice flows in open water following the breakup of shorefast ice has always been a dimension of the spring marine mammal

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<sup>35</sup> For a more in-depth examination of recent historic descriptions of hunting in the northwestern Alaska sea ice environment and of Iñupiaq sea ice terminology see Nelson (1969).

hunting complex in Shishmaref, but the timing and dynamics surrounding how boats are used have also changed dramatically in recent years. Whereas groups of hunters used to be able to travel, together or independently, with a minimal amount of gear (snow machine, sled, rifle, ice tester, retrieval hooks, and a sleeping bag), hunting today requires a greater financial commitment, and is more labor intensive. Hauling boats and outboards across the jumbled shore ice is hard on equipment. Broken snow machines, sleds and excessive wear and tear on boats is the expected norm. Being able to both repair and finance repairs to hunting equipment is as important as having the equipment itself. Also, the environmental factors that supported potholing now work against hunting with boats. More recently, as the pack ice has retreated northward much faster in the spring, a persistent north wind will pile the remnants of the drifting pack ice against the shore of the northwest Seward Peninsula, slowing down the breakup of the shorefast ice and extending the shorefast ice apron. This extended ice apron is thin, unstable and rough. It is often too dangerous to cross in order to get to open water, much less while dragging a 26 ft. plywood boat, particularly if open water is twenty miles out. At the same time as the north wind piles ice against the shoreline, the long warm days of spring melt the ice, making it even more dangerous to cross once a south wind scatters the ice enough to permit hunting. Active hunters will hunt on as many days as possible when they can get out, however the financial costs of hunting (price of gasoline, wear on boats, snow machines, and sleds) in conjunction with unstable ice conditions have contributed to a dramatic reduction in the number of days hunters can go out.

Writing of sea ice hunting conditions experienced by hunters living along the Yukon Kuskokwim coast, Fienup-Riordan (1986:103) notes that whenever possible seals are hunted between December and May. Yet on average (during the 1980s) conditions only allowed hunting eight days a month. Factors limiting hunting included too much wind, too much open water, or the ice being too densely packed. She further notes that hunters are not successful on all of the days they can hunt. Fienup-Riordan also suggests that annual fluctuations in quality and character of sea ice coverage and hunting conditions are typical. It is possible that the general sets of conditions experienced by hunters along

the Yukon Kuskokwim delta coast offer a predictive picture of limitations and opportunities that all Bering Strait hunters may experience with increased regularity as a result of climate change.

Older Kigiqtaamiut hunters who grew up hunting ugzruit primarily with dog teams and snow machines speak nostalgically about potholing, both as an especially pleasurable way to hunt and for its relative stress free simplicity—at least when compared to the logistical, physical, and financial stresses connected to hauling large boats across the ice to reach open water. This is demonstrated in the following conversation between Clifford and myself during the spring hunting season of 2008.

Clifford: There are changes in some of the currents out here too; we don't see those big ice bergs in December.

Josh: Yeah I know old folks talk about the blue ice they use to always see.

Clifford: Yeah, I sure miss sitting on edge of the ice with a sled, hook and a good rifle. We use to do that a lot. I remember one time I got tired of traveling I just stop by a lead. I just fell asleep. I told my cousin Lillian I shot an ugzruk plum naked! Yeah I got it!! That use to be fun. So easy, go out there in a sled, dog team and stuff. Nothing to worry about like now, you know, like now hunting with boats and stuff.

Dad, he says, "Sonny one time to get to the lead it took me two days to get out the lead to get ugzruk." And then, ah, his hunting partner was Fred Avasuk, you know Georgie Ann's father. And so he (Fred) woke up first and he saw ugzruk on top the ice he got up from his sleeping bag took his rifle in bare feet, just to make stories, he got it all right. *Suksuk* was his name (Clifford speaking Iñupiaq) and he use to laugh like this "he he he he. With my bare feet I killed it, yeah." Yeah that ocean sure change always north wind now, I don't know why?

Josh: But a north wind use to be good when you were hunting with sno-go ah?

Clifford: Or dog team? Yeah, but not for this long though.

Josh: Oh it would have been that big south wind by now?

Clifford: Yeah and the ice was a lot thicker.

Josh: Them days you could go way out too, like Grandpa Alex did, not like today.

Clifford: Yeah, here there is just too much north wind. Look it's been north wind since when, January?

Josh: Ah, yeah. We just had that little south wind in April. That opened things up a little, and there was that open water pretty close, just a few miles out. It looked like we might get good hunting. But that was just a couple days and then it has been north wind since.

Clifford: It never used to be like that. You know Daniel and I sure miss being on the edge of ice. You know, like with Ben, when we use to sleep on sleds. I don't know what happened. I don't know what happened. It use to be so much easier just to get ugzruk. Currents must'a change or...I don't know.

Josh: No having to move boats on sleds all the time.

Clifford: Yeah, yeah, we never use to do that when I was a kid. (June 14 2008)

Over the course of my multi-year fieldwork, variations in the timing of hunting fluctuated dramatically. Between 2006 and 2009 the dates on which the first ugzruk were caught in Shishmaref indicate how different the ice conditions along the northwestern Seward Peninsula littoral can be on an annual basis.<sup>36</sup> In 2006, hunting began in May, and the first ugzruk was caught on May 15. That year there was thick and solid ice. Boats were pulled less than five miles across the shore ice to reach open water, where there were lots of large floating ice pans (see Figure 1). In 2007 no ugzruk was caught in Shishmaref until June 17. During the spring of 2007 there was a persistent north wind piling remnant pack ice against the shorefast ice for much of the spring and open water was over 20 miles away. The ice near open water was too thin and jumbled to be able to haul boats across (see Figure 2). Additionally, as the spring progressed the shorefast ice became increasingly rotten to the point where hunting could not begin until the shorefast ice broke up and began to spread out. Subsequently most hunting took place 50 miles

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<sup>36</sup>Figures 1-3 show satellite imagery of ice conditions along the northern Seward Peninsula on or near the dates when the first ugzruk was caught on an annual basis during years I carried out fieldwork.

southwest of Shishmaref among the scattered flows of shorefast ice as the pack ice had long since retreated northward. The 2008 hunting and ice conditions were similar to the 2007 hunting season. In 2008 it was not until June 20<sup>th</sup> that hunters were able to catch an ugzruk. Again a strong north wind prevented earlier hunting while the main pack ice retreated northward. There was a small body of open water that opened up a mile off shore from Shishmaref in early spring. However there were no leads to connect it to open water further out, and as a result no bearded seals were able to come in closer to shore. As in 2007, it was not until the shorefast ice began to break up that crews were able to begin hunting. Hunting crews traveled 30 miles northeast of Shishmaref toward Cape Espenberg, “chasing the ice” to where there is less current and the ice lingers longer (see Figure 3). Late hunting in 2008 was followed by unusually cool and wet weather. Persistent rainfall throughout most of July forced families to attempt to dry meats and make seal oil indoors for the first time in living memory. The process of splitting, air drying meats, and rendering seal oil generally takes four to six weeks. Kigiqtaamiut families have historically counted on dry spring weather and typically have meats dried and oil rendered by early July in order to begin other subsistence activities. The conditions experienced in 2008 represented a dramatic departure from previously experienced hunting conditions, yet on May 13, 2009 I received a text message from Clifford’s oldest daughter that stated “Ugs on the beach, butchering tomorrow.” Tina went on to say that some hunters were actually able to hunt with snow machines early on, and got everything they needed before “boating.”

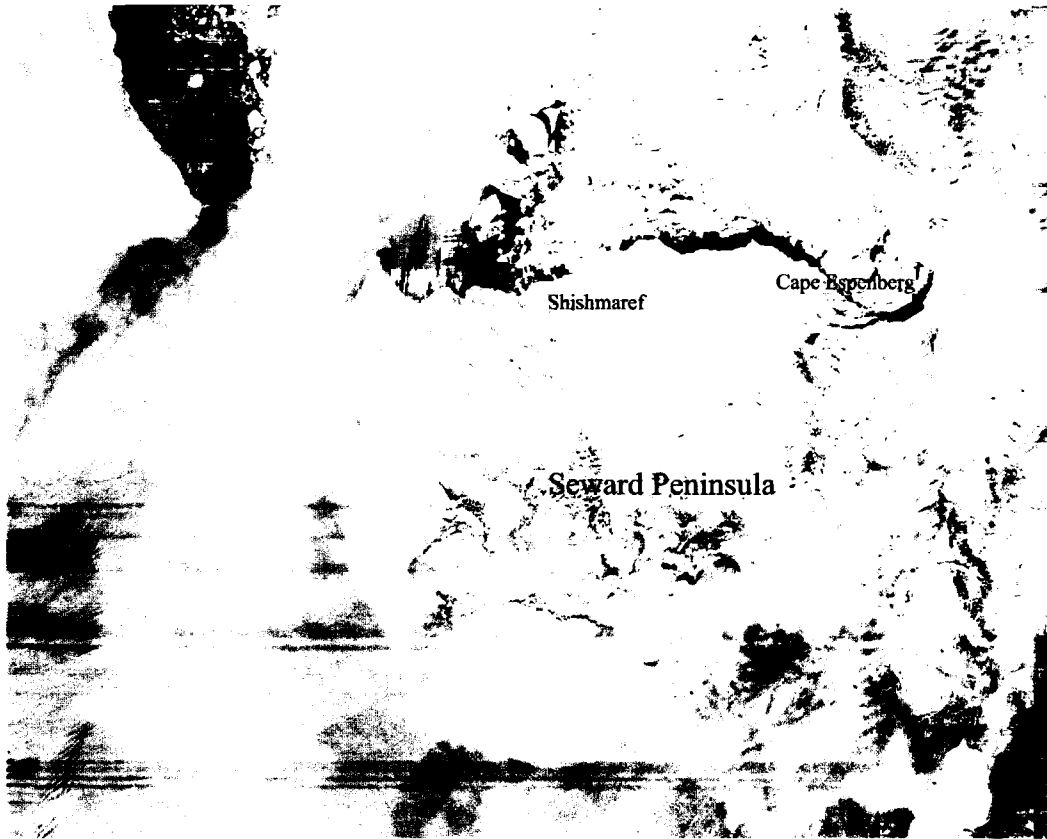


Figure 1 May 15<sup>th</sup> Bering Strait sea ice conditions. May 15 2006 MODIS (Moderate-resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) Images are used with permission from University of Alaska-GINA [www.gina.alaska.edu](http://www.gina.alaska.edu).



Figure 2 June 18<sup>th</sup> 2007 Bering Strait sea ice conditions. June 18 2007 MODIS (Moderate-resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) Images are used with permission from University of Alaska-GINA [www.gina.alaska.edu](http://www.gina.alaska.edu).



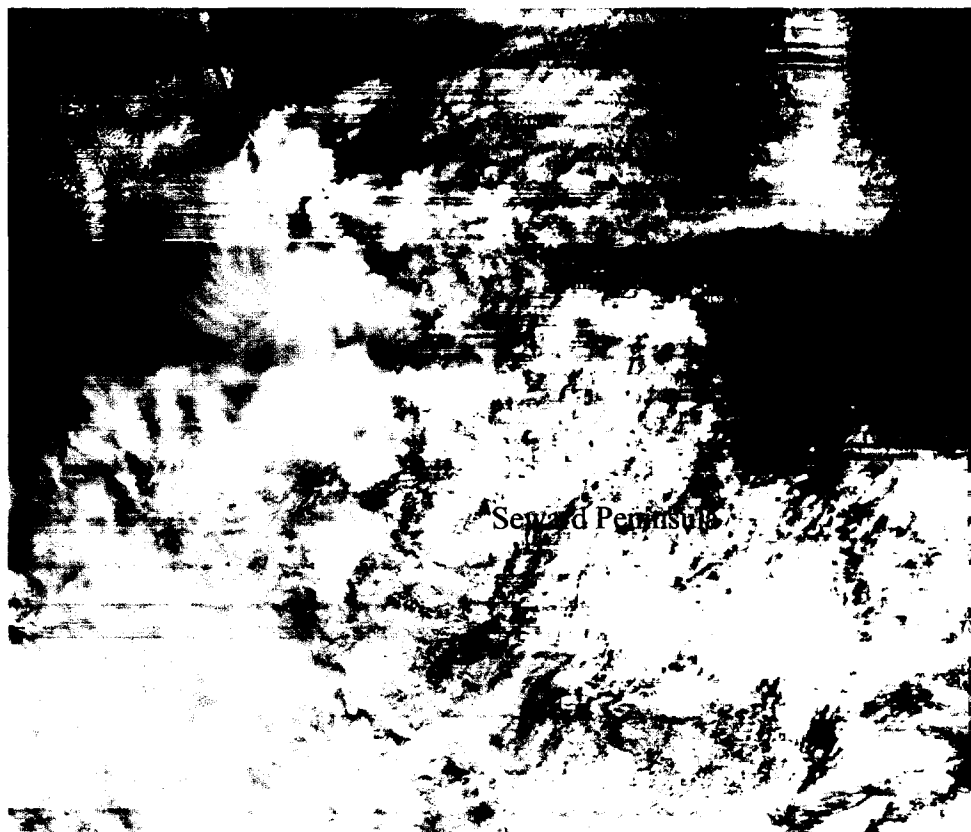


Figure 3 June 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 Bering Strait sea ice conditions.  
 June 20 2008 MODIS (Moderate-resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) Images are used with permission from University of Alaska-GINA [www.gina.alaska.edu](http://www.gina.alaska.edu).

These examples suggest how in recent years dramatic variability is common. Elders' hunting stories also imply a high degree of variability in the timing of spring hunting and the spatial dimensions of hunting. Clifford's example of how his father had to travel for two days to reach open water is supplemented by his own accounts of the relative ease of ugzruk hunting as he remembers it compared to the contemporary contexts wherein sea ice conditions are experienced as increasingly difficult and unpredictable. In addition to responding to climate driven changes, consistent annual variability requires continual flexibility, and so responsive adaptations are actualized and they emerge through hunters' ways of knowing. Before any further analysis of hunting, it is worthwhile to consider the ecology of bearded seals and some further dimensions of regional human and bearded seal relations.

Ugzruit (bearded seals) (*Erignathus barbatus*) are the largest of the pagophilic phocid seals that normally occur in Alaskan arctic and sub-arctic waters (Burns 1967). They can weigh up to 700 lbs. They are found across the arctic and sub-arctic waters as far south as Hokkaido in the Pacific and as far south as Labrador in the western Atlantic (Kelly 1988). During the winter and spring they live in broken and drifting pack ice. Bearded seals living in the Okhotsk and White seas may haul out on land during the summer, though they have not been known to do so in the eastern Bering, Chukchi or Beaufort seas. Bearded seals are known to travel often as far as 100 miles up the Yukon River during late summer and early fall. Yup'ik hunters living in the Yukon Delta have developed specialized spear and throwing board technologies that continue to be actively employed in order to hunt seals in a freshwater environment, where, due to the lack of salinity, seals sink faster than in the ocean.

Bearded seals are primarily benthic feeders and are predominantly found in the near shore environment. Clams, which can be found in abundance along the coast near Shishmaref, are an important food source for bearded seals along with crabs, shrimps, and Arctic cod. In the fall, prior to the rivers freezing, juvenile bearded seals in particular can be found in the Serpentine and Arctic rivers feeding on Arctic cod, which are referred to as "Tomcod" in Shishmaref. When Kigiqtaamiut hunters butcher ugzruk on ice flows in the spring, one of the first things they will do is slit open the stomach in order to look for clams "already cooked" to eat as a snack while butchering.

Because they feed in depths of 150-200 meters (Burns 1981) and prefer depths of 20-25 meters (Kingsly *et al.* 1982), the shallow littoral of the northwestern Seward Peninsula is an ideally suited feeding habitat for bearded seals, and is viewed locally as one reason why Shishmaref hunters have historically been viewed as ugzruk specialists. Bearded seals, like ringed seals, are capable of making and maintaining breathing holes in areas of continuous thick sea ice coverage. However, biologists and hunters both concur that bearded seals prefer broken drifting ice pans with polynyas and leads rather than continuous sea ice coverage. They also prefer very clean white ice and are more likely to be found on white ice than on ice that is more rotten. In contrast, walrus are more often

found among brash rotting ice. Hunters' knowledge of ugzruit preferences for clean white ice is an essential aspect of their hunting practices.

An accurate sense of the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas' bearded seal population is difficult to obtain. Recent literature continues to rely upon Burns (1981) and Popov (1976) and their population estimation range of 250,000 to 300,000 animals. Kelly (1988:88) identified five key research recommendations for bearded seal ecological research, which included the need for precise estimates for bearded seal numbers in order to monitor population growth and decline. The other areas of recommended research include harvest monitoring on both sides of the Bering Strait; predation rates by polar bears and the role of bearded seals in polar bear diets; expanded bio-ecological studies, including trophic studies to assess the impact of bearded seals on fish stocks; blubber thickness measurements in order to monitor decreases in food or environmental stresses; and DNA data to determine the presence of subpopulations.

A 1997 stock assessment published by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) did not offer new population estimates and continued to rely upon Burns (1981) and Popov (1976), but suggested there was no indication that population levels were in decline. This same data is currently being used by the Center for Biological Diversity in their bid to have bearded and other ice seals listed as endangered species due to declines in sea ice coverage.<sup>37</sup>

There are several factors that require consideration when examining bearded seal population dynamics. These factors include available forage, predation, and annual changes in sea ice coverage and character. Additionally, it is necessary to consider human/bearded seal interactions. This, however, is difficult to determine, as quantitative harvest data is generally limited. The majority of the data related to Alaska bearded seal harvests were synthesized during the 1980s. The most congruent data comes from the

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<sup>37</sup> Freeman and Foote (2009), in their critique of the processes and data not attended to in the listing of polar bears, challenge the basis upon which polar bears were listed as threatened by the U.S. Department of Interior under the Endangered Species Act. One of the points of their critique has been the lack of incorporation of local knowledge and observations of hunters with long temporal knowledge of discreet local populations responding to changes in local sea ice coverage. Their critique holds equally true to the lack of engagement with hunters' knowledge leading up to the ice seal listing, which does not cite or offer new data related to ice seals.

western side of Bering Strait and is synthesized in Krupnik (1988). As temporally limiting as this data may be, it does offer some insight into bearded seal harvest levels. Prior to the introduction of firearms, hunters had to rely on stalking animals in order to get close enough to hunt them with a harpoon, throwing board, or bow and arrow. Krupnik (1980; 1984; 1988; 1998) and Burns (1967) both comment on a relatively low rate of bearded seals that were struck and lost prior to the introduction of firearms. Krupnik (1980) has estimated that during the middle of the nineteenth century only one bearded seal per hunter, 350-400 seals annually, was harvested by Chukchi and Inuit hunters along the Chukotka coast. In his view bearded seals played a small role in the overall subsistence pattern. This contrasts Burch's (1998; 2006) analysis of Northwest Alaska coastal groups for whom hunting bearded seals for both food and raw materials was the central focus of spring hunting during the annual round of subsistence activities. Given the significance of bearded seal products in the Alaskan context, a harvest of one would have been disastrous.

Krupnik (1980) states that, following the combined introduction of both firearms and record keeping by non-Natives in Chukota, the retrieval rate for bearded seals between the years 1915 and 1937 was 1,822, with a standard deviation (SD) of 879. Between the years 1940 and 1980 harvest levels decline significantly and dropped to 608 (SD 253). There had been no quantitative assessment of historic bearded seal harvest levels in Alaska prior to the introduction of firearms. However, Burns (1967) estimates the struck and lost rate at 50% following the introduction of firearms in Alaska. Burns (1981) estimates the annual harvest of bearded seals between 1967 and 1977 at 1,784 (SD 941). The Eskimo Walrus Commission estimated the subsistence harvest of bearded seals for the coastal communities of Gambell, Saavonga, Wales, Little Diomedede, and Shishmaref between August 1985 and June 1986 at 791 (Kelly 1988:87), with 44% of the harvest coming from Shishmaref.

Soviet era commercial harvests in the western Bering Sea also have had a dramatic impact on bearded seal populations. The harvest of bearded seals between 1957 and

1964 ranged between 9,000 and 13,000 annually (Popov 1976). Soviet era seal harvests are more fully analyzed by Krupnik (1988; 1998a).

Another quantitative dimension to consider in a regional perspective of human/bearded seal interactions is their monetary value. Burns and Frost (1983) suggest the monetary value of a bearded seal for an Iñupiaq family in 1977–78 at \$286. ADF&G (2000) quantified the replacement value of subsistence foods with a replacement expense of \$3 to \$5 per pound in 2000. If we adopt a conservative estimate of 500 lbs. for a dressed mature bearded seal, draw upon ADF&G’s replacement value of \$5 (in order to account for inflation), and factor in the increase in fuel prices from 2007 onward, we can estimate the average ugzruk to be worth approximately \$2,500 to a household economy. On average, most Shishmaref households try to catch a minimum of four adult ugzruk to last them the year. We can therefore estimate that ugzruk contribute \$10,000 to a household’s economy.<sup>38</sup> As bearded seals are the largest annually harvested mammal in Shishmaref,<sup>39</sup> their annual contribution to familial economies is highly significant.

In Shishmaref and throughout Bering Strait bearded seals have a clear and unique social position in relation to other seals that is articulated across western Alaska in both hunting practices and oral traditions (Fienup-Riordan 1994; Lantis 1947; Nelson E.W. 1983). This hierarchy between bearded seals and other seal forms is outlined in the Yup’ik oral tradition “The Boy Who Lived With the Seals”<sup>40</sup> (Fienup-Riordan 1983; 1994) in which seals sit in their *qasgiq*<sup>41</sup> under the ocean according to their rank with fully mature bearded seals representing the top of the hierarchy. This social hierarchy of seals and the importance of bearded seals in Shishmaref are further revealed through linguistic usage in casual conversation where there are “ugzruk” and there are seals: ringed (common), spotted, or ribbon. If one were to pose the question to a Shishmaref

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<sup>38</sup> This estimate may be low, as it doesn’t consider those items that may be manufactured or sold from the catch, or the sale of seal oil or meats to other families or to families living in Nome, Anchorage, or other nearby communities.

<sup>39</sup> Walrus are hunted annually but they are not viewed as necessary and are only targeted after bearded seals have been caught.

<sup>40</sup> Similar versions of this oral tradition are found across Alaska, detailing proper behavior between humans and animals. In Southeastern Alaska as well as along the Copper River in Southcentral Alaska, Tlingit and Ahtn’a forms of this account speak to hierarchy of salmon and the relationship between humans and salmon as persons. In Bering Strait Iñupiaq traditions from Wales and Little Diomedede the stories speak to the relationship between humans and walrus.

<sup>41</sup> The *qasgiq* or men’s houses were buildings in which men lived communally and where ritual activities, as well as those of daily life, such as manufacturing hunting equipment, took place in both Yup’ik and Iñupiaq societies.

hunter returning home after a fall seal hunt “How many seals did you get?” A typical answer could be “I caught three common and two spotted.” A closer look in his boat or sled might further inform you that in addition he caught two young ugzruk (*anmiak*<sup>42</sup>) as well. That these were not mentioned was not absent-mindedness, but rather an example of the linguistic markings of differentiation between ugzruk and seals. Had the question been phrased “what did you get?” the answer would be more encompassing to include the two *anmiat* as well.

Within local discourse, ugzruk are not seals but hold an exceptional and distinguished status above seals. Hunters can and do regularly speak to biologists about ugzruk as bearded seals and are keenly interested in biological information related to population dynamics, diminishing ice coverage, migration patterns, and contaminants. Hunters strategically oscillate from local ugzruk hunting discourses of differentiating between ugzruk and seals when speaking among themselves and discussing ugzruk as bearded seals when speaking to scientists.

The social significance of ugzruk hunting in community life is further demonstrated through the distribution of the first ugzruk caught during spring hunting. During this time of year ugzruk are targeted to the virtual exclusion of any other seal. Though other seals may be much more numerous, they are rarely if ever hunted during the spring. By distributing the first ugzruk catch of the year to village elders, hunters seek to promote individual and community success in future hunts by way of a demonstration of respect to both elders and in appreciation of success in catching ugzruk. In addition to distributing the first ugzruk brought back to the community, most familial hunting crews distribute their first ugzruk of the spring hunt as well<sup>43</sup> so people “get a taste.” Other animals, like caribou or muskox are routinely shared when they are caught, but they are given much

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<sup>42</sup> *Anmiak* is considered a “Shishmaref word.” It is not generally used by other nearby Iñupiaq communities to describe young ugzruk. *Anmiat* is the plural version. Kigiqtaamiut hunters have other terms as well that speak to different age classifications of ugzruk, just as *anmiak* refers to a specific life stage.

<sup>43</sup> The first walrus caught for the hunting season is also distributed. Some younger hunters, however, do not actively participate in distribution of “firsts.” Older hunters are often glad to learn when a more mature hunter caught the first ugzruk or walrus of the season in order to ensure that it will be distributed. Equally important is when a younger hunter distributes without prompting from his elders. A friend told me that after recently letting his boys get their first caribou, some of them were interested in selling them back in the village rather than giving them away, though he insisted that they be distributed.

less significance than sharing ugzruk meat and oil. The distribution of bearded seals is much less formally structured in Shishmaref than seal parties described on Nelson Island (Fienup-Riordan 1983) or the division of muktuk among Greenlandic hunters (Dahl 1989; 2000) or Siberian Yup'ik and Iñupiaq whalers across Northwestern Alaska (Jolles 2003).

In practice, distribution is a subtle and largely unstructured affair in Shishmaref. Yet specific butchering techniques and ritual distribution of “firsts” are locally identified as important socio-cultural dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut spring hunting traditions. Many families have their own way of determining distribution shares rather than following an established protocol. However, distribution of “firsts” generally includes a small piece of blubber, ribs and a small piece of meat. Families choose to whom they will distribute. Distribution will be sent to the receiving family in a plastic store bag, or a representative of the receiving family will be sent to the home of the hunting family to pick up their portion.

The ecology of bearded seals, their harvest numbers, their estimated economic value, and their social distinction determine ugzruk as unique among other seals. The on-the-ground reality of hunters' experiences with and perspectives about bearded seals suggests that it is important to consider human/bearded seal ecological relationships, harvest levels, and technological efficiency in accord with local rationales for meaningful actions by hunters.

### 3.3 THE RULES OF OLD FOLKS “*ADIZUGAKSRAT INIQTIGUTAIT*”

Chapter two argues that in contemporary village life Christianity is selectively drawn upon and utilized to help individuals and families get through times of crisis, such as the loss of loved ones. Indigenized forms of local Lutheran practices are articulated as means of manifesting personal power through song and prayer for support of other people and families. Yet the use of Christianity to understand and explain phenomena is largely limited to certain domains of village social space. To understand animals and the environmental settings in which they are encountered, hunters draw upon a diverse and

syncretic combination of sources, including personal experience, the experiences of previous generations of hunters, and local history. As noted previously, hunters do take western scientific understandings of bearded seals into consideration; however, these understandings are not contemplated singularly or separated from older ideas and beliefs or “traditional knowledge” about the connections between human actions and intentions and the phenomenal world. Rather, the synthesis of scientific ideas and older beliefs is incorporated and considered in relation to continuously emerging collections of shared experiences and implied relationalities that are subsequently referred to in the Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq dialect as *añizugaksrat iniqtiġutait*, “the rules of old folks,” or “the rules of elders.” Younger hunters refer to these understandings as “Eskimo Law.” *Añizugaksrat* translates as “elders” or “older people” while *iniqtiġutait* translates as “warnings,” “admonishments,” or “rules.”

Across the Inuit Arctic regions, the documentation of taboos and rules regarding particular behaviors or actions in relation to various circumstances has been an important topic of ethnographic inquiry (Bogoras 1904-09; Boas 1888; Fienup-Riordan 1994; Lantis 1947; Merkur 1991; Nelson 1983; Rasmussen 1929; 1931; Spencer 1959). Yup’ik speaking people of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Delta and Bristol Bay region south of the study area have a terminology similar to *añizugaksrat iniqtiġutait* to describe rules of successful living. The Yup’ik term “*qaneryarat*” describes “that which is spoken”; “*alerquutet*” refers to laws or instructions; and “*inerquutet*” to admonish or warn someone (Fienup-Riordan 1994:52). These rules “enabled a person to stand up properly” (Fienup-Riordan 1994:52) and over the course of a lifetime one came to understand a wide range of *alerquutet* and *inerquutet* for proper living (Fienup-Riordan 1994:53).

Fienup-Riordan (1994:53) states that three key concepts stand out in Yup’ik rules for living: 1) a person’s thoughts have power; 2) one must act thoughtfully to avoid causing harm to others; 3) there is a danger that one’s mind can lead one astray (Fienup-Riordan 1994:53). The conceptual basis for these Yup’ik admonishments suggests strong parallel to the Kigiqtaamiut concept of *añizugaksrat iniqtiġutait*, which today refers to knowledge of the past and rules for behavior that current generations of elders learned from the



previous generations of elders as they were growing up. Most elders suggest there were many more rules influencing the lives of those from previous generations, more than are known and actively discussed across generations today. The values embodied in these rules are held as “truth” because they were grounded in previous generations of hunters’ experiences with various phenomena and responses to human actions and intentions. It is the grounding of knowledge claims in experiences that serves to qualify knowing against local frameworks of “objectivity” or as locally held truths about the phenomenal world.

There are three primary rules that are explicitly expressed verbally and implicitly expressed through actions that are connected to hunting life: 1) don’t play with animals, or more broadly do not assume one can fully know or predict the environment because it will come back to you; 2) don’t think you are better than others, meaning do not act in such a way that implies you think you can predict the outcome of events; 3) whoever sees an animal first claims that animal even if another hunter kills it; it belongs to the hunter who saw it first. These rules are presented here as discrete in and of themselves. In practice, however, they are largely viewed as inseparable, and intimately connected to each other.

Of these rules, it is the fundamental rule of not playing with animals that most frequently is articulated in hunting life. The understanding that certain actions can result in unpredictable consequences is the most significant aspect for understanding rules in Kigiqtaamiut hunting lifeworlds. These rules do not just apply to hunting encounters, but are used as a template for considering the ramifications of a wide range of actions that people engage in. Moreover, as the concept of rules suggests, *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* does not speak to what people always do, but suggests what people should and should not do, and conversely that people need to carefully consider the ramifications of certain actions. As relational knowing extends to all living beings both situated and local, *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* does not explain relationships between phenomena in the world but rather emphasizes careful consideration of the unexplainable. *Anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* alludes to possibilities that the world cannot be fully known and suggests not-fully-knowable forces can intersect in life in unforeseeable ways.

Anizugaksrat iniqtiġutait and the ramification of human actions carried out without consideration of possibilities are revealed in the following local history narratives. These three narratives focus upon and highlight the ramifications of anizugaksrat iniqtiġutait as they relate to “playing with animals.” They describe the consequences experienced by humans who cruelly and intentionally plucked feathers from living birds and subsequently released them into the world. The first two narratives were recorded in the early 1980s by native researchers in Shishmaref for a regional cultural heritage program. They do not specify when the events they describe took place, but they do allude to recent history. I recorded the third narrative in 2008, which describes events that the narrator witnessed and participated in during the late 1930s as a young man.

1) These too, birds or any flying birds, when they are alive, they cannot be bothered in anyway. Also too, they cannot be plucked alive. Then when this person is bothersome this young man, this person who is “high and mighty” towards the animals then he would spew blood. Also his life, his life is “cut,” which was supposed to be long. These things, when he does not care about animals, even though they are alive when torturing them or something bad, these small birds that are teased. These that are treated this way... then their life will be shortened. These have more consequences those birds. This blood they spew out. These offenders when they intimidate flying birds, because birds communicate with each other. Also, they recognize the offenders as time goes on. The one that offended them. (Alex Weyiouanna Shh EN 83-020)

2) Me too story to tell, this one.<sup>44</sup> Long ago that time. Father story he tell us, Ninguelook. Long ago. Up the coast in Qivaloag too people live. These siblings, boys. How many, but were many. Young boys. Young men they became grown up. They adults, not become yet; but walking anyplace. Somewhere all together. Then these again walk. Over there, near campsite. Raven. Young ones they saw, flying start to these, they find. Then these young boys. Talking... come to conclusion, spoke: “Why don’t we, these feathers we pluck. Wings left and tail too. Pluck them and let them fly.” Then these young boys plucked them. Plucking afterwards let them fly. Then, these young boys plucked them. Plucking afterwards. Done with them. Wings and tail feathers attached only. Not plucked, these. Momentarily. Let it fly this raven they finished. Then upwards in

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<sup>44</sup> This story was originally told in Iñupiaq and word for word translated into English by Shishmaref scholar Edgar Ninguelook. The narrative form and sentence structure therefore reflects Iñupiaq language terms and style. I have presented it here in its translation.

circles it flew up. Then raven out of sight upwards. Then another one they plucked. Same thing again. Then out of sight it go upwards. Then. Circling upwards, flying. At any rate these young boys finish them. These young ravens. Plucking them. How many I don't know. These young ravens. Raven, so called....Then. These young boys. Who plucked and let fly young ravens. Sweating. Then; blood throwing up through mouth. Blood to throw up. Wife reminded me of this one they all died. Those who plucked and let ravens fly. Young ravens these not play with. Anything. Game animals these; since like us they have lives too; to live thing they. Also talk to each other somewhat. People that one anything. They make noises, these animals. Not only one noise they make. They too are communicating. We too, noises we make. How, too, talk we. This way, too, these game animals. (Jack Ninguelook Shh EN 83-002)

3) I guess he must have stay at *Ipnauraq*, 18 mile and they hunt owl by putting pole and trap. He must have caught that one and instead of killing that owl he must of cut the sinew of that owl and let it go. And later on, I don't know how late or how many months or weeks, they saw Clifford go *qayaq* [kayak] on a real calm day and someone that was staying at Iglut saw *Utuaqtaq* [Clifford] tip over in his *qayaq* and they saw the owl was pestering him or bothering him and let him turn over and let him drown. They say he drown on a calm day. And they musta go rescue him because someone from Iglut saw by *Ipnauraq*. And the only thing I remember I don't know how, we go by skin boat from *Ipnauraq* there was Eddie Tocktoo, Grace Tocktoo, my mother, myself, and one old lady. The way I remember I think she is *Kiqsiuq*, that old lady that stay with us. And we bring the body, real calm day from *Ipnauraq* to here, and we park the boat south side of church and I can't remember where they bury him or if they bury him here. So they always tell us not to play with the animals. They say it always go back to you or harm you. (Johnny Weyiouanna March 21 2008)

Central to these narratives are the ramifications of “playing with animals,” which in all three cases result in the deaths of those who have tortured animals. These historic narratives stress that animals, and more broadly, the environment, are aware. It is impossible to know or predict when or how particular actions that violate *aṅizugaksrat iniqtiḡutait* will occur. Viewing rules in this context speaks less to what is known and certain, but rather to an inherent unknowability of the world and the need to consider one's own actions, thoughts and intentions.

