# Meeting Another Twist of Fate – William Oquilluk and Eskimo Adaptivity and Defence in Our Time

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## 摘　要

威廉、歐桂拉克自他年輕之時以至於老年，一直以寫出克威瑞克族的愛斯基摩人的故事爲個人計劃。這部作品到後來尚未付梓就受到一位具大學教育訓練的人類學家羅拉・布蘭德的注意。歐桂拉克先生與布蘭德博士因而共同合作，促成了克威瑞克族人：北愛斯基摩的傳說一書的出版。時間是在一九七三年，由阿拉斯加的美以美教派大學出版。此書銷路還不錯，而且還在一九八一年再版。這本書也成爲白令海峽地區研究愛斯基摩的文化的學術團體與個人所運用的資料。

威廉・歐桂拉克的手稿現典藏於菲爾班克斯的阿拉斯加大學圖書館的檔案保管處。學者可向他們申請研究這個手稿。在對照手稿與出版的書後，可見到極大的分岐與許多的吻合之處。而在此既平行又分岐吻合、不吻合的混合狀態中，加以將口傳愛斯基摩語變成書寫文字以至最後的印刷成書的過程，顯示有一文化對另一文化的影響。

在比較成書與手稿的同一頁時，可以看出二種不同的寫法與兩種不同的表現方法。這樣的並列以及同時的存在形成了文化互相接觸與文化轉變上的基本問題，而這些問題與海姆斯，泰德拉克，史坦那的相關著作有極大的關連。因此，歐桂拉克的作品值得我們廣泛的探究。

在此有限的研究中，我發掘了手稿中呈現出的複雜的詩與修辭上的技巧，也發現到手稿與成書有極大的區別。並且，手稿也展現了嫻熟地運用地區性英文（愛斯基摩英文）的技巧，可見此種地區性英文，是足次表達出一切他們想表達的事與物。

**ABSTRACT**

William Oquilluk wrote a portion of the stories of the Kauwerak Eskimos as a personal project beginning from his early manhood until nearly the end of his life. In his later years this work, as yet unpublished, came to the attention of a University-trained anthropologist, Dr. Laurel Bland. Mr. Oquilluk and Dr. Bland began a collaboration that resulted in the publication *People of Kauwerak: Legends of the Northern Eskimo* by Alaska Methodist University Press, in 1973. This work has sold relatively well, entering a second edition in 1981. It has been used in academic settings as well as a source for the self-study of Eskimo culture in the Bering Strait region.

The original manuscripts which were written by William Oquilluk are

held in the archives of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, library, where they are available for inspection and study by authorized scholars. Examination of these manuscripts reveals radical differences as well as areas of complete agreement with the published book. It is this mixed state of parallel/deviational agreement/disagreement which reveals the working of one culture upon another, as the stories proceed from their context in Eskimo-language oral tradition through the writing and ultimately printing process. In comparing the printed page with the handwritten page, one confronts two kinds of writing, two kinds of presentation. Their juxtaposition or co-existence brings into focus basic problems of culture contact and change which have important connections with the work of Hymes, Tedlock, Steiner and others. Therefore the work of Oquilluk is deserving of extensive study. This limited study reveals in the manuscript a complex-appearing poetic/rhetorical technique, more highly-differentiated than that the printed book, which suggests among other things a high order of skill in the use of the local variety of English, as well as the existence of a full range of expressive possibility within that local English itself.

This brief study opens with something of a polemical note. In his fine book, *"In Vain I Tried to Tell You,"* Dell Hymes discusses the general state of scholarship regarding "the first literature of North America, that of the American Indians, or Native Americans."[1] His work and the work of Dennis Tedlock are very important in furthering appreciation of this literature. Appreciation and understanding of this first literature of North America are not what they should be, Hymes says, and provides some reasons for this neglect.

> It is strange that there has been so little explicit analysis of Native American verbal art. But then it is perhaps also strange that so little of it has been preserved. Native Americans themselves, by and large, had no precedent for maintaining verbal tradition other than through oral learning by successive generations. Conquest, disruption, conversion, schooling, decimation eliminated most such learning. As Louis Simpson told Edward Sapir at the end of the myth, "Coyote's people sing" . . . "Thus were the ways (myths). Today none of the children know them. I, Louis, when I was a boy, now then my father, his father, made those myths to me". . . .
>
> We must count ourselves lucky to have records of the verbal art of even a dozen gifted narrators, a dozen from among the hundred who must have died unrecorded and are now unremembered. (p. 6)

