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著者(英)	Edith Turner
journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Studies
volume	66
page range	95-105
year	2004-02-20
URL	http://doi.org/10.15021/00002688

Advocacy Anthropology among the Iñupiat of Northern Alaska and the General Role of Ethnology in the Present Decade

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Anthropology has a role in the new decade, that of nurturer of ethnicity. Some day in the future ethnic societies might find themselves regarding anthropologists as midwives, good to have at hand when new styles of being human are in the process of being born, ready with scissors to separate them from their parent and give a helping hand to lift them to where they can find nourishment.

We have many new types of culture in the north, and this is especially so of Alaska. The new Iñupiat culture, for example, has not lost the general form of the old but it cannot go back into the womb of pure hunting and gathering. Many Iñupiat favor the opening up of the Alaska wild life refuge for oil exploitation simply because it would create more jobs. In this decade, economic reality dictates that a hunter cannot follow his calling without considerable mechanical equipment, which costs money. Hunters therefore have to earn money. Strange as it may seem, some of them would advocate losing many of their hunting grounds to the oil industry because oil is a source of jobs.

At the same time, the Iñupiat national culture has become more proud, conscious of its identity, and no longer so afraid of its shamanic gifts and other marks of culture, honoring them. These are twenty-first century gifts. Heightened levels of consciousness are occurring now, in their own way. Anthropologists have been privileged to help in this endeavor, this task of defending and honoring their people's new culture; and that kind of help—which should be invited, not forced—might well become the true role of the discipline in this decade.

Such assistance may well be called advocacy anthropology, when seen as the work of presenting to central metropolitan centers the strengths and usefulness of peripheral cultures and arguing their cause in cases of injustice. As I mentioned, anthropologists can help the new "traditional" societies to be born. Furthermore, we anthropologists need a warning against using "force" in this childbirth, either in the form of supercharged investigations that will analyze human group behavior as if it were a machine, or angry willed attacks on certain human customs which "enlightened" central-society scholars do not agree with. At various times ethnographers have indeed entered the out-back sectors of some third world country unasked, and done just that. These deeds become impositions that are not much better than the use of armed force to bring progress. The old superseded Marxian maxim ran, "force is the midwife of progress."

However, an entirely different policy is in the making. It could be that a new type of anthropologist, gifted and trained in understanding and complete participation, will be able

to actually feed the culture they are in, warm it in its new birth, and be the mediating good “wife” to the new mother, the “midwife.” This midwife, at one with the struggling female body she serves, uses the opposite of “force”; on the contrary, she practices identification with the ones she cares for. At present northern societies are continually bringing to birth their new selves with plenty of bitter muscle action, naturally. Force in this context can be seen as utterly foreign to the process. Negative capability is everything. Thus we may be able to change the Marxian saying and say, “may anthropology come to be the midwife of cultures, through negative capability.”

Most anthropologists have felt a call to work in this kind of way. Many others have taken a despairing view and stand aside from their host societies under some kind of “prime directive,” Star Trek style: “Never involve yourself in the affairs of other cultures; you might change them in an undesirable way.” In other words, stand aside, be detached. Don’t act, even with compassion, or with anything. Just record. I am beginning to regard this as an inconceivably anti-humanistic waste. Are we merely trained to record and analyze?

It may be that if a gift for certain skills latent in those trained in social understanding were developed, the trained understanding combined with the gift would be welcome beyond all things and would turn around the face of social science. The gift? It is that of total participation as a full human being. Here we come on to moral matters. This participating individual, then, needs to be more than usually what the English call “decent,” that is truly loving, practically a saint; holding to the spirit of what Victor Turner called “*communitas*.”

If this were to be available, say, in some rising human crisis in the field and were *not* deployed, both sides would have suffered a tremendous waste, and a chance of sealing good human relations would have been lost. We know all this, yet it is never talked about. Hollywood, movies, and novels come closest to it for some reason. The churches and religions are always avid to claim good deeds for their own brand of theology—but anthropology itself seems to me the network of thinking that is broad enough to overcome the quarreling between the religions. This is due, strangely enough, to its fierce tradition of criticism—“critical anthropology.” Anthropology brooks no partisanship. Its members turn on each other and break down any such artificial, discipline-limiting erection of boundaries. We haven’t claimed to have found great human universals—simply because what is human is so appallingly complex, so truly awe-inspiring in its richness. We daren’t announce universals. But we can help.