Implicit in *anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait* is the recognition that “the country” is full of potentiality and intentionality, alive to personal experience and responsive to actions and intentions. This is further revealed through the Iñupiaq notion of *sila*; a term variously construed and debated across the Inuit Arctic (Birket-Smith 1953; Jenness 1922; Merkur 1991; Rasmussen 1929; 1931; 1952; Sonne 1980). Broadly conceived, *sila* refers to the environment, the organization of the world, consciousness, and weather without implying a differentiation between these conditions of the world. As opposed to implying differentiation, the notion of *sila* suggests that sentience is an implicit dimension of the world and is experienced as such.

Some Shishmaref elders will discuss the presence of *Silam Inua* as “the first creator.” *Inua* is derived from the possessive form of *Inuk* (meaning person), or more directly as master, owner, or core of a boil (Kaplan n.d.). *Silam Inua* bears strong resemblance to the Yup’ik notion of *ellam yua* (the person of the universe). Much as *anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait* implies that certain behaviors can “come back to you,” improper treatment of animals can cause *ellam yua* to come and “wake a person up” (Fienup-Riordan 1994:89), suggesting that actions bring about consequences in potentially unforeseeable ways.

The meaning of *silam inua* parallels *ellam yua*. In Kigiġtaamiut Iñupiaq, however, it does not make its way into everyday usage among hunters the way Eskimo Law does. The only time I heard it discussed was when I introduced it into a conversation among a group of elders when I asked about potential forces that influence hunting success. When I asked about how I might understand *Silam Inua* I was told, “even Eskimos have always known there was a God, a creator.” Yet *sila* as a sentient ecological notion is realized through ongoing experiences with *anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait*. To not play with animals, or to not think you are better than others, encourages a cautious and reflexive awareness of how one behaves in a not-fully-knowable world where the possibility that human actions and intentions can manifest and bring about unforeseeable results in many dimensions of life.

Briggs (1991:262) similarly suggests that through time Inuit have and continue to experience the world as ultimately unknowable, compiled of multiple, shifting qualities and potentialities. These experiences in the world foster contextual and relational approaches toward a wide range of social relationships as a broad pan-Inuit cultural strategy. This is particularly true in hunting life, for danger is a constant in both hunting and social life across the Arctic. In hunting life bad weather, poor ice conditions, mechanical failure, and a lack of game in historic and contemporary contexts could result in precarious situations. Briggs (1991:261) highlights that firsthand experiences with death and loss of loved ones are a common experience for many Inuit, even the very young. This no less true in Shishmaref today, where the passing of elders, hunting accidents, high rates of cancer; the tragedy of suicide, alcohol abuse, and other accidents are common in the lives of most individuals and families. The constant of unpredictability is experienced in both social life and in hunting activities.

Briggs' (1991) suggestion, that life training in Inuit cultural practices serves to prepare one to engage in an unpredictable world, is useful to consider. In Kigiqtaamiut hunting, the world is filled with unknowable and unpredictable possibilities, such as presence of animals, changes in sea ice conditions, or unexpected overflow. Equally, however, *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* implies the world is inherently sentient and responsive to human actions and intentions in unforeseeable and incongruous ways. This is further revealed in the oral histories about the boys' experiences with the birds, where the forces in the world are directly experienced as responding to human actions, resulting in human death.

To further illustrate the actualization of Eskimo Law, the following hunting stories describe hunters responding to sentient environmental phenomena actively manipulating the environmental circumstances surrounding hunters' experiences. The following examples illustrate hunters' reflexive analysis of their experiences and responses to unpredictable events. They also highlight how events are viewed as revealing truths about the world through their experiential contexts. They demonstrate how experiences are analyzed in consideration of the relationality *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* implies. At the

same time, they demonstrate how individual, personal experiences bolster anizugaksrat iniqtigutait as a set of shared and intersubjective understandings.

The first two examples relate to local landscape and to unknowable forces associated with specific known places. These examples are followed by hunters' experiences with different animals as sentient and responsive to human actions.

Clifford came to find me to go eat while I was working at the school today. I told him and Warren Jimmy that I had just heard the story about those people who had been living at *Sin̄aazruat* who were *funny* about how they butchered beluga and how the beluga came back after them as people who didn't have eyebrows. Clifford told us about going down the coast with his dad and grandfather, dog-teaming, and how Grandpa Alex kept calling out "che-che che", to get his dogs to go right because this place, where those people were buried (A large mass grave) would *pull* you. "Nothing bad would happen to you" he said, "you just get pulled over it." He said this happened to him one time before as well when Baker broke down toward Ikpik. Clifford went home to get him a part and was going back down coast in the dark, really trying to follow his tracks, with his lights, so he wouldn't get pulled and still he got pulled right over that spot, despite his efforts to avoid it. (March 5 2008)

In the following narrative a hunter describes to me and a group of older hunters two experiences where he felt the circumstances surrounding his activities being manipulated by unforeseeable forces.

Stanley: Because we always see them and they take us further out and we don't see tracks... Even one time when I was younger and I tried to go home too and I see my other partner's snow machine, nighttime, I see his lights. I try to take off full throttle to catch up... no tracks. Other time we look for Jimmy Knox we see campfire in the distance. After third time I say wait a minute guys this is not right we are running out of fuel. Half our fuel is gone we got one thing left to do; we gotta make camp and track in the morning, because this was just taking us south... even Harvey say. One time, north of Hot Springs for no reason I get stuck on the flats right. So I go to bed I was using his (Harvey's) snow machine I didn't want to ruin his track on the rocks. I get the one-inch rope, pull the sled and I just take the shackle off and the sled was stuck. No wind, it [the sled] started going backwards I said "What the heck that sled doing now?" And it went all the way back down, the runners broke, down the mountain. Ben said "What's going on with your sled?" I said "I dunno" cause he watching too. That same trip, GPS don't lie right? Satellite. From there we were trying to go

to Grayling Creek and home. And I make waypoint. And we went back to same place we were going from. That area to Grayling Creek we follow the arrow and I tell him “Ben this thing is not right let’s go any old way and find our main trail.” We were going Grayling Creek and we wind up same place with that sled. I told Harvey, he said spirits try to get us, he knows that area. North side of Hot Springs. (March 11 2008)

Both Clifford’s and Stanley’s hunting stories highlight how they experienced their actions manipulated by unpredictable forces. Clifford *felt* himself pulled over a mass grave he was going out of his way to avoid. In one instance Stanley and his other search and rescue team members are lured deeper into the country by lights, but no sign of snow machine tracks, while in another instance he and another hunter witness his stuck sled being manipulated and find their GPS not leading them in their intended direction, but instead taking them back to a place they had left. During both of these encounters hunters directly experienced the country’s power to bring about unforeseeable events, and to manipulate human actions. In other stories hunters note the awareness of animals to bring about or manipulate the outcome of their engagement with human hunters.

The following narrative event is a conversation between a group of hunters at the Shishmaref School where a group of elders had gathered to discuss their understandings and experiences with different sea ice forms. The conversation that follows occurred afterwards as a group of us sat around having coffee after other participants had left.

Morris: Dad say they [polar bears] are the most perceptive animal. Wish for them to do something, just talk to them a little bit they will hear you right away and sometimes do your request.

Stanley: Even brown bears too. One time they tell me same thing. I thought those were wolverine, all I seen were there two, you know bumps. So I speed up so we meet. You can’t turn right or left or right, because you’ve got to climb. I didn’t know what to do because they were running this way toward me. Holy cow those are not wolverine, those are brown bears! I never even say anything, I just think about them, about what they say to talk to them. So I wish they could take off and turn back other way. After I think like that, they both turn around and take off, I was real happy. Brown bears, they were my wolverine [all laughing]. That was not too fun alright.

Tommy: Some of those polar bear too. Leave them alone they got dots somewhere?

Vincent: Yeah you've got to leave them alone. Spots, any kind of spots, they got bare skin, you know or if they got black spots anywhere on the body...

Morris: They are a reincarnated ancestor. You wouldn't be able to get so you never go after that kind that is the skin, maybe of person? Showing through or some kind of...

Vincent: Those whales [killer whales] too, when they find something over on the ocean, and you wish for a piece of it, they will give you a piece from it.

Morris: They hear you. One time dad went hunting beluga, and there were some [killer whales] and he said I wouldn't mind having a piece to taste. Next morning, that was in the spring okay, next morning there were a few pieces floating [beluga meat and fat] he says every spring after that they always do that a few pieces floating where they camp. And then one time he says it was real stormy. Even dad was a good kayaker he said it was a little too rough for him and dad couldn't go and get 'em and when he never got 'em that's when they [killer whales] quit. They never showed up, those pieces. Then after mom died we moved to ah, Brevig for a while, that spring there was lots of killer whales and then, now and then beluga. We were camping on this side. I wouldn't mind tasting some. Ah next morning dad and I, he took us to Teller, across there and we were talking with someone. Wait, wait, and right below our camp I'm looking at it [beluga] a long time. And then after that he just look at me. Later on we never go across and when we go across I looked at him. After that he just look at me. When we never go across after that I look at him, I remember that beluga was gone they took it back down. He knew what had happened....

John: I ask Morris if he ever try it. Because when I first saw a polar bear I worried about that bear going out onto thin ice and it didn't know I was watching it. So I started going in my head, if it goes toward ocean I wouldn't be able to get it. Sure enough when I was thinking like that it just stop look around and then it started to go.

Josh: Toward the ocean?

John: Toward the ocean, yup. So I was thinking Oh no-no-no, come back toward the shore, come this way slow. That thing go out then start looking



around again, come back toward the shore and kept walking toward me. I remember. That's what the elders said too; that's why I told it to go back toward the shore, in my head and it did.

Josh: That's what Davy said, that he could talk to them, but not with words. When I talk to him about that. He said he use his mind to speak to them without using words. He would tell them what he wanted.

John: I have experienced it. It's true. Alex said when he got his big bear, he said he wanted to skin it but it was too heavy he said. So he think about what they use to say and tell the bear to let it be easy for him and he said it got easy. I think he's the one that told me the paw was so heavy and he ask to let him lift it. You better go ask him.... (November 16 2007)

These conversations reveal how these hunters have directly observed, experienced, and interacted with animals as sentient beings responding to their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Morris's father receives beluga whale meat from killer whales on multiple occasions.<sup>45</sup> This cycle of exchange continues until Morris's father is not able (due to bad weather) to retrieve beluga meat given to him, thereby ending his relationship with the killer whales. Hunters discuss what they were told about the perceptive power of polar bears by their elders and how they have personally experienced these qualities and have communicated with bears while hunting. Stan tells two brown bears to move away from him when he comes across them in a set of circumstances when he cannot turn away and he avoids a potentially dangerous encounter. In another set of circumstances John tells a polar bear not to go on thin ice by thinking he wants it to turn back toward him. All three events describe hunters and animals communicating and interacting with each other in ways that can only be understood through the personal experiences of participating in the event. Thus John ends his story, saying, "I have experienced it, it is true."

In these narratives it is the experience of events that render them truthful and informative and illustrate the "truth" of *aņizugaksrat iniqtiġutait*. During my own process of participating in hunting life I shared in hunting experiences my partners felt

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<sup>45</sup> Nelson (1983:159) reports that Koyukon hunters observe wolves leaving clean unspoiled meat at their kills which hunters have the right to take.

demonstrated aspects of Kigiqtaamiut hunting ways of knowing which could only be understood through our shared experiences connected to recent local historical events.

While I was visiting Clifford and Shirley in Nome, Shirley mentioned she might like to taste ptarmigan broth. After I went back to Shish, Ben said Mick and I should try to go look up coast to try and “get” [ptarmigan] for Shirley and maybe we could see caribou too. We [Mickey and I] went up past Second Channel. I brought my shotgun and my .22-mag. Yesterday Francis told me there were lots of caribou around the area but when we looked there wasn’t anything. We saw one big bull way out on the tundra but it was probably too “stink” from rutting by now. Even though it was kind of low water we went way up some creek I didn’t know but we never saw anything but that one bull. I was kicking myself for not going after those ptarmigan I saw with John Boy when we went up Arctic River the other day when I had my mag with me. So we were up there for a couple of hours Mick and me, until Mickey thought we should maybe try Serp or Tin Creek. As we turned the boat around to starting going back down this creek when a small bird flew into the boat and sat on a bench and watched us for several minutes. We did not say anything about it for several minutes after it flew away. For some reason I cannot understand it kind of made me think about “Boy.” Completely separate of me saying anything Mick said that maybe “Boy” was with us. I had not really thought about “Boy” Norman [Mick’s cousin] too much lately, after he went through thin ice on his snow machine coming back to Shishmaref after hunting ducks two springs ago. We didn’t say anything else about it and still tried to hunt throughout the day with no real luck and came home late that night. Later Ben and Sue called me to come over to eat. I was having tea after our meal and was sitting on the couch watching TV with Ben when Nancy came in. Mick recounted our experience with the small bird. After describing the encounter and its relation to Boy in his experience, Nancy turned to me and said “It’s different when you experience these things yourself. You see that these things are real now, so now *you* know.” (October 15, 2007)

This event, taken in concert with the other described experiences, reveals much about the intersubjective relationality of *anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait* as a mosaic of personal experiences and explanations that interact with, inform, and shape a more general set of relational and ecological understandings among hunters. Understandings about phenomena emerge through a person’s direct participation in them. John knows about polar bears’ perceptive powers from communicating with them, Mick understood our

encounter with a bird to somehow be connected with “Boy” through experiencing the bird in relation to Boy’s death. His experiences in the world, his memories and feelings provide personal experiential basis to interpret the behavior of the small bird. Stanley’s GPS leads him not toward the Grayling Creek cabin he marked as a waypoint but back to where he had left. Clifford experiences the power of being pulled off the trail and over a burial mound. These diverse narratives of experience all connect to and inform *anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait*, yet like the diverse narratives illustrating the ramifications for “playing with animals,” no explanation is central, required, or expected. *Anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait* is not grounded in a meta-narrative. Rather, diverse and on-going experiences and understandings speak to the presence of not-fully-knowable possibilities. The settings described are filled with not-fully-understandable events and occurrences.

It is the experience of these not-fully-knowable events, the personal engagement with them in conjunction with other personal events, and experiences with local history that render them partially understandable to hunters in the context of their own being-in-the-world. The not-fully-knowable reality of the world is generally accepted by hunters, and personal experience contributes an aspect of understanding into that which can only ever be partially known. As the world can only ever be partially known, personal experiences toward informing understandings of it, acquired over the course of a life history, provide a context for informing the not-fully-knowable. Partial, incomplete, processual, and continuously emerging knowings coincide with a world experienced and understood as ambiguous and never fully knowable.

Hunters pay considerable attention to elders’ explanations of events. Many elders grew up living primarily at remote camps much of the year and have had considerable experience with animals. Elders draw upon the “truth” of their experiences in order to highlight the significance of attending to rules and as examples of the consequences to persons who didn’t consider the potential consequences of their actions. Understanding how to read ice and weather conditions, properly tie a sled, where to shoot an *ugzruk*, or how to behave around certain types of animals are equally practical and necessary skills to master in order to be safe and have success while hunting. Understanding local

history, animal behavior, and human relations with animals and the environment are synthesized and therefore all given considerable weight by hunters in the analysis of events, and the elders' thoughts on such matters are given considerable weight due to the depth of their experiences and the opportunities they had to learn from previous generations.

What is central to consider is how *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait*, as a set of considerations about the relationality that both derives from outside Christianity and simultaneously exists within it, informs possibility but does not provide definitive explanations. It demonstrates that through time persons have experienced events that could not be otherwise explained, except through the personal understandings of the experience itself. There is no question among hunters and elders that lands, animals, and ecological phenomena cannot be fully understood. However, what is significant is how understandings of the relational nature of the world are considered through suggestions about the consequences and ramifications of human actions. These are illustrated through historical narratives and reinforced through ongoing hunting experiences. These narratives as well as current emerging hunting narratives demonstrate how *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* as an intersubjective knowing is not applied to the world but emerges from experiences in it.

*Anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* is given much value toward explaining phenomena in hunting life because people have experienced and participated in events otherwise not fully explainable. Christianity provides one mechanism for explaining events and serves as an outlet for providing spiritual support to individuals through singing and prayer in community life. It doesn't undermine the presence and continuity of older beliefs connected to hunting. *Anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* informs local phenomenological analysis of personal experiences with animals and phenomena. These experiences are taken into consideration by many hunters through their own individualized and personal understandings of *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* as the analytical framework for engaging with events and experiences that can only be understood through having lived them.

Both recent and historical accounts of interactions and experiences with not-fully-knowable forces play an important role in understanding the relational complexity of the world. One specific ugzruk hunt that took place in 1948 is continuously drawn upon in order to provide insight into connections between humans and the phenomenal world. The local historical event below was related to me by the last living participant in it. The narrator (Arthur Tocktoo) describes encountering a being that transcends the differentiation between humans and animals. Arthur's story is most often brought forth during discussions about sea ice phenomena and conditions as means of offering practical information relating to hunting and travelling on the sea ice. This will be further discussed in chapter five.

Josh: Oh, so you were with those guys?

Arthur: Yeah, but they call us to go back right away before, before we go to that thing over there. That (painting) describes a female, but it was a male what we been see.

Josh: So he drew a picture of a female but what you actually saw was a male?

Arthur: Iyah.

Josh: So it had short hair like a man?

Arthur: No long hair, all the mermaids have long hair male or female. It covers them up when they are underwater.

Josh: so it was you [Arthur Tocktoo], Davy [Davy Ningeulook], James Moses and who?

Arthur: Jake Minguna and Tommy Setemona. All, they are all gone.

Josh: Iyah. I ask Davy about it one time before he go.

Arthur: I'm the only one left.

Josh: Yeah, that's why I wanted you to tell about what you remember about that.... You and Davy were the young ones that time.

Arthur: That time, because me and him run off the boat to see if we could see that thing you know? While were gone, they call us, not to do that they want us to go back right away.

Josh: So who saw it first?

Arthur: We saw it first. Just when our motor run out of gas, just when we lay up to that iluqnauq [large piece of floating ice] you know.

Josh: You guys saw it when you were boating. When you were in the water first?

Arthur: Yeah. We didn't even see it when we was boating, but when we stop get up on the ice we see. It was sitting like this on the ice part in the water.

Josh: You stop where you could go up on a high part of that iluqnauq, on a *uiniq* [a pressure ridge of piled ice]?

Arthur: No we were level, but there is a little pile of ice here and there. But me and Davy go close to it. We were going to go close to it with the binoculars you know. But them fellas call us up to go back said to go back we don't have to play with it.

Josh: Yeah, not to mess around with that kind? But you could tell it was a male?

Arthur: They said that was lady [referring to painting] but it was a man you know, straight, like this (pointing to chest). It got no tits on it. And then that James Moses said you boys come back, you don't have to mess around with it. We gotta go. They fill up the gas tank. He say we don't gotta mess around with that. I seen this one sitting on the ice, with his [legs] in the water, and not too big of a pond you know. He look at us for a while, but he see one guy way over there by himself. So he's looking at that one all the time instead of us.

Josh: He could see you guys?

Arthur: Yeah, no. He must of see this guy before we stop. He must of see that guy walking on top the ice carrying a rifle.

Josh: Were you guys seeing any game that day?

Arthur: Well we was looking for game. We weren't seeing nothing out, then our motor go dry. The tank was only two gallon; they got no big 5-gallon. It run out of gas after too long.... Me and Davy see it real close, hiding in that one ice pack and then we walk with binoculars. But they holler and want us to go back you know. They say they don't play around with those.

Josh: Was it some kind of watchdog, like with ugzruk when one always watches out for the others?

Arthur: I don't know, maybe, some people say? We weren't seeing the game.

Josh: What did they call those kind, what you guys saw, in Iñupiaq?

Arthur: Mermaid, they got a name, mmm...crazy... It's *kununigaq* that's the Eskimo name for those.

Josh: Is that the only time you see one of those?

Arthur: It was sitting on the ice, it look once in a while toward us, but it was watching that other guy with rifle, who was walking with a rifle that time. It was Fred Avasuk that was on the other boat, he was with another boat. Those guys were way other there. We got only one boat with us. They must of stop further out. He don't pay attention to us even though we were close but to that other guy who is walking with rifle you know.

Josh: I wonder why it never pay attention to you guys?

Arthur: I don't know, just watching with binoculars and putting gas in the motor. That's all, maybe that's how come.

Josh: Because it knew you weren't hunting?

Arthur: Yeah!! But me and Davy were about the same age and were hiding among the ice and go toward it, go watch it you know. We watch it for a while, then that old guy [James Moses] say "You fellas come back don't play with that." He told us not to play with it like that. But he [mermaid] never even scared of us. That person look at us like this [sideways] he look like human. The body [upper torso] is human with long hair all the way back, but this one here got no tits you know?

Josh: Is that the same kind they sometimes catch in nets?

Arthur: Yeah! But they take 'em out when they're alive and let them go, they never take 'em, just let them go.

Josh: That's what I always hear too.

Arthur: I never hear no one ever see a dead one. Even face like us you know, but real long hair. I hear from other person when we say we see that mermaid you know, they say they see some in the water too but their hair was in the front. That way they can travel long ways. When they catch in net, they can say something and let it go. They will turn into something, what they call. That's the way they are so you can have some kind of seal. That's what they say anyway if you catch mermaid on a net, turn to some kind of seal. Yeah me and Davy if we didn't get called back we would've gone real close to it. We weren't gonna play with it. We just wanted to see with binoculars real close.

Josh: You could see it pretty good though?

Arthur: Yeah, real clear. Real white ice real clear, like what ugzruks always be on real clean ice. Yeah we see one. They say there is someone sitting over there and that older guy say that is not a person. That's a mermaid, but never say mermaid he say *kununigaq*. It got one long leg, not like person it's like a seal. We never see, but we ask that old guy, he say they got no legs just a tail.

Josh: That was James Moses who tell you that?

Arthur: Yeah Jacob Minguna and James Moses was the elders.

Josh: Kununigaq, they always watch out for seals or? ...

Arthur: I don't know? But the people they say if you see that kind, not to bother that kind. That's how come that elder with us, he call, "come on, come on, we gotta go, before something happen to us...Then when we go out again Jake Minguna say, "I hope we won't see nothing like that again." We gotta hunt what we're hunting. But I think they [animals, mermaids] always hear us.

Josh: So he said that so, they [kununigaq] would know you were not trying to go after that kind?

Arthur: Yeah uh-huh. Yeah! Not that kind we're hunting for ourselves you know, for ugzruk.... Well good thing I tell somebody before I die!! Yeah I am the last one now today who was there. (April 3, 2008)



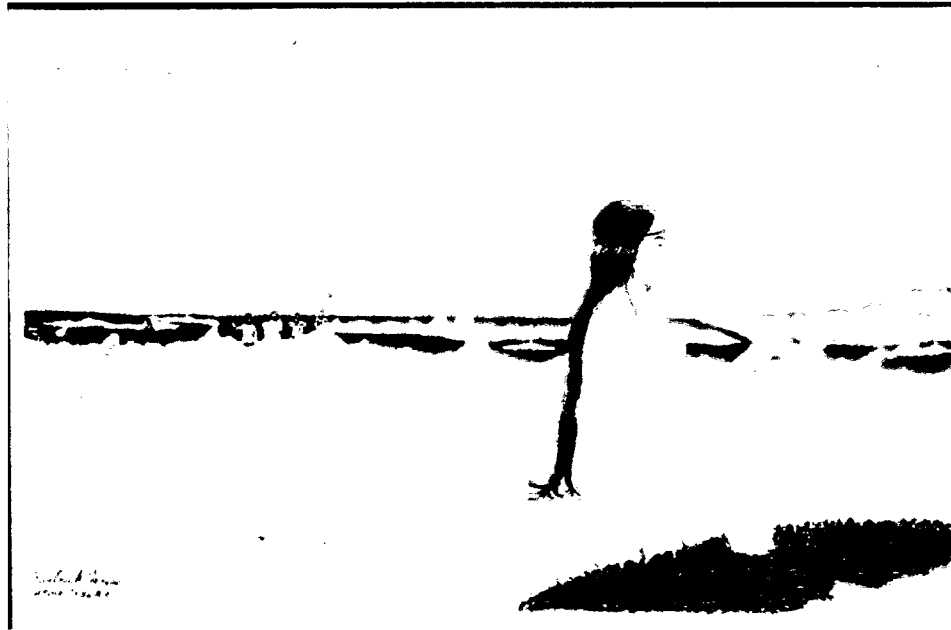


Figure 4 “Eskimo Mermaid” painting by James Moses. The digital image of the Eskimo Mermaid was provided by Molly Lee and is used here with permission.

Burch (1971); Fienup-Riordan (1994) Merkuer (1991); Spencer (1959) all report the presence of similar beings similar to the kununigaq across the arctic. Catching kununigat (pl), in seal nets or what Spencer (1959: 261-2) refers to as mermen was not uncommon for Iñupiat living along on the North Slope during winter. Upon releasing a kununigaq caught in a net the hunter was entitled to request an animal, up to the size of a beluga, though ugzruit were the most common animal to request. The Kununigaq or merman would return in form of animal requested, and could be identified in animal form by the composition of their organs. The liver, in particular would be more congruous rather than the naturally more lobed shape of a seal liver. Similar occurrences have taken place in Shishmaref within the memories of elders. Many older hunters also suggested at different times they found hair in their seal nets that they attributed to a kununigaq that had escaped. In 2008 a hunter reported to me that he had caught an ugzruk with a single

kidney. The abnormality of this ugzruk caused him to consider elders' accounts, which also recount times when people didn't release a kununigaq that was in human form and subsequently died. He was somewhat trepidatious about the ramifications that catching such an animal might have on his future hunting success. Arthur's experience with a kununigaq, as well as those of the other hunters who were with him, all of whom have now passed away, continues to inform Kigiqtaamiut hunters' understandings of bearded seals, sea ice and the phenomenal world in general.

Another being associated with sea ice that has been historically encountered in the Shishmaref area in living memory is a *nagzriinataq* literally meaning something with horns. A *nagzriinataq* is a large being, somewhat shaped like a walrus with large tusks or horns that extend and retract with its breathing. Other descriptions suggest it is shaped like a conical shell. Seeing one is considered an indicator that there will be a successful spring hunting season. There is a song that describes *nagzriinataq* as a being of both the land and the marine environment.

*Nakzriinataq, taamna,*                      Nakzriinataq, this one

*Nakzriinataq taamna,*                      Nakzriinataq, this one

*Imigmunluu Nunamun Luu,*      In the water. In the land

Stories about *nagzritataq* were often used to scold children about playing with animals or engaging in other behavior that violated the principles of *aņizugaksrat iniqtiġutait*. One hunter suggested to me that he believed *nagzriinataq* to be a made up story elders used to scare kids from playing on the lagoon ice in spring. He suspected that sightings were actually large pieces of ice that were frozen to the bottom of the lagoon, which would in spring suddenly and dramatically break free and surface.

That some hunters have witnessed the *nagzriinataq* and others discount its presence and relate it to natural processes is not locally viewed as posing contradictions. Rather, as the central use of *nagzriinataq* stories are to inform people about the potential consequences of certain behavioral modalities, directly witnessing a *nagzriinataq* is not a prerequisite to engaging its narrative role as instruction and warning. The potential ramifications of playing with animals or for playing around unsafe ice conditions are the

same. Both can result in loss of human life. The results for such actions may not be immediate. Often accidents or mishaps occur well after an act that seemed to violate suggested behavior. These are attributed to actions one may have taken at an earlier point in one's life (Tyrrell 2009).

The nagzrinataq, Arthur's experience with a kununigaq, and related occurrences have influenced hunters' understandings, shared experiences, and observations of the world as sentient and relational, which are the central tenets of both *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* and *silam inua*. Kigiqtaamiut hunters' intersubjective awareness of the world as responsive to human actions and intentions in ultimately not-fully-knowable ways are expressed through both hunters' practices and their ways of discussing hunting. These understandings are revealed through hunters' ways of explicitly not talking about animals and hunting in certain settings, the specific terminology they use to discuss *ugzruk* and seal behavior, self-regulation, and the role of luck. All of these understandings are involved in catching animals.

### 3.4 LUCK/SUCCESS

The attentiveness and responsiveness of both animals and the phenomenal world to hunters' thoughts, actions, and intentions is not limited to the acts of hunting and being out on the country or on the sea ice. Even in the village, hunters are careful about how they discuss hunting and *ugzruit* prior to hunting. In the midst of a hunt, *ugzruit* can reveal themselves as powerful and active co-participants, shaping the outcome of an encounter. Even when they're not hunting, or simply preparing for a hunt, many hunters still exercise caution in how they behave toward *ugzruit* and other animals. Cautious hunters do not assume that the perceptive powers of *ugzruit* reach into the village, nor do they explicitly deny the possibility of it. Fienup-Riordan (1994:88-91) notes that recent Yup'ik seal hunting practices indicate that success in hunting was at least partially dependent upon the animals' approval of hunters actions and their state of mind (Fienup-Riordan 1994:88). Throughout the non-seal hunting times of the year both men and women worked to ensure that seals would return to them during spring hunting.

Men prepared new and attractive hunting equipment, as they believed that seals appreciated being killed by beautiful weapons. They set new kayak covers to bleach in the sun, and painted their bentwood hunting hats with white clay, as the seals preferred clean white things. Women likewise carefully stitched new gut parkas and hunting boots both to protect and empower the hunters and to attract and please the seals...They try to smell like the land so the ones they could catch cannot go away from them. So through smoke or some other way, by wiping some product of earth on themselves, they tried to be the same smell of the land...Each hunter acted as *ek'eralria*, literally “the one crossing over,” every year in preparation of the first seal hunt of the season. (Fienup-Riordan 1994:91-92)

Willerslev (2007:83) likewise describes how Yukaghir hunters refrain from close human contact prior to going out toward hunting camps. Specifically they avoid contact with children. When they use the sauna, before departing to camp they rub dry birch leaves on their bodies to mask their human-ness and make themselves more attractive to moose. The practicality of these actions, as well as those of Kigiqtaamiut hunters, must be considered against their particular experiences with animals. Kigiqtaamiut hunters don't state that animals are aware of what they are doing or thinking in village life, nor do they explicitly limit the degree to which human behavior can influence future events in unforeseeable ways. The following conversation between Clifford and myself offers some insight into his understandings of the capacity of animals and the environment to respond to human actions and intentions.

Clifford and I stayed up last night going through gear and getting ready for hunting tomorrow. He was, as he often is, highly critical of the practices of the younger generations of hunters.

“Those guys, they always talk any old way about hunting. They say I know about the ice, they don't know, they think any old kind of white ice is okay, they don't think about frozen slush, you know *qinu*.” But when they ask me, or say, “Hey Clifford is it good to go out, or when are we gonna start to gets ugzruk,” then I tell 'em all I can. I ain't stingy about sharing. But them guys who talk like, “I am going to get my moose, or I'm gonna get my caribou,” they won't. They are just going to get lost or broken down or something. They ain't gonna catch nothing. I know, I've been hunting all my life. You never know what might happen out there or out on the country. You just gotta be careful and wait and see. Maybe your

gonna get luck or maybe just get skunked. Guiding it's the same way alright. Those hunters always try to ask me, "Clifford I am going to get my bear tomorrow?" or something. I tell them, "Look, just wait. We will go look around but I don't know what we're going to find." Even Brian (A non-Native guide whom Clifford works with) sometimes he'll tell some guy he's going to get a moose tomorrow. I told Brian, "Well I guess I'm done, I'll go home tomorrow I guess." They ain't supposed to be that way. That is why even though we're getting ready right now I know we're just going to have a look. Maybe try go down coast. But we don't know what going to happen maybe we won't even go.... (May 18 2007)

On another occasion a hunter named Stanley expressed his discontent to me about how his hunting partner talked about hunting.

I ran into Stanley the other day when I was looking for John at school, and we went over to Ben and Sue's for hot cakes. As we walked back to the school afterwards he was talking about hunting with Cal. Who is one of his primary hunting partners.

Stanley: I don't know about that guy sometimes. Even, he knows better, he always likes to say he's going to catch this or that. I always try to tell him, Cal, don't have to talk that way, you can't know, sometimes I'm real bugged when he's like that. I think probably don't even need to go hunting, were not going to see anything, caribou or moose or wolverine. I just try to tell him we are just going riding around.... (February 10 2008)

Cautious hunters are careful not to explicitly claim or be boastful about ugzruk leading up to the first ugzruk hunt of the season. When finally getting ready to go they might simply suggest they are going to look around. If ice conditions are poor and the leads are blocked, a hunting crew might return after only a few hours. However, if hunting conditions are good, a hunting crew might stay out for 48 hours or more looking for ugzruit and head right back out after returning with their catch in order to take advantage of the conditions.

Anderson (2000:125) writes that Evenki reindeer herders employ a similar cautious approach that avoids any form of insinuating any belief in an impending potentially successful encounter with an animal. Therefore, hunters would not even sharpen their knives before heading out. In another example a Ukrainian veterinarian wished a hunter "good luck" as he prepared to go out. The hunter replied, "May your tongue dry up"

(Anderson 2000:125), implying that such comments could have potentially negative consequences on the hunters success through the indication of possible success.