The situation Hymes describes here contains very precise lineaments of a general situation that is painful to contemplate for most Americans – the situation of the so-called "Vanishing American," the American Indian/Eskimo/Aleut. In purely demographic terms, the Indian/Eskimo/Aleut are not at all disappearing. Hymes laments the vanishing of their words and the networks that

carried them into the future, and regards the occasional effort to keep oral art alive outside the usual transmission on into the new mileau wrought by the coming of white Culture by Native Americans themselves (outside the traditional oral networks) as itself breaking tradition. His treatment of Simpson's quote furnishes a good example of the collapse of this network in one place at one time. Perhaps this bit of dialogue, with all its pathos, is meant to be a typical instance of a general situation, by no means confined to the lives of Native Americans. Traditional culture worldwide is under stress, not only in the way culture is always under stress, but in new ways stemming from mass media, increased travel, and the like – an all too familiar list, to which I can add, gratefully, nothing. But there is something suspect in this matter of the final farewell to the Vanishing American (not vanishing at all) and his works, and for that matter, to local culture everywhere. Just as climax ecology is dubious scientifically and bad for the spiritual health of its proponents (it is a vector for a specially virulent romantic agony centered on a mythically-stable natural order which man has knocked off kilter), so "steady-state" cultural meta-theory directs one away from the powerful forces for change which have always been there, and even more, from the responsiveness and resiliency of man.

In reaction to Hymes' statement that much of oral art is lost now because Native Americans "had no precedent for maintaining verbal tradition other than through oral learning by successive generations," I would observe that no precedent existed because such an adaptation was not considered to be needed. The other cause for great loss mentioned by Hymes is that "often non-Indians did not wish to preserve the culture of the Indians. Conviction or guilt persuaded them that it was already gone, or best gone." In this scenario, oral art falls into oblivion because those with an interest in preserving and continuing it have no tools to do so, and those with the tools have no interest. It is tragedy of unpreparedness for surprise attack, and dark comedy of brutal triumph. But if this account is dramatic, also dramatic is the effort of Native Americans to keep their words alive. This story is the opposite of the one Hymes tells. His "key words" are not encouraging ones: conquest, disruption, conversion, schooling, decimation, guilt. But there is place in the history of Native American people's oral art for affirmation based on adaptability, creativity, initiative, determination. These too are aspects of man, all men, and so though they are not welcome in romantic tragedy, they fit here in the real world. We now turn to a notable instance.

In 1973 Alaska Methodist University published *People of Kauwerak: Legends of the Northern Eskimo*, by William A. Oquilluk with the assistance

of Laurel L. Bland. William Oquilluk, an Eskimo from the Seward Peninsula, Alaska (but born at Point Hope), had been writing down stories told to him by his grandfather (in Eskimo language). Oquilluk had begun this practice of writing down the stories when he was only eighteen or ninetten years old, working of course in English since no writing system was in use for Eskimo at that time among the Eskimo people, except perhaps in connection with the work of some linguists or anthropologists from outside Eskimo culture. Bland tells us that he "was not particularly admired for his odd hobby," until his last years.[2] A few years before his death, Oquilluk came into contact with Bland and together they "transformed his manuscript into typewritten chapters" in order to "preserve his stories in printed form (viii).[3] Why did Oquilluk begin to write these stories down? Within the book *People of Kauwerak* he takes up this question at several points. By way of introducing some aspects of Oquilluk the writer and of opening up his situation, I quote some of his published statements from the Prologue to his book (xvii-xviii):

> When . . . . a boy, I used to go into the kazghi with the others. Sometimes instead of dancing, they used to tell stories like the ones here. We used to haar these stories. People liked to listen to them, but it seemed nobody was interested in writing them down. I used to wonder about that. . . . [In the school] my grandpa told us some of the stories in this book. The school teacher said these stories were very interesting, but he did not write any of them down. He sure did like to hear them, though.
>
> A few years later another school teacher came. His name was H.D. Reese. He liked those stories, too, and was going to write them down. He had so much to do he never had a chance to get that done. When I got to the sixth grade Mr. Reese told me. "Now you remember those stories your grandpa told you. You should write them down. They are interesting and important stories about the first Eskimos and the troubles they had with the disasters."
>
> I started thinking about that, and decided it was a good idea to try to write them down. I knew I might miss some of them and not get all of them done, but I could try, anyway. I could get most of them. Most of the stories were written down when our house burned. That was in 1918. I did not start writing them again until two or three years later. I am still writing them down now.

Oquilluk tells us that he has heard these same stories in various places in the Seward Peninsula and nearby areas, from different tellers, and he has himself seen most of the sites of the stories. He accepts the autherticity of the stories

as history, as ecological philosophy; he sees the value of viewing the land in terms of the stories and setting stories against actual experience of the land. He says "it would not be right to put things into the stories I did not know about myself. If people want to, they can see these places for themselves, too. The young people and their children coming along should see how their ancestors used to live by the land. They should hear the stories of their forefathers. That is why I have written these things down" (xvii-xviii).