My example is one which a number of anthropologists have experienced but which is not usually reported in academic journals—a case of an anthropologist involved in the deep trouble of her field people. This one is about nuclear radioactivity in the Point Hope region of Alaska.

The background to the case has a fifty year history. In 1962 there occurred an infringement of regulations that was not discovered until 1992. The story very much concerns the ethnic status of Iñupiat Eskimos and their changing sense of identity.

The scene was a village 140 miles north of the Arctic circle on the North Slope—a wild country (Turner 1989). The North Slope is so called because it is the slope that descends from the extreme northern end of the Rocky Mountain range and then downhill northward to the long rim of the Arctic Ocean, taking in a broad treeless coastal region stretching

from the Bering Straits to Canada. The people of Point Hope obtain two-thirds of their food from subsistence hunting, an activity they pursue on ice, sea, and land. When I was there in January 1988 the temperature often went down to -30 degrees F. with strong winds. It was known as a warm winter. In summer it briefly went up to about 55 degrees F.

The place and the ecology had its own ancient history concretized and present within it. There was once a great deed act performed between an animal and a human, and because of the event the people call the land sacred. A long time ago when there was no land and no world, Tulungugraq, Raven, was paddling in his kayak on the sea. Tulungugraq noticed something dark under the water, rising toward him. He took his harpoon and struck. Then he pulled and pulled. The thing was very heavy. At last it showed, dark and big. It was a whale, and it was the land, it was Point Hope itself—it was the land and it was the whale too.

Many millennia passed, while the people lived in their thousands along the shore and the river, in warm underground homes, with no word “government” in their language but a custom of being attentive to the guidance of the elders. The hunting of sea mammals occupied their life, requiring boats made of a driftwood frame covered with sealskin. These were passed down from father to son. Their tools and weapons were made of ivory, hard slate, and flint. On land they hunted caribou; the land was the territory of all. Here and there, out in the wilds, were spots that made people tremble to mention them, for a spirit was present there. The accounts of these were few but were matters of great seriousness.

Their shamans were both men and women. Often, when the shamans used their abilities, the spirits and ancestors worked through them and performed the work of healing, changing the weather, finding lost people and objects, and communicating with the dead. The shaman sessions took place in the neighborhood underground meeting house, “*qalgi*.” If a shaman wished to make a spirit journey to cure a sick person, drummers and singers would assemble and sing the songs the shaman had taught them, who in turn had been taught them by his or her helping spirit. The shaman, in dancing his or her spirit animal, would eventually fall, and his or her spirit would depart, leaving the body behind. He or she would take a trip under the water or ice, under the ground, or flying above the tundra, and would visit the home of the animals. There he or she would ask them to restore the sick person’s health. In some cases a shaman might extract small spirit spear points from the patient’s body by means of sucking the body, wherever he or she perceived the trouble to be.

And so the people lived, using the products of the environment to feed a relatively stable population. There were some changes and wars, one tribe taking over from another in about 400 AD.

After centuries a new phase began in Iñupiat history. In 1850 white people arrived in Alaska with their commercial whaling ships, and by the next century most of the whales and other animals had disappeared. The people began to starve. Whites brought addictive substances to the village, substances that the civilized visitors thought were good: alcohol, tobacco, sugar, also refined flour. These were made available in exchange for pelts. In addition to diseases from addictive substances, the population was further reduced by the beginnings of epidemics, including venereal disease. Then in 1890 a strange white preacher turned up, who told them Tulungugraq, God, had a son who had given his life for human beings. This made sense to the people.