The avoidance of making a direct reference to hunting is not limited to ugzruk hunting. Hunters may say they are going to look around, that they are going riding around or going boating at other times of the year as well and avoid explicitly saying they are going hunting. However, the moments leading up to the first ugzruk hunt of the year are when hunters are most cautious when speaking about hunting and animals.

While John Boy and I were loading the sleds to go out to the johnboat, which we'd left at the ice edge, Clifford offered us some direction. "If you guys should get luck and you have to move it [ugzruk] across flat ice back to the boat, you can tie a rope to it and pull it across the ice, if it's far. You know, if you guys should get luck." (May 23 2006)

Clifford's father Alex Weyiouanna, also uses the word "luck" to describe the feasibility of catching animals.

These hunters when they treat animals nice they have good hospitality from these hunters. They see the hunter when he is coming. They recognize this person. Then submit itself to the hunter. It will submit to the hunter since he treats animals fairly, that hunter. These sayings are true because I use to hear too. Some with teeth (animals), they fail to catch. They cannot come near animals with teeth. Animals could not go near this hunter when he has that reputation. When he has a grudge toward animals; the animals know him. Because my father hunted, the game with teeth he could not catch. Could not kill. Animals with teeth shy away from him. These with teeth are wolves, polar bears, brown bears, wolverines. These animals with teeth would not get close to him....These animals were very smart...because they have talked about them, the way our elders talked about them. Because too myself those [grandparents] of ours elderly ladies too when I helped them they would "wish me luck." And I heard them animals those will give themselves to you easily. (Shish-EN-83-009-T1)

A prominent elder now living in Nome, and who grew up hunting ugzruk in the Cape Espenberg area near Shishmaref, explained to me why he felt he had luck in his hunting career when I told him about my recent inability to catch ptarmigan when I really wanted to.

Josh: ... Yeah, I sure wanted to get alright. Francis told me and Micksuq to go up coast that young bulls (caribou) were real close. So, me and Mick went up there. Ben told us to so we could try to hunt ptarmigan for Shirley. But we didn't see any game.

Ethel: Gee, Francis shouldn't talk that way. He should know better. Tell him Dan, so he can know this kind. You know how you get luck from hunting when you were young.

Dan: Well I remember the first time I got ugzruk. Hunting at Cape. I was the young one that time, mostly just doing the camp chores. But they let me try and I catch one. Boy I was glad. When we went back to Deering I told my mom, "I got ugzruk, I got ugzruk." I told my mom. She scolded me; she said, "You can't act like that." You have to give it away. She told me I had to give it to this old woman who lived all by herself. I was scared to take it to her, but I did. And I always had luck catching after I do that. Even I never hunt for some reason, you know for moose or any kind, I always get. Someone give me, or when I would go hunting I get luck. Somehow, I don't know why.

Ethel: See he was blessed by that elder, and she let him catch, you know, get luck with animals, ugzruk or any kind, he always get. He was blessed by an elder, that's why. Even he never hunts anymore, because he is too old! [laughing] Even driving still, crazy! Our boys though, when they go out riding, they always [catch animals]. So you shouldn't talk some kind of way because animals, they know. They can hear you maybe or something or...

Dan: That is why my mom let me give it away to that elder so I would have luck in hunting. When you see these things, our ways, they are true. When you learn how we do, about animals or ugzruit, even plants and berries too I guess, these things are true. (October 18 2007)

The stories illustrate something of the nature of luck in Kigiqtaamiut experiences. They highlight the importance of respectful relations with and between lands, animals, and persons as important toward achieving luck but not guaranteeing it. In particular, they highlight how hunters understand the possibility for luck to emerge (or not) based on an individual's actions as understood through one's own personal experience. Clifford attempts to achieve luck by avoiding making predictions about the possibility of catching animals as such predictions can potentially result in lands and animals responding to his

actions by not revealing anything to catch. Stanley complains that his hunting partner is negatively influencing their chances at catching animals by boastfully claiming what he plans to catch in the absence of any assurances of actual success. Finally, Dan claims that his lifetime of luck in catching and receiving animals comes from the fact he was “blessed” by an elder as a young man when he gave away the first ugzruk he caught. He also stresses the importance of not assuming success but maintaining a humble respect and appreciation for lands and animals. These examples all demonstrate the need for subtle yet intentional actions by hunters to increase their chances of successfully catching animals through a range of modes of demonstrating respect.

Luck and its role in hunting success, as realized in various manifestations in hunting, has been variously attended in subarctic hunting ethnographies across the circumpolar North (Humphrey 1996; Sharp 2001; Smith 1998; Speck 1935; Willerslev 2007). There is not a direct translation of luck in Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq, nor is luck or power generally discussed in historic and contemporary pan-Inuit ethnographies in which hunting figures prominently (Balikci 1970; Brewster 2004; Burch 1975, 1998; 2005; 2006; Boas (1964 [1888]) 1888; Briggs 1998; Dahl 2000; Fienup-Riordan 1983; 1990; 1994; 2005; 2008; Lowenstein 1992; 1993; Wenzel 1991; Nelson 1969; Nelson E.W. 1983; Nuttall 1992; Spencer 1959). In Bering Strait Iñupiaq the word *añu* relates to catching animals or having success (Anunguzuk pers. comm. 2009). When leaving to go hunting, one might say *añuymaugut*, “May we be successful,” or in speaking to hunters about to leave, one might utter *añuymausi*, “May you be successful.” A good hunter, one who has success/luck is an *añusuq* (one who is successful). In the eastern arctic the post-base *sujuk* implies a person is a successful hunter and actively engaged in hunting life and recognized as “a real hunter” (Shannon & Freeman 2009:45).

For Shishmaref hunters, luck is synonymous with success in catching ugzruit. Luck may or may not be a substitution for *añu*. Fluent Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq speakers suggested they were not aware of an Iñupiaq word for luck, but they use the word luck regardless, as substitute for talking about catching ugzruk in an effort to increase their chances for success. Regardless of its potential historic linguistic connection with *añu*,



luck is prominently featured in the lexicon of contemporary Kigiqtaamiut hunters. Further, seeking to manifest luck and increase one's opportunities for luck/success in hunting is central to Kigiqtaamiut hunting today.

As previously stated one way hunters attempt to increase their success/luck is through avoiding directly referencing hunting, ugzruit, or the desire to "get" by utilizing a hunting lexicon that does not specifically speak about "hunting" as hunting. In the previously mentioned example of Arthur's account of the encounter with a kununigaq, he noted that upon leaving and continuing to look for seals one of the elders spoke aloud that they did not want to encounter another kununigaq. He therefore says out-loud they were just looking for seals for themselves. In doing so he distances their actions from the kununigaq in order to increase their opportunities for success at catching seals.

Avoidance of directly referring to ugzruk hunting prior to the hunt, through substitution and use of the word luck, is one way hunters attempt to increase their chances of catching ugzruk. Another is to diminish one's personal role toward realizing success. Therefore, when talking about catching ugzruk, hunters will speak in such a way so as to downplay the role their actions had toward catching ugzruk. To do so hunters will minimize their efforts, suggesting them as "play." Phrases like "let's go play look around,"<sup>46</sup> "I play shot that ugzruk, holy cow I hit it!" or "I play took my rifle with me just in case" are commonly used by hunters, during, before, and after hunting, in a variety of conversational circumstances.

Central to how play is locally used requires consideration of how it removes the intentional actions of an actor from the results of their actions. Bateson (1978:125) writes that central to understanding the social role of play is the consideration that actions that fall under the category of play have a different relevance from the actions of non-play. Bateson (1979:125) goes on to suggest, "It may even be that the essence of play lies in a partial denial of the meanings that the actions would have in other situations." Examined in light of Bateson's analysis, hunters' use of play as a "denial of meaning" suggests hunters intentionally use "play" to diminish both their role and the significance

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<sup>46</sup> Not playing with animals is a central dimension of Kigiqtaamiut aṅizugaksrat iniqtiḡutait. Play here is used in a different context.

of their actions in order to realize success. As it is used by hunters, it might be more succinctly understood as a means of pointing out that their role in successfully catching an animal is limited.

By saying “I shot an ugzruk while hunting” the hunter accepts full responsibility for the outcome of the hunt. The meaning of the action “I shot an ugzruk” places responsibility solely within hunters’ actions. The statement “I play shot an ugzruk” recasts the hunters actions, through “partial denial.” It downplays the intentional significance of hunters’ actions. Play hunting expands the intentional role of animals in hunting success. Equally, and perhaps most significant in a Kigiqtaamiut hunting context, it opens hunting events up for personal interpretation wherein factors and forces beyond control of hunter are recognized as bearing partial responsibility for his success. The ability to get luck or have success is not presumed to exist solely in the hunter, which would assume a degree of personal authority to predict and control the outcome of a hunt, a dangerous prospect according to the tenets of anizugaksrat iniqtiġutait. However, a lack of success is not attributed to or blamed on animals. A dismissal of personal actions and intentions toward getting luck would presume a removed and superior existential vantage point over ugzruk. Here it is pertinent to examine the actual interaction between the hunter and the ugzruk where the multiplicities of factors determining the occurrence of luck are most fully realized. It is during these encounters that Bateson’s notion of the partiality of play takes on increased significance.

### 3.5 PRESENTATIONS AND MASKED DECEPTIONS IN HUNTING PRACTICES

Up to this point my presentation of Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ ways of knowing have emphasized individual and shared understandings as processual and largely grounded in personal experiences. They have been demonstrated as complex, intersecting, and mutually informative in inconsistent and ambiguous ways. This is no truer than during the direct interactions between hunters and animals. These interactions are variously understood by hunters, and, concurrently, the understandings I developed through shared experiences with hunters are diverse, incomplete, and often ambiguously incongruous.

Kigiqtaamiut hunters' actions and their articulated understandings of their actions are not consistent and often appear contradictory. However, this does not make them inconsistent with Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing. Personal understandings are ultimately the most significant elements that inform individual hunters' actions. The complex ambiguity of personal understandings of hunters' interactions with animals defies conforming to a consistent pattern. The discussion I offer here provides ethnographic examples and phenomenological tools to use in considering hunters' actions and statements, and to help expand ethnographic understandings of human/animal interactions. However, I do not attempt to characterize these interactions as anything but inconsistent and contradictory. Attempting an all-encompassing characterization of these interactive moments would contrast the fluidity and ambiguity inherent in Kigiqtaamiut hunting and knowing.

Chapter two discussed how hunting allowed for movement between the dualities of village and the country, self and other, and hunters and animals. I suggested that while hunting, observing, and watching animals, hunters empathetically oscillate between self and other, human and animal. For while a hunter watches an animal, that animal in turn watches the hunter watching it. Each is responding to the other, responding to the self. It is through observing oneself through the actions and behaviors of an animal in response to the hunter that hunters oscillate between self and other. Hunting provides an interactional context for movement between self and other, between human and animal. At the same time, the act of hunting also maintains the boundary between humans and animals.

Throughout this chapter I have highlighted the environment and interactions with animals not as a setting or backdrop, but as dimensions of an active interactional and relational world. Hunters' experiences likewise go on to suggest that animals are active co-participants in hunting encounters. They are thought to be aware of and responsive to hunters' actions. As previously suggested, the extent or limits of animals' powers of awareness are not determined or definitively known. They are experienced. Hunters comment that animals, and especially ugzruk, know when they are being hunted. Often

after hunters are no longer looking for ugzruk and have turned their attention toward walrus, a curious ugzruk might swim close to the boat and study the hunters, comfortably aware it is not being hunted. Thus while sneaking up on ugzruk either in a boat or stalking them on land, hunters are not just watching ugzruk. They are watching ugzruk that are in turn watching the hunter(s) watching and responding to them. It is thus in this moment when a hunter must oscillate between watching the animal and monitoring, regulating, and modifying his own action as he watches the ugzruk respond to his actions and behaviors and tries to understand how the ugzruk is relating to him.

Essentially the hunter seeks to see himself through the animal's eyes, and he modifies his actions in order to allow the animal to stay relaxed as he continues to approach within shooting range. This involves the partial masking of one's projected intentions, as ugzruk know when they are being hunted. Therefore, to increase one's opportunity to be able to have success and get within shooting range, hunters must behave in a way that masks their intentions, their desire to "get."

The following two hunting narratives describe hunters' experiences in both responding to ugzruk that are in turn responding to them, and to the actualization of masked intentional behavior while stalking ugzruk.

I stayed with Clifford at the boat while John Boy went to stalk an ugzruk resting on ice. While he was sneaking and still in sight, Clifford talked about what he [John Boy] was doing.

Clifford: See Josh, how he always stop? See, because he knows that ugzruk wants to look around alright. So he just gets low, and covers himself too, like polar bears do that too. Now he has to get around to the other side of him too so when that ug looks up he can have a good shot. That why he's going that way. And he has to stay on that good ice too....well I guess we got to wait until he comes back to hear stories now [smiling].

15 minutes later

Clifford: You get, John Boy?

Josh: I couldn't really see you after you had to go around that little hill. Then I just waited and hoped I would hear a shot.

Clifford: Yeah, I didn't want him to go help until we knew something.

John Boy: That one was really looking around alright. I had to go real slow. Even around funny ice too. I keep stopping when it try to look around. Cover my face like grandpa always say. Maybe it thought I was a little iceberg or something. So I keep going around to it until I am close to shoot alright. Then I talk to it. Because it won't look up so I play grunt like walrus so it can look around. Then I get it, right behind the ear you know, after it look up. So... I guess that is one.

Clifford: Yeah, that good, we can keep looking. Oh yeah they do that, like the time I got four. One at a time after they want to look up like that too...One is good though it's a start. You and Josh can drag it back? I'll make coffee while you guys go.... (May 23 2006)

I visited with Clifford's father Alex to discuss his understandings of animals responding to him in his hunting experiences.

Whenever I go to see Alex I am never prepared. I'll go over for coffee and he will go into an extensive description of hunting when he was growing up. Other times I go over, hoping to continue a discussion and am ready to record it and we simply sit and watch TV together. However tonight I finally "got luck." I went over for instruction and "inspection on the ulu" I have been making for Gehlen. After telling me where I needed to make some changes he told me a hunting story I'd not heard him tell before.

Alex: One time I get six ugzruks

Josh: That many? Holy Cow!!

Alex: Yeah, I go to them. They are resting on ice. So I sneak, even I cover my face with my arm. Just like polar bear cover his nose. That one, the leader of those ugzruk, like a watchdog. I wait until they all are resting. That one look out. I shoot him. He put his head down. Those other ones look at that watchdog and see him never move. So they stay that way. Next one lift its head, same thing. That's how I get six that one time.

Josh: Wow that is pretty good.

Alex: Yeah, I know! That time. That is why you have to try to get that one first. Some call it a watchdog, I don't know. But got to go after that one. Then another one takes over if that one is dead, even they don't

know, that one is shot. They just wake up every once and a while to look and see that watchdog is resting, that dead one. So then you shoot that next one. Just gotta be careful if it is near water they don't try to go in. Sometimes you gotta go right away, and hook em.  
(January 10, 2007)

To more fully understand hunters' actions and masking their hunting intentions, the desire to get in order to increase the opportunity to manifest luck/success and catch an ugzruk, we need to consider hunters' actions more carefully, not just as hunting, but hunting as not-(not)-hunting. Hunters certainly are hunting insofar as they are attempting to catch and kill ugzruk for consumption. But as they interact with ugzruk, or attempt to downplay their role in catching animals, or avoid referencing their actions as hunting, they are in those contexts "not hunting," while concurrently they most certainly are hunting. They are in effect not-(not)-hunting.

One means of considering not-(not)-hunting on a phenomenological level is to turn to Sartre's (1956: 86-116) conceptualization of Bad Faith. Under the modality of Bad Faith, Sartre (1956:103) suggests that persons "play" the role of being things, and in doing so become those things, yet they are only those person/things to the degree they are not those things. To explain his position he offers the example of a waiter in a café, writing, "...the waiter in the café cannot be immediately a café waiter in the sense that this inkwell is an inkwell, or the glass is a glass" (Sartre 1956:102). The person becomes the waiter through intentional actions, acting the part of the waiter. "The waiter in the café plays with his condition in order to realize it." (Sartre 1956:102) In that vein, the waiter is the waiter in the mode of "being what I am not" (Sartre 1956:103).

Returning to the context of the Kigiqtaamiut hunter stalking an ugzruk on ice, the ugzruk sees the hunter in the distance looking toward him, sensing his presence. The hunter realizes this through observing the ugzruk responding to his movements. Thus the hunter changes his mode of being to one of appearing (to an ugzruk) to not be trying to catch an ugzruk, in order to try and catch it. Slowly he moves closer to it while the ugzruk lies with its head down. When it looks up it does not see a hunter. It may see that the hunter is there, but not as a hunter. The hunter is concealed in a white parka cover

blending in with the sea ice, covering his face with his arm. As he gets closer he maintains his composure and his “play” of not hunting, and the ugzruk remains relaxed. When he is close enough as John Boy tells us, he may “talk” to the ugzruk who looks up and in that moment the hunter shoots. Throughout the interaction between the hunter and the ugzruk, the hunter masks his intentions in order to hunt, or as Sartre suggests he is “playing” at not hunting. He is not-(not)-hunting.

Willerslev’s (2007) description of moose hunting practices among Yukaghir suggests that a central tenet of their moose hunting strategies is to transform themselves from human persons into moose in order to lure moose to them. This is done by moving like moose through the forest, wearing moose hide jackets, with the hair worn outward and headgear with protruding ears and during winter using heavy skis with fur of moose that imitate the sound of the animal moving through snow. Willerslev suggests that through mimesis hunters come to occupy a space in between being a human person and being an animal. Hunters adopt an animal’s perspective, yet they also remain human hunters. Willerslev (2007:95) concluded that Yukaghir hunters transform themselves, yet occupy a liminal space of in-between-ness, that of being a not-(not) animal. Nelson (1973:94), writing of Gwichin moose hunting practices in northeastern Alaska, likewise suggests that the central idea in their hunting practices is to “act just like a moose.” These examples of hunter transformations are illuminating, yet imitating moose in a boreal forest environment and stalking a seal resting on ice represent two drastically different hunting contexts.<sup>47</sup>

Kigiqtaamiut hunters do not act like an animal to attract it to them, yet the notion of not-(not), applies in both cases, although in different ways. Within the Yukaghir context articulated by Willerslev (2007), hunters transforming themselves into imperfect copies of moose is key. However, Kigiqtaamiut hunters do not hint, imply, or suggest in any way that their hunting involves transformation. Despite the camouflaged role played by donning parka covers that allow them to take on a quality of the sea ice setting,

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<sup>47</sup> It is important to state that, in historic pre-firearm hunting, hunters would act like seals in order to get close to seals resting on ice. This hunting technique does offer important parallels to both Nelson’s and Willerslev’s notions of transformation. However this is not how contemporary hunters describe or conceptualize their hunting actions.

transformation is not a presentation of themselves or their hunting practices that Kigiqtaamiut hunters are comfortable with or use. Transformation suggests tricking animals and discounts the role that animals play in interacting with hunters during the hunt.

Most Kigiqtaamiut hunters are careful to not discount the potential role an ugzruk had in determining the outcome of a hunt or to discount ugzruit intelligence. Though some individual animals are viewed as less intelligent than others and most hunters have experienced individual animals they viewed as highly intelligent, most hunters are hesitant to discuss success as “tricking them.” This would imply that it was the skill of the hunter that was essential toward realizing success.

Yet trying to appear as ice, even if one is not trying to appear as a seal, does deceive ugzruit into thinking that the hunter is other than what he is, that he is something other than a hunter attempting to kill it. This is true even if trickery, per se, is not a hunters stated intentions. Equally, the stories of Alex and John Boy inadvertently suggest deception. John Boy grunts like a walrus, tricking the bearded seal into looking toward him so he can shoot it. Alex describes concealing himself in order get close to resting ugzruit. There is ultimately a level of irreconcilable ambiguity and inconsistency between a suggested vision of masked intentions and animals’ roles in determining the outcome of hunts. This speaks to both the limitations in my own experiential knowing and the diverse personal experiential understandings hunters have of their actions and relationships with ugzruit. At this point it is pertinent to discuss how hunters experience their inability to catch ugzruk as both a synthesis of personal responsibility and their performative skill coupled with the awareness and responsiveness of the ugzruk in response to their actions.

### 3.6 HAVING A MESSED UP SYSTEM

When describing his experiences trying to catch the first ugzruk of the hunting season, Clifford would explain how hard it was for him. What made it particularly difficult was having “one’s system” all messed up.



I mean when you want to catch one. Maybe when it is the first one of the year, and you are really looking around. Then maybe you see one, on ice or in the water and you want to try to catch it alright, but even when you are close and should be able to shoot good. My rifles are always sighted in too. So then you see that thing close and Man! Can't even come close to it. Here finally after trying five or six time maybe you can get it. You know shoot it. It's hard that first one, when your system is all messed up. (May 20, 2006)

Kigiqtaamiut hunters discuss the causality behind this and similar occurring incidents in relation to the interactions between multiple dimensions beyond that of an individual hunter's shooting, uncontrolled breathing or a poorly sighted rifle. The personal assumption of responsibility suggested through the statement "my system was messed up" speaks to the disjunction of the body/mind self, resulting in poor shooting. It is a failure to live or be fully present in the moment. Through this absence of the self in the here and now one fails to fully connect with the immediate place one is in and with the animal one is trying to catch. The failure to connect with animals in the flow of the moment results from the failure to be in the moment of one's own immediate experience. Equally, though, is the recognition and assumption that animals are aware of and responding to the hunter, his attitudes, actions, presentation of himself, and his ability or inability to connect with the animal. Thus it is not just that the hunter's poor shooting is the result of *his* "system being messed up," but that ugzruit are equally aware of and responding to the hunter's feelings and intentions, so the hunter is not able to successfully catch animals because he is not successfully able to be completely in the moment. Here he is excited and expectant and removed from the flow of being in the moment. This excitement is projected outward from the self and into the world toward the animal, which in turn responds to the hunter. In addition to animals responding to a hunter's lack of presence in the moment, the hunter who cannot focus shoots poorly or wildly.

I went hunting with the two Allockeoks today [John Boy and Jeffery] J.B. and I were both pretty excited to use the skin boat in the channel while there was still open water. I too was equally interested in the experience

of hunting in Allockeok's old boat with the two new Allockeoks.<sup>48</sup> We were seeing lots of seals even two anmiat surfaced real close to the boat. After Jeffery [our shooter] missed two shots John Boy [the driver. I was navigator], called out to him.

John Boy: What the fuck, can't play around with those man.

Jeffery: Yeah, I dunno what wrong with me, or it's my gun, or I can't shoot, something, or it's my system? Maybe should let Josh or...?  
[laughing]

John Boy: Anyway.

The next two seals that came up Jeffery shot right away. We kept at it throughout the day. That night when we went home we had three anmiat, 2 spotties and a couple of common seals too. What was interesting was Jeffery is usually a pretty good shooter, to miss that close was not like him. He referred to his system being off. I tried to ask him about it and he just hinted that "maybe those anmiaks didn't want to let me win."

The day before I had been out with Dennis and Rob, and Rob had suggested something similar to Jeffery's comment. Dennis was driving as usual, and Rob who is locally recognized as being quite "deadly" was shooting. He had a new .204 which he had just sighted in. After missing three seals Rob, in his laid back style looked over at me.

Rob: Shit, I can't shoot today. I am off or something with seals or my breathing?

Josh: Over there, oh wait, black face [male ringed seal].

Rob: Oh, Josh is learning. I better let him follow me next spring.

Dennis: No way, I got him first! Anyway you better drive; I am shooting good right now. I am real happy with my shooting past few days, or I am lucky or something.

Dennis got out his .22-250 from underneath the *siu* [bow] the next two seals on ice we saw, Dennis shot them. Both with perfect headshots.

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<sup>48</sup> William Allockeok was Clifford's grandfather and John Boy's great grandfather. Both John Boy and Jeffery were given the Iñupiaq name of Allockeok. The umiaq we were hunting in was Allockeoks umiaq that I rebuilt with Clifford over a course of two years.

Having a messed up system in Kigiqtaamiut hunting does not speak to a singularity of possibilities or events. Nor does it speak to limitations that reside solely within the performance or the presence in the moment of the hunter. One's system includes, but is not limited to, their shooting skills, the presence of the hunter, their being in the moment, and their ability to interact with and respond to animals. This is the ability to regulate one's breathing, to hold one's rifle steady, and anticipate where a seal will rise out of the water. To hold a breath and let it out slowly. To squeeze and not pull the trigger. One's system also suggests that animals are aware of and responding to human intentions and actions with a degree of anticipation based on their perceptive powers.

Bateson (1978:118) writes, "Cross species communication is *always* a sequence of contexts of learning in which each species is continually being corrected as to the nature of each previous context." Bateson's comments can be considered within the framework of Kigiqtaamiut hunters' comments regarding their systems. Fundamentally, the reference point hunters use to suggest their system as messed up or off are their interactions with animals. Their individual and personal experiences, when they can't hit an animal they are shooting at. The combination of bad shooting and recognition of animals' awareness and responsiveness to human actions are experienced simultaneously and relationally as intricately connected.

Bateson's "sequences of contexts" speaks to the directly interactional relationship between hunters and animals. The "correction" is the application of experience the hunter gains through an event that he applies to future hunting encounters. Like other aspects of the relationality between humans and animals *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* suggests, it is only through the individual's personal experience of having their system off, feeling and experiencing animals responding him in the moment, that the hunter learns how to react and respond to an animal in a subsequent encounter. It is during the specific contexts of hunters' experiences with animals responding and reacting directly to them that hunters gain better understandings of themselves, animals, and their relationship with animals. Through these interactions hunters don't learn how to be, or be-in-the-world. Rather, the inability to have success is often largely a result of one's

perception, or misperception of their being in a moment, as they are unaware of their lack of presence in their activity due to other thoughts.

Clifford, Dennis, or Rob might understand their inability to get luck/success during a given hunt as a response to their experiences of having their systems messed up. Another hunter may have a very different range of experientially informed explanations for their success, or lack thereof. Moreover, how hunters understand the particular unfolding of a specific hunt may change through time, and the consideration of other hunter's experiences. A young hunter might suggest his uncle's gun is no good so he wasn't shooting well. While as an older hunter he might come to feel he was more directly responsible for his shooting, and or that the animal he was hunting "wouldn't let him win" because of something he was doing, or had done previously.

### 3.7 UGZRUK LEXICONICAL VARIATIONS

Describing one's system as messed up is one way some Kigiqtaamiut hunters understand and articulate their inability to catch animals. To further understand how hunters experience ugzruk as co-participants in hunting encounters that are capable of influencing the outcome of a hunt, we can consider the language hunters use to describe their empirical observations of ugzruk behavior, natural history, and their experiences while hunting them. Kigiqtaamiut hunters use one form of speech to describe ugzruk life history, ecological relations, and observed behaviors that are not responses to hunters' actions. They utilize another set of descriptions to describe ugzruk behavior when they are interacting with a hunter.

Ethno-biological terminology is largely composed of Iñupiaq words, and hunting provides one of the important opportunities younger and older hunters have to both use their Iñupiaq vocabulary when speaking to each other. Kigiqtaamiut hunters have five terms to describe the different life stages of ugzruk. Some of these terms have corresponding English ones. Ugzruk is a blanket term applied to bearded seals in general. It also refers to a fully mature adult bearded seal. A baby ugzruk is an *ugzruaqhiq*. A juvenile ugzruk is an *anmiak*. Anmiat (pl) are often referred to as teenagers and are noted for rendering the clearest oil.

Anmiak is regionally noted as a “Shishmaref word” and is not commonly used in other Bering Strait Iñupiaq communities. There are two observed age classifications for young adult bearded seals that are older than anmiat. One is *aktunaqshraq*. The skins from *aktunaqshraq* are used for making cordage, and boot soles. The slightly older is the *unagzuraq* (almost ugzruk). Most young hunters simply lump these two ugzruk together as “almost ugzruk.” Older hunters who are more fluent in Iñupiaq more often distinguish between these two life stage classifications

Others terms denote ugzruk physical behavior; a *uyuqtuaq* or a “whistler” is an ugzruk calling under water. They are only encountered in early spring and can be tracked underwater by following the sound. Auditory underwater tracking can continue for a half hour or more before an ugzruk may surface in shooting range. A *qagamazuraq* refers to an ugzruk resting on ice. Hunters often simplify the term as *qagama*, with statements such as “It’s sunny, if there were ugzruk they would want to qagama.” Ugzruit and other marine mammals that haul out on ice are simply called “swimmers” when they are in the water. Elderly hunters note that there is a word for them; however, at present swimmer is used almost exclusively. During early spring many ugzruk have bright red faces and are called “red faces.” Some hunters suggest this is from digging in the benthic zone to forage for clams. Others offer that it is sunburn from resting on ice during long sunny spring days. Red faces like the *uyuqtuaq* are encountered in early spring.

Hunters describe their interactive experiences with ugzruk using largely English vocabulary. The same descriptive terms are occasionally applied to experiences with other animals as well, but are most often applied to marine mammals, and especially to ugzruk. Just as some hunters understand their experiences with luck/success or their lack thereof, in relation to one’s system the terms offered here do not speak to a universal Kigiqtaamiut conceptual framework, but to some of the ways some hunters describe their experiences.

Boy [Ralph] came over while we were putting the skin on the umiaq. I was under the boat with the camp stove making holes in the fabric to lash it to the frame with. I could hear Clifford talking to Ralph about ugzruk hunting a few feet away and stopped to listen to their conversation. I was surprised to hear Ralph somewhat refute one of Clifford’s comments, for two reasons. The first was that Ralph is a much younger hunter, in his

mid thirties. The second was it was one of the only time I heard a hunter describe his experiences in a way that differed from how Clifford would describe his.

Clifford: You know how it is, when that first ugzruk is hard to get?

Ralph: Is it?

Clifford: Yeah you know how you want to try to be the first to get, and then you find one and you just can't get it.

Ralph: Oh, I don't really know about that kind, they always seem to be pretty tame for me. They let me try to go after them.

Clifford: Ha... They always let you ah? So I better go hunting with you next spring [laughing], because you always get luck.

Ralph: Iyah [laughing]. you can follow.  
(July 15, 2007)

Ugzruit or seal that come up close to boats and watch hunters or are very relaxed around them are considered "tame." Hunters, such as Ralph often suggest that tame ugzruk "let" you shoot at them. Often an ugzruk is so tame that a hunter who is not shooting well, or whose system is messed up, will be able to self-correct and eventually shoot and hit it. Other times an ugzruk that was tame will become "wild" only surfacing briefly and at great distances from the hunter. Wild ones are often noted as not wanting to let hunters win. A wild ugzruk's desire to not let the hunter win is observed in the animal's behavior. Furthermore, these "wild" animals, once shot, might "play try and sink" before hunters can get to them. During this situation a hunter might not just lose an ugzruk but he might also feel the loss to negatively influence his ability to get luck in future, by virtue of losing an animal.

When groups of ugzruk rest upon ice together one is usually more attentive than the others. This animal will look up more often than the others. These ugzruit are often called dogs or watchdogs. During the conversation I shared with Arthur about the kununigaq (referenced earlier in this chapter), I asked if the being he experienced was acting as a watchdog since Arthur had noted this being was watching them intently, and

they were not seeing any animals. When Alex shared his hunting story in which he shot six ugzruit, he described having to shoot the watchdog first. Use of the term dog also connects this intentional behavior to other beings as well. Spotted seals are known to sometimes have a dog with them. This is a *qazigat qimuktaat* (spotted seal watchdog). They are reportedly able to run across the water and alert the animals they are protecting to potential dangers.

Some hunters suggest that, among herd animals like spotted seals or walrus, watchdogs are common. Arthur reported that the kununigaq he encountered was a form of a “watchdog,” though he said he did not believe it was one. Recent and ongoing hunters’ observations of ugzruk watchdogs and *qazigat qimuktaat* provide examples of how hunters’ personal experiences and observations of animals in similar contexts allow for individual, intersubjective, and inconclusive possibilities while concurrently suggesting threads of possibilities and congruencies between them. This interaction between the singular personal experience and shared mutual understandings that derive from these individual experiences speaks to how shared understandings among Kigiqtaamiut hunters emerge and are continuously questioned and challenged according to one’s own experience.

### 3.8 SELF-REGULATION AS RELATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

The previous sections explored examples of hunters’ diverse understandings of the role of luck/success and of animals’ active co-participation in determining success in hunting. This section builds upon the previous one to consider how hunters seek to manage their relations with ugzruk. In particular I consider how some hunters view some of their hunting actions as forms of self-regulation in order to foster luck/success in future spring ugzruk hunts.

To connect this discussion of hunters’ experiences and practices with the regional analysis of changes in hunting practices that have developed in partial response to the technological and economic changes presented at the beginning of this chapter, it is valuable to consider how hunters view the number of animals they take annually in

relation to articulated family needs and the role of animals' co-participation in hunting success. Following passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1972, the economic dimension of marine mammal hunting vanished virtually overnight. During this period hunters moved away from relying on dog traction for transportation and toward snow machines. These two factors contributed to dramatic reduction in the number of animals hunters attempted to catch annually, as hunters no longer needed to maintain dog teams and were no longer able to commercially sell sealskins. As one elderly hunter emphasized to me, hunters went from being able to make a living through hunting to needing to make a living in order to go hunting.

Hunters are also aware of the wide-ranging discourse on climate change. As highlighted in chapter two, Shishmaref residents often find themselves at the center of broader discussions on climate change. To that end hunters pay close attention to forecasts predicting changes in ice coverage and marine mammal populations. These factors further contribute to the already noted unknowable and unpredictable nature of the world and the complex forces that contribute to hunting success or failure.

To further increase the potential for both short and long-term success, Kigiqtaamiut hunters carefully self-regulate their ugzruk hunting, limiting their harvest of ugzruk to basic familial needs. Even hunters in my own age cohort (early thirties) recall they used to try and catch 12 or more per family each year while they were growing up. Now they catch much less, as consumption and material needs have changed. During spring hunting, hunters try to catch an average of four fully mature ugzruk per family, and when possible they will supplement that harvest with two or three anmiat. Across Shishmaref this is generally acknowledged as the average amount a family needs to make enough seal oil and air dried "black meat" to last through the winter until the following spring.