It seems that for Oquilluk to turn to writing these stories down is natural enough, and he wonders that others aven't done so already. He does not describe here the conditions that will make access for coming generations to these stories difficult except through print, but these conditions are implied by the English-language classroom and the fact that the basis of economics is changing so radically that children will not know much about living on the land unless they can read about it. Implied is language loss and the breakdown in communication from old to young. Young Oquilluk's schoolteacher gave encouragement to Oquilluk after his own failure to get around to writing down these stories that he liked so much, but was also cause of the rapid change which history had imposed on the people of Kauwerak. Oquilluk at the end of his book speaks of this change:

> The Fifth Disaster is maybe now. There are not many old people left. The rules and stories of our ancestors are being forgotten. The people do not know who their relations are. Many chilren lost their parents and grandparents in the flu and other sickness. They went to the mission orphanages and sometimes Outside. They did not learn about their forefathers. (p. 225)

One anomaly in this passage, which reflects a continuing situation from between 1917 and 1970, is the comment about the old people getting fewer. Of course old people are passing away, but the number of them in contemporary times compared to the past is greater than ever before, since the Eskimo population is greater than before and the life expectancy is also greater. What Oquilluk is referring to is people of his generation or older, who represent a cultural horizon. He says, again at the end of his book, "even the language is beginning to be forgotten. Many children do not know the Eskimo dialects. They talk only in English" (p. 219). Oquilluk is on that same cultural horizon, and finds it natural to build a bridge to the future for the people to come. That role is completely appropriate to Eskimo culture. Nowhere is mention made in the book of restrictions on the distribution of these stories along clan or group lines

that would affect his project.[4] Ownership is vested in the people of Kauwerak. His project is a countermove against the force of the Fifth Disaster.

Just as the Disaster is complex, containing elements which can be perceived as inevitable results of the elimination of other kinds of stresses on Eskimo people, such as hunger or local war, so Oquilluk's project is manifold, involving contradictory elements and points of defeat as well as achievement. It is important to see Oquilluk's work in all its phases, not only the "finished product," the book as published by AMU Press, and to note the relationships that exist between these phases. In this way key elements of Oquilluk's situation and some aspects of his problem and his solutions will come into focus. The point is to see how Oquilluk copes with his situation linguistically and generically in shifting stories learned at first in oral form to written English, to printed and published English with the help of an academic scholar. In this comparative work we work from Oquilluk's initial English version to the revised and augmented printed version. As we have seen above, Oquilluk learned these stories in Inupiat language and also heard some of them told in English translation ("simultaneous") in his classroom. Perhaps these early experiences of translation served as a model and a license for his later work, setting stylistic precedents as they were the work of elders and authoritative relatives. Although our comparative work cannot tie back into the original performances in the *kazghi* or the classroom, or to later ones, one can profitably work within and between the English texts. A variety of approaches offer themselves. Not all can be followed in a paper of this scope, nor can much of the available text be analysed. What we can do, though, is to describe the texts in a general way, to present sections of them that seem to be parallel, and to examine closely some salient characteristics of each. The point of these analyses hopefully will be "literary," since that is where scholarship is needed most, as Dell Hymes tells us in no uncertain terms.[5]

In these same pages Hymes makes another point:

> The modern founder of our work, Franz Boaz, was clear and insistent about the need to work with the originals. For example, in his general text he stated: 'It is obvious that for the understanding of the form of native literature, if we may use this term for their unwritten poetry and tales, a thorough knowledge of the language is indispensable, for without it the elements that appeal to the esthetic sense of the hearer cannot be appreciated" (1938.44).