In the first half of the twentieth century severe epidemics hit the village, measles, which was a killer then, and tuberculosis, the most terrifying of the diseases. These hit in the nineteen-forties and fifties, and then in the sixties and seventies the oil boom hit. Everyone was suddenly wealthy and very miserable, and this time it was the culture that sickened, with a significant increase in teenage suicides. Not only this: because of sea erosion the authorities moved the village onto a new site, to an area with old funerary grounds on it, but no one protested—then. To make the new village bulldozers first pushed thick gravel over the tundra, over the sites of the dead, and over the summer grass, flowers, and pathways, in order to prevent mud conditions in the new village, and then the village was built up on the gravel in a grid system of tarmaced streets, with a large school in the center.

Mid-century histories of Northern Alaska record as a minor point that the region was of importance after World War II in the Cold War. Military installations were accordingly built all along the north Arctic Slope. In 1958 the United States Atomic Energy Commission planned to do what in the climate of the era seemed rather exciting. They were going to create a huge crater next to the ocean using nuclear explosives and make a harbor for sea-going vessels. This was “Project Chariot” (see Foote 1961). But for some reason the project was abandoned.

It was the age of modern transportation. People took planes, not dog sleds, and the mail came in from the south by air every day. This was in the sixties, seventies, and eighties of the twentieth century. The village possessed a clinic connected by satellite phone to a hospital 140 miles away at the larger village of Kotzebue. One of the healers in Point Hope worked regularly on a contract basis in the outpatients’ clinic in Kotzebue. But at Point Hope itself, the village appeared to be suffering from an epidemic of cancer.

It was apparent that existence in Point Hope was breaking open on a wider arena, because history itself on a world-wide scale had broken into the peace of Point Hope. Just as in the thirties, forties, and fifties the village had been ravaged by deadly measles and tuberculosis from the south (the marks were still on the village), so now my sense of the village quietly riding through time was disturbed—as the people themselves were disturbed—by the threat of cancer that had been growing since the sixties. No one could feel really easy about it. My landlady Frances found that her painful shoulder was not healing. The doctors told her it was cancer of the bone. Amos, the leading whaling captain, had something of the same sort wrong with his previously injured leg. I said to myself, “So much has changed with these people. They seem to be at the mercy of modern life. What’s going on?” I went to the Point Hope clinic and leaned over the counter. The health aide and I chatted about poor Frances and Amos:

“What’s the cause of the cancer, d’you think? Why is there so much of it here?”

“The figures are nothing out of the ordinary,” she said. “They’ve always been like that.”

The cause of sickness in Point Hope remained a mystery. Everyone knew that Project Chariot had been abandoned. No one had exploded any bombs. In fact, as I discovered, it was the resistance that the village had mounted in the sixties that had prevented the

fulfillment of the project; and the same spirit of resistance had had the effect of engendering Native protection movements up and down the state of Alaska.

Very slowly I began to take notice. The village had been tilted down, half-submerged, as it were, under the “forces of history” as Marx called them. Yet in that darkness souls were still connecting in their traditional way to the underworld of the dead. Frances died in 1989, and when I came back on a short visit in 1990 I sensed Frances herself in the pew at the church — a year after she had died. I felt she was sitting beside me, and said seriously, under my breath, “Glad you’re here, Frances.”

It was not until 1991 that Rex Tuzroyluk, a western-trained Iñupiaq¹ biologist, and I tried to total up the cancer score. Rex said there had been ten cancer deaths in the previous two years. He was puzzled. He pulled out an old clipping about Project Chariot that clearly demonstrated the mentality of the Atomic Energy Commission and the U.S. army. The project had been invented by Edward Teller, supposedly as a way to “beat swords into plowshares,” under his notorious “Plowshares” scheme. When I read the clipping I realized that the site was at the Ogotoruk Creek, Cape Thompson, only 31 miles south, on the nearest and best caribou grazing land—and caribou meat was the second staple of the Iñupiat. I thought, “The area for the project was so near the village. Who’d dare to go up to the site and see what they left behind?” At Rex’s suggestion I wrote anxiously to many agencies on the matter, and from the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation I received the explanation that the illness was caused by the people’s bad life style. They meant by this that the people were smoking too much, using drugs, and consuming alcohol and junk food. There were similar responses from the Native Health Service at the North Slope Borough. The Army Corps of Engineers stated outright—what we found afterwards to be a lie—that there were no toxic wastes left in the area. I was puzzled. It was the life style? Why was the life style supposed to be so much worse in Point Hope than among, for example, that of many of the wild students I knew down below, or in any village in the lower forty-eight where the shopping carts were full of junk food and cigarettes? Presumably if it were a matter of life style the people in the small towns of the lower forty-eight states ought to be dying of cancer at the same rate as in Point Hope.