During fall hunting, hunters focus on catching animals in order to sell their skins to the local village-run tannery, or to have skins tanned in order to sew slippers, mittens, hats and other crafts for sale. Animals shot during fall hunting are also used for immediate consumption, used to feed dogs, or maybe sold or given to other hunters who maintain recreational dog teams. Burns (1967) has suggested a 50% struck and lost



retrieval rate for ugzruk following the introduction of firearms. During the seasons I traveled with different family hunting crews, and I witnessed a much higher retrieval rate. Indeed, the majority of the seals shot by members of the crews I participated with were retrieved. When animals sank before they could be retrieved, considerable effort was invested in attempting to retrieve them with sink hooks. It is not suggested here that my data is broad enough to definitively challenge Burns' analysis. However, noting both the decline in harvest levels despite increased technological sophistication and the efforts I witnessed to retrieve the seals that sank, I believe that attributing the decrease in harvest levels to the introduction of firearms should be carefully reconsidered.

Diverse analysis of ethnographic literatures relating to indigenous peoples' conservation practices, or lack thereof, have promoted considerable debate and contrasting characterization of indigenous resource management practices against divergent analytical frameworks (Brightman 1993; Fienup-Riordan 1986; 1990; 1999; Hunn 1982; Krupnik 1993; Feit 1973; 1978; 2007; Krech 1999; Langdon 2006; 2007; Smith and Wishnie 2000 Willerslev 2007; Zavaleta 1999). Central to understanding this debate has been the notion of animals "giving themselves" and how this belief has shaped local hunting practices across the circumpolar north. Some analyses (Brightman 1993; Krech 1999; Zavaleta 1999; Willerslev 2007) in particular have suggested that because northern indigenous hunters believe animals offer themselves they take all that is "offered" with no conception of waste or efforts to limit their harvests. This argument is in part based on the conceptualization that many indigenous hunting groups have (prior to interaction with western scientists) no conception of regional animal populations and dynamics.

In his ethnography of Yukaghir moose hunting, Willerslev (2007:30) notes that state biologists spoke to hunters about the declining local moose population and the need for hunters' self-restraint. In contrast, Hunters believed that overhunting had not caused the decline, and claimed instead that some animals had simply moved out of the area. Willerslev continues by describing an incident when he and the hunters he was traveling with killed seven moose during a summer day. The leader of the hunters instructed them

to take only choice cuts of meat, leaving the vast majority of the meat to rot. Though offering no further analysis of this incident, Willerslev uses it to argue that Yukaghir hunters have no sense of waste. They perceive success in hunting to be dependent upon placating *khoziain* (an animal guardian), who “won’t feed people who don’t need to be fed” (Willerslev 2007:40). Thus he argues people do not store meat, as to store meat will bring bad luck and they will not be able to kill moose in the future. Thus hunters continuously hunt moose in order to maintain relations with moose and *khoziain* that will allow them to continue to have success in killing moose.

Fienup-Riordan (1990:172) similarly suggests Yup’ik notions of the recycling of animal souls “presupposes a more or less continuous supply of animals.” Her analysis, like Willerslev’s, suggests that continued success in catching animals was, and continues to be, premised upon human actions toward maintaining positive relations with animals (1990:172). If a hunter sees an animal he should try to catch it, for if the hunter does not take and fully use it when it is offered the animal may not reveal itself to him in the future. Equally significant to Fienup-Riordan’s argument, however, is *how* animals are treated respectfully through a prohibition against wasteful use.

If a man kills many seals, many land animals, if he does not treat them well but wastes the meat, they will be angry. In the spring the seals will come back. The animals will be moving everywhere. But that hunter will not get any; he will not be able to successfully hunt them. (Billy Lincoln in Fienup-Riordan 1990:173)

It was for this reason that Yup’ik ceremonies often involved elaborate distribution and consumption of food resources in order to promote the possibility of successful community harvesting in coming seasons (Fienup-Riordan 1990:174).

Yup’ik and Yukaghir conceptualizations of animals suggest their continuous renewability is at least partially premised on the behavior of hunters. In contrast to Yup’ik and Yukaghir hunters, contemporary Kigiqtaamiut hunters don’t explicitly suggest or deny the renewability of *ugzruk*. However, a central tenet of Kigiqtaamiut hunting has been the admonishments of elders that animals will not always be present and accessible, and that periods of relative abundance of animals will be followed by times of

hardship. In recent years hunters have witnessed the dramatic expansion of (introduced) muskoxen, as well as the western arctic caribou herd moving onto the Seward Peninsula, destroying the local commercial reindeer herds. Hunters also discuss how difficult ugzruk hunting is now compared to what they experienced 20 years ago, when hunters had more days to hunt, and hunting conditions bolstered by the higher quality of sea ice. These types of experiences further inform the pragmatic uncertainty of hunters' ways of knowing. These experiences with fluctuations and changes are enfolded into how hunters try to achieve luck/success through controlling their speech, avoiding direct references to ugzruk, through "play" hunting, and not-(not)-hunting. These actions are all dimensions of how hunters attempt to achieve short and long term success in ugzruk hunting.

I went boating today again with Dennis. I've learned that when he calls me up in the morning I better be ready to go right then, because a drive down to check out the channel means we are going boating, which means, better have everything you need to go. Rob and Wilber were there also, hunting seals from the beach.

Rob: Watcha guys gonna do?

Josh: *Atta?* [I dunno] Go boating?

Rob: [smiling] Oh you're gonna go boating ah? [laughing] Dennis wants you follow, because you're so deadly ah? [To Dennis] What's the plan umaliaq?

Dennis: You heard him, Josh is going to let me go boating I guess. [laughing]

We hunted in the main channel for several hours following a small lead that was kept open by the west channel current. Dennis shot four seals including one big spotted seal and two anmiat. We saw several large ugzruks resting on ice, but Dennis wasn't even excited about them, which surprised me, as Dennis hunts seals almost every day for his mom and for the tannery. I asked him why we were not trying to go after them

Josh: Hey Den, how come nobody goes after those big ugs. Fall time seems like they are easy, because they are so close, and mostly they just *qagama* (lay around) on this *siguliaq* (young ice)

Dennis: Not suppose to. Those are just for springtime. One time I shot a monster, biggest ugzruk I have ever caught, I was so happy. Man I got a scolding. I brought home to my mom all she said was “What did you do that for? We don’t go after big ones fall time, just young ones or seals!” So I never tried to after that. Mostly I guess because we do seal oil and everything during spring so we only go after those full ugzruks in spring, you know, and to make dry meat and stuffs. Can’t do that in the fall, it is too cold and wet, not with full ugzruk. So we just try to catch anmiaks and seals to eat and for skins. Anyway I don’t want to mess up my luck for spring hunting too. That is when it is most important to get anyway. You know ugs. I don’t know? What’s Clifford say about it?

Josh: Oh I never thought to ask until I saw those big bastards out there resting on ice so close, not even watching us and us with all these little ringed seals and everything.

Dennis: Yeah not suppose to go after those fall time, [laughing] so you better not even look that way anymore. You might play try to let me shoot the wrong kind and let me get scolding...

Josh: I never! [laughing] (November 2 2007)

The above dialogue highlights the rationale behind the self-restraint of Dennis’ and other hunters who do not go after ugzruk during fall hunting, though the opportunity is present. They avoid shooting them in the fall in order to increase their chances to successfully catch as many ugzruk as they need during spring hunting the following year. Here, as in other hunting contexts, hunters’ actions are executed in consideration of how their activities may potentially influence both immediate and future success.

Clifford and I stayed up tonight talking about the announcement we had heard on the radio about the Center for Biological Diversity’s proposal to have all ice seals listed as threatened or endangered. While it did not in any way speak to how those actions might impact hunting, it was certainly on his mind as we spoke.

Clifford: One thing I tell you if there was ever moratorium on ugzruk hunting that would really hurt us.

Josh: Yup that’s the truth, since ugzruks are the main one to hunt here.

Clifford: We only get so many for our families. We don't overharvest, just everybody here I guess, the village of Shishmaref or anywhere. Well I don't know what other villages do I guess. I always tell my boys to quit hunting they got to help the elders first. I mean after us, the family, you know after we get enough.

Josh: Like what we get for *akka* after what we catch to take care of us?

Clifford: Yeah! Shirley always say to us, "Just three and a couple young ones." When John Boy and Tyler and them want to keep hunting I tell them, "Well if you want to hunt ugzruks they are not for me you got help an elder." "Okay dad." That's what they say, and they go hunt, like Tyler he always want to get for Martha, he call her sister too ah?

Josh: Yeah, even we were still unloading from the boat, and he's all ready to go load the argo and take an ugzruk to her house [laughing], even when he called her he just says "I get you ugzruk," then I hear him say "it's your brother."

Clifford: A long time ago they use to get as many as they can get for dog feed and stuff and to sell. And they use to put them in pokes man that was good oil. Yeah before we leave wherever we camp we use to find a hill bury the pokes. I was with dad a couple of times, to go dig them out. Now though we catch less. We could get more all right, but might mess us up, you know, from waste or something. My ataata [grandfather] use to always say if you are on the ice and you catch something, seal or ugzruk and you can't bring it home then you gotta cut it open and let the guts<sup>49</sup> out. I dunno why, but he always do little things. But you see, you know how many we try to catch each year, hunting ah? I mean you're there for the whole thing anyway.

Josh: Yeah and I always visit other working down at their racks, like Ben and Sue, or Warren and Bessie, Mia and Ruben, other too. So I always pay attention to how many others get.

Clifford: Man you're getting as bad as us! You always gotta go look, [laughing] nose ah! You! (June 8 2008)

Both Dennis and Clifford intentionally avoid trying to hunt more than they need, though in slightly different contexts. Clifford points out that during spring, hunters only try to

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<sup>49</sup> Fienup-Riordan (1983; 1994) provides detailed discussions of the significance of the ceremonial treatment of seal bladders along the Yukon, and Kuskokwim delta region just south of Bering Strait.

catch as many ugzruk as they need to make seal oil, and dried meats to get through until the following spring. Within the context of fall hunting, hunters are trying to catch seals for immediate consumption and to sell their skins to the tribally managed tannery. Dennis suggests hunters avoid hunting bearded seals in order to increase their chances at having luck or success during spring hunts. Both actions further suggest that human actions in different contexts can influence success during spring hunting. For Kigiqtaamiut hunters, the issue is not whether animals are renewable or not. What is significant is the recognition of possibility, and presence of sentience in the world, and therefore how one's actions and intentions can influence hunting success.

Langdon (2003; 2006; 2007) has advanced the notion of relational sustainability as a set of practices and understandings that emerge from the recognition of shared qualities of human-persons and persons in other form. The recognition of animals as persons warrants specific behaviors in order to maintain a relationship that allows human hunters to continue catching or harvesting different animal forms. Relational sustainability is neither a system of management nor a resource conservation ethic (Smith and Wishine 2000), though it may have implications toward practices when considered against western epistemological constructs of natural resource management. Rather, Langdon (2003:7) writes that relational sustainability,

...takes seriously (and not as a metaphor or construction) the idea of the sociality of persons and creates a logic of engagement resting on essentially equivalent structures of knowing, attending, preferring and choosing among persons of various forms. It posits an essence of "personness" at the center of existence.

Relational sustainability emphasizes behavioral modes and actions of attentiveness to animal-others so as to encourage future mutually beneficial interactions. Self-regulation among Kigiqtaamiut hunters during both spring and fall seal hunting follows this modality of living in a social relationship with ugzruit. The suggested premise for self-regulation is to maintain the best possible chance for getting luck/success in future spring hunts. Hunters do not specifically suggest ugzruk are persons, just as hunters avoid making other definitive statements about the phenomenal world. Concurrently, hunters'

actions do respond directly toward maintaining long-term relational success with ugzruit and other animals. Linguistic caution in speech, self-regulation, and other acts such as the proper timing for hunting and preparing for the hunt—for example sharpening harpoons and sighting in rifles—are central to manifesting luck/success in hunting. The fundamental principles of relational sustainability can be therefore viewed as collapsed into Kigiqtaamiut hunting ways of knowing as a central tenet of a relational knowing continuously realized through and informing hunters' actions.

Anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait, Eskimo Law, luck/success, play, not-(not)-hunting, tame ugzruit, and relational sustainability all speak to interrelated and mutually occurring dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut ugzruk hunting as a way of being in and coming to know the world through being in it. As a modality, hunting does not distinguish between being and knowing. By considering their experiences in-the-world through reflexive engagements with Anjizugaksrat iniqtiġutait hunters' understandings of the world continuously emerge and take shape. Kigiqtaamiut understandings of ugzruit, of sea ice dynamics and local history do not represent a body of knowledge but a series of individual engagements with local considerations of the inherent relationality between humans and the phenomenal world.

### 3.9 CONCLUSIONS

Through a broad range of ethnographic examples ranging from hunters' personal stories, conversations, and firsthand shared experiences, I have highlighted Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing the world from a position of being-in-the-world. Further, I have specified the central, though largely unarticulated, role that direct ongoing interactional experiences with animals and other environmental phenomena play toward coming to know in hunting life, and that these experiences are a fundamental experiential aspect of Kigiqtaamiut hunting life.

In this chapter I have highlighted the active experiential dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing about bearded seals (ugzruk) as a relational way of knowing. Hunters' understandings of the world and their experiences in the world are ongoing

events and processes that shape and are shaped by the animals they encounter. This chapter opened by describing the role of ugzruit in hunting life across western Alaska and on both sides of Bering Strait. Here I engaged in a quantitative analyses of regional bearded seal hunting patterns in response to changing technological and economic conditions. Responding to these regional analyses, I described Kigiqtaamiut historical spring marine mammal hunting patterns and more recent local responses to changes in sea ice coverage. The hunting conditions I experienced during three consecutive spring hunting seasons suggested ways recent changes might be considered against historical experiences, with variability as a constant in marine mammal hunting life in the Bering Strait.

Building upon the foundation of hunters' experiences of environmental variability and unpredictability in relation to sea ice coverage, *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait*, or Eskimo Law, I demonstrated these features as a shared and intersubjective set of understandings that shape and are continuously shaped by hunters' experiences with animals and the phenomenal world. Central to this discussion were hunters' engagements with local history and older beliefs in the context of their own hunting experiences. An equally critical aspect of hunters' considerations of *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* was the ultimate unknowability of the world and the presence and possibilities of sentience and connections between events that can only be understood through experiencing them.

Recognizing *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* as a foundational dimension of hunters' ways of experiencing the world, I considered the factors that shape local decision making. Direct social interactions with animals during hunting experiences were considered against *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait*, and have fostered a set of strategies hunters employ to increase their opportunities for short and long term ugzruk hunting success. Hunters operate from an embedded position that recognizes forces and factors in the environment beyond their ability to know or fully control elements that contribute to the outcome of hunts. Therefore, hunters attempt to increase their chances for success through sets of actions designed to minimize hunters' recognition of the self as responsible for hunting success.



Hunters avoid talking about hunting, focusing instead on local conceptualizations of luck as success. They also seek to downplay their role in achieving success through rearticulating their actions as play hunting. This, Bateson (1978:125) suggests, prompts a partial denial of the implications that one's actions would have in non-play contexts. Thus hunters suggest they "play shot an ugzruk," minimizing the actual degree of prowess that lead to their successfully shooting an animal. In doing so, hunters seek to continue to have success in hunting by recognizing factors beyond their abilities contributed to their success. Recognition of animals' perceptive powers is further realized as hunters interact with them while stalking them or watching them while hunting. Hunters recognize animals are also watching hunters and are aware of hunters' actions and intentions. Thus hunters seek to mask their intentions by not-(not)-hunting. Like "play" hunting, hunters seek to increase their chances for success through presenting the self to the animals as not-hunters in order to get close enough to animals to be able to shoot at them.

Based on these interactions and experiences, hunters use a hunting lexicon to articulate how ugzruk respond to hunters' actions. Finally, I characterize hunters' self-regulation and conservation practices as a form of relational sustainability. That is, they are a set of practices articulated in order to maintain social relations conducive to continued success in hunting life. Presenting these discrete aspects of hunting has highlighted them as mutually occurring and, in the context of hunting, largely unarticulated but central practices implicit in Kigiqtaamiut hunting as a way of being in and knowing the world.

CHAPTER 4  
 “YOU WANNA MALIK ME?”  
 RELATIONAL KNOWINGS: HUNTING AS EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored hunters’ ways of knowing through accounts of spring ugzruk hunting practices. Specifically it explored hunters’ understandings of the relationships between their actions and intentions and the phenomenal world through the emerging template of *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* (Eskimo Law). Building upon Ingold’s (2000:42) characterization of *knowledgeability* as knowledge realized in situ, hunters’ ways of knowing were examined as processual and continuously coming into being.

In this chapter I shift from a focus on what hunters know to how they come to know what they know in hunting and other aspects of social life. Relationality, as the condition of being-in-the-world one is continuously coming to know, was the foundation of the previous chapter’s analysis. Here I continue to build upon a relational foundation and explore the specific pedagogical practices that are significant to shaping how hunters come to know. Concurrently I focus on pedagogy in hunting and how it connects to my ethnographic explorations of hunters’ way of knowing, and I present these as mutual and linked processes of learning.

I begin this chapter by providing a discussion about learning from hunters that took place between myself and a long time regional resident whose life has been intimately connected to Bering Strait hunting life since she moved to the region in the 1950s.

I spent the afternoon visiting with Sister Damien in Nome today. She called me earlier this morning, since I was in Nome, to come over this afternoon so she could give me the new hunting parka cover that she had sewn for me, “Diomedé style.” I will be the only hunter with a Diomedé style parka hunting this spring back in Shishmaref that is certain. I am sure it will provide a humorous moment if nothing else when those guys see me wearing this. Though having one of Sister Damien’s parkas is if nothing else quite special in and of itself. While visiting I asked about her life on Little Diomedé and our discussion turned toward hunting. Sister Damien asked me about my experiences of learning about hunting life.

Sister Damien: And out in the boats, how is it?

Josh: Well it is quiet. I mean when we are looking for animals or stalking, on ice, or a swimmer or doing something we don't really talk. While hunting or butchering or relaxing we just do what we do mostly just hand using signals, looks, like raised eyebrows and nods. So there isn't much talking. Also when you are spending hours just looking through binoculars for ugzruit and everyone really wants to catch one, you don't really talk a lot. We are just looking around, paying attention, sensing.

Sister Damien: Yes on Little Diomedé they had many signals for communicating. They do not need to say much while hunting. They still do this of course. Use those hand signals.

Josh: That is the problem I face Sister Damien. When I sit in my room at night back in Shish and think about "data," I think about how I am going to write this for my committee. Because when we are out hunting and even afterwards people hardly talk about these things. I mean they do, but it is in a way... I mean people just kind of know what they know. And me as a would-be apprentice, or however my role might be characterized, I am being actively instructed through being allowed to be present and participate. But we do not really talk that much out on the ice. I mean you are not supposed to, you know, ask questions. You learn stuff by doing it and by paying attention. Even if you wanted to ask questions, no one would answer. You are supposed to be quiet. Besides what is the question to ask when you're in the middle of it? Hunting, we are all just there together looking around and that is how you learn, through being there...through being in it.

Sister Damien: That is right, that is right! They do not talk when out hunting. You learn through being part of everything. If you are not out there with hunters you cannot really learn, no? They do not talk about many things, no? That's right, that is how it is, you must just see these things and do them and then understand what they mean for people. We learned to split walrus skins on Little Diomedé and many other things also. We had to. Even when you want to understand how the hunters understand animals you must just watch and learn, no? Yes that is right, that is how it is.

Josh: Yes I believe that *is* what it is. Still I have to find a way to write about what people are not saying but know, feel, see, and experience.

Sister Damien: Yes that is important for you of course, and it is important to do.... Well at least you will have a new parka cover for hunting. And of course when it is covered in blood and dirty, which I hope will be soon for you, you must come back and I will make you a new one for next spring.

That is what we always did on Little Diomedede. So I will help you, and make sure you have parka covers while you are hunting. That would be good, no? (April 3 2008)

Sister Damien's comments introduce an important and arguably crucial dimension of Kigiqtamiut hunting: hunters' ways of learning and knowing and the study of hunters' ways of learning and knowing are intimately intertwined and largely inseparable. Through immersion in the activities of hunting on the sea ice, one is learning with, from, and alongside hunters all at once. One comes to understand what hunters know through coming to know how to respond to and react to their actions. One learns to implicitly know that when your hunting partner taps his forearm he has spotted an ugzruk resting on ice. Moreover it is through involvement in-flow of experience that one learns not just what signals mean but what the meaningful responses are to them and how to execute them. Here one learns from participation to pull their parka cover down over their face, to make sure the harpoon and seal hook are ready, and to slow the boat down to an idle. Bodily experiences and sensory education serve as both the tool of inquiry and also as the vehicle and subject for the formulation and transmission of ethnographic knowledge in written form.

Pálsson's (1994:901) conceptualization of enskillment suggests that becoming knowledgeable means to attend to tasks of active engagement within a social and natural environment, through participation in-flow of everyday life. Pálsson goes on to suggest that in learning, by becoming skillful through engagement and immersion, one is not simply copying modes and discourse. Rather, through acquiring competency in specific actions one becomes at home with those actions in the context of one's own being. At the same time, one becomes comfortable with and knowledgeable about the community of other skilled practitioners. Pálsson builds his argument on Bourdieu's characterization of habitus, which suggests "practical schemes pass directly from practice to practice without moving through discourse and consciousness" (Bourdieu 1990:74). Central to Pálsson's argument is transparency between becoming knowledgeable about a task, skill, or way of perceiving and being-in-the-world through everyday living, and that the practical-theoretical ethnography of that process is inseparably linked.

Skills—in fishing or doing field work (or anything else for that matter)—are indeed individual in the sense they are properties of the body, dispositions of the habitus. However to isolate their acquisition and application from everything outside their soma is to subscribe to a normative theory of learning and a natural conception of the individual. An alternative approach recognizes the sociality of the individual being and the situated nature of human activities. (Pálsson 1994:921)

Through his focus on situatedness as a dimension of the human condition Pálsson suggests an immersive approach toward understanding how we come to know in both life and ethnography.

Likewise in his ethnographic analysis of boxing, Wacquant speaks to the necessity of acquiescing to the pedagogy of boxing in order to understand it, writing:

To an essentially corporeal and little-codified practice, whose logic can be grasped only in and through action, corresponds an implicit, and collective inculcation. The transmission of pugilism is effected in a gestural, visual and mimetic manner, at the cost of regulated manipulation of the body that somatizes the knowledge collectively held and exhibited by the members of the club at each level in the tacit hierarchy that runs through it. (Wacquant 2004:100)

It is Wacquant's argument that the ethnographer should surrender to "the fire of action *in situ*" (2005:viii). He suggests placing oneself at the center of the multiplicity of forces both material and symbolic that one seeks to unpack. For Wacquant, as with Pálsson, it is suggested the scholar should work to acquire, understand, and to the greatest degree possible come to embody the way of knowing and being that define the dimensions of life one is engaging in order to explore the inner-depths and complexities that define the socio-cultural process under consideration.

This too was Sister Damien's point: one can only come to know what hunters know about animals through being with them as they experience them. Further, in doing so one must be willing to be with hunters on *their* terms. This also suggests that it is not just the hunt itself in which one must participate, but the sets of relations and values that hunting connects to and supports in daily life. The hunting educational experience is as at once socio-cultural and perceptual. It moves beyond activities connected to the sea ice and shapes interpersonal social relations in other village settings as well. Through it we

come to know and understand something of what the “other” knows by coming directly and personally to know something of the unspoken and implicit understandings that shapes the “other’s” actions. That which is learned through shared experiences, understood through personal feelings, and communicated through nods, raised eyebrows, and hand signals can likewise only be understood through coming to directly know the range of meanings in the context of meaningful application.

It is here where Pálsson, Wacquant, and Sister Damien’s comments intersect and speak to an intersubjective relational ethnographic approach in which the ethnographic study of hunter’ experiences can be carried out through engaging with and analysis of experiences shared with them. The ethnography of learning with, from, and alongside hunters is an inherently intersubjective process; the data derived from it is neither objective nor subjective. Rather, as Jackson (1998) suggests, emphasis on the intersubjective represents a pragmatic decision to examine the space in between these two oppositional modes of knowing. It engages ideas that are at once generally accepted and at the same time grounded in highly personal individual experiences. Knowledge in the Kigiqtaamiut hunting context can be thus conceptualized as *knowing*. Knowing emphasizes both the active application of knowledge and processual learning, without delineating any differentiation between the two. Moreover, going a step further and speaking to the individual and personal nature of Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ ways of knowing, we can understand it as *knowings*.

Local hunting pedagogy and understandings emphasize personal and processual knowings. The ethnography of intersubjective and relational knowings is likewise brought into being through mutual, emerging, and processual understandings of hunters and between hunters and the ethnographer. Just as hunters’ knowings are processual and emergent, an ethnographic study of such knowings needs to be intimate, detailed, and also equally processually incomplete. An ethnography of *knowing* is a relational, processual, and dynamically emergent learning ethnography.

To highlight Kigiqtaamiut experiential pedagogy in hunting life and the concurrent role it plays in the ethnographic analysis of hunters’ knowings, this chapter begins by

examining Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq language terms for different forms of knowledge or knowing. Here I examine metaphors in language as one context for beginning to understand processual learning in hunting life. Building upon those frameworks I turn to ethnographic examples that highlight the significance of experience in contemporary hunting life.

#### 4.2 KIGIQTAAMIUT CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF KNOWINGS

Though Iñupiaq is not the primary language spoken by most residents in Shishmaref today, examining some of the ways knowing and understanding are characterized in Iñupiaq provides an important point of departure for considering pedagogy in hunting and in the ethnography of hunting. The older generation of hunters, who were by and large responsible for training the current generation of active hunters, were and are predominantly Iñupiaq speakers who grew up with Iñupiaq as their primary language. The ideas connected to knowing as embodied in certain terms or phrases were ones they grew up with and which to varying degrees, concomitant with individual life experiences and other shared ideas, shaped their individual pedagogical decisions.

However, though Iñupiaq is not currently the predominate language spoken in Shishmaref, ugzruk hunting is the context wherein Iñupiaq is most likely to be heard and spoken between generations. Descriptions of ice, different animals, tools and techniques are all to a large degree, when verbalized, done so in Iñupiaq. In practice it is important to reiterate that hunting is by and large a very non-verbal activity. Therefore I consider some of the metaphors linked to Iñupiaq language terms for knowledge and understanding that also connect to pedagogy in practice. In doing so it is also important to consider how Iñupiaq is used, as it is a highly contextual and relationally specific language in which words can have a range of uses and meanings dependent upon the specific contexts of the moment. To that end, strict categorical delineations, as well as metaphorical linkages, must be used with caution (Kaplan 2009 pers. com.).

Continuously emerging understandings can be thought of in terms of *qaugri*. *Qaugri* alludes to the process of growing awareness, which typically, though not always, begins

in childhood and ideally continues throughout the course of one's life. Qauḡri is an important Kigiqtaamiut conceptual framework to consider, as it suggests coming to know as a processual-phenomenological engagement in the world. Qauḡri is a base, or root word and a transitive verb. It is suggestive of a personal increasing curiosity and awareness of linkages between phenomena in the world (Kaplan 1988:39). As a transitive verb qauḡri emphasizes an ongoing increase in awareness *of*, not a capacity of awareness separated from an experiential context, it speaks to a process of becoming *in* the world. It suggests the importance of personal experience toward shaping awareness. Qau can be related to “dawn,” implicating an existential and metaphoric linkage between observations of the material world (the rising of the sun) and inception of the becoming of a person. Emphasizing a growing understanding and interest in the world, qauḡri similarly suggests that the self is relational, that one is alive through the emergence of oneself in the experience of one's surroundings. To be sentient, to be conscious through experience, is to be alive in relation to the qualities of the experienced world.

Qauḡri, in its varied regional dialectical variations, is used across the Iñupiaq/Inuktitut speaking world. Nagy (2006:81-2) notes that *qauyi*, and *qauyima*, was used by elders in oral history research as a temporal marker for early childhood memories. Briggs (1998:236) also identifies *qauyima* as descriptive of knowing, awareness and understanding. *Qaujima* has also been drawn upon by the Inuit government of Nunavut in the identification and formalization of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, to articulate an Inuit way of knowing that addresses Inuit experiences of connections between animal species and the environment, particularly in response to TEK<sup>50</sup> (Wenzel 2004:240-1).

Another articulation of ideas connected to learning, knowing, and experiencing stems from the base *ilit*. Derivatives of *ilit* express a range of dimensions connected to learning, knowing, teaching, arriving, coming to resemble, “putting,” or traveling. *Iltuḡa* means to learn. *Ilisautiaa* refers to teaching, and *ilisama* means to know or know how. Ili

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<sup>50</sup> The primary concern of the government of Nunavut in responding to TEK was TEK's general lack of attentiveness toward the relationships Inuit hunters saw between diverse environmental phenomena. In contrast, TEK sought to record a much more direct species-based understanding, a formal analytical framework which did not coalesce with Inuit experiences. (Wenzel 2004)



can also be used to say one has arrived at a destination en route, “*Iliuq* “Sinjazaat”, “he has made it to Sinjazaat.” Nagy (2006:84) notes that both *quayima* and varied constructions of *ilit* may all be used to suggest learning or knowing, becoming conscious, or becoming aware, without requiring a separation of these different meanings. The Yup’ik language also offers similar contextual terminology toward processual and emerging understandings in the verb form of *ellangelleq*. Fienup-Riordan (1994:52) suggests that *ellenge*, like the transitive verb form of *qaugri*, speaks to a process “which literally translates becoming aware, coming to one’s senses, or getting a glimpse of reality. Once acquired, awareness continued throughout a person’s life and into death.”

In Yupik, Iñupiaq, and across the Inuktitut speaking world, the language of learning emphasizes learning and knowing, not as separable but as linked and continuous processes that begin as one becomes conscious of one’s world. It from this point in life going forward that one begins to learn/know in relation to his experiences. *Qaugri* and *ilit* offer both a metaphoric and literal point of departure toward considering the experiential processes of coming to know in hunting life.

#### 4.3 “YOU WANNA MALIK ME?” OBSERVATION AS INSTRUCTION

Early on in my research it was made apparent to me that participation in hunting life was essential for understanding what hunters knew. At different times I have sought to elucidate from hunters how they have come to understand certain things. Hunters’ typical responses to my queries were “I use to always follow,” or “my ataata [grandfather] would let me follow.” More often people might respond with “I always *malik* my uncles and them,” or simply “they let me *malik*.” Most directly *malik* can be translated simply as “to follow,” such as in *maliktuq*, “he is following.” It can also be stated *malikataq*, as in to chase or pursue, which could also be used in the context of hunting. Thus, in one sense *malik* could be used to describe pursuing an animal. *Malik* is also a base term for ocean waves, as in *malliaa*, it (the ocean) has rough seas, or *malliuq*, to travel through rough seas. *Malik*, is an Iñupiaq term that continues to be

prominently used in daily village life in Shishmaref, and serves as the predominate pedagogical form in hunting life.

I began to develop this project to focus on hunters' knowledge of ugzruk after I had been conducting research in Shishmaref for two years. Community leaders and hunters in Shishmaref were supportive, noting that ugzruk hunting was an important dimension of life to record for future generations. This support was articulated through comments like, "That would be good. Lots of people know you, so they will let you follow" or "You going to follow Clifford and them again this spring for your work?" These comments and many others like it highlight the importance of direct firsthand experience toward coming to understand in Kigiqtaamiut hunting life. It also suggests that in relation to the education of young hunters, or for the instruction of outsiders, understandings are not fostered outside the context of direct experience, but through it. Hence we may consider the oft-heard comment relating to elders' knowings, "He seen it, so it must be true," as grounded in this observational and experiential instruction.

When it is used in relation to Kigiqtaamiut hunting pedagogy, malik emphasizes both observational learning and instruction. By accompanying an experienced hunter, a novice is *shown* how to engage in activities. Though one is not typically told what to observe and pay attention to, it is implicitly recognized that during hunting one learns through close observation. Just as one learns about animals and how to respond to their behaviors through close observation, one learns about the varied pragmatics of hunting through close observation of hunters' actions.

The role of teaching through following is best understood as a dialectic between both intentional and passive instruction. Intentional instruction is actualized by allowing a novice to observe important activities, such as how to stalk or butcher an ugzruk, or how to prime an outboard motor with the camp stove fuel tank. Instruction is passive when it allows the novice to absorb these activities and develop his own sets of understandings and ideas in relation to individual observational experiences. The role of teaching, therefore, is not so much to offer instruction, but to establish a context for observation wherein novices are allowed and helped to develop their own sets of relational

understandings. Similarly, Nelson (1969:386) writes that among Iñupiaq hunters of northern Alaska during the 1960s there was little verbal instruction for young hunters. Young hunters accompanied older men on their hunting trips and learned by observing them and replicating their actions.

Young hunters in their early teens and late pre-teens, accompanying older more experienced men, usually first experience ugzruk hunting after hunting in open water begins. The physical challenges and dangers associated with hunting and travel across the ice with snow machines and boats are too great for pre-teen and young teenage hunters. However, once the shore ice begins to break up and boats can be launched from the shore, younger hunters are invited to participate. Once out among the ice flows, hunters will begin to look for ugzruk with binoculars. Young would-be hunters are often quite proud to have their own inexpensive pair of binoculars to use and follow the lead and direction of older hunters as they look for ugzruk. Yet while in the course of the hunt men will spend hours glassing for animals, young boys often quit after an hour or more. Often they will then climb up in the bow of the boat, in order to take a nap out of the cold. Even if animals are sighted, the young hunter is not awakened to observe, rather his decision to sleep or participate is respected as his choice.

Likewise young hunters are neither asked nor invited to help with hunting tasks. That is, they are not asked until they are perceived as having had enough experiences that they should know what is expected of them. However, they are not discouraged from participating, with one important caveat: there are particular ways to perform certain tasks. There is a way to butcher ugzruk, to pull out their intestines and clean them out with freshwater and braid them. There is a way to approach an ugzruk resting on ice, to pack and tie a sled and perform other tasks. Or more appropriately, as Anderson (2000:120) highlights through his own apprenticeship, while there may not have been a way that things had to be done, there were many wrong ways of acting which revealed an individual's lack of knowing. Aware that there are implicit methods in many of the tasks of hunting, young hunters often wait until they understand what to do, or are instructed to do something before taking a more active role. When they do, their presence is not

generally acknowledged, unless they are doing something wrong that is perceived either as potentially dangerous or as having a negative impact on the potential success of the hunt.

Similarly, Nelson (1969:380) writes that it was uncommon for one hunter to tell another what to do in any given situation. He goes on to say:

If a young man walks out onto the ice in summer without pushing a sled along those who know better will probably let him shoot a seal and learn for himself how difficult it is to drag the seal home on the ice without a sled. Only in dangerous situations, will comments or hints be made even then they are often cryptic and indirect.

Doing things incorrectly brings not just unwanted ridicule but could also limit future participation if one's actions are viewed as not contributing or as "play trying to help" while just being in the way or burdensome.

Duck hunting at Cape today. I watched Clifford cleaning ducks, while I brought them over to the boat from where they had been piled. He, Shirley and Ardieth plucked the tail feathers and down around the butt in order to pull the guts out, leaving the more tasty organs intact. After watching for a while in order to make sure I knew what they were doing I started cleaning my ducks. Clifford casually looked in my direction "inspecting" my work, and simply said "you know how to ah?" I raised my eyebrows in response and he turned back to the duck he was plucking. (July 10<sup>th</sup> 2005)

The observational learning implied through following is rendered more complicated to the inexperienced or to the outsider, as it is up to the follower to know what is important to pay attention to. As I sought to understand ugzruk/hunter relations, I was never told what was important or that I should pay attention to this or note that. Rather, I was simply present, and the degree to which I would come to know was left to me to figure out. This made doing the ethnography of the implicit an extremely self-conscious affair. This does not mean that there was no verbal instruction at all. After hunting, and as I wrote up my notes, Clifford and I would discuss our experiences. If Clifford thought my comments or questions relevant he would respond to them, yet in doing so he would more often than not articulate his ideas in the esoteric language of hunting. Most often this consisted of historical references, previous experiences, inside jokes, abbreviated word

plays, and other references indicative of Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of speaking. As I indicated in the previous chapter, discussions were also shaped by Clifford's avoiding particular references or themes in consideration of how future success might be impacted by discussing them. When I was rebuilding Clifford's grandfather's old umiaq frame I often referenced old books with pictures of umiat. This always brought strong criticism from Clifford who would point out that what I was working on was right in front of me and that pictures of boats from other places and other times, while relevant in terms of comparison, were not useful.

Clifford came down to the racks to work with me today after breakfast. Even though we are working together on this project there are lots of times when I find myself coming to work early in order to avoid being criticized for doing something wrong or different. Even just the other day he scolded me for checking my work against the book on Saint Lawrence Island umiat I brought down to the racks....

Clifford: You should just throw that damn book away. When I build a boat, I don't look at books about other boats. I just build it. I have built lots you know. You ain't gonna figure out what to do by looking at pictures or reading that. You just got to work on this one and do it right. They might just tell you the wrong way, not for that one, but for this one. Maybe they even messed up there you don't know. Like with that skin. You wanted to cut it because the book said to. You would have had to do more sewing, and it would be too small. I knew that from looking at it. Because I have built boats. That is what I am trying to teach you. To just do it this way, so you can learn.

Josh: Yeah, I always kind of think that. But sometimes I don't trust myself. So I try to check if I am doing it like those other ones are, in order to get it right I guess.

Clifford: Yeah those other ones don't really matter, it is just this one. I don't care about those kind. This is what we're working on anyway. You're not going to learn like that. (July 5<sup>th</sup> 2007)

Wacquant (2005:100-101) provides a similar example of his own experiential attempts at coming to know in boxing when he asked DeeDee, the head trainer of the boxing gym where he trained, what he thought of using books to learn the basics of boxing:

“No, it ain’t helpful. You don’t learn how to box readin’ no books. I know them books, they got a buncha pictures an’ diagrams in em that show you how to place your feet an’ your arms, the angle your arm is suppose to move at an’ all that, but it’s all standin’ still! You don’t get no sense of movement. Boxin’s movement, it’s the movement that count.”

I persist: “So you can’t learn anything about boxin in books then?”

“No you caint”...

“But for a beginner like me, it couldn’t hurt to understand things mentally before I come to the gym”

“Of course it hurt, ‘specially if you’re a beginner. Them books, they gonna mess you up complet’ly. You never gonna be a boxer if you learn in a book”.

Clifford and DeeDee both agree that one cannot apply abstract or static knowledge toward the active and interactive world of direct engagement. While Clifford is speaking of boat building and hunting, and DeeDee is speaking of boxing, both instructors are emphatic that knowing comes through doing or observing, from being in the experience. Both insist that the subtleties of knowing can only be understood in the direct context of the engagement in the act. Thus one can learn to consider that animals may be sentient, or that certain places may respond to human actions in unanticipated ways, if one listens to their elders or pays attention to hunters’ stories. Yet it is only through directly encountering these situations and interacting with them that one can come to know.

What these examples suggest is that, for young hunters, boxers, or ethnographers of these practices, much of the experiential aspect of coming to know through participation and direct experience was about learning how to learn. Learning what is being communicated in different contexts, coming to understand what is implied and suggested through how things are said or not said, responding to actions, nods, looks, and later following up after hunts with meaningful forms of inquiry in meaningful contexts are all examples of this process. Ethno-phenomenologically speaking, hunting is in part about learning to acquiesce to the hunters’ ways of coming to know while directly learning the socio-cultural and directly experiential dimensions of hunting in order to be able to learn

about hunting. Though “following” fosters and encourages individual understandings, there are aspects of hunting that are central to know, and it is the observer’s (ethnographer or young hunter) responsibility to come to understand and know what those aspects are.

Through hunting one learns by paying close attention, observing behaviors and coming to understand the meanings and reasons behind those behaviors through seeking to replicate and embody them in the flow of activity. Anderson (2000:128) notes of his apprenticeship with Evenki reindeer herders that when he asked how a task should be done he would at times be presented with a quick performance of said task, without an explanation. His inability to understand and replicate these actions after such an explicit demonstration would illicit comments suggesting that young herders his same age only had to see something performed once in order for them to know it.

In both hunting and the manufacturing of hunting equipment in Shishmaref, there are the ways things are done and many ways they are not done, yet at the same time there is room for individual preference, personality, and style. For example, through my experiences working with hunters on their boats it was clear that all of the boats built in Shishmaref were made according to the same general principles of construction and order of operations. They were all similar in size, and yet they were all remarkably different. To the trained eye, the differences between boats built by Howard, Clifford, and Rob, Shishmaref’s three most prominent boat builders, stand out. These differences can include the height of the bow on one or the flare of the sides on another, the depth of the keel on one versus the height of the sides on another. To builders and hunters these differences are obvious, but to one unfamiliar they may demonstrate little heterogeneity. These subtle differences extend to sleds and sled construction, choices and preferences in snow machines, rifle calibers, and other equipment. Yet for all the areas where there is differentiation in personal style and preference, the expected norms of hunting life are never explicitly vocalized in training. One is not told to be quiet or to not ask questions. Like many dimensions of learning, “following” in hunting life is implicitly known.

#### 4.4 SELF-REGULATED ACTION AS IMPLICIT INSTRUCTION

Chapter two suggested that hunting highlighted the difference between those considered to be real hunters and those who weren't, or between those who know and those who don't. The following field notes highlight the difference between those who know and those who don't, and offer additional insight into Kigiqtaamiut modes of non-verbal instruction, communication and pedagogy beyond hunting.

While I was in Nome this past week working in the Eskimo Heritage Program archives I spoke with Rose about my work and progress. She had read some of my preliminary ideas and expressed her interest about how my work spoke to regionally pragmatic issues connected to Native and non-Native relations. The practical application of my work has always been an area where I have been a little self-conscious. So when Rose brought it up I wasn't thrilled. However, in contrast to what I expected she thought it had important applications. Speaking about "Native" ways of communicating and in particular toward emphasizing what people mean by how they say what they say...

Rose: ...For example, I know you know what I am talking about from what people in Shishmaref say. So when I had to go to Wales for some reindeer stuff I called Faye, you know her right?

Josh: Of course, she's Fannie's mom, I see her at Tony's all the time. You know for different things, meals or visiting with Tony. She helped Daphne on my new snow machine mittens some too, I think.

Rose: Yes, well I called her from Nome before I left to see if there was anything she wanted me to take to Wales. You know food or whatever she needed. We talked for a while and she said she didn't need anything. Then later she just mentioned she was getting a little low on corn meal. She didn't say she wanted any, needed any, and I didn't ask. Because she just told me to bring some right? But she's an elder so she said it like that, so I would know to bring it, but also to let me decide if I wanted to. Of course I am supposed to, but it is my choice. If I didn't, then she didn't "ask me to" so it wouldn't matter. But she did tell me to. That is how we communicate. Letting people decide, it is respectful.

Josh: Yeah in hunting too it is that way. When we need something for the boat or anything, Clifford might just sometime say he'd like to take this or that down to the tent some time or get this fixed. I know it means if I want to go hunting tomorrow I better get off my butt and get to work.



Rose: [laughing] Yes! Let me give you another example. My brother was fishing, you know down there. And he told me when he thought they'd be done. Well of course he knew I knew he didn't have a car or any way to get fish home. He didn't tell me or ask me to come pick him up. He just left it up to me to decide if I wanted to pick him up, you know respectfully, of my choice to decide. Of course yes I know I was going to pick him up, but he wasn't going to come out and say that. It was just up to me. That's how we say things, respectfully like that. Letting other people make their own decisions and not telling them. Or even as elders especially talk about things they have certain ways they say it. So I think in your research it would be good to point that out....(April 5<sup>th</sup> 2008)

Like Rose's examples, hunting with Clifford and living with his family involved clear, though not verbally expressed, expectations of behavior. The differences between acting according to these expectations and violating them were continuously made clear when eating with guests. Clifford often worked closely with National Park Service researchers, Fish & Game biologists, and other government representatives, many of whom would spend the night at his home when they came over for meetings or meals.

Meals at the Weyiouanna house would unfold according to an assumed standard of self-regulation. During meals family members all took small portions of everything that was offered according to personal preferences and how much was available in relation to the number of people eating. If meals were comprised of a mixture of native food and non-Native food, Native food was eaten first. In particular seal oil, *panaluk* (dried ugzruk meat stored in seal oil) and seal oil dishes were washed separately. If the meal involved some particularly special seasonal food, it was expected that the particularly savory parts were left for the oldest people present there for whom it was an extra special treat. Clifford and family carefully and deliberately eat, but always casually, making sure everyone gets an equal portion. Non-Native guests, in contrast, would often dive in, creating large platefuls of food for themselves, not considering or noticing the efforts and subsequent readjustments people made to their own consumption patterns to ensure guests had enough. Thus, prior to having a second portion of anything, someone might say, "Maybe I should try more duck." Even though there might quite obviously be a lot left it was usually not until Clifford, or perhaps John-Boy, might say "go ahead" would

that person take more. Often after having mostly cleared our plates Clifford would look at a piece of caribou meat or other dish and tell someone to finish it.

During breakfast when Clifford would make sourdough hotcakes, we would often have bacon. During my tenure in Shishmaref, a small package of bacon was close to \$10. Bacon, like many store bought foods, was quite expensive, particularly in relation to household incomes. Therefore when one bought bacon it was used sparingly. On more than one occasion Clifford, John Boy and myself sat having breakfast, each of us diligently cutting our single strips of bacon into small portions each to be eaten with a single bite of a hotcake. On many occasions when cooking for others, I would catch a subtle glance Clifford might throw my way, as a big game hunter or a documentary film maker took three or more slices of bacon eating them each in a couple of bites. In the glance Clifford would say “don’t they know, there are five of us here, that is all the bacon there is, if you take that much then other people won’t get any, you have to make sure everyone gets a taste.” None of this was vocalized. Yet this implicit and expected behavior was a well established protocol, not just in the Weyiouanna household but in most of the homes I ate in.

The implicit and explicit that is actualized in subtle unspoken, self-regulatory behavior is realized in other ways as well. One of these contexts, which connects to hunting insofar as it is a male domain, is the world of physical work. During early spring, hunters begin to dig out their boats from where they parked them in the previous fall. They can then drag them around the island in order to stage them for upcoming spring hunting. Hunters work together to dig boats out and create channels in the snow in order to drag them off the ground and onto the snow that has accumulated around them. There is often limited room to dig around boats. Though several hunters might be working together, often only one person can work at a time.

One hunter will dig until another will casually say “Take a break” or ask “My turn?” In doing so hunters are attentive to take over from each other before the other might need a break or stop. They demonstrate respect for the other by taking over for them, at the same time allowing a person to maintain status as hardworking by taking over before that

person reaches a point where they need to stop and ask someone to take over for them. Thus one allows the other to take a break, but does so in a way that does not require the worker to suggest they need one. In doing so they also establish themselves as competent, hard workers, by stepping in unasked to help with a given task. This self-regulation of physical labor is also realized in the task of grave digging, illustrated in chapter two as a community affair. While down in the grave itself, there is room for only one or two diggers, thus other diggers have to ensure they take over for those digging. Where several men may be working together, an individual must also make sure they assert themselves to take over for enough digging in order to maintain status among the other men in addition to resting enough in between digging sessions to maintain their strength in order to chop through the frozen earth when digging.

Learning and knowing how to behave in these and other socio-cultural activities is realized through observation, by “following.” Following serves as an observational pedagogical form wherein instruction and individual reflexive analysis is pervasive in multiple domains of everyday social life. This extends from knowing what is meant by what is communicated to knowing how to behave in different social settings. The education of the implicit and collective largely bypasses any form of vocal instruction, yet is nonetheless communicated through participation and observation.

#### 4.5 YOU’VE GOT TO MESS UP IN ORDER TO LEARN

I was talking with Dan today in Nome. He took me out to breakfast to give me a break from sitting at the hospital. I guess he could tell I was tired. While we were eating he was telling me about his first ugzruk hunting experience at Cape Espenberg.

Josh: You guys would really camp out up there, them days ah, you know, be there for a while?

Dan: Yeah, the first time I went they mostly let me just be in camp, to keep it picked up. I didn’t really know what to do, but that is how I learned. They just let me watch and then I would try.

Josh: Yeah that is how it is in hunting ah? Just watch and then it’s your turn to do it and try not to mess up?

Dan: Oh so you're learning about that, from Clifford?

Josh: [laughing] You mean messing up? I already know about that kind.

Dan: [laughing] Well that first time I went, they told me to make mush. So I did. I had seen them boil water, add salt and cook it. So then it was my turn. So I went down to the shore ice I dipped ocean water from a hole, I didn't know that it was salty, right? So I boiled water and added salt like they did and made mush. I sure was proud too! They took one bite, no one could eat it, too salty! So that was how I learned the ocean was salty and you can't cook with that kind of water. It is how we learn by messing up like that...(October 19 2007)

In Kigiqtaamiut hunting pedagogy, this balance between recognizing and encouraging personal autonomy and expected behavioral norms comes through reprimand and “scolding” as a key aspect of hunting education. Nelson (1969:386) writes that when young Iñupiaq hunters successfully replicated the actions of an experienced hunter in a task, the only reward was quiet unacknowledged acceptance. However, if one made a mistake he was severely chastised and teased, even far beyond the event, and stories about the young hunter's mistakes are told to others who subsequently do not hold back on teasing. The boundary between teasing and scolding is ambiguous relative to the one who is the subject of the ridicule. Yet Nelson (1969:386) goes on to suggest that the desire to escape this ridicule is a strong motivating factor to encourage competency in hunting tasks. This is generally true in Shishmaref today as well. Whatever the individual idiosyncrasies and personal dispositions of the older hunter, providing instruction or leading a hunting crew plays into to this dimension of learning.

Clifford, John Boy, Tyler and I all went out today. We took the johnboat out to the edge of the shorefast ice. As we were loading the boat Tyler stood to one side leaving most of the unloading of the sleds to me. Today for some reason it didn't seem to matter what I did or where I put stuff, I was wrong. Maybe Clifford was stressed because it was getting close to the middle of June and we hadn't caught an ugzruk yet or something else was bothering him but I couldn't do anything right in his eyes. John Boy walked over to me after we had the boat loaded, “Ah, don't worry about

any of that stuff. It was the same with me, you know growing up and learning or whatever. Same way, you know, scolding. Those days sometimes it didn't matter what I did, you know. It's just hunting." As we came back to the ice edge Magan and his boys were just launching their boat. Magan who jokes with me quite a bit called out to me, "Hey ES-KI-MO!" I looked back and acknowledged him but quickly got to work moving snow machines closer to the boat for unloading equipment. Partially I guess trying to redeem myself in Clifford's eyes. Magan turned back and called out, "Oh Josh is real quiet, musta got scolding ah? Hey Josh you get scolding out there today?" Even though I was feeling like crap I couldn't help but look over at him and smile a little. (June 11, 2007)

An additional factor that played into both the task of doing ethnography and learning through participation was not just the experiential in abstract but the personal relational dimension between the instructor (Clifford, his sons and grandsons, and myself). Though learning through participation and sharing experiences was my primary objective, there were times when, in a general sense, and despite both my desire to participate and need for data, I found myself hoping we wouldn't go hunting, if only to avoid the public admonishment aspect of it. Also, as I worked on general household chores, boatbuilding, or other projects, I was always anxious to make sure I was pulling my weight in order to maintain my inclusion in Clifford's hunting crew.

Clifford, Howard, and I are traveling by snow machine back from the ice edge. We are about 20 miles from Shishmaref. We had been looking for open water. We found one small *kuuk* [river, or open water flowing between large ice pans]. We hunted for several hours at this spot. Seeing no animals or indications of animals, and with heavy black clouds on the horizon we decided to head home. This is relatively late in the hunting season to be hunting with snow machines. Last year we were hunting with boats by this time and the ice is getting more rotten every day. Harvey told me that only one other time in his life did he see ice this bad (thin, jumbled, rotten and with a constant north wind) that year the only person to catch an ugzruk was Esau; Howard's dad, and Clifford's uncle. That was the year Clifford traveled in the umiaq with his grandfather Allockeok to Cape Espenberg in order to buy seal oil from families there.

We had traveled about 20 miles south of Shishmaref. To avoid the young rotten flat ice [*siguliaq*] as much as possible while we traveled, we followed a rough trail by staying as close as possible to pressure ridges [*iunnjit*] where the ice is thicker. Therefore we followed a constantly

zigzagging route as we worked our way back to the more solidly anchored shore ice. After two hours of this rough trail we quickly crossed some *siguliaq* and came to stop to scout for more trail. “Don’t always do that,” Clifford tells me in his characteristic style of public scolding so Howard can hear. “Don’t play follow me so close. You always want to follow too close, it’s dangerous if I need to stop and tell you guys to go a different way. You gotta learn this, or you might *imaq* [go through the ice]. You gotta know this. I told you before. Just follow my trail but not close.” (June 7<sup>th</sup> 2007)

Anderson (2000: 117) notes how ridicule and public admonishment operated to both foster self-sufficiency and discourage asking questions. For example, when he asked for guidance in selecting a tree to cut for firewood the response was, “Don’t you know wood yet?” or “It’s better not to then.” Clifford’s mode of instruction didn’t follow a scripted format. It consisted primarily of ideas communicated through a combination of gestures, looks, raised eyebrows, and simple comments: “Wait, Don’t rush,” “Don’t play follow so close,” “Loop it the other way.” If Tyler, James (Clifford’s grandsons), or myself still demonstrated that we were unable to do something the way he felt it should be done in that instance, he would resentfully step in and do it himself. Clifford is generally fairly understated in his manner of speaking. However, scoldings, admonishments, or corrections were done in a public fashion and in a voice loud enough so others around could hear and so the one being admonished knew everyone else could hear.

John Boy went to stalk *ugzruk* resting on ice. While he was working toward them James and Tyler were watching and I was watching the boat. One of the cardinal rules of hunting on the sea ice is that someone always stays with the boat. Clifford spotted a swimmer and wanted to try and catch it. We quickly and quietly took off. We snuck up on it but were in somewhat densely packed ice without a lot of room to maneuver for stalking. Suddenly it popped up close and both Tyler and James shot at it before Clifford was ready. Tyler shot first—too early—and only wounded it. As we were tracking it James shot at it before we were positioned to get to it quickly if it was hit especially as Tyler had already wounded it. After we lost it in the ice we went back to where John Boy was waiting for us to help. Clifford started to talk to the boys in the boat about how they messed up and recounted the hunt and their mistakes again to John Boy.

Clifford: When they're wounded they don't go down quick. You gotta get ready, you know get in the clear before we can shoot. Don't ever get in a rush to shoot em when they're wounded Tye.

Tyler: Mm hm

Clifford: Then try to aim good way. Don't be in a rush. How come they never bring sinking hook...? Gotta go around [floating ice]. Should wait a while ago Tye. Gotta wait until there's no ice in the way. Well I hope John Boy get to that ugzruk. As soon as I say okay, then even both you could'a try to shoot. After my boat is in the clear. Cause I gotta speed up to try to get to it. I mean it was hit alright...Well boys, that was you that shot that second time ah, James? Well at least we'll have one to work on that your daddy get ah James? Well we got one. You guys learned your lesson for when you're alone, about going after a wounded one. If it wasn't wounded we would've been alright.

Clifford: [to John Boy] Tyler shot too early, you know on that wounded one, and then James. They both learned a lesson though. I told them, you know, Tyler shot too quick, I was trying to go around ice, but that is the way you learn, by fucking up. But, ah boys that's the way I hunt. I always hit the ice and get up and look around with binoculars. Hah, John Boy right? Because you can't see all of them from the boat. It always good to stop and look around, like from icebergs. Yeah, John Boy?

John Boy: Mm Hm, yup.

Clifford: Well okay so now you boys should know alright. John Boy get anyway ah...?(June 10, 2006)

In contrast to Clifford's vocal admonishment for making mistakes, or "fucking up," Clifford generally would adopt a relatively disinterested position if one was performing tasks competently. His instruction, which lacked apparent direct focus, nonetheless almost unwaveringly emphasized total attention to the task at hand, which he articulated through a combination of teases, public reprimands, disinterested acceptance, and occasional public compliments. Public compliments were rarely offered when the one being praised was present. Experiential learning should not be simplified as just learning through the context and flow of activities. Equally it is a highly personal experience, one of expectation, insecurity, and physical and emotional effort. As the sentient quality of

lands and animals are known through personal interactions and feelings, so too is the process of learning in hunting one of personal life history, consciousness, and relationships with both place and with phenomena during moments of engagement.

#### 4.6 “HE DOESN’T KNOW”

Clifford and I left early this morning to try and find some open water. It is getting late, it is almost the first week of June and no one has caught an ugzruk yet. We are traveling on snow machines and stop at a large *iunnjig* [pressure ridge] to look around a little. While we are there Clifford’s cousin, Howard arrived.

Clifford: [laughing] What are you doing out here?

Howard: Same as you two I guess. Trying to look for something.

Clifford: Yeah?

We climb up the *iunnjig* and scan the horizon with binoculars. All that I am able to glean from what I am seeing is an *inizragaq* [ice mirage]. It is low on the horizon, so I know that open water is far out. Other than that I am not able to infer much from what I am looking at. Clifford and Howard discuss which way we might try and go.

Howard: Josh, there is open water, but that big ice is blocking. So we’re going to try and go around it ah.

Clifford: He doesn’t know!

Howard: He’s learning though ah?

Clifford: Yeah, he’s starting to all right.  
(June 13 2007)

The development of personal and individual understandings in order to foster individual competency and knowings in hunting life is a primary aspect of hunting pedagogy. Personal experiences form the central component of determining the “truth” of a situation or event. As suggested previously, hunting stories serve as one primary means through which crucial information is exchanged. What is determined as important or significant is determined by both listeners and speakers. What Poirier (2005:181)



refers to as the “informative potential” of a hunting story is individually determined. It is shaped by the information being offered, the person offering it, and the relationship between the storyteller and the audience. In sharing information/understanding, what is significant is not simply a report of conditions as an objective presentation of data in a western epistemological context. Rather it is the experience of the storyteller in a particular set of conditions and how he responded to them.

Information is considered against a listeners’ own emerging experiential template, his relationship to the storyteller, and the recent activities of the storyteller in relation to the information and ideas being shared. All of these elements may inform the listener’s further actions. In the following hunting story, Walter Nayokouk describes the intersections between ice conditions, weather patterns, social relations among hunters, and the ability of individual power to potentially contribute to shaping the outcome of an experience.

We were hunting out on the ice in the 1950s. We were drifted away Alagïaq [Allockeok], Alex, Verne, Herbert, Frankie, and myself. We went 40 miles out from the west shore by Piñuqpak. There were three of us in one group. Tijuk, Frankie, and Walter. We went out from Piñuqpak we traveled for eight hours by dog team. Yes we were drifted away at that time, about...close to one week.

Then our elder Alagïaq talked to us when we realized we are drifted away. He says we will start going up the coast, where there is ice. If we keep going in that direction, toward north—We will probably hit land toward Cape Espenberg.

The ice was really rough at that time—Thick old ice. It seemed like it went forever when you look. Broken, thick slabs. They were piled up, broken up that way. So I led them in this direction (toward Cape Espenberg). Finally we came to a crack higher than this ceiling. A crack about 75 feet wide, thinly frozen...you can’t even travel through it. When this blocked us we returned toward the west. So I led them all the way. My leader [dogteam] could go forward on rough ice. When I hurt myself after falling, landing on my rib cage, I requested that one of the other men should relieve me from leading. So they all tried but their leaders could not go forward.

My leader Ukpik was a good one. It would let me go forward. Although I was in pain, when their leaders would not go, I went ahead and led again.

Then we said, before it gets too foggy, we will leave and lead them toward icebergs. Then one by one we turned our dogs around and starting with the last team. Because of the rough ice, we turned this way starting from the last team. And then because I had a fairly good team, when I started, I went on the side through the rough ice.

Then I became the leader. When we got up there the fog came in, just when we attempted to reach the water's edge. So when I reached the water's edge, despite the dense fog, I traveled toward the east, looking for that good ice. When I thought I had reached the good ice —thinking I had passed the white ice – I stopped.

Then I let my dog team go backward, and here, the area had an iceberg which wasn't too high. It was anchored. It was shorefast ice by the edge of the water and it was smooth and white. Here we set up camp. Then in the midst of the fog, we stayed here for days.

So we stayed here inside the fog. Here, our elder Alāgiaq, when we set up camp after feeding our dogs, seals were coming up everywhere. Then Tinuk and Frankie would get seals from here. They would retrieve them with wooden seal hooks, because they were close from the edge. Then when we woke up the next morning, we had hardly slept. Our elder kept us awake. He said our ancestors would not just sleep.

He said that to us. Here, we would take a catnap, like Iditarod racers, sleeping on top of our sleds. Then, here in the morning, up above in the sky the clouds were very high as if it will turn to a southerly direction.

And then, on top of his small sled Alāgiaq was there with his arms inside his parka. He stayed there for a long time, motionless, just sitting for a long time. And so, he said that he performed a shamanistic ritual right here. He covered his head with his arms inside his parka. While he was in this position. Later on we saw dense fog down there, thick fog. Then before too long, the wind direction switched to the north. Then we couldn't see. But we started seeing the other side... inside the fog. We were far, about five miles from the main ice from here. Here we stayed for quite a while inside the fog, we couldn't go anywhere. Then the fog cleared. Here we saw that we were on a curve and had set up our camp, like on a U. We set camp right on it, that time, at random. Here too starting from an easterly direction, it had a point too. Then later on when the current reversed, the place where we were at started moving this way.

It was moving fast, because when we got close we packed our stuff right away—our dogs. So, when the two points connected, the one who was the slowest all the time, Verne, crossed first!

He and I helped each other through. Dogs were reluctant to cross when the ice was piling, when two ice cakes rubbed against each other. We helped each other that way by assisting the teams. That way we went across to the shorefast ice. Then after we come across, later on it became real foggy again.

After we crossed. Alāgiaq said we should leave that night since folks up there are expecting us. I told him I would sleep overnight because I would have little difficulty in the fog. Also my dog's feet would get raw because the snow was razor sharp. All of us slept there.

When the morning came we left. Although I didn't want to be the leader, here they waited for me again. They waited because the trail was rough. Then likewise, we made it safely.

Our trail down from *Tuviqzruzraat* about a week ahead of us they went down. We hit this trail, about two hours after we have traveled from the ocean. We just followed that dog trail. Then a plane circled above us and dropped a note. If we didn't have food, they suggested we form a circle. Our partners didn't want to. Verne and I tried to urge them, but they didn't want to form a circle. If we had done it, they would have dropped us food. (Walter Nayokpuk 1994)

The crucial instructional components in this hunting story are Walter's experience, and other hunters' confirmation of Walter going through this ordeal and his account of certain forms of action that he believes contributed to their survival. He suggests the possibility of Allockeok's manifestation of personal power to switch the current and wind direction in order to move the drifting sea ice closer to the shorefast ice. In his account he does not suggest or deny the impact of Allockeok's actions, only that it is possible. The determining factors of the value of Walter's account are ultimately up to the individual hunters to determine in context of, and in relation to, their own knowings, engagements with older ideas, and experiences with sentience. Here learning and knowing is much like Poirier (2005:188) suggests for the aborigines of Australia's western desert. It does not necessitate a definitive boundary between absolutes of true and

false. Narratives of experience are valued, respected, and considered against one's own experiences, which form the basis for their own meaningful actions.

Individuals can decide the value of information provided to them based on their relationship with the storyteller. To that end, the experiential dimensions of the story do not diminish the value of sharing information. Rather, they serve to enhance it.

Clifford and I were working outside the house this morning digging out harpoons and going through hunting equipment when Corny (one of Clifford's cousins) walked by on his way back from the store. He saw us working and came over stood at a distance and watched us.

Corny: Ice is starting to open up, I seen it on satellite, on computer.

Clifford: Corny, you shouldn't even look at the ocean! You don't go hunting.

Corny: Yeah [laughs] well I got to go anyway.

Clifford: He don't know, he never leaves this island. That ice ain't moving I can see that. I don't need any kinda of satellite to know what the ice conditions. He [Corny] just trying to play talk like he know something. Don't ever do that. You know, act like you know something. Like that one old tugboat man, said the ocean never get him. It did. That kind of information, from guys who don't know, it's no good.  
(May 15 2007)

In this instance Corny's experience, or recognized lack thereof, formed the basis for Clifford's dismissal of the information he tried to share with us. Also, through the linking of a tug-boat captain's death to Corny's unfounded knowledge, Clifford is also drawing upon *anjizugaksrat iniqtigutait* (Eskimo Law), in particular the notion that one shouldn't speak about things they don't have firsthand knowledge of. Corny's comments on ice conditions were dismissed due to his lack of firsthand experience. To follow his advice could prove dangerous. Concurrently, his claim to know the ice is viewed as dangerous by virtue of the potential unpredictable ramifications associated with making uninformed knowledge claims. Even among hunters who are generally recognized as being knowledgeable, claims and experiences are not always viewed as having useful insights.

The validity of knowledge claims are assessed in relation to the narrator's experience, as well as to the listener's personal experiences. This, however, should not be misconstrued to imply that all personal experiences are considered by every hunter to be valuable. In relation to the transmission of useful information, the status of the individual as a hunter is given considerable weight when examining the value of shared information. Though I spent extensive time out hunting and invested a lot of time talking with other hunters, my understandings were never considered particularly valuable in conversations with groups of hunters. Based in part on my relatively limited temporal range of experiences I was never considered a "real hunter" by any stretch of the imagination. The value of knowledge claims of real hunters would vary considerably, even among those like Clifford who were in general considered to be highly knowledgeable.

During the first weeks of June 2007 we were still waiting for ice conditions to improve. We'd been out a few times, but had not had any success yet. During that time Magan (a hunter in his late fifties) went down the coast southwest toward his spring camp at *Sinjazaat* with his son Warren to check out ice conditions. He suggested Pingupaq, a land feature halfway between Shishmaref and Sinjazaat, might be where things were going to happen this spring. He, Clifford, Warren, and myself were standing on the little rise next to Clara and Shelton's house studying the ice while Magan shared his analysis. He said there was open water there not too far out. He was going to take a wall tent down there and camp out with his crew. Clifford suggested we'd go down with him at the same time so the two boat crews could help each other out. Nothing happened over the next several days. During that time, whenever I'd see Magan he'd reiterate that Pingupaq was really starting to open up, and asked when we were going down. This continued for almost a week.

As this progressed Clifford's assessment of the value of Magan's claims changed. As we'd see him watching the ice somewhere Clifford would say:

He ain't going anywhere, don't need to keep hearing about Pingupaq.  
He's just talking any old way now. When he was down there I was kinda interested in what he'd have to say. Now he don't know. He's just trying

to get us or someone else to go down there and look around so he don't have to.

Though Magan is an older hunter with kinship ties to that area and a life history of experiences on that stretch of coast, the value of his knowledge claims diminished for Clifford as Magan continued to make knowledge claims not informed by new and ongoing experiences. When Magan had just returned Clifford was very interested in his "stories" and his experience, which he considered to offer important information. As more time passed the same experiential template that determined the value of Magan's claims were reassessed. Magan continued to suggest that, based on his previous experience, Pingupaq was the place to go. Yet as it was known he had not been back down there since his initial trip the week before, the applicability of his report was diminished. Later on, however, four hunting crews did go down there to hunt and were successful. Magan did not, going instead to Sinjazaat where he had success. We also travelled to Sinjazaat. We also camped and hunted there, and our two crews did help each other out.