That summer Rex and his wife Piquk took me outside their house and showed me a seal that looked strange, stretched on the gravel. Its hair was not gray but an orange color, wrong looking. This orange color was not caused by oil contamination: the EPA office in Anchorage informed us that oil contamination results in black discoloration. I took pictures. Connie Oomituck reported to me later that people had been finding tumors in seals and caribou.

By my next visit in June 1992, matters had changed again. What really upset me was seeing how old Barbara Lane, who had been over-quiet last year at the elders’ lunch, now sat hardly moving in the corner next to her healthy old husband. She had further fallen in upon herself. She looked yellow and ate little. We learned later it was a brain tumor. The Iñupiat were trying to coerce the Native Health Service to investigate the cause of all the cancer, but the responses of the white-run Native Health Service were extremely slow.

This brings us to the summer months of 1992. During those months a researcher named Dan O’Neill of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks was busy in the archives of the Rasmusen Library conducting an investigation of the old Project Chariot activities of

1958–1963, which everyone knew by now was a project designed to increase America's naval strength against Soviet Russia in the Cold War. While turning over the material O'Neil discovered documents describing the illegal experimental dumping of 15,000 lbs of radioactive soil at the Chariot site in 1962, *after* the project had been officially abandoned. The material was brought from the Nevada test sites, specifically for the purpose of experimentation, and secretly positioned in a loose dump at the Chariot site without the legally required containers. This was executed secretly, under cover of the withdrawal of the Chariot personnel.

In the middle of August 1992 the nine villages of the North Slope received the information that Dan O'Neill had revealed. Rex Tuzroyluk (1992) told me about it on the phone. The epidemic of cancer was indeed traceable to the dump, which had been placed thirty-one miles from the village on the caribou feeding grounds.

“Eddie, when the news came out I went around to my mom's and she just sat and wouldn't talk to me.” Her daughter, Rex's younger sister Tuzzy, a brilliant university student, had recently died of cancer. When Rex's wife, Piquk, who was not well herself, came on the phone, she sounded in shock.

I said to her, “They have to move that dump. But where will they put it? It'll harm people whatever they do with it. Are they going to shoot it out into space?”

“Dump it on Washington DC,” she said.

Thus began the story, a true account, of events that connected my field community to perhaps the most serious issue of our day, radioactive pollution, and brought some of the villagers to the center of their world, Washington DC.

Politics was changing rapidly. In the middle of this whirlwind of news, the Iñupiat self-made lawyer, Jack Schaefer, said on the phone, “We've done it, we've designated ourselves, ‘The Native Village of Point Hope.’”

“Great.” “Native Village” was a title given by the Indian Reorganization Act body, IRA, which could assign the area the full rights of a Native Reserve and sovereignty under the Federal Government, not under the politically conservative State of Alaska. So Point Hope, in effect, had become an elective village holding all the IRA powers. This body proceeded to buy back 90% of the land from its previous owner, the village corporation, a body under the state that had been in danger of bankruptcy and forced sale, so that now the land would remain permanently under the control of the Native Village or “tribal government.” This was a brilliant “castling” move as in chess. Already the fear of the dump was leading the village to seek a more secure self-determination, to win back its pride in its tattered ethnicity, and an assurance of its identity as “Native.” It was a process that had been developing since 1958 in resistance to white encroachment.