#### 4.7 CONCLUSIONS

This ethnographic descriptions and analyses of Kigiqtaamiut hunting pedagogy built upon the relational framework of the previous chapter, and detailed how experiential pedagogies are realized in village life and in hunting activities. Throughout this chapter I referred to knowings as personalized, individual understandings that are articulated through being in the flow of activities, and that also inform and are informed by *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* through experience. Many aspects of training bypass explicit linguistic expression, emphasize experiential learning, and ultimately demonstrate that knowing is couched in personal understandings. In this chapter I have sought to provide further ethnographic weight to the analysis of experience as a fundamental dimension of Kigiqtaamiut relationality as a way of being in and knowing the world. Personal experience and engagement with both community norms and individual understandings permeates a multiplicity of dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut social and hunting life, wherein

experiencing and learning to experience phenomena relationally are largely collapsed into each other. I have gone further to suggest that this is true both in hunting life and the ethnography of hunting life. To that end I have suggested that this project is an ethnography of knowing insofar as the source of ethnographic material is an engagement with hunters' experiences through my experiences with them.

Building upon this inquiry into hunters' knowings, I suggest that the ethnographic investigation into diverse ways of knowing, as a dimension of exploring the human condition of being-in-the-world, can be understood as an ethnography of knowing. Expanding upon the relational contexts suggested in the previous chapter, and upon Ingold's notion of knowledgeability, I suggested Kigiqtaamiut understandings as knowings. In the case of Kigiqtaamiut ugzruk hunting, knowings and practices are not presented with a body of knowledge that can be understood outside of the context of its continuously emerging coming into being. Equally, it is important to avoid viewing personal and individual knowings in the abstract. The ethnographic descriptions, along with supportive comparative literature, have emphasized how experiential learning in hunting and in ethnography are highly charged interactive social experiences. Experiential learning and personal knowings are not just developed through tasks of living. The interactions and social relations between beginning learners and instructors contribute significantly to what and how one comes to know, and how that person comes to understand this process. Complex and multidimensional understandings of the world are articulated in everyday living. Kigiqtaamiut relational understandings are not just collapsed into practices, but are learned, realized and continuously brought into being through the activities of daily life.

## CHAPTER 5 “HE KNOWS THE ICE”: HUNTING AS PLACE-MAKING

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In her analysis of Iñupiaq place-names for the areas around Shishmaref, Susan Fair (1997:466) quoted Shishmaref elder Hattie Ninguelook as saying, “These kinds of stories, they always tell our parents and grandparents. They say that in those days past – The earth possesses them.” This chapter addresses how we might make sense of the comment “the earth possesses them,” and how we might understand it in relation to Kigiqtaamiut intersubjective experiences in the world.

Central to the discussion of knowing, as articulated in the previous chapters, has been the consideration of hunters’ ways of knowing as they flow out of the hunter’s being-in-the-world. Relationality, as a condition of our being-in-the-world, suggests that our understandings of the world are inseparable from our condition of being-in-the-world. Our experiences in the world inform our understandings of the world, which in turn further shape our future experiences. Ontology and epistemology, being and knowing, are intimately and inescapably intertwined, both shaping and shaped by the other in subtly distinguishable but not fully separable ways. Being speaks to actions and knowing. Within the context of hunting, when one is removed from being, or when one is removed from the context of a moment, it can “mess up one’s system,” as indicated in chapter three. However, knowing also informs and contributes to shaping both our actions and our understandings of those actions in the world.

As our understandings of the world are continuously coming into being, so also is the phenomenal world, the world in which we carry out our lives in relation to our understandings of it. Our being-in-the-world and the world-of-our-being-in exist in relation to each other. Thus Ingold (2000:99) writes that experience does not mediate between the human mind and an external environment, because they are existentially inseparable. Experience is a crucial coupling to the process of “being alive to the world.” Ingold goes on to state that it is only from a position of being-in-the-world that we can



imagine ourselves as separate from it. Phenomenologically however, the world, and its understood material and non-material properties, emerges along with the perceiver-person in the context of interaction with these material properties. “Since the person is a being-in-the-world, the coming into being of the person is part and parcel of the process of the coming into being of the world.” (Ingold 2000:168)

Therefore, discussing processes of knowing emergent from our being-in-the-world equally necessitates discussing the coming into being of the phenomenal world as a crucial dimension of the relationality of being and knowing. By doing so we may speak to Hattie Niguelook’s “the earth possesses them” within the context of hunters’ interactions and knowings of the material world

Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ experiences with animals, and more specifically with ugzruk, take place in the world. However, they do not take place in the world in general or “at large.” Hunters’ experiences with animals occur in particular locales and specific unpredictable contexts. It is to this topic, hunters’ interactions and associations in specific known environmental locales, that this discussion is specifically oriented. That is, it is oriented toward place, and to the coming into being of place concomitant with the coming into being of hunters’ ways of knowing.

Dating back to Franz Boas’s early research on Baffin Island, the documentation of place-names and ethno-geographic knowledge has a long history in the continuum of pan arctic Inuit ethnography<sup>51</sup> (Aporta 2003; 2005; Boas 1888; Collignon 2006; Brody 1976; Carpenter 1973; Fair 1997; Nuttall 1992; Rundstrom 1990). Fair (1997) and Collignon (2006) both offer the suggestions that knowledge of place and of place-names is textual insofar that experienced hunters “read the land” (Collignon 2006:151). Fair (1997:468) suggests this is accomplished by knowing the names of places, and requisite information connected to specific named places.

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<sup>51</sup> At the outset of this dissertation I suggested that this project was not designed to speak or be applied as indicative of all Iñupiaq peoples, all Kigiqtaamiut, or even all Kigiqtaamiut hunters. Rather this work is designed to at once speak specifically to the Kigiqtaamiut hunters with whom I experienced hunting life with and operate on a more general theoretical level. However, I draw upon and critique the broader Inuit/place literature in recognition that the Kigiqtaamiut are members of the broader Inuit-Iñupiaq society.

Fair (1997:473) offers that place-names in the Shishmaref area can be organized into different categories based on the types of information they offer. *Descriptive geographic toponyms* describe a specific feature. *Generic descriptive toponyms* describe lakes, rivers or other reoccurring features. *Activity toponyms* describe forms of behavior performed at a given locale, such as fishing or berry picking. Another form of toponym is what Fair refers to as *family text*. These speak to the local familial histories, describing actions of family members in the distant past. *Creation texts* provide accounts of cultural heroes, or how people and places and people came into being. Another form is what she calls *memory names*, which relate to formerly occupied communities that no longer exist, or places where ecological dynamics have radically transformed a place into something else. Fair's final toponym form is what she refers to as *cautionary toponym tales*. These include human habitation sites from the distant past that may have unknown powers connected to them.

One point of critique of Fair's work is the etic nature of her classification system. While noting Kigiqtaamiut hunters do not employ such a system, she organizes them for analysis against a non-local epistemological framework. In doing so she fails to attend to the permeability and multiplicity of meanings a single name can embody.

For example, *Sinjazaat* is a camp on a barrier island southwest of Shishmaref. *Sinjazaat* can be translated as, "where there is a small river." This refers to the channel one has to find in order to approach this camp from the lagoon. Here the channel is not simply the passage of water between two barrier islands, but a narrow winding channel one must be able to navigate in order to travel to this area. This is also a historic camp for *Ikpikmiut* and those families with historic ties to that now abandoned village.

Francis (Magan) Kakoona, who is of *Ikpikmiut* decent, maintains a small camp there with a cabin. As ice conditions warrant, he and other hunters use it as a staging area during spring hunting. His family also travels there for blackberry picking and waterfowl hunting in the fall. In local history *Sinjazaat* is remembered as a place where Arnold Olanna found Gregory Ayak, a hunter from King Island who spent three weeks lost on the ice before being rescued by hunters from the Shishmaref area.

Sinḡazaat is also where in the distant past residents' wasteful butchering practices resulted in the mass death of the community with the exception of one orphan, who recognized beluga coming ashore in human form in response to their disrespectful treatment. The bodies are buried in a mass grave near Sinḡazaat. Thus Sinḡazaat speaks at once to all of Fair's toponym categories without needing to distinguish between them. Equally, hunters' new and ongoing experiences at Sinḡazaat and the surrounding area continuously add new layers of meaning to it through their engagement with those layers of history. Fair's work is historically important, particularly as she worked with Kigiqtaamiut elders no longer living, and documented toponyms that are largely no longer in usage. However, her classification model offers limited insight into the concept of place-names as relational in nature.

Based on his ethnographic research in northwest Greenland, Nuttall (1992:48) offers the characterization of the land as a memoryscape. He writes that the individual hunter's image of the land evolves in relation to his experiences. He suggests that rather than viewing land as text that is read, that the landscape is "constituted in relation to each individual." The previous chapters have centered on hunters' relational knowings as emergent, and to that end they are grounded in hunter's experiences with the phenomenal world. Nuttall (1992:48) writes that memory is crucial because experiences and ideas are personal, and "negotiate images and understandings of the land" (Basso 1984:22). Reconciling the multiplicity of phenomena embodied in named places, Nuttall (1992:51) offers the characterization of the experienced and named landscape as a memoryscape.

Stories and myths unfold against a geographical backdrop. Events, whether contemporary, historical or mythical that happen at certain points in the local area tend to become integral elements of those places. They are thought about and remembered with reference to specific events and experiences and it is in this sense I refer to landscape as memoryscape. Memories take the form of stories about the real and remembered things. They cannot be separated from the land even though place names do not immediately reflect stories. (Nuttall 1992:54)

A central aspect of our being-in-the-world is the relationship between how understandings that arise from our experiences in the world shape both the world and

how we know the world. At the same time, these knowings of the world shape our experiences in the world. The directly experienced world is continually being brought into being through our experiences and knowings in and of the world.

Memories are dynamic and continuous processes. They are continuously coming into being. Memory as applied to place suggests that the way we conceptualize place as a processual coming into being is place-making. Writing of place as “place-making” based on his work among the Western Apache, Basso (1996:5) offers place-making as a general tool of historical imagination involving the complex interactions of both remembering and imagining locales. Place-making, he goes on to suggest, is a process of “constructing history itself, of inventing it, of fashioning novel versions of ‘what happened here’” (Basso 1996:6). Basso suggests the multiplicity of connotations embodied in places connects to what people make of themselves as members of societies and as human beings more generally. He goes on to note that while person and place may be separated analytically they are joined in practice. Likewise, Jackson (1998:137) writes “To come into one’s own, a person must also feel at home in the world.” Place-making is an imaginative cultural activity. It is a way of “doing” human history (Basso: 1996:7).

Likewise, Ingold (2000) states that place exists, or is processually coming into being, through peoples’ processes in the tasks of everyday living in the world. A landscape, writes Ingold (2000: 193), is “the world as it is known.” It is the world that comes to be in relation to our being in and coming to know it. In that light, Ingold stresses that landscapes or places are always temporal. Because the process of living and being in the world is existentially temporal, so too must be place (Ingold 2000:208).

Building upon Basso’s conceptualization of place-making, Thornton (2008:8) offers a four-tiered analytical framework for engaging the process of place-making in a Tlingit cultural setting. This begins by 1) considering how a society or cultural group organizes themselves spatially and coordinates their interactions across and within a landscape; 2) the use of specific place language to define and engage experiences with places, and the role of language toward shaping cognitive structures that affect how places are perceived;

3) consideration of the material modes of production, in particular practices like subsistence hunting, informing how places are used or abused in sustaining human existence; 4) finally, the role of ritual which connects, transforms, and mediates space and time in ways that shape consciousness of place, identity, and experience.

While in general agreement with Thornton's framework, I believe there is an additional dimension that must be added in order to apply it to Kigiqtaamiut ways of knowing. This is the process by which individual experiences with place are brought into the everyday, thus informing intersubjective knowings of place. Jackson (1998:136) notes that it is the stories of experiences with places that bring the personal into the socially shared. Jackson (1998:136) further notes that without these stories the connections between one's own life and the larger unfolding of life and existence are lost, stating:

...links with place constitute one of our first and most intimate metaphors for intersubjectivity, since before the events that make up our lives are construed as occurring sequentially in time, they are experienced as embodied and located in space. (Jackson 1998:175)

Here Jackson infers that place, or places, form subconscious reference points for how we engage and understand our experiences by grounding them in the world. Writing in a vein similar to Jackson, Poirier (2005) writes of the connections between experiences and narrative in Aborigine ways of knowing. She offers that it is not just narratives, in terms of the content and meaning, that are significant in conveying meaningful experiences, but also the experiential components of those narratives, that is, the act of hearing the narratives being told (Poirier 2005:10). The narrative event is experiential, and as such, the stories and everyday experiences and interactions provide an important pathway toward the "structuration of experience, the production and transmission of knowledge and the interpretation and objectification of events" (Poirier 2005:11).

Linking these comments to experiences with places, as Basso (1996:6) suggests they must be, Poirier highlights the significance of narrative within place, and the role of narrative toward shaping future experiences with that place, in relation to bringing personal experience into a shared intersubjectivity. These examples highlight how

experiences in the world interact with the world in order to bring the directly experienced world continuously into being. At the same time they demonstrate how place-making is at once in the world and speaks to the material world, and yet it is not fixed and bound to it. Place exists temporally, both through and in relation to experience, memory, and narrative.

Drawing on these relational perspectives with place-making, I examine Kigiqtaamiut marine mammal hunting as a practice of place-making. Broadening or accelerating Ingold's framework of temporalization, I examine place-making in the temporal, seasonally present, ever shifting dynamic setting of the sea ice environment wherein hunters encounter ugzruk. The focus here is less on ugzruk per se, but on the coming into being of the understandings of the settings in which hunters carry out ugzruk hunting, and the role that sharing hunting stories and historical narratives have toward place-making the sea ice environment.

## 5.2 KIGIQTAAMIUT SEA ICE TERMINOLOGY

Over the course of three seasons of hunting, a constant stream of visits to hunters' households, shared discussions, hunting stories, through group discussions with community elders—all focused on the sea ice environment—I documented 65 Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq terms for phenomena related to sea ice dynamics and 16 terms related to qualities of snow for both terrestrial and marine environments (see Appendix 1). Though Shishmaref is historically a community in which Iñupiaq was the primary language, its usage has been largely eclipsed by English among hunters under 50 years of age, who make up the majority active hunters in Shishmaref today. Among this social majority of hunters, approximately 10 Iñupiaq terms are consistently and regularly used within the hunters' lexicon to describe ice conditions. These include terms such as “funny ice”; “bum trail”; “pothole”; “pond”; “river”; “trail”; “dry-mouth”; “big water”; and “white ice.” These terms, when examined in relation to shared experiences, contextual usages, and personal understandings, are equally as important to consider as their Iñupiaq counterparts when describing ice phenomena in a local, meaningful way. Iñupiaq and

English sea ice terminology are used interchangeably among both fluent Iñupiaq speakers and younger hunters utilizing a syntax composed primarily of English words. The grammatical rules of each language are not adhered to with much concern in contemporary exchanges, and both are often applied interchangeably. For example, hunters may say *ugzruks* instead of *ugzruit*, or *ilqunauqs* instead of *iluqnait* to describe their experiences.

In critiquing Fair's categorization of place-names I suggested that the use of place-names in daily life resists categorization within an externally applied framework. Just as place-names embody a multiplicity of relational meanings that continue to change through time in relation to experience, so to do the diverse, shifting, and relational meanings of sea ice related terminology resist formal categorization and linguistic analysis. Meaning in relation to terminology is created and shifts according to the context of specific usages.

The term *iluqnauq* translates as simply "something whole." It is a term frequently used by Shishmaref hunters to speak about large floating ice pans. During 2007-08 group discussions with elderly hunters, they defined *iluqnauq* as a large piece of floating ice that *ugzruit* like to rest upon. This is particularly true when *aupkanit* (holes that go all the way through the ice) form, which allow *ugzruit* a way to get on and off the ice while staying in the middle of a large pan. *Iluqnait* are formed when large ice pans break off of the larger pack ice that has moved south during the winter. An *iluqnauq* can be flat, rough ice or multi-textured ice, as it is not topography that defines an *iluqnauq*, but its overall size. Their main defining feature is that they are large free-floating ice platforms.

Depending on the wind conditions, large *Iluqnait* can block animals from traveling closer to the shore ice edge from the "big water" further west. A large *iluqnauq* that is held against the shore ice by a north wind can also slow down the breakup of the shore ice by holding it in place. This makes hunting more difficult, for as the shore ice melts in place it becomes dangerous to travel on, yet if the ice doesn't move hunters are forced to wait until the shore ice melts and breaks up. An *iluqnauq* serves in one capacity as a

good habitat for bearded seals, while in another capacity under specific environmental constraints it can serve as an impediment to hunting.

Iluqnauit also connect to and embody important local history. The story of the kununigaq that Arthur Tocktoo and other Shishmaref hunters encountered, which figures prominently into anizugaksrat iniqtigutait, is embodied in understandings and discussions of iluqnauit along with numerous other local historical accounts and life history renderings of hunters' experiences trapped on the ice. The following examples of the use of sea ice terminology show that this lexicon demonstrates a multiplicity of meanings within single terms used in different contexts. Even in the casual exchange of information between hunters after returning to the village from the sea ice, a single term might be used to describe a broad range of conditions and experiences.

After Clifford, Tyler, John Boy and I came back from hunting today I walked next door to Tony's house to share my experience with him. He was outside working on a snow machine. As I walked over he looked up "any news?" I waited, we smoked and looked at his snow machine turned on its side, so Tony could work on the undercarriage. In the brief conversation that followed we shared a classic "Shishmaref style" exchange of information about current state of ice conditions and possibilities for spring hunting. Central to our discussion was the presence and role of a large Iluqnauq.

Josh: Real big iluqnauq man. That open water is good alright, and we saw lots of seals. No ugs though. But we couldn't get to that "big water."

Tony: Oh, iluqnauq?"

Josh: Iyah, iluqnauq. Big one.

Tony: Hmm, so I don't need to get excited or...

Josh: You could, if you let me malik you, but, I dunno what for.

Tony: Same shit every year now almost, seems like.

Josh: North wind?

Tony: Yeah holding, you know, against. Maybe we better try and go egg hunting or what?



Josh: Oh I like eggs alright, as long as you're not trying to let me be scared?

Tony: Is it? [laughing] I let you get dry mouth?

Josh: [laughing] Don't lie cuz you know I am not brave like you. Play sink a snow machine for one little egg...(May 18 2008)

Though relatively little was actually said about the ice conditions in this exchange between Tony and myself, a variety of context-specific factors were mutually understood, allowing a seemingly simple exchange to convey important information.

Tony knew that I had gone hunting that day before I came over to see him. He also knew I had gone out as a member of the first hunting crew to go hunting that spring, and therefore had direct firsthand experiences with current conditions. Equally, he knew that I was with Clifford, who is viewed as a hunter with a depth of understanding about sea ice hunting conditions. Finally, Tony was aware that open water was very close to Shishmaref, less than one mile off shore. When I said "iluqnaq," Tony, an experienced hunter, knew that despite the relative closeness of open water a large ice pan was pushed against the shore ice, blocking the open water close to shore from open water, or "big water," further out. Here iluqnaq meant the hunting is not good right now and won't improve until a strong south wind spreads out and scatters the ice enough to allow animals to swim closer to shore. Tony's response was that if there was no open water it might be a good time to go look for seagull eggs. This meant crossing the rotting lagoon ice in order to reach the main land, which Tony knew I wouldn't try to do unless I was going with a more experienced hunter. His reference to "dry mouth" is a commonly used phrase among Shishmaref hunters. It is one hunters use to describe their biophysical reactions to finding themselves in stressful situations when one's mouth gets dry. Equally, it is used as a term to describe experiences with dangerous sea ice, ocean conditions, or other dangerous phenomena while hunting or traveling. He also knew that I, like Clifford, was fond of sea gull eggs and hadn't been out "egg hunting" yet that

spring. Though little was said there was much communicated through shared understandings and previous history.

Iluqnauit provide good ice habitats for seals, and are generally a good place to look for ugzruit in specific circumstances. In other circumstances, however, they can be features that greatly disrupt hunting practices. An iluqnauq also embodies important local historical references and important material reference points within the context of hunters' life histories. What is highlighted as significant here is that it is not a name, place-name, or form of ice terminology that is meaningful, but rather its meaning and usage in specific contexts. What I stress here is that the meaning a term draws upon in any given conversation is highly contextual and accentuates connections of meaning to both experiences and relationships. In order to expand this discussion to encompass the role sea ice place-making has for linking experience with places through the interactions among Kigiqtaamiut hunters, we can now turn toward sea ice narratives.

### 5.3 SEA ICE NARRATIVES

Writing of hunting narratives among Orchon hunters and herders of eastern Siberia, Heonik Kwon (1998:117) offers the suggestion that hunting be considered as narrative action. To support this assertion, Kwon (1998:118) describes how hunters discuss hunting in relation to the behavior and actions of animals while avoiding aspects of the hunt that speak to the hunters' roles in the successful conclusion of a hunt, or the subsequent butchering of the animal. In contrast, academic characterizations of hunting often offer drastically different portrayals and analyses of those same actions. The result is two dramatically different characterizations of the same sets of activities. Diverse narratives of hunting, complex socially constructed knowledges, and power relations all shape the way hunting actions, behaviors, and rationales are perceived by a wider public (Nadasdy 1999; 2003; 2005). Narratives of hunting are an important part of the broader complex of subsumed actions that support on-the-land activities and actual encounters between hunters and animals. However, hunting *is* the complex of actions and behaviors of stalking that leads up to having an animal in between the cross hairs of one's

riflescope. Hunting *is* hunting. It is the complex relationship between self and other, between human and animal, leading up to the moment when the trigger is pulled. Hunting is about having one's arms covered in blood as one reaches into an animal's body cavity to pull out viscera. Contrasting with Kwon's analysis and writing to a Kigiqtaamiut perspective, there is often very little verbal communication during a hunt, "hunting *is* hunting." It encompasses a broad range of activities and experiences that contribute to and include diverse narratives.

Narratives have an important role in creating the shared implicit intersubjective understandings that characterize Kigiqtaamiut hunters' knowings. The academic project of conveying and speaking to these knowings is directly dependent upon these exchanges and hunting stories. Equally, and building on Jackson (1998), narratives play a crucial role of linking experiences with places in the process of place-making through the sharing of information with other hunters. This is an important part of the place-making process.

Hunters' stories are mostly told to other hunters. They relate types of experiences shared by other hunters set in places and landscapes that are at once generally and specifically known by other hunters. These understandings include one's own history of experiences as well as those of other hunters, familial and local histories, ideas about animal behaviors, and experiences of relationality. Kigiqtaamiut hunters all generally operate within overlapping and shared lifeworlds. They are able to communicate a great deal without needing to rely upon lengthy narrative descriptions. Lengthy descriptions are further discouraged as hunters rely on their personal experiential templates to determine the value of a given account. Hunters do not try to "convince" others through their narratives. Rather, they highlight their own particular experiences as just that, and allow others to draw from them as they see fit.

Rosaldo (1986:108) writes that linguistic exchanges among Ilongot hunters are articulated through "telegraphic shorthand." "Speakers," he says, "can safely assume their listeners depth of knowledge about the landscape, hunting practices, the huntsmen's abilities, previous hunts in the area and elsewhere and so on." In speaking of Ilongot

hunting stories, Rosaldo (1986:108) notes they were quite simply a list of place-names wherein the shared context for understanding possibilities were so strong that only the briefest reminder such as a place-name (similarly an ice term) is needed to bring the narrators point into focus.

Here, Rosaldo's point speaks to the challenge and limitation of listing place-names. He writes:

The notion that the text recorded by the ethnographer, here a list of place-names, can be understood from within, on its own terms in a manner of new criticism, simply makes no sense in this case because the text speaks not for itself but only in the context of the shared understandings informing Ilongot everyday life. In this society, peoples' lives overlap significantly from birth to death, so story tellers can evoke by allusion a wealth of background knowledge held in common by their listeners. Thus for Ilongot, place names in and of themselves contain myriad associations. (1986:108)

Likewise, Kigiqtaamiut hunting stories are articulated in a cryptic and esoteric "Shishmaref style" shorthand making hunting stories appear simplistic to those who don't have the requisite shared life and local historical contextual framework. This point was highlighted soon after I left the field. I had recorded several hours of elders' discussions about hunting and sea ice conditions over the course of year. These discussions were predominantly carried out in Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq. Originally a retired hunter who was both a fluent speaker and writer of Iñupiaq had offered to assist me, recognizing my language limitations. However, due to familial issues he was not able to invest the time. Noting my plight, an elder, originally from the island community of Little Diomedede and a fluent Iñupiaq speaker, offered to help with the translations. A few days after receiving the CD's I sent her, Mary Herman called to tell me she was unable to translate the materials. Minor dialectical differences aside, she suggested the reason she couldn't understand what hunters were talking about was that they spoke in their own language, used their own words and made up terms directly connected to their own personal experiences. Though she had grown up in a marine mammal hunting community less than 100 miles from Shishmaref and knew the majority of the speakers, she found their discourse largely impenetrable.

Mary's comments speak further to the way language is used to speak to experience, as well as to the shifting contextual usages of place-names and terminology in narration. To understand the meaning imbedded in hunters' sea ice terminology we must focus on the manner in which different terms are used. Kigiqtaamiut hunting narratives in Shishmaref fall into four general overlapping and not mutually exclusive forms: 1) oral traditions, which speak to events in the distant past; 2) local history, referring to events within more recent times or within living memory that are collectively and individually drawn upon in the articulation of local identity; 3) life histories, those sets of experiences and understandings connected to one's life; 4) hunting stories in daily life. The latter are the everyday exchanges of information between hunters as they return to village social space, such as the one between Tony and myself that I noted earlier.

Yet, as with place-names, multidimensionality is key. A hunting narrative, such as Arthur Tocktoo's account of an encounter with a kununigaq, is part of his life history of experiences; the story more generally is at the same time part of local history and considered a central component of collective and shared iluqnaq knowings. Likewise the previously mentioned story of finding Gregory Ayak, the lost King Island hunter, which was embedded in the history and memory of Sinjazaat, is another story that embodies important iluqnaq understandings. Thus we see how terms used and discussed in different contexts clarify the depth and multidimensionality of Kigiqtaamiut hunters' understandings of sea ice and the intertwined roles of hunting and hunting narratives in the processes of place-making.

In this next section I provide examples of how hunters selectively draw upon narratives related to specific ice terms to convey different themes. In presenting them I have attempted to keep to the original language as much as possible in order to convey the flavor and character of the Kigiqtaamiut hunting narrative form. Each of the four narratives that follow will be preceded by a brief description of the ice condition term it connects to. Two of the narratives are conversations among elders of specific ice forms. The third one relates an important local historical event, and the final one is an oral tradition connected to processes of fall ice formations. These narratives vary in the

general level of accessibility. Therefore, when appropriate I will suggest some of the key themes hunters were discussing.

*Ayaqmik* is a feature at the edge of the shorefast ice where large pieces of ice meet to form a right angle, forming a point that forces animals to travel along a specific route. They are ideal ice formations to seek out while ugzruk hunting. The *izaksautaa* is the right angle side of the *ayaqmik*, and the *Siukazuk* is a point below the *izaksautaa*. This ice feature is particularly significant for hunting in Shishmaref. Experienced hunters look for these formations and position themselves to take advantage of the current and the movement of animals within an *ayaqmik*. In this excerpt a group of elders are discussing the basic qualities of an *ayaqmik* and some of their experiences hunting in them. Central to their discussion is the role currents play in the movements of animals through leads. This is important when considering that the sea ice conditions are always considered in relation to other environmental features.

#### Narrative 1

Vincent: Ayaqmik sigu.

Moe: To underneath it is?

Vincent: Bearded seals they can't travel though it.

Davis: This one shore ice, the edge toward the ocean this one place to go into that one like that they name it. It is not a crack this one sea ice, that one.

Vincent: Open lead or ice this one. When it has ice toward the bottom...Ayaqmik. Ugzruit follow the edge then it turns back, it will just turn back.

Davis: They do not come up far I remember. When they pop up along the edge, when it pop up again. Ah it's a shore ice crack along the shore ice, broken off in a funnel or L shape. That edge of the shore ice.

Johnson: They hit this and the ugzruk will come up close to the edge.

Davis: Right here I remember it had an ayaqmik. I remember long ago here when we first moved here... Billy and Jessie, we went to the west, to the ayaqmik. There was a big water then that's it, ugzruk pop up along the edge. It was very close. It turned back. Jessie got ready, right there. A little further out, not far, it pop up again up to here halfway up it looked, aimed at it. He shot at it, he shot very low. I believe he rushed. I kept teasing him all this time, that one, what happen I wonder? Or that one did it sink?

Harvey: What is it these guys are talking about?

Vincent: Ayaqmia, the shore ice.

Harvey: Oh this one. Around here the open lead, this one from the west the very edge. This one along the edge they are toward the ocean too I usually follow it... ayaqmia I know that one. Out there toward the ocean out there the point just like this it go to down there.

Morris: Yeah, that one out there I know.

Harvey: Yeah, from out there.

Morris: The one farther out there right?

Harvey: That one out there the end, from down there from the end, they pop up usually, iyah it always happen like that. I know it is. This one they follow it, bearded seals to that one out there. They go around it.

Davis: But out toward the ocean.

Harvey: That one then and around it there are no leads this area but west of it. This one from the ayaqmik from here but the place where it goes toward the ocean that one they usually look for it, that one.

Morris: Ahha, okay.

Davis: That one but the sea ice out toward the ocean that one some of it, that one down there, *izaksaavia* they call it down toward the ocean, the area that goes out toward the ocean. The area that goes out toward the ocean. Like that they call it. This one here they call it. This one, the shore ice's this one, the end this one, that one going out toward the ocean part of it, that one the part that goes like this. An *izaksaun* they call it.

Harvey: How it's here?

Davis: This one, this ones the sea ice when it goes out toward the ocean *izaksaavianik piuzugaat* they call it.

Harvey: Yeah, this one here, this one, the edge going toward the ocean, to the sea from this point, that one ayaqmik they call it.

Harvey: This one ayaqmik they call it *L ga una* this one, corner of the L. That one over there it will not pop up over there.

Johnson: To the?

Davis: Iyah. Shore ice right there the L shape of the ayaqmik. *Uvva tuag* [Here is the shore ice]. When they hit it they can't go nowhere. They try to go in and pretty soon they come back through the ayaqmia una. Part of the ice that stretches out toward the north its *izaksaavia* they call it. Just like this out toward the ocean.

Morris: I thought in a good way, shore ice. I did not hear it.

Davis: Those people in the past, the ones before us, everything they knew about it then, this one. Whoever went somewhere, when they asked him questions. When he told about it. They know about it, like that those in the past are like that.

Morris: That's why that one, what's it stuck on through right there. They would be stuck. Just like that when they told the story to a person who is hunting, it is just like watching TV. They are like that. They know how it is. Just like that how it is. (November 15, 2007)

This discussion on an ayaqmik opens by highlighting where ayaqmit form in relation to the interactions between the floating pack ice and more firmly anchored shorefast ice. The elders discuss how ugzruk will swim into an ayaqmik, come to a dead end, and be forced to swim back out. Hunters must attend to the directions of currents in predicting where to position themselves in order to effectively hunt an ayaqmik. They further discussed the direction and spatial orientation of the crack, and Morris concluded the discussion, noting that, for hunters who shared the same types of experiences, when a hunter comes back and shares his stories hearing a story like this from another hunter is as clear as watching it on television.



*Iluqnauq* is a large piece of floating ice that ugzruit like to rest upon. This is particularly true when aupkanit form (holes that go all the way through the ice that allow ugzruit to get on and off the ice while staying in the middle of a large pan, as I mentioned previously). Iluqnait are formed when large sections of ice break off of the pack ice that had moved south during the winter. An Iluqnauq can be flat or rough ice; their specific topography does not fit into the definition of an iluqnauq. Their main defining feature is that they are large free-floating ice platforms. Depending on the wind conditions, large iluqnait can block animals from traveling closer to the shore ice edge from “Big Water” further west. A large iluqnauq that is held against the shore ice by a north wind can also slow down the breakup of the shore ice by holding it in place. This makes hunting more difficult, for as the shore ice rots in place it becomes dangerous to travel across to reach open water.

There are two narratives connected to iluqnauq presented here. Both occurred when a group of elders assembled at the school one afternoon to discuss sea ice. All were experienced hunters and were sharing their life history experiences amongst each other. Also present were several middle age hunters, some teenage students who were recording the discussion for school credit, and myself, who, as requested by the elders council, suggested the topic of discussion. Though they discuss their historic experiences with iluqnait, the general dynamics they discuss mirror contemporary sea ice movements around Shishmaref. The first is a discussion among a group of elderly hunters describing some of their experiences with this ice form. They discuss types of ice that are safe to camp on and ice qualities that are important to ugzruk habitats. They also discuss technological adaptations toward hunting on an iluqnauq and the social organization of hunting while out on the sea ice.

#### Narrative 2

Harvey: Large pan of ice, and they check if they will move, I remember, with sink hooks. They check to see if it will move, very large ice pan. I remember these ones that hardly move are always like out on the ocean, on very large ones. That one, ice sticking out like an anchor, if it will move, one that hardly moves.

Morris: Very large ice pans?

Harvey: Too very large ice pans, ones without outboard motors, right now they just push off them.

Davis: To these very large ice pans, they will camp on it.

Vincent: Iyah, they are not flat this one ice pan everyone.

Davis: These ones that are flat, they do not camp on it during the night.

Vincent: No.

Davis: Because only on rough ones, they have pressure ridges. The rotting open spots ugzruk will be slightly hidden, ones on the ice. They will walk. I know they will go to a high place to look from, moving from one spot to another. Ugzruks when they see them they sneak them.

Vincent: Rough areas, these ugzruk they are hard to spot.

Davis: Even if it is tiny, I know.

Vincent: Iyah when they are on ice they can be really hidden.

Vincent: Whoever I know right? That one when they tell about it, that kind after they hear about it they tell their sides, they will go to it. Iyah.