The news came through that, on learning of the dump revelations, Jack and other leaders from Point Hope went to Anchorage and were interviewed by the *Anchorage Daily News* on September 6, 1992 (see also Schneider 1996). Committees were formed at the village and borough level, and after a time Iñupiat policy began to develop. News came through from Washington that the Department of Energy promised to clean up the dump at a

cost of a million dollars but refused to do a search for other known installations.

Polarization had begun to take place in the activities involving the small village of Point Hope: the village on the one side, and the nation's capital on the other. Events continually spanned the gap. One can see how the malaise that was afflicting the village was also present in the nation itself during the years when the dump existed—the two malaises deriving from the same source, that is, the results of western industrial and military policies, policies that affected us all.

In January 1993 Jack Schaefer of Point Hope, also Jesse Kaleak of Barrow who was the Mayor of the North Slope Borough at the time, along with his assistant Johnny Aiken, also other Iñupiat and some friendly lawyers, met in New York City with a number of North American Native leaders to put their case to the United Nations. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the Secretary-General, agreed to give an audience to these leaders of indigenous minority communities. Jack telephoned and asked me to come. I went with them and sat in front of Boutros Boutros Ghali while Ghali listened to the Iñupiat telling of their wrongs. We had no pull, no majority vote. We were quite helpless. In their presentation the Iñupiat were formal and eloquent, as they always were in their elders' conferences and in ages before that in their *qalgi* meeting centers, their underground domed sod houses. Even I told Boutros Ghali of the wrongs. Boutros Ghali informed the meeting that he was setting up an office of the United Nations at Geneva, to be devoted to the interests of indigenous minorities, those without a United Nations vote. So far, so good.

Later on February 23rd in Alaska the State epidemiologist, Dr. John Middaugh, made a statement on the question of the Point Hope dump². He said, "There has been no evidence of radiation impact on the health problems of the local residents...." And later in the letter: "The plan to excavate the Cape Thompson site should be abandoned." He was referring to the upcoming plan to dig up and remove the dump.

No evidence? What then had caused all the cancer I had seen among the villagers of Point Hope?

Meanwhile the party of Iñupiat proceeded to Washington to seek meetings with the head of the Department of Energy and with the two Alaska senators. At Senator Stevens' chambers Jack Schaefer gave his appeal with his educated dignity. He told the senator about the dumps and the sickness, and described what he was also worried about, some two-foot-wide metal pipes the hunters had discovered that reached deep into the ground on the Chariot site, visible to this day, stuffed with a bit of dirt. "They definitely need investigation," Jack told the senator.

"They would never drill so wide," said Stevens, flustered. "It's impossible! Why would they want to do that?" Here was another denial. The constituency of this senator, back in Alaska, was four/fifths white, the rest native. The four/fifths would not want to hear what Jack said. In our own minds to this day the question repeats itself, "What was the size of the nuclear bombs the Chariot team had intended to place underground at Ogotoruk Creek, then detonate? Have we any information about the plans and how far they went?" This matter went beyond the fears of a small village—whose troubles were less, after all, than those of the Marshall Islands.³

In Point Hope at this stage the mood was black. All the authorities were denying that

the dump had anything to do with the people's ill-health. In any discussion of the dump the people doubted that the government would actually do what was necessary and move the material. Barbara Lane was dead, and her husband Jacob, who had been an important man as long as his wife was alive, could no longer run a whaleboat and had given up the captaincy to his daughter. He was now unshaven. Many of the men had let their beards grow. There was more trash lying about in the village. None of the villagers seemed to be able to lift up their heads. There had been insult; the government had been found to play them false. These people embodied the oldest village in America—did no one honor even that? No one from outside cared about them and dumped nuclear waste on them that would kill them. That gray-black mood was something I did not like to see. I myself was unhappy, embroiled in the dreadful results of globalization.

It was obvious that I had to do some real compiling of figures. At last Dr. Bowerman of the Native Health Hospital, Barrow, came on the scene and determined that the death rate from cancer in the year 1950, before the dump, was 4 per thousand and that the recent rate represented more than a fourteen-fold increase. Why the difference between those periods? Nearly every agency to which we appealed argued that it was caused by the people's life style.