Davis: Because they are rough to drag because of it being rough. Because it is a rough area, those bearded seals, when they are on the ice, some of it, this one, sometimes, it looks just as if it is part of it, the rough area its hard to see, that why.

Morris: When people hear about these iluqnauq, Vincent said they brought their uniapiaq. When it is rotten ice inside, there is lots of ugzruk.

Stanley: It is a homemade sled, made out of rawhide and pegged.

Josh: Those small ones?

Stanley: Big ones.

Morris: They were light, they are the only kind they had then eh?

Vincent: *Iyah, mi uniapit ipkua tazrra qaa aglaan atga.* Our traditional sleds? Yes they are made around here. The front of the sled, these, they are high.

Davis: The runners they look crooked just like this. Them look like they won't last, like they would break sideways. They can carry a lot of weight.

Morris: They have no nails.

Davis: They always float and...

Harvey: A large piece of ice, one with pressure ridge for lookout. On the shore ice that's it. I will be on it one with very large pressure ridges on a large piece of ice it has a place to hunt ugzruk, that one, very large ice pan.

Morris: They wait for them to go on the ice, right there sleeping. Some of them old men will sleep, wait for them to go on the ice in the morning, they tell people to do something those ones (ugzruit) to go kill them. Old people (men), the ones who slept, while they have breakfast when they woke up. They tell them to do something, when ugzruit are on the ice, so those ones, young men, young people, kids too, how by helping each other they will go and get ugzruit. Ones that they killed right here to the boat There is a lookout, because up there one with a place make coffee.

Harvey: At the pressure ridge, because pressure ridges, they put coffee makers there too, where they look with binoculars.

Vincent: So that's why, those people their camp stoves, one burner camp stoves.

Harvey: Even though they will always get too much fuel and burn big their camp stove. Around here sometimes up there, there is a lot of smoke that it, it is not in a good mood. It was not opened, or turned on. This one, the burner, that one, one without noise. The loud one but that one it was good. You can hear it for sure and a lot "iyah" that's it. (November 16, 2007)

This discussion of iluqnauit begins as Harvey identifies and describes an iluqnaug. Davis expands this discussion by describing how hunters take advantage of pressure

ridges for ugzruk hunting.<sup>52</sup> Morris mentions that a central part of historic iluqnaug hunting practices was the utilization of a flat sled to drag ugzruit across rough ice. Here Stanley interjects to make sure I know what type of sled is being discussed. The last part of the discussion focused upon how hunting crews worked together on the ice. Harvey brings up how important hot coffee is when hunting, noting how elders would sit and have coffee while younger hunters worked. His reference to a “coffee maker” means a specific job not a coffee making device. He also noted that many people are not proficient at using their camp stoves.<sup>53</sup>

Another account of an iluqnaug is the story of Gregory Ayak. The story is rearticulated in different ways and in published forms. I present it here as it was told in Shishmaref when elders discussed iluqnaut during the same setting when the previous narrative took place.

### Narrative 3

Vincent: Then those ones, King Islanders got stuck. When they drifted out on that kind, iluqnaug. They were really out there, long time. Real hard to last that long. Even those other two never make it, those two who were with that one who they find. They go pretty far I guess. Then somehow he get closer to shore ice and get on to land, near Sinjazaat. They were looking for him too. You know hunters from here were. I think Alfred almost find him.

Tommy: Alfred Kiyutelluk, that one Alfred. He see tracks. That King Islander he start to go to Ear Mountain. Must of think it was Wales mountains. He was trying to go Wales but it was Ear Mountain. Never mind Wales.

Vincent: Iyah. That Ear Mountain let him go back to coast, to Sinjazaat. You know, cause he was going the wrong way. So Arnold find him there and take him Ikpik when they were staying there, at Ikpik where he was from. Try to let him get stronger there then I guess they go to Wales with dogs. After, they medivac him to Nome.... They always have hard time.

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<sup>52</sup> Davis’s comments about using the pressure ridge to look for animals articulates the same strategy Clifford sought to instill in his grandkids Tyler and James in the previous chapter.

<sup>53</sup> His final comment is reminiscent to those made by Dan Karmun in the previous chapter as he discussed learning how to make mush and the role of making mistakes toward developing understandings.

Those drifters out there. Even one time I hear that hunter he buy. For one wolverine skin, to let his partner let him have water from his umiks.<sup>54</sup>

Josh: Oh, so he had to pay to get that water from the other one?

Vincent: Yeah one wolverine skin to have water from umiks. So people always help out that way. (January 18, 2008)

In telling this story in relation to iluqnait Vincent's narration demonstrates how iluqnaug as an ice form embodies local historical experiences and how the meaning of iluqnaug in a broader context of Kigiqtaamiut hunting narratives moves well beyond its role of describing a feature in the sea ice landscape. He was also informing a future generation of hunters about the use of local landmarks (Ear Mountain), the types of hardships they may experience, and the need to work together and support each other.

The final narrative account that follows describes a conflict between *Qulliaġzruit*<sup>55</sup> and Iñupiaq speaking people from around Shishmaref. In versions of the story I heard there are two central characters, the *Qulliaġzruit*, named *Tulimaq*<sup>56</sup> and his Kigiqtaamiut adversary *Iġizrgaiyuk*. *Tulimaq*'s knowledge and skill at being able to cross unstable, early fall ice was viewed as an important dimension of knowing about *qinu*. In contrast, older renditions of the story recorded in the 1980s do not explicitly name or highlight the direct role of *Tulimaq*,<sup>57</sup> yet when I began to hear the story in 2007 and 2008 *Tulimaq* was always brought up in discussions of sea ice. The version I recorded on March 12, 2008 emerged out of a discussion about different terms related to boating though thin ice

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<sup>54</sup> Vincent is using an anglicized version of *umik*, (whiskers, facial hair) the plural form which would be *umit* in Iñupiaq.

<sup>55</sup> *Qulliaġzruit* refers to Siberian Natives living on the western side of Bering Strait. Historically this referred directly to Chukchi people. When it was used in Shishmaref at the time of these recordings, it spoke to Native people with no distinction between Chukchi and Yupik

<sup>56</sup> While living in Shishmaref, I was given the name *Tulimaq*. *Tulimaq* was both an outsider and scholar of sea ice conditions. It was also pointed out to me that while *Tulimaq* was eventually killed in the Shishmaref area, that persons who were adversaries in former lives are close friends when they return again. This was told to me as I sat next to "my" former adversary during a retelling of the event in March of 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Versions of this story were told in Inupiaq to local Kigiqtaamiut historian Edgar Ninguelook in the early 1980s, and were transcribed by Edgar, who was also a fluent speaker. These versions of the story were told just for the sake of recording them. They are currently archived in Nome with the Eskimo Heritage Program. There is no mention of *Tulimaq* throughout them. Yet 25 years later, the story was referenced in relation to *Tulimaq* as one of the heroes of the account.

and early stages of ice formation. The narrative account related to the following ice forms: *Kiaksitikaagi*, “People stuck in slush ice, boat stuck in slush ice”; and *Qinu*, “slush ice.” *Qinu* is not considered ice in same form as *sigu*. It is a form of snow that consolidates and freezes. Slush ice is considered very dangerous, because it is not a solid platform, like ice. It is not strong and cannot support weight. It is often compared to quick sand, because one who falls through can be stuck. One can also fall all the way to the bottom of *qinu* where it meets the ocean floor. *Qinu* is very white. When hunting in the spring it is important to be able to distinguish between *qinu* and ice when traveling out to the ice edge. This is one of the reasons travel to the edge of shore ice can proceed along a long circuitous path, as an experienced hunter goes through great pains to avoid *qinu*. *Siguzizruat* means “boating through thin ice.” This term refers to the act of travelling through freshly formed or forming sea ice. Freshly formed *sigu* can form sharp edges that when broken can cut through both a walrus skin covered *umiat* or even plywood. Hunters will often wrap the front of boats in old *ugzruk* skins to protect them from *siguzizruat*. This is especially important when boating through the lagoon systems where the outflow of freshwater makes the ice especially brittle and sharp when broken.

#### Narrative 4

Johnson: ...boating through thin ice. *Kiaksitikaaga*, when they get stuck. It kinda like in slush ice or ice they get stuck. That’s right ah?

Morris: That refers to fall time when the slush is forming and then it is freezing up rapidly, while they are hunting, boating.

Johnny: It just float like, get stuck on the slush.

Harvey: No motor. Can’t go home a long time ago.

Tommy: It happen to Dennis not too far back, ah, you know back there. Remember, Black Hawk [Helicopter] have to go pick them up.

Josh: So when it is freezing too fast?

Davis: Yeah. You got to just push for the land while *qinu* is getting thick. No wonder, while it goes downward it doesn’t pile up and get thick.

Morris: Like Harvey says when you're boating, especially in the channel, that ice is coming together and you can't hardly move on it. That ice is floating you can't move through it.

Davis: *Siguzizruat* that means you can't go through it because ice is coming together.

Morris: Yeah due also to current and wind.

Harvey: Maybe north wind is coming in or something like that, and they catch em.

Morris: That one Harvey saying they don't do that anymore. Nobody that desperate to go boating anymore because food is easier. But before outboard motors that's what happened. Especially oaring, with no motor.

Harvey: North wind is no good.

Morris: Yeah especially northwest.... They say, or the old folks use to say you could only go hunting when *Tagiaq* is favorable. You know that the ocean is favorable. That was that Russian's name, that one that pass away... after they come here.<sup>58</sup> Actually there was one, that was a long time ago a famous Siberian athlete. He was well known all over.

Harvey: Yeah! [laughing]

Morris: They got [killed] that guy here. One fall time, there was a lot of slush out here. You know how it [qinu] forms up getting outer and outer. And a boat got blown in [from Siberia]. They went as far as they could. Then one of them jump off the boat with oars and then [mimicking hopping like a rabbit with oars, lashed to hands and feet], then had string on his mouth and travel like that. And then ah, and then he pull the boat with that one, help pull it up. Then Shishmaref people find out. That's the guy who did that, Tulimaq. But after they find out they send for Ipnauraq<sup>59</sup> people, they send for Igizrgaiyuk. That's his [Davis's namesake] [all laughing]<sup>60</sup> His [Igizrgaiyuk's] parents had been killed by

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<sup>58</sup> Morris is referring to cultural exchanges that took place in the early 1990s when Native boat crews from Chukotka crossed Being Strait and visited several Iñupiaq communities.

<sup>59</sup> Ipnauraq is a fall fishing camp and historic settlement at the mouth of the Serpentine River, where it drains into Shishmaref lagoon.

<sup>60</sup> At this moment in the narration event there was lots of laughter as I was sitting next to elder Davis Sockpik, who namesake was Igizrgaiyuk, while due to my interest in sea ice some elders had recognized Tulimaq as my namesake. Some of the comments related to our relationship, historic and contemporary.

Siberians. He always wanted to have revenge, so a hunter went up and got him, he was fishing at eighteen mile [Ipnauraq].

Josh: [laughing] No wonder he always talk to me when I see him fishing at Grayling Creek. [All laughing] He say, “What are you doing out here?”

Morris: So they got him real quick. A runner got him, he was carving with a drill when that guy came in. They talk to each other. Then that guy say, “I came to tell you there’s Siberians down there, they just got blown in. Then that guy kuugluk [get scared, flinch] and put his clothes on real quick. He ran all the way from eighteen mile to Shishmaref. When he got here he still had that drill mouthpiece in [all laughing]. By the time he got here, the Shishmaref people got rid of those Siberians, cause they were bitter rivals. But that athlete [Tulimaq] had gotten away somehow. There use to be big hills across there, almost like mountains. And that guy was hiding back there and just when Igizrgaiyuk reach the lagoon he tripped on a pole. Then the elders joke with him when he say he was going to go after that one [Tulimaq]. They say, “I don’t think you can, you’re too clumsy.” But he went over there and they start chasing each other. Once in a while they’d see dust rising. Those were the two just running after each other. Finally Tulimaq got on top of the bigger hills. Then Igizrgaiyuk went after him and then he got em. So you two [Davis and Josh] fought across there. Then later on they found out that there was little opening over here [pointing to collar]. There was a tattoo. They open it a little farther, there was a lot of tattoos all over his body. They found out later that for everyman he killed he had made a new tattoo. That was Tulimaq [talking to Josh] your namesake and Igizrgaiyuk’s namesake... (March 10, 2008)

In each of these four sea ice narratives, sea ice terminology is invoked, or serves as the basis for carrying out wide ranging discussions beyond simple descriptions of sea ice in and of themselves. Terms are considered against and alongside ongoing experiences, and speak to a wide range of aspects of hunting life. During the first narrative about an ayaqmik, elderly hunters discussed the movements of animals, hunting techniques and modes of chastising other hunters for making mistakes.

The first discussion of an iluqnaq likewise focused on animals, the difficulty in finding them on rough ice, specific hunting tactics and technological changes. These narratives highlighted understanding associations grounded in hunters’ life histories. The second iluqnaq narrative is a local historical account, focusing on the King Island hunter Gregory Ayak who drifted out in the pack ice and was subsequently rescued by



Shishmaref hunters. While the narrative is brief, the details and the conditions of his experience and other aspects of the environmental conditions he experienced are imbedded in hunters' life experiences. It is not necessary for the narrative to provide these details to hunters. Rather, hunters provide their own experiences to the narrative in order to understand it against their own experiences on sea ice.

The multiplicity of meanings connected to terminology is further made clear through the final narrative of Tulimaq crossing qinu. In the stories told leading up to the narration of this local oral tradition, hunters had described different conditions and dimensions of fall sea ice formation. Hunters' experiences with these sea ice dynamics informed their understanding of the sets of conditions that resulted in the Qulliaġzruit being blown ashore and in Tulimaq's subsequent knowing that allowed him to cross highly dangerous qinu-forming conditions.

Tulimaq's ingenuity is recognized and praised despite his reputation for violence. Qinu and the Tulimaq oral tradition are further brought into the present through continued perpetuation of sea ice knowings, through social relations, and the recycling of names, bringing forth the contemporary relationship of Igizrgaiyuk (Davis) and Tulimaq (Josh) fostered through shared experiences, as well as humor about their first meeting at a remote fishing site reconsidered in relation to the historic context of their namesakes' previous encounters.

The narrative accounts demonstrate how Kigiqtaamiut sea ice terminology is engaged. They also demonstrate the multiplicity of meanings connected to experiences on the sea ice. Sea ice terminology as an embodiment of local understandings of the material world connects to oral traditions, local histories, life histories and ongoing personal experiences processes of knowing. The narratives highlight how hunting on the sea ice and the sharing of those experiences bring both understandings of and future experiences with the sea ice environment into being. We see sea ice as place, and hunting and the narration of hunting events through time as a process of place-making.

#### 5.4 CONCLUSIONS

What I have attempted to describe in the course of this discussion is the emergence of sea ice as place. In doing so I have suggested how Kigiqtaamiut hunting can be understood as a process of place-making through past, present, and future shared engagements with the phenomenal world. In this light I examine how hunting, as practice in the world, connects to and brings the experienced world into being. In contrast to formal classification of place-name listing I have suggested how Kigiqtaamiut ice terminology defies formal classification as meanings come into being through context of both shared and personnel understandings.

The 1956 *Polar Record* vol. 8 (54) contains an ice glossary of 68 terms used by arctic meteorologists and mariners (Armstrong and Roberts 1956). Juxtaposed with the 65 Kigiqtaamiut sea ice hunting terms documented thus far, the terms and definitions recorded in *Polar Record*, such as ice pan, flow edge, brash ice, polynya, offer many parallel descriptions of sea ice phenomena and are close regarding the number of terms.<sup>61</sup> Yet there are notable differences in these lists. As opposed to the general description of sea ice conditions encountered in arctic and sub arctic oceanic conditions offered by the *Polar Record* glossary, Kigiqtaamiut sea ice terminology emphasizes a highly local vocabulary used to describe sea ice phenomena as experienced in context of hunting along the littoral cell of the northwest Seward Peninsula coastline.

The translation and classification of Kigiqtaamiut sea ice terminology provides a set of descriptions of ice phenomena, yet this does not speak to the depth of hunters' understanding and ways of knowing natural phenomena. Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing, like the Iñupiaq language structure, is flexible and context-specific. Knowings are rendered significant through activity. Just as being in the flow of specific circumstances requires meaningful actions, the significances embodied in a hunter's sea ice lexicon are continuously and creatively constructed in relation to ongoing activities. Beyond simply offering an ethnographic critique of formal classifications, I have

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<sup>61</sup> The numerical closeness of these two lists of ice terms should not necessarily be understood as representative of all Inuit ice terminology. Other communities have their own terminology that is used to describe their localized experiences with sea ice phenomena.

demonstrated how the meanings inherent in different terms are linked to personal experiences. Diverse contextual meanings are articulated through conversations and diverse narrative events demonstrating the connections between meaning and experience.

Given the temporal parameters surrounding the seasonal presence of sea ice and the fluctuations in its quality and character over time as well as annually, Kigiqtaamiut sea ice hunting/place-making is a highly flexible, continuously changing process. The spatial organization of people across the sea ice landscape is constantly shifting seasonally, daily, and even hourly, as hunters travel up leads and respond to the currents and winds that move the ice around. Hunters employ a complex mixture of both historic Kigiqtaamiut Iñupiaq and English terms that embody a broad array of environmental descriptions, life history experiences, local history, and oral traditions. Kigiqtaamiut place-making demonstrates how non-places (seasonally variable sea ice) that are places without fixed, continuously present locations are brought into being and engaged as places.

Kigiqtaamiut hunting and narrative practices loosely speak to Thornton's (2008) categorical framework through relational, shifting, personal, and shared understandings that emphasize the possibilities of meanings over definitive explanations. This is suggested through the multiplicity of illustrations enveloped in hunters' knowings of sea ice, as articulated through diverse and multi-themed narratives connected to sea ice terminology. Iluqnaq serves as an existential reference point for hunters' experiences with persons-in-other-form. Likewise it speaks to the local history of the rescue of Gregory Ayak and the histories of other Kigiqtaamiut hunters who have drifted away in the pack ice. Qinu brings the story of Tulimaq and techniques for crossing dangerous ice, along with the history of cross-Bering Strait conflict, into the everyday.

Through diverse sea ice knowings rising out of personal and collective experiences with sea ice and sea ice narratives, the sea ice environment is brought into being in tandem with the coming into being of sea ice knowings. We can return to Hattie Ninguelook's comment that "the earth possesses" as indicative of Kigiqtaamiut knowings about sea ice, which, connected to knowings about ugzruk, flow from Kigiqtaamiut

hunters' experiences and activities in the world. Here we see that sea ice serves not just as background against which meaningful actions take place but as a continuously emerging and evolving existential context for experiences and thoughts about sea ice. Thus, hunters' understandings of sea ice teach a great deal about physical phenomena and they can also teach us a great deal about how we understand the world.

## CHAPTER 6 AN EXPERIENCE IN KNOWINGS—REVISTED

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this ethnographic account of learning from a group of Kigiqtaamiut hunters was to explore knowing in both hunting and the ethnography of hunting. I do this from the understanding that humans' existential condition of being-in-the-world, rather than simply observing it, shapes processes of knowing that are at once emergent from, dependent upon, and shaped by our living in the world or being-in-the-world. At the outset of this dissertation I suggested that this relationality of the human world is a condition of our continuously coming to understand phenomena, experiences, and material dimensions of the world that are shaped and brought into being through our knowing and acting. To attend to this relationality in hunting and ethnography I focused on the intersubjective dimensions of daily hunting life, emphasizing individual, personal, and shared experiences and understandings of more widely held cultural-ontological assumptions about the relationships between humans, animals, places, terminologies, narratives, and histories in the world. This was accomplished by examining not only hunting activities but also shared experiential dimensions of hunting life, as well as my own process of coming to learn from, with, and alongside a group of Kigiqtaamiut hunters.

It is difficult to determine when I actually left the field and moved from the process of data collection toward analysis and write up. The social relations that I developed in the field that shaped many of the experiences I had in coming to know remain present in my daily life away from Shishmaref. Weekly and daily phone calls, e-mails, and text messages with Clifford and his family continue to be part of my everyday life. Clifford continues to monitor my progress and more than once has suggested I consider moving back to Shishmaref to write my dissertation where I would have less distraction and not be lonely. We discuss future hunting trips we will share and the repairs he is expecting me to make on hunting equipment I manufactured. Relationships from the field continue

to shape this process of inquiry outside of the fieldwork setting and collapse much of the distinction between fieldwork analyses and write up into concomitant processes. I am sure many other ethnographers experience the same continuity of relationships, but I want to consider some of the implications of these relations for our understandings of ethnography and ethnographic knowledge.

I suggest this partial and welcome dissolving of the boundaries between theory, method, and practice helps us to continue to engage the implicitness and sensitivity of both the Kigiqtaamiut hunters' relations with animals and their hunting practices as ways of knowing in motion. That is, they are understandings that are articulated through actions and realized through experiences. Applied more generally, I suggest that this perspective toward engaging ways of knowing as relational, active, socio-culturally charged, and experiential is a necessary part of a "radically empirical" (Jackson 1998:360) analysis of the human condition of knowing about the world as understood from the condition of being-in-the-world.

Often, anthropological engagements with people who are understood to participate in the world means exploring ways of knowing as discrete, isolatable bodies of socio-cultural understandings that can be derived separately from considering how these understandings are creatively engaged and brought into being in daily life. However, this approach is decidedly limited and often erroneous. I have sought to explore ways of understanding the phenomenal world by embedding myself within that world, participating in Kigiqtaamiut hunters daily lives, and experiencing their relationships to both animals and the local sentient ecological setting.

Writing about this often unspoken, though omnipresent, dimension of hunters' experiences is complicated by local awareness of the way elders have been judged—sometimes ridiculed—for their beliefs and understandings by local schoolteachers, clergy, and state officials. These judgments have long histories, and Shishmaref residents continue to experience them in the present. In contrast to these colonial perceptions, I found Kigiqtaamiut hunters to be highly pragmatic empirical observers who put little credence in the exotic, and are highly sensitive to being portrayed as such. Views on the

relationships between human actions and forces in the world vary widely between Kigiqtaamiut individuals, change through time, and are relative to personal experiences. In this ethnography I built on the primacy of my experiences as I grappled with the subtlety of both everyday relations and hunters' ways of understanding, knowing, and experiencing the world from their position of being situated within it.

Any predetermined methodology, course, or theoretical perspective applied to a chosen context of hunting life will be at odds with the flow and character of actions that compose it. What we find in the experiences of hunting is not planned and predictable. Instead, we find a flexible preparedness for the emergent and directly experienced. Hunting and the ethnography of hunting blend into and inform each other, and both result in understandings that are not hard and fast, timeless, or universal, but are instead suggestive of possibilities that can only be understood through one's experience with them. Success in hunting is determined by the ability of the hunters to seek and catch animals. Success in ethnography is determined by accurately depicting diverse experiences and ways of engaging with the world.

This exploration of hunting has been used as a case study in the more general examination of ways of knowing as they are informed by the being-in-the-world of the ethnographer and the people they develop relationships with. It is therefore about a way knowing that is ambiguous and not fully definable in objective terms. The continuously coming into being of hunters' understandings cannot be defined or measured. Perhaps the best way to speak to this complexity is through example, and this is what I have sought to do.

Emphasizing my own process of learning about shared, intersubjective, and incomplete understandings has allowed me to develop an ethnography of relationality, one that emphasizes connections and relationships. Relationships here do not just pertain to objectified ethnographic Others, but are an elemental aspect of doing, living, and writing an ethnography. As such, they are a process embedded within the relationality of being-in-the-world. By taking this approach I have attempted to speak to Ingold's (2000; 2006) call for relationally grounded research that brings to the center the being-in-the-

world of the researcher and the relationships one is dependent upon and bound to as a means of accurately reporting and understanding the world.

The central premise of this project has thus been to illuminate that human knowings can only emerge from being-in-the-world. This highlights a central issue, one regarding the ethnographic methods for attending to these relational processes. I sought to address this issue by highlighting my direct engagement with Kigiqtaamiut hunters as the topical focus of this ethnography. In doing so, I adopted and explored the local hunting pedagogy of “following.” Following, or being allowed to “malik,” emphasized learning through direct experience in order to develop personal and individual self reliance and understandings. Utilizing and building upon this local pedagogy as a primary means of learning allowed me to acknowledge and make central my relationship with Clifford Weyiouanna and other hunters in the process of learning. Active participation in daily life is not a new contribution to the ethnography of hunting. What I have offered here is a learning ethnography that is at once grounded in the local pedagogy of following while expanding beyond it in order to consider narrative learning, verbal criticism, the synthesis of older beliefs with local history, and ongoing personal experiences. This ethnographic approach provided a diverse context for exploring important details of daily life. Such an approach has the potential to generate new forms of knowing that challenge ethnographies in which the ethnographer self is separated from their relationships with informants and instructors. Further, this approach seeks to contribute to similar initiatives undertaken by ethnographers like Michael Jackson, Sylvia Poirier and Jean Goulet.

Such projects, research methods, and ethnographies will not readily fit many readers’ expectations or standards, especially those who work in areas of research that have been dominantly objectivist. Nevertheless, and as I indicated in chapter one, these approaches are emerging forms of ethnography, research, and analysis in anthropology.

Upon ending the period of formal data collection that has informed this dissertation in the fall of 2008, I was asked by the director of the natural resource division of Kawerak (the Bering Strait regional non-profit organization) to speak to their elders’ advisory council in Nome, Alaska, about my research in Shishmaref. I had become quite



comfortable working with and alongside elders in Shishmaref, having come to know most of the elders through shared hunting activities. When asking questions or talking with them about my interests and concerns, our discussions were at least in-part grounded in our shared experiences in Shishmaref over a period of several years, and their knowledge of my range of experiences with on-the-land activities and social relations.

Standing before a group of elders from different communities around the Bering Strait region, I was uncertain how they would receive and respond to my experientially derived knowledge claims. I began by describing my research and experiences. I discussed learning by following and by participating. I spoke of coming to understand not through interviewing people but through experiencing life with them, and developing my own understandings. As I spoke I found myself drifting into fairly theoretical domains of my research and my broader interests in ontologies of knowing and knowledges as active relational socio-cultural practices.

The engaging conversation that followed was not one I had anticipated. These elderly hunters and I discussed the nuances of skin on frame boat construction on one hand, and ugzruk behavior and on the other, not to mention the importance of both experience and experiencing in developing understandings. “We don’t talk about things we just know them, so I am glad you can talk about them,” was the comment of one retired hunter. Another woman simply turned to me as she left and said “Kigiqtaamiut,” suggesting I was now a person of the island. I certainly do not suggest I agree with her comment or suggest that I ever saw myself as an “insider,” as a “real hunter” or as “one who knows.” My position has always been as the student-learner of ways of knowing, a position with inherently incomplete and emerging understandings. What was significant to me was that I encountered striking support from representatives from these diverse Iñupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik communities when I proposed that the experiential was fundamental to how they came to qualify their knowings of the world. As our conversation concluded I was told that I was doing this work the right way, and that I needed to continue this following approach to understand and be able to write about hunting life in the region.

Since I was feeling somewhat self-conscious about my presentation, these comments were somewhat surprising to me, even if my experiences and conversations in Shishmaref had likewise suggested the practicality of this approach. Part of my surprise at regional acceptance of the work sprang from the fact that some months earlier I had briefly left the field in order to co-organize and participate in a small conference session at a regional anthropological meeting. I left the field to give a paper and returned to Shishmaref soon after to begin getting ready for spring hunting and to carry out archival work in Nome. I presented a paper discussing ideas of luck and hunters' experiences with sentience in animal behavior. I discussed many of the same themes I would later share with the Kawerak elders' advisory council. Following the conclusion of the session, I overheard several comments in the hall questioning the benefit of such work and the applicability of it in the context of resource management issues and regional history. After overhearing these concerns, I as well found myself questioning my project.

The stated goal of my research was to explore Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing in relation to local practices and assumptions by focusing on empirical observations and the local pedagogy of hunting. This was a methodology that I believed reflected the complexity and diversity of their ways of knowing. Thus, the "dismissal" of this project by other regional scholars was troubling, considering of course that this research was also designed to complete my dissertation and be shared with others.

And yet some months later as I spoke with regional hunters about the same themes I'd previously been told were not relevant, I was encouraged to continue in this line of research on both a regional level by the Kawerak elders' advisory council and on a local level by elders and hunters in Shishmaref. In short, I received wide support both locally and regionally from residents, yet on a professional level regional scholars involved in resource management and archeology dismissed the work as having no relevance to the region's paradigmatic or practical contemporary research needs.

I suggest these divergent perspectives speak to a central dimension of this project of learning and knowing *in situ* by demonstrating the importance of challenging both standard western academic Cartesian concepts of knowledge and the resulting separation

of humanity from the existential reality of the bio-physical world. In order to address the challenges of the ethnographic study of hunting, I have also tried to apply an alternative framework for directly engaging the ways in which we come to understand the experienced world from our position of being in it. I do not suggest that in doing so this work achieves the goal of providing a broadly applicable template for bridging intercultural communication. However, this framework does address ways of knowing and provides a methodological/theoretical synthesis toward exploring and writing about diverse ways of knowing as emergent within and connected to a multiplicity of relationships within other pedagogical frameworks. It is to this end, and my desire to explore methods that could be applied to the on-the-ground realities of the processes of learning and knowing among Kigiqtaamiut hunters, that this project has been directed. My aim has been to learn from and respect Kigiqtaamiut ways of knowing and to contribute to ethnographic learning. Yet although aspects of my learning overlap with those of Kigiqtaamiut hunters, my task is fundamentally different. My task is to inform people outside of the Kigiqtaamiut hunting context, whereas hunters must attend to the not-fully knowable in order to catch animals. I seek to inform the academic discipline of anthropology about Kigiqtaamiut hunters' experiences and ways of knowing. Rather than responding to animals and not-fully knowable forces in the world, and in order to achieve validity for my project, I must adapt my understandings of the process of Kigiqtaamiut learning and knowing beyond my participation in hunting life to the rituals and language of academia and the long history of western philosophy that has shaped academic knowledge.

To speak about hunting as a practice in the world, the linkages between the study of hunting and the practices of hunting must be attended to in full in order to speak about a specific set of hunting practices as directly as possible. Therefore, the process by which one comes to know must be attended to with equal attention to the subject being explored not dualistically as "method" and "data" but collapsed into each other as mutual aspects of the relational process of coming to know. Thus, Ingold's emphasis on the connections between ontology and epistemology, and Kigiqtaamiut hunters' focus on the directly

experienced world both suggest a relational, learning ethnography of knowing that I have attempted to produce here.

However, this also poses another challenge that I have attempted to address in my thesis, the question of how to write a relational ethnography. How one imagines and writes relationally about learning from others, in order to speak to ways of knowing that are fluid, dynamic, and emerging, is not a straightforward task, and has not been fully addressed in existing literature on ethnographic writing, although there is a tradition of phenomenological ethnography. It is a challenge I struggled with both intellectually and stylistically to attend to. The resulting ethnography is certainly not perfect, yet it does offer a contribution to the methodology of writing a relational ethnography, and I consider this an important aspect of the project.

In the core ethnographic chapters of this thesis I addressed this complexity by highlighting specific reoccurring themes that emerged either in the context of hunting events or as consistent topics of discussion among hunters. Moreover, I sought to describe these themes as I encountered and engaged them with hunters, with as little modification from their essential form as possible. Thus conversations were, to the degree possible, left intact in order to convey the specific contextualized realities of the moment, whether it was in the form of a reprimand, or a conversation about the sentient nature of polar bears. This also renders the text transparent and open to critique, as the specific conversations and interactions that form the basis of ethnographic claims are made clear.

Chapter three focused on relational knowing in hunting and human animal relations. Chapter four addressed “following” and critical discursive pedagogies, as well as intergenerational relations between teachers and learners. Chapter five highlighted interconnected and unclassifiable discursive conversations about sea ice in order to attend to place-making and the ultimate inseparability of different forms of experienced relations and knowings. The expanded discussions within each thematic chapter were broken down in order to attend to diverse examples of ways these themes illuminated aspects of hunter’s experiences and ways of knowing through being-in-the-

world. I also tried to accentuate the interconnectivity between the different highlighted themes within the context of daily life.

## 6.2 A SUMMARY OF THE EXPERIENCE

The primary ethnographic goals of this project were to provide a relatively direct ethnographic account of Kigiqtaamiut bearded seal hunting practices and hunters' ways of knowing the experienced world. I sought to accomplish this through the analysis of my shared experiences of learning from and alongside a small cohort of Kigiqtaamiut hunters over the course of the three seasons I spent accompanying them onto the spring ice. Attending to the interactive process of directly learning by following and doing proved to have incredible significance and value for my analysis of the ways of knowing among a community of skilled practitioners.

What I have attempted to portray through this ethnography is the permeability of the boundaries between being, acting, experiencing, and knowing in both hunting and ethnography. I have also sought to present how relations between hunters, between hunters and non-human forms, and between hunters and ethnographers, emerge to take shape and meaning in the context of action in Kigiqtaamiut hunting life. In doing so, I have sought to speak to the ways of knowing that inform meaningful action in daily hunting life in a manner that is congruent with its actualization in Kigiqtaamiut life and experience. This is one of the ways I develop an ethnography of knowing.

Returning to the original considerations outlined in chapter one and building upon Jackson's (1998) primacy of relation over relata, I drew upon relationality as a dimension of the human condition grounded in the human condition of being-in-the-world. As we are both immersed in the world and relationally a part of it, our emerging knowledge of the world serves to shape and transform how we experience it. In exploring the active process of coming to know the world by considering the knowledge that informs the everyday, I endeavored to focus on the intersubjective in daily life.

I drew on the formulation of intersubjective life as "a space in between" objectivity and subjectivity in order to speak to the shared and implicit understandings of daily life

that can repeatedly shift and change in ambiguous, unpredictable, and incongruous ways. I explored how intersubjective thought and social space allows us to consider the relationship between the individual as at once both separate from and concurrently part of a more encompassing relational field.

In relation to knowing, I explored knowing not as a cohesive body of understandings. Rather, this ethnography addressed personal engagements within social interactions wherein experiences, concerns and values shape shifting and emergent knowledges. These contexts included individuals' personal relationships with places, understandings of animal behavior, and a self-reflexive analysis of individual thoughts and actions.

Chapter two opened by providing a temporal perspective on the significance of marine mammal hunting in western Alaska leading up to and describing the role of hunting in contemporary village life. From here I moved to examine Shishmaref within the regional history of colonial encounters, from first contacts with maritime explorers to the expansion of pelagic and shore-based whaling stations and the sets of opportunities these brought for social advancement within local cultural frameworks. Central to examining the history of Shishmaref was recognizing the scant historical accounts of early colonial contacts and interactions in both written records and local oral historical accounts. Yet certain events find prominence in local history and are brought forth as central markers of Kigiqtaamiut history and indigenous identity. These are the introduction and incorporation of reindeer into Kigiqtaamiut subsistence practices and local efforts to halt the expansion of the 1918 influenza epidemic.

Contemporary village life was described in relation to a complex set of issues surrounding community relocation efforts, poverty, and the role and valuation of hunting in contemporary village life. I indicated how hunting serves as an important opportunity for men to achieve status and success in village life. Through shared and mutual experiences with hunters, I highlighted the way hunting involves social interactions with animals that blur the boundary between humanness and animality while at the same time insuring those boundaries remain intact. Highlighting these dimensions reveals the relationality inherent and subsumed in everyday village and hunting life.

Chapter three described how recent changes in sea ice coverage, quality, and character have shaped changes in hunting practices. Equally, however, it was noted that experiences with annual variability in the character of sea ice coverage through time, as revealed through oral histories, has long been present in local hunting practices and in hunters' understandings of the unpredictability of environmental phenomena. These examples suggested a need to look more carefully at how hunters understood and engaged coming to know the environment. *Anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* (Eskimo Law) was introduced here as an evolving framework of older ideas and beliefs which hunters continue to contribute to and engage with through ongoing experiences in the phenomenal world. Hunters synthesized these beliefs with other modes of knowing in order to understand relations between human actions, thoughts, and intentions with the unfolding of events and experiences with unknowable forces in the world. A central tenant of *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* is the prohibition against playing with animals. This is more broadly conceived as operating under the assumption that one can ever fully know or predict the environment.

I explored how these evolving concepts were brought into being in hunting and life experiences by highlighting my shared experiences with hunters and by providing examples of conversations between myself and hunters that revealed *anizugaksrat iniqtigutait* as an active, emerging, intersubjective knowing, a knowing that is at once collectively informed through local history and ongoing hunting experiences, and that is thus also highly personal and intuitive in its application. Ideas of luck/success, play hunting, and my own characterization of hunting as not-(not)-hunting were used to demonstrate and describe ways hunters conceptualize their experiences with hunting success and failures. Hunters ultimately strive to increase and maintain their possibilities for success in future hunting events by avoiding hunting or shooting *ugzruk* during certain seasons, despite their availability, in order to increase their potential for success during future spring hunts. Hunters' knowings and relationships with animals were shown to evolve and draw upon a multitude of experiential domains in order to understand the experienced world from the position of being in it.

Chapter four expanded upon Kigiqtaamiut experiences in order to consider it as a pedagogy that informs a multiplicity of dimensions of Kigiqtaamiut socio-cultural life. Following, or being allowed to malik, was demonstrated as a principle instruction method for social life hunting and ethnography. Following creates a context for observation and participation. As realized in hunting pedagogy where personal experience forms the basis for validity, instruction by “following” encourages individuals to develop their own sets of understandings by encouraging them to engage in activities and come to understand through their own experiences. Concurrently, these understandings are communicated within a broader relational field of shared implicit understandings about social behavior. Daily lived examples, such as self-regulation while working, further show how the experiential serves as a broader cultural template of learning and knowing in Kigiqtaamiut social life in order to attend to the primacy of its role in hunting life.

Experience shapes knowings, which are at the same time shaping experience. Through this processes of coming to know in the world, the directly experienced world is also continuously brought into being. I suggested in chapter five that this was exemplified by how hunting could be understood as a process of place-making wherein continually emerging understandings are connected to experiences with places.

These experiences are not limited to the on-the-ground experiences of hunting. Building on Poirier’s (2005) emphasis on both narration and narrative, I suggested that the narrative experience of place contributes to shaping understandings and experiences with places. Through the example of the sea ice landscape, I examined how sea ice as place, and knowings of the sea ice as place, inform each other. Local history and personal experiences are creatively combined and embodied in both the English and Iñupiaq terminology in hunters’ narratives to articulate their experiential knowings, which serves to further the process of place making.

These overlapping, shared, but individually unique experiences have highlighted some of the ways hunting, being, and knowing are interconnected aspects of Kigiqtaamiut hunters’ experiences. Lived, experienced, intersubjective dimensions of life speak to the inescapable ambiguity of particularity and commonality in daily life.



Here relationality and a relational approach toward understanding the everyday in hunting life does not provide a complete picture of the whole of Kigiqtaamiut society in Shishmaref. What is offered here is a particular kind of ethnography, one that is neither an emic nor etic portrait of Kigiqtaamiut marine mammal hunting life. This is a multifaceted picture of the interactions and interrelationships between my own process of learning and that of Kigiqtaamiut hunters as two emerging and mutually informing understandings in motion.

### 6.3 CONCLUSIONS

I have sought to draw upon my experiential engagement with Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of knowing in order to develop an ethnography of knowing as a fluid and ongoing process of coming to know from the position of being-in-the-world. This project is incomplete and inescapably so. For in the same way that understandings in hunting are continuous and ongoing, so too must this project be but a partial and temporally specific summary of my current understandings.

I have learned much, and I have tried to share much. Sea ice features carry multiple layers of meaning for me derived from experiences shared while out hunting, during visits to hunter's homes, and through narratives at elders' gatherings. While sitting in friends' houses I can share in and understand stories connected to places I've come to know through our shared experiences. We can laugh together and speak in a language of mutuality while at the same time recognizing differentiation and limitation. Knowing doesn't require "knowing" in a complete and absolute sense, but rather an active-yet-critical openness to the possible. On the other hand, building a kayak or umiaq, tying a sled, or avoiding bum ice on a rotting trail requires the application of intuitive and felt understandings in a given moment, even as these same understandings are forever changing in complex and unpredictable ways. Thus, through coming to know and by suggesting ways to do ethnographies of knowing, it may be possible to grapple with a knowing that is forever situated, changing, and neither timeless nor universal.

Writing about her studying ethnography under Harold Conklin, Myrdene Anderson noted that Conklin's course was not about ethnography, but was instead about *doing* ethnography (2007:59). "The subtext in the course seemed to be that doing ethnography should be impossible, but that we were to proceed in good faith with all senses in tow" (Anderson 2007:59). Operating from an acceptance of the incomplete and processual nature of the project opens up new possibilities for how we understand and analyze knowledge claims. Were I to have only participated in one season of spring hunting and used that as the basis of my ethnographic analysis I would have offered some insights into the Shishmaref spring hunting complex. Yet comparing my first year of experience and data against the second and third, my conceptions of the particular and the universal dimensions of hunting practices were dramatically informed and transformed. Rather than feeling confident, I am left much more informed and experienced, but feeling much more aware of the limitations in my knowledge.

In concluding this ethnographic experience in knowings, I return to the point I suggested at the beginning of this dissertation. There I suggested the possibility that there was much to be learned from Kigiqtaamiut hunters about bearded seals, about sea ice, and about the connections between phenomena in the world. This was shown to be true, as the hunters demonstrated complex understandings of ugzruk behaviors, including the ways ugzruk could be experienced as sentient beings. Further, I suggested that the ethnographer's analysis of hunters' ways of knowing was equally revealing about the human condition of being in and coming to know the world. Hunters highlight knowing from a position of embeddedness, and in a context of relationality, that does not disallow an objective analysis of phenomena, but seeks to ground understanding in a context of an experienced world. This suggests both possibility and caution. For an ethnographer, this possibility dissolves boundaries between theory and action, supporting an idea of knowledge in motion. Hunter's caution comes in the form of admonishment, to not overstep one's bounds or suggest knowing beyond that which you have directly experienced. In essence, caution recognizes the limitations of prospective knowledge claims and their implications.

In writing this ethnography I have attempted to remain aware of and to explicitly speak to both of those dimensions. I have on one hand suggested the possibility of learning and doing relational anthropology through an ethnography of knowing. At the same time, doing so has suggested that such a processual approach speaks to relational and situational limitations, and to the temporality of ethnographic knowledge claims. However, I suggest doing so allows one to speak more empirically, albeit with cautious confidence, about what is indeed actually known in a given moment. In doing so, I offer this learning and processual ethnography not as an authoritative narrative of Kigiqtaamiut society, but as an account of learning from and with Kigiqtaamiut hunters that offers unique and important insights into Kigiqtaamiut hunters' ways of being in and knowing the world from the vantage of the directly experienced. At the same time, and with Clifford's admonishment, "He doesn't know," running through my head, I cautiously offer this ethnography of knowing as a contribution to the broader project of the anthropology of knowing.

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## APPENDIX 1

## KIGIQTAAMIUT SEA ICE AND WEATHER TERMINOLOGY

## SEA ICE TERMINOLOGY

Alluaq - fishing hole in the ice (not a seal breathing hole). This is a human made feature in ice environment.

Alluq - seal breathing hole, allut and allunik, plural forms. This term can be used in a sentence such as nigsam allua. These are breathing holes made by seals. Seals begin making breathing holes during the early stages of ice formation. Breathing holes are continuously revisited by seals in order to keep them open. During early fall hunting breathing holes made in young ice provide important visual land mark when looking for seals

Anaglu - dirty sea ice. Ugzruuit are known to prefer very white ice. During early spring hunting anaglu is ignored while looking for game. Later in the spring when hunters are looking for walrus anaglu is important, as it IS the type of ice around which walrus tend to congregate.

Aupkaniq - A body of open water in an iluqnaug, or could also be in tuaq (shore ice). Aupkaniq is a hole in the ice. They form a body of open water in a large piece of ice. They are much larger than a breathing hole and are not made by seals but are made by processes of sea ice deterioration during the spring as floating ice begins to breakdown from the bottom side. An aupkaniq differs from imagzruaq which is water on top of the ice. However as ice continues to rot from underneath, an imagzruaq becomes aupkaniq. Bearded seals use aupkaniq to climb onto iluqnaut to rest in the sunshine. These are safe places for seals to rest as they usually form near the center of large ice pans see figure 1. In this painting by Shishmaref artist James Moses ugzruuit are shown resting near a large aupkaniq being stalked by a Inuk hunter

Auqpaᅇmannᅇ - when the ice is really melted. This term is related to Aupkaniq. The base word aupkaq means to melt through. The terms Aupkaniq, Auqpaᅇmannᅇ, Auzruaq, all refer to processes and qualities of ice melting from underneath, but do not necessarily speak to singularly identifiable features. These terms are used somewhat interchangeably in the contemporary moment.

Auzruaq - When the sea ice is getting rotten from melting from the top and bottom (see the above discussion)

Ayaqmik - This is a feature at the edge of the shorefast where large pieces of ice that make right angle, forming a point that force animals to travel along a specific route, they

are very good features to look for while ugzruk hunting. The izaksautaa is the right angle side of the ayaqmik, the Siukazuk is a point below the izaksautaa. This ice feature is particularly significant for hunting in Shishmaref. Experienced hunters look for these specific formations and position themselves to take advantage of the current and the movement of animals within an ayaqmik.

Iluqnauq - A large piece of floating ice that ugzruit like to rest upon. This is particularly true when aupkanit form which allow ugzruit a way to get on and off the ice while staying in the middle of a large pan. Iluqnait are formed when large ice pans break off of the pack ice that has moved south during the winter. An Iluqnauq can be flat or rough ice their specific topography does not fit into the definition of an iluqnauq Their main defining feature is that they are large free floating ice platforms Depending on the wind conditions large Iluqnait can block animals from traveling closer to the shore ice edge from "Big Water" further west. A large iluqnauq that is held against the shore ice by a north wind can also slow down the breakup of the shore ice by holding it in place. This makes hunting more difficult as the shore ice rots in place it becomes dangerous to travel on. Yet if the ice doesn't move hunters are forced to find ways to get to open water. An iluqnauq serves in one capacity as good habitat for bearded seals. While in another capacity under specific environmental constraints it can serve as an impediment to hunting.

Iluqnamazruamik or iluqnamazruaq - Small pan of ice that ugzruit rest upon. Ugzruk resting on ice may be referred to as kimigitaq or qazigmazuraq when it is on a small piece of ice of that type. These are small forms of Iluqnait that are usually broken off from larger iluqnait.

Iluqnausuk - very large pan of floating loose ice. This is a very large Iluqnauq. When discussing an iluqnauq blocking leads for animals to travel closer to shore ice hunters are most often referring to an Iluqnausuk. In everyday discussions however hunters most often use the simplified form of Iluqnauq even when referring to an iluqnausuk.

Imagzruat - water that collects on top of the ice. This can be in the form of rain water, melted snow water or created as surface of ice begins to melt. An imagzruat does not go all the way through the ice like a aupkaniq. Though it may become one as the ice continues to rot over the course of the spring

Imagnaizruat- open hole in ice pan with thin ice around the edges This is usually ice that has frozen the night before. Imagnaizruat is also used to describe the condition of floating ice drifting against the ice edge and the small bodies of water that form between pieces of ice which refreeze and become imagnaizruat. These are also sometimes called pot holes, or kukus. Kuuk is a base word for river. It is broadly applied to a wide range of bodies of water across the North American arctic.

Inizraġaq - Ice mirage. Ice mirages are common in the spring during sunny days. When the ice mirage is low on the horizon it typically means that the open water is far out. When it is higher in the sky it means that open water is closer

Issiaq - Piece of ice stuck to the bottom of floating ice. These can be dangerous ice features. They can break off and puncture boats. They are created by two pans of ice bumping into each other. The smaller pieces of ice go under the larger one and freeze to the bottom, the piece that is frozen to the bottom of the larger piece of ice is referred to as an issiaq. It can break off and severely damage a boat (Narrative 3)

Issruaq- Deeper water, deep water current. Such as the condition at Sinġaazruaq (West Channel) Ice will take longer to form in these settings, it will also break up earlier. These places can be dangerous to cross in both early fall when the ice is thickening and in the spring when the ice is melting.

Itnazaaga - Slightly deeper water with deeper current. This term is related to the former but refers to deeper water

Itqaaniq- The easterly direction current. This is an important current to be aware of for Shishmaref hunters. This current brings sea ice and animals close to shore near the vicinity of Cape Espenberg. One of the reasons Cape Espenberg has historically been a good hunting area has been that this current brings animals close to shore here. Hunting in this area does not require hunters to travel far out onto the sea ice. Another quality of this current speaks to becoming stuck on drifting ice. Hunters who have drifted out on moving ice try to travel eastward moving from iluqnauq to inuqnauq in order to move closer to shorefast ice.

Iunġiq - (Iunġit) plural- pressure ridge. A large hill of ice made by the edges of large pieces of ice pushing against each breaking their edges off and piling up. An Iluqnauq can have multiple Iunġit holding it together. These are strong points on an iluqnauq. While spending the night on ice hunters try to camp near pressure ridges as they help hold ice together. Hunting around an Iluqnauq hunters in boats will often stop near the back side of a large iunġit in order to climb it and search for animals resting on flat ice from a high and concealed vantage point. Later in the spring they can become dangerous and hunters avoid going near them in case they fall over. They should not be climbed during these times.

Iunizuit- a very large iunġit

Iuniġaurat- a small iunġit

Izaksautaa- the right angle “east side of an ayaqmik that is toward ocean side of the ayaqmik.

Kanimniġat- small pieces of ice that can be remnants of ice pack in late spring and early summer, either the last of the shore ice or last of ice coming up from the south.

Kaniq- frost

Kazrruq- (kazrrut plural) - small pieces of crushed ice that gather alongside iluqnaug, or that are encountered as the last of the ice passes through Bering Strait. Kazrrut are made as larger pieces of ice bump into each other, resulting in small pieces of ice breaking off. Kazruut can block boat trails but will separate on a north or northeast wind.

Kiaksitikaagi - People stuck in slush ice, boat stuck in slush ice

Kiaknaiman - East wind

Kiġġiq - This refers to a piece of shore ice that has broken off from the main body of shore ice when it is seen miles off shore.

Kilaagniġat - During the spring as ice begins to melt and get thinner openings will form in this thin ice.

Kiniqtaq- This is ice that the salt has leached out of. This ice can be a good source of fresh water, especially if hunters have drifted away from shore.

Maniġġaq - ice going over other ice the thickness of which doesn't matter. This is a verb and refers to the process of ice piling. It speaks to the general notion of a form of ice movement and doesn't specify size or form of ice moving.

Maptuzruaq - strong thick ice.

Niġġuwik- Literally "table" this refers to the edge of ice that gets washed out from underneath that forms a thin edge that sits above the water. This is known as one of the most dangerous forms of ice one can encounter while out boating during spring hunting. Niġġuwik cannot support weight and if stepped on a hunter can easily fall into the water.

Niiq - North wind. This is a difficult wind for hunting during spring. It blows the sea ice against the shore ice, closing leads, and ponds of open water. In both recent years and in the memories of elders, years when there were persistent north winds resulted in very poor ugzruk hunting. While a north packs the ice against the coast instead of letting it spread out, the ice. It continues to rot. This makes travelling out on the ice late in the spring when there has been persistent north winds very dangerous. While out hunting in boats hunters will return to shore quickly if the wind turns north as it can block trails or trap boats in the ice.

Nilak - Freshwater ice such as in the lagoon and even right in front of the islands, this ice is more sharp and brittle than pure sea ice. Sea ice is flexible and can be crossed even when quite thin. Freshwater ice of similar thickness would break if one tried to cross it. Several rivers drain into the lagoon behind Shishmaref giving it a brackish quality. Lagoon ice has some qualities of both sea ice and freshwater ice.

Niqsaq Puiġla - A seal coming up in a breathing hole.

Piġuliaq - "Glacial ice" old ice from up north that is freshwater and bluish in color. This is multiyear ice that has moved south. This form of ice is rarely seen in Bering Strait. However piġuliaq use to provide an important source of fresh water through the winter. Many elders suggest that rather than rely on cutting ice out of mainland lakes for drinking water during the winter that they instead used mostly piġuliaq ice. It is also suggested that this ice was vastly superior in the quality of drinking water it offered than existing mainland freshwater sources

Pizruġaaq - Westerly current

Qalligiititaaga- the active process of siguliaq (young ice) becoming thicker as it broken by waves, winds and tidal currents. These broken pieces move around and become thicker through building layers on top of other pieces of ice

Qalligiiktauniq – Thicker siguliaq formed of multiple layers siguliaq.

Qaniq - permafrost ice similar to piġaliaq. This ice can be found on the mainland by clearing away surface vegetation. This ice has been used as a source of freshwater in the memory of some elders.

Qaimut – slush ice formed by water waves that forms snow burms. Qaimut can be used to navigate in marginal weather. Returning from up the coast from Shishmaref Qaimiut are kept on the left side of the boat. Elders have suggested that qaimut are not as good as a GPS toward pinpointing one's position but provide a reliable geographic and directional navigation add that one can use to navigate by in marginal conditions.

Qavuġnak - frost that forms on the ground in the fall during the evenings and subsequently melts during the day.

Qinu - Slush ice Qinu is not considered ice in same form as sigu. It is a form of snow that consolidates and freezes. Slush ice is considered very dangerous, because it is not a solid platform like ice it is not strong and cannot support weight. It is often compared to quick sand, because one who falls through can be stuck. One can also fall all the way to the bottom of qinu where it meets the ocean floor. Qinu is very white. When hunting in the spring it is important to be able to distinguish between qinu and ice when traveling out to the ice edge. This is one of the reasons travel to edge of shoe ice can proceed

along a long circuitous path as an experienced hunter goes through great pains to avoid qinu. There is a famous story in Shishmaref of a Siberian inuit crossing qinu. In the story he is recognized for his ingenuity and skill at being able to read and judge ice conditions.

Qipsruġaq - The frozen surface of the snow on top of sea ice. This thin layer of snow will melt during the day and refreeze in the evening. When hunters travelled by dog team on the sea ice this was particularly bad on dogs feet.

Qizua - When clouds appear dark on their underside from the reflection of open water. This is an important environmental indicator that is used throughout the year when ice is present to gauge the distance to open water. When no qizua can be seen then open water is far away. When the underside of clouds are dark then open water is close by. An experienced hunter can gauge the distance and direction of open water from observing qizua

Qupnauraq - Any form of a small crack in the ice.

Sauzaġuat - This ice feature originates as siguaq or young thin ice which eventually breaks up into multiple pieces that continuously bump into each other round and round forming circular pieces shaped like dance drums.

Sigimitaaga - This refers to shore ice breaking up. Specifically this refers to witnessing the shore ice breaking up.

Sigimaaq - Broken pieces of shore ice

Siginiq - Glacier ice

Sigu- A generic term for sea ice. This is a post base word that is often used to construct other descriptive terms. It typically is not used that much in isolation to describe any specific types of conditions or characteristics.

Siguaq - This is the very first phase of sea ice formation in either the lagoon systems or on the ocean. In the lagoon where there is outflow of freshwater from varied river systems siguaq will have a different character than "pure" saltwater. Siguaq composed of mixed fresh and saltwater will be more brittle. Saltwater ice has a degree of flexibility. Thin saltwater ice can often be crossed, whereas freshwater ice of the same thickness would not support the weight of a person crossing it. Thus hunters crossing thin ice must know not just how to distribute their weight to move across thin ice, they must also have a sense of the ratio of saltwater to freshwater in order to determine the strength of the ice. Historically old seal skins would be hung over the bow of the boat to save the boats skin covering from being cut by sharp ice, in particular ice with high freshwater composition.



**Siguliaq** - This term describes a wide range of conditions and ice characteristics it is a general term from *sigu*. It is used to formulate descriptions of ice conditions more than it describes a singular condition. It is most often used to relate dynamics and observations connected to young or newly formed ice.

**Sigugiktuq** - "good ice" clean white ice. This is a form of ice *ugzruk* prefer. It is not necessarily a form of ice as much as it is a quality. An *iluqnaq* can also be *sigugiktuq*, or have *sigugiktuq*.

**Sigimaq** - Small pieces of broken up ice that are too small for seals to rest upon. These small ice pans are made by larger pieces brushing against each other in windy and wavy conditions. They are common in the fall when ice is starting to thicken up and is moving around a lot from the wind and tide.

**Siguzizruat** - Boating through thin ice. This term refers to the act of travelling through freshly formed or forming sea ice. Freshly formed *sigu* can form sharp edges when broken that can cut through walrus skin covered *umiat* or plywood. Hunters will often wrap the front of boats in old *ugzruk* skins to protect them from *siguzizruat*. This is especially important when boating through the lagoon systems where they outflow of freshwater makes the ice especially brittle and sharp when broken.

**Siukazuk** - A point below the *izaksautaa* of an *ayaqmik*. This is a large point of floating ice. This term however is not limited to ice and can refer to any feature forming a large point.

**Tagiaq** - Ocean water, the ocean

**Tamalaanaqsimaun** or **tamalaamaun** (alternative) - When the sea ice scatters resulting in good trails for hunters. "Elders refer to floating ice is blown against the *tuaq* smashing it and subsequently blowing back out to sea as *talamaq*. This form of floating ice will separate during late spring during east and northeast winds.

**Tasraaman** - When pieces of ice bump into each other

**Tawalaumizruaq** - spread out broken sea ice. This form of ice is good for hunting in boats. When navigating through *tawalaumizruaq* hunters chose a point on the horizon to aim for. Therefore in continuously moving around floating pans they can maintain a continuous direction.

**Tuluğaatauaq** - A crack in the ice heading toward shore created by a very large *iluqnaq* hitting *tuaq*.

**Tuaq** - Shorefast ice

Uggaḡaḡuk - Westwind, This wind like a north wind and quickly pack the ice together or trap hunters out on the ice. It is the most dangerous wind, leads to piling ice, this is the most dangerous wind hunters can encounter. This wind results in ice piling up and can quickly close leads on hunters.

Uinniq - An open lead parallel to shore. This often refers to a crack that forms in early fall in the shore ice as it is forming. This can be dangerous later in the spring as it will be a weak spot in the ice that hunters will have to cross in order to get out to open water. In the spring they can be difficult to identify as it will have frozen over. In the fall these are important places for setting seal nets.

Uizrutigaatiuk- “Two of us become drifted out to sea when the tuaq breaks up.

Uizrutigaa - one person drifting out to sea when the shore ice breaks up.

Uitkaa - When the shore ice is just breaking up to form a lead.

Uitqiyaun - A crack closer to shore than the open lead further out. It can be fresh or old. It can be an older early lead that has re-frozen. A uitqiyaun can be an old uiniq or lead that has frozen over and a new lead along the shore ice edge is further out. An uitqiyaun can be barely frozen at all, and must be crossed with extreme caution while traveling out to open water. One concern in crossing an uitqiyaun is that under certain conditions it could break off from tuaq leaving hunter stranded on floating ice.

Wazrruraq<sup>62</sup> - ice that is in one piece that is getting rotten and not moving it can be jumbled, it doesn't move or spread out and results in no trail. The ice northeast of Shishmaref is noted for having this quality. Much of the movement of the ice around Shishmaref is attributed to the movement of water in the various channels and the flow of water generated by terrestrial freshwater systems that flow in to the lagoons. The ice between Sinik and Cape Espenberg is not influenced by this factor. Also the itqaaniq or easterly moving current pushes the ice in this direction. There is not another strong set of currents that contribute to ice in this area moving. Subsequently it is wazrruraq. A persistent northwind can also cause the ice around Shishmaref to wazrruraq.

## SNOW TERMINOLOGY

Aniu - snow

Avutqiyaun - The second snow fall over old snow

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<sup>62</sup> W as a letter-sound is not present in the Iñupiaq alphabet. Ui can be substituted here. I use W out of deference to the insistence of a hunter, who is fluent speaker and has training in writing in Iñupiaq that a W is the letter to be used in this circumstance.

Mizulik - wet snow

Mizułhaqaaq - slush ice on top of good ice

Natigvigtuaq - Blowing snow right above the ground

Nataqulgit - Hail

Piqsiq - Storm with snowflakes and blowing snow

Qayuqlait - Snowdrift

Qaniaqtaaga - light snow

Qaukluk - Sporadic snow

Qayuqlait - Snowdrift

Qimigzruit - Large snow drift like a hill, build up behind a hill, which can be used as temporary shelter

Qiqsrugaq - Wet snow that has re-frozen

Taktitaq (taktitaqtuaq) - Sporadic snowflakes and light fog

Ugak - Snow with hard snow on top

## WEATHER

Anugisraituaq - When the wind is variable and keeps shifting direction

Anugailaq-When the weather is calm and still. This weather can be an indicator that the ocean will freeze. When it is still and calm wave activity won't break up newly created ice.

Anuqlaituq - Very windy weather

Issraliq - Very cold weather

Pizugnailaq- When the weather is too poor to go hunting

Silagiilaaq - Very bad weather

Silagigzigaa - When bad weather has improved

Taksaituq - Foggy weather common in the spring as the sea ice melts.

## WINDS

Niiqpaq- (Niqpaatuq) Northwind

Igaknaituq-North easterly wind

Kiaknaq- (Kiaknaituq) East wind

Nunaizaq- Southeast wind

Uḡalaq- South wind

Uḡalaḡik Southwest wind

Uiaknaq (uiaknaituq) west wind

Niqqik- Northwest wind

## APPENDIX 2

## NON-IÑUPIAQ SEA ICE AND UGRUK HUNTING TERMINOLOGY

**Big Water-** Open water, beyond the outer edge of shore ice, or when open water is not blocked by large Iluqnauit. Water with scattered ice that animals can swim through and that hunters can get to with boats in order to hunt.

**Bum Trail-** Bad trail conditions. This can refer to traveling on the sea ice, traveling on the land or while traveling by boat through leads and scattered ice flows. When a trail becomes “bum” it is no longer safe to travel on or through.

**Dry Mouth-** A physical response to a stressful situation, when ones mouth is dry from a lack of saliva. This can occur when traveling through on a “bum trail”, through a stormy ocean or in other stressful or charged situations like an encounter with a polar bear. Different people get this feeling in different circumstances. In story telling this term is used to convey the severity of an experienced situation, or how a hunter felt in a moment. It is often used in a humorous and self-deprecating way to make-fun of oneself after getting through a self induced stressful situation

**Funny Ice-** Ice that is unsafe. This ice may be or may soon become “bum”. Funny ice is ice that is unreliable and difficult to read. In the spring when the shore ice, which is a combination of qinu (slush ice) and sigu (ice), areas with a lot of qinu will be referred to as funny as they are particularly unsafe to travel across. “Funny” is also used to describe persons, animals and other phenomena whose actions and behaviors fall outside accepted norms.

**Kuuk-** Kuuk means river. As relates to the sea ice, a kuuk can be a small lead, or a larger area of open water, it can also refer to ice melting and forming elongated ponds on top of the ice. Kuuk can refer to a variety of waterways encountered while hunting around sea ice. It can also be substituted with “pond”, “river”, or “trail” depending on the individual using the term and how they use it. It has no hard and fast definition but is used to describe a range of conditions involving water.

**Pond-**A pond is a body of open water. It can be a melt water pond on the surface of the ice, or a small body of open water in created between ice pans. A pond may not necessarily be completely surrounded by floating ice. Often times a small river or kuuk, may connect two small ponds. Ponds are popular places to hunting in early spring when hunters travel on to the ice by snow machine looking for them. A pond may also be referred to as a kuuk, pot hole, or river, depending on the particularities of a situation.

**Pot Hole-** A pot hole is a pond created when an ice pan cracks, making an opening, or when multiple ice pans are resting against each other in such a way that creates a small body of open water. Pot holes are often connected by small “kukus” or rivers. Hunting

at poles by waiting for ugzruit to surface in them is referred to as potholing. A pot hole might also be referred to as a “pond”, “river”, or kuuk depending on the particularities of a hunters experience and how he prefers to describe it.

River- A flowing body of water. A river can be water on top of ice, particularly during breakup as the surface of the ice begins to melt. Most often it is used to describe open water or a small lead, connecting to large bodies of open water. A river is also referred to as a kuuk, or trail, and occasionally as a pot hole. Though most often rivers are noted for connecting potholes.

Trail- A trail is typically any pathway across or though the ice. It can refer to a route across the ice to open water where hunters can launch their boats. A trail also refers to a travel route through ice. This can be through a lead around large ice pans, or through scattered ice pans. A trail can also be a river, or kuuk, particularly when used to refer to a travel route for ugzruit through the ice.

White Ice- White ice refers to ice that is particularly bright and clean. It can refer to different ice forms. In the spring qinu (slush) ice will continue to look bright and white, while sigu, will become dark brown and black as it melts and rots. Thus qinu would look deceptively like solid ice when it was in reality quite “funny”. In the pack ice that is very clean and white is preferential for ugzruit to rest on. Maptuzruaq, or thick strong ice is typically bright ice and white ice is often used to describe this form of ice.

## UGZRUK TERMINOLOGY

Aksunashraq “One for rope” This ugzruk is in between an unigzoshuq and an anmiaq. Its hide is the preferred thickness for making rope and for making the soles of kamit (boots)

Anmiaq - Young ugzruk “teenager” these ugzruk are hunted in the spring and in the fall. The blubber from anmiat, hunted in the spring render very clear oil. In the fall they will swim up river to feed on fish. In the fall they are only hunted for their meat.

Qagamazuraq - Ugzruk resting on ice. “If they were *qagama* (resting on ice) we’d see em and try to go after them all right”. Hunters will often simply tap the top of their forearm with their fingers to indicate they see an ugzruk resting on ice

Swimmer- An ugzruk or any type of marine mammal that hauls out on ice can be referred to as a swimmer when encountered in water. An ugzruk, walrus or seal may be referred to as a swimmer when encountered in the water.

Tame one- An ugzruk or seal that comes up close to a boat or repeatedly shows itself to hunters, often “letting” them shoot at it. Even after being shot at repeatedly a tame ugzruk may continue to surface close to hunters. Though a tame ugzruk may also become “wild” after being shot at and only surface far away from hunters.

Unigzoshuq “Almost ugzruk” Ugzruk that is older than an anmiaq but it not quite a full grown ugzruk.

Uyuktuaq - “whistler” an ugzruk that makes a whistling sound. They are heard in early May during the first part of spring hunting. They can with the plan ear or by placing a oar in the water for use as a hydrophone. Whistlers can be tracked when they are swimming underwater by the sound of their whistling.

Watch-Dog- When seals and ugzruit rest on ice they occasionally lift their heads in order to look around for danger. Seals look up fairly often while resting on ice, ugzruit do much less often. When a group of urzruit are resting on ice together one ugzruk will regularly lift its head and look around. This individual is referred to as the watch dog as it keeps a look out enabling the other ones to rest. When hunters are trying to sneak up to and hunt a group of ugzruit they will try to shoot the watch dog first. The other ugzruit will see that ugzruit not lifting its head and will stay relaxed.

Wild one-This is an ugzruk that is difficult to catch. It may only surface far away from hunters and will only surface for a brief period making it difficult to shoot at. Often an ugzruk that was tame and allowed hunters to shoot at it will become wild after having been shot at. A wild ugzruk may also sink right after being shot and further make itself difficult to catch.

## BOAT TERMONOLOGY

Aclu - sled runner or umiaq runner, hard surface (plastic , or whale bone) nailed into keel on the outside of material in order to protect the skin when dragging it across ice.

Aġġuwa -stern

Anġutiġ- paddle

Ituwaat- thwarts

Qullak -gunwales

Quyaaq -keel

Qulitaq - canvas spray guard held upright by sticks above gunwale.

Siaanit- longitudinal stringers

Siu - Bow stem of boat also covered area in the front of the boat.

Tulimat- Ribs or frames

Tuurvik - stringer, on inside of the frames