Nevertheless, in 1993, a year after the dump was first been discovered, the Department of Energy did remove it, commenting that it was done so that the people of Point Hope would feel better. It would be of psychological benefit.

It was not until 1995 that the Alaskan government medical authorities came to a new conclusion: the high rate of cancer in Point Hope *was indeed* indisputably caused by the local radioactive pollution.

Eventually the village recovered. In the spring of 1995, when I visited, the Oktolliks were expecting whales. They kept looking out the window where they could see the south shore. Was there water cloud? The weather was warm and muggy, 26 degrees Fahrenheit, and the wind was from the south, blowing the ice against the shore. There would be no whales, for there was no water for the whale to come through. But next day, what happened?—and it would not happen without the whole village *doing it*. The wind....it concerned the wind which was still wrong, from the south.

What happened was this. After church on Sunday a call came through on the Citizens Band, heard at Molly Oktollik's, that there was going to be a Rogation (prayer service, a dull affair in my experience) in the church at 3 PM. I thought I had better go. The voice on the CB continued, "Any volunteers to bring a boat into the church?" Aha! I remembered how they brought a boat into the church the first year I was there, and how they blessed it in the hope of catching whales. I remembered the whaling captains all standing in the sanctuary. I left Molly's and wandered outside in the snow to watch. Over a stretch of snow beside Seymour's house I saw men collecting around a 16 foot skin boat that still rested on its high rack. But not for long; they were manhandling it down and onto a sled. I had to run to keep the boat in view as the snowmobile glided with it around the streets and to the side of the church. I came up behind panting, and saw the captains with five of their young sons heaving and shoving the boat off the sled—then they took the sled and smartly passed it into the church and parked it up the aisle in the sanctuary, and afterward took the boat itself through the church

entrance, sideways, with banging and side slipping, until they could get it through the door and the right way up again, then up the aisle and onto the sled; then sled and boat were set as on ice and on sea, only in church—where the altar boy was in the act of changing the colored altar cloth for a white one. Whales like white. The preacher wore white. The paddles were all scoured white and set upright—as when a whale is caught and in the position of the “catch” signal to other boats. The church was filling quickly. All twenty-two whaling captains, including their leader, Henry Nashookpuk (known for his gifts), stood in two ranks on each side of the boat. The preacher stood at the prow, and began. We sang of the good things from the sea, “the whales and all that move in the waters,” “the sea is his and he made it,” and “when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds,” songs that brought tears to the eyes of many of us, Molly, Emma, myself—and others, so Emma said.

Then the preacher and the captains put their hands on the gunwale of the boat all around, and their wives behind them put their hands on their husbands. The congregation went up and put their hands on the wives, and so on. Then we all began to pray for a north wind. The sound arose till my eyes were starting out of my head. I prayed like mad—there were weird cryings from the crowd, with arms whirling on high. The strength rose and rose and rose. Edie, I told myself, you’ve never been in a religious event like this! “God send us a north wind, God send...” I heard, sometimes in Iñupiat. The sound grew and grew; I was calling and yearning with them. It rose to a great, great, collective cry—all of us were as one. It seemed that in the midst of the noise we were being collected up and nurtured in some way. At its height I looked over to Henry the chief of the captains and saw him smile faintly. The calling began to tail off and soon ended. We finished with one more hymn, most of us in a state of cold chill. The congregation started to leave. The men took the boat down and out the door, and I went gingerly over the snowy step myself, to find Molly waiting to walk back with me. As we passed the end of the church and came into the open, there it was. The wind had changed to the north. It blew icy and fresh from far up the village and fell freely on our cheeks and upon the south shore. It would blow the ice away and there would be water. No one said a word.

The next day there was water, and the men went down on the ice to break trail. By Tuesday there were several crews down at the water, watching. Several whales were seen. Piquk phoned me the week after I got home and told me Molly had her whale. Henry and John Tingook also caught whales.

So the people’s efforts were rewarded by a favorable north wind. Obviously the Iñupiat had regained their powers. The whale was once more the center of their life, their Archimedean point. The point had swung back into position.

The people had been wronged, their way of life had been insulted, they had lost much. Now, once again the people could pray and the wind changed. They were back in communication with their god, but this god was the one that Patrick Attungana, the retired preacher, once named as “the whale.” So the huge energy deployed in the church was to call the whale to come to them, to open the waters for them and be their food, to make the strange transfer—in their religion—from sea to land. The Iñupiat had the custom of giving sea mammals fresh water to drink when they caught them. The animals pined for it, and wanted to make the transfer into the human cycle, to fulfil the cosmological cycling of all things.

While at the same time the humans needed to live, honored by their honoring of the whale. This was goodness, the opposite to being grossly insulted and injured by intrusive deceitful strangers.

The unity was still intact. The spiritual power of the calling could come again. It called to them to use it and they responded. This is the rule of ritual. The spirit and its great events comes first; the reply of humans is the fruition of these and is absolutely necessary. Their reply is the flower, the maturing, of the first act. The spirit—the whale—wants this response. Why? Because nature has bred up the “human being” to bear this function, that of crowning nature with spirituality—which is anyway redolent through the whole. But humans have to do the work, because it is they who have these odd faculties and have experienced that odd evolutionary history.

This then was the old and excellent shamanism. This shamanism altered the weather. Such an interpretation shows the integration of past and present, and also shows the way such non-material power works, even across times and spaces that do not seem appropriate for that connection. It was from this ability to respond, I maintain, that the people’s morale and sense of identity began to grow again.

Globalization has greatly affected peripheral peoples. The Iñupiat live far up in the north. Nevertheless it was they who during the radioactivity crisis kept the interlacing connection going with the center of power, at Washington. Circumstances impelled them to it. Globalization for them derived from the pathological exaggeration of power that brought about the Cold War between two mighty states, so that the realities of globalization were cutting their girders and machine lines across the delicate kinship veins and arteries of human interconnectedness—which are not “structures” or “systems,” but, in the case of kinship, literal blood-fed reproductive cells with their huge emotional load—including eventually the ineradicable umbilical cord that joins all of us to this world. The sacred land itself, often scarred by old tribal wars, is succumbing to effects worse than those of any tribal war: it is cut across by oil fields, nuclear dumping, first world property encroachments. This is especially true in the far north.

Anthropologists in their turn are writing about northern societies so as to correct the balance *vis-à-vis* metropolitan countries and achieve justice for such minorities on global terms. This is advocacy anthropology.

Humanistic anthropologists, according to their lights, are following this path, often following the field people about in these people’s efforts to preserve their autonomy. There is some kind of anti-radioactivity effect here. The little unseen particle of humanism might be able to protect the twenty-first century from the total annihilation of our umbilical connection with each other. The girders and power lines have only one kind of power.

Here globalization hit an innocent village, and drew its desperate representatives to the capital. These representatives have mandated that the peripheries of the planet will not do for dumping harmful garbage, because people live there. The result is that “center” and “periphery” are no more: not only has economic globalization reached everywhere, but the value system of the globe also.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper would have been impossible without the major help and research of Jack Schaefer and Rex Tuzrolyuk (the latter became president of the North Slope Borough Assembly). The friendship of these two meant much to me. Warm thanks also go to Piquik Tuzrolyuk for her friendship and hospitality. Parts of the paper were derived from "There are no Peripheries to Humanity: Northern Alaska Nuclear Dumping and the Iñupiat's Search for Redress," *Anthropology and Humanism* 22(1):95-109, 1997. The American Anthropological Association has given permission for its republication.

NOTES

- 1) "Iñupiaq" is the singular of the noun "Iñupiat."
- 2) Letter to Kevin Cabbie, the Department of Energy, Nevada, from the Alaska Governor Hickel's office.
- 3) Jack Schaefer and his group shared a lawyer who had worked effectively on the problems and rights of the Marshall Islanders, the people who had been most afflicted by nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

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