Hymes says that "whatever the factors, the texts of Native American tradition

have been largely ignored. The translations have been consulted and sometimes analyzed, the originals mostly not" (p. 7). One can hardly disagree with Boas' point and with Hymes' concurrence and condemnation of the present situation. I think it is here that Oquilluk's work is pivotal. Nowhere does he state that he is translating these stories. He says that when the teacher in his first school asked him to get his grandpa to tell the boys stories, a problem of finding an interpreter arose, which was solved by enlisting Oquilluk's uncle; but it is clear that the interpreter was needed only for the non-Eskimos in the classroom. There may well have been only one: the teacher himself. Oquilluk poses his task not as translation but only as "writing down." Automatically that means working in his own English. There was no other choice. There is no written Eskimo available at large in the Seward Peninsula. Writing means English. Thus it is hard to classify Oquilluk's work in terms of the antinomies used by Hymes and Boas – original/translation – and feel very satisfied with the result. This is especially true if we consider Oquilluk to be just what he is – a fully competent member of Kauweramuit culture, a means by which that culture is adapting to new circumstances – which all cultures must do at all times. Maybe the attempt to see him as something else – as the equivalent of what Hymes designates the "ethnological" translators producing "ethnological translations" (*"In Vain I Tried to Tell You"*, p. 58) – shows even more clearly than a positive definition what he is not. Hymes presents two sets of conditions for the recreation of a poem in a different language from its original version's: a feel for the poem, being able to "see what the poem says, nonlinguistically, like a movie in my mind'" (Hymes is quoting Gary Snyder), and knowledge of the "verbal meaning of the text, the sort of materials that a linguistically-motivated approach puts in focus" (*"In Vain I Tried to Tell You"*, p. 60). If we allow for "text" Oquilluk's embedment in Kauweramuit culture, and do the same for "feel," and in each case give due regard for Hymes' notion of the importance of performance as something like an ontological condition for the existence of the work, then it is possible to see Oquilluk as the ideal translator – assuming an at-home-ness in English. I think that the last condition will be seen to be met as we examine the texts. But, even given all this, I think that to call Oquilluk a translator is not correct, does not even feel plausible. In fact we may not have a good term for what he is – unless one likes the sound of "bi-lingual culture bearer." Steiner in his discussion of language growth and change states his view that "the collation of the Iliad and the composition of the Odyssey coincide with the 'new immortality' of writing, with the specific transition from oral to

written literature."[6] It is certainly true that for Eskimo people in the Kauwerak area, the moment had come for their own word-works (oral literature is so awkward a term) to find this new immortality, with Oquilluk as the agent of change. This role is much more than that of translator for one within the Eskimo culture. To move one's heritage from oral to written, and across languages, is the action of a culture hero. It can be called creative, destructive, hopeful and despairing; it can be seen as bold, defiant, even foolish, but also as careful and circumspect.

In short then when we look at Oquilluk's own handwritten stories we are not looking at translations in the word's usual meaning. And we are not looking at the transfer of literary materials from one culture to another. We are looking at an intra-cultural transfer of materials from one language to another under conditions of pressure from an encroaching culture. One missing link in all of this is some clear idea of the general characteristics of the English in use among the Bering Straits Eskimos in Nome and outside of Nome during this period. The question of "village English" is a chronic one in Alaska, plaguing linguists, school officials, and teachers and students alike. No serious studies have been undertaken to fully describe local English, even to this day. Various tussles occur among the competent groups regarding issues of "language interference," "code-switching," "standard English." There is no way to resolve these debates, which are often highly politicized, without information. The information does not exist in scientific form, assuming it could take such form (see Steiner on scientism in linguistics in *After Babel,* pp. 110-114). Among the Eskimos of Nome and the surrounding area, among all age groups save that of the elderly, it is not hard to hear sentences begun in English ended in Eskimo, or vice-versa. There is constant input into the lives of the people from the white world, white technology. And there is family, and nature, seen among my friends and students, Eskimo men in their thirties, in Eskimo terms. The same man can study Milton Friedman's economic theories in the evening and build a boat or fix an engine in Eskimo the next morning. George Steiner describes his personal multilingual world:

> My natural condition was polyglot, as is that of children in the Val d'Aosta, in the Basque country, in parts of Flanders, or among speakers of Guarani and Spanish in Paraguay. It was habitual, unnoticed practice for my mother to start a sentence in one language and finish it in another. At home, conversations were interlinguistic not only inside the same sentence or speech segment, but as between speakers. Only a sudden wedge of interruption or roused consciousness would make me realize that I was replying in French

> to a question put in German or vice versa. . . . . Speech was, tangibly, option, a choice between equally inherent yet alternate claims and pivots of self-consciousness. (p. 116)

To linguist or literary scholar, the question readily occurs as to why language choice of the moment and momentary situation correspond – surely Steiner does not mean the choice is so free as to be random, not when he goes on to say that "from the earliest of memories, I proceeded within the unexamined cognition that *ein Pferd,* a horse, and *un cheval* were the same and/or very different, or diverse points of a modulation which led from perfect equivalence to disparity" (pp. 116-117). These samenesses, or differences, mean that in choosing "equivalent" words one is choosing between meanings that are different even if the same. What is so interesting about Steiner's point here is his willingness to invade the private world of his inner language-feelings and not try to reduce what he finds there to some sort of system which will lie about the richnesses he is exploring. The point of this is to attune us to the delicacy of language, and to warn off crassnesses in approaching language in any form:

> Even as there is in certain branches of modern literary criticism a covert distaste for literature, a search for "objective" or verifiable criteria of poetic exegesis though such criteria are obstinately alien to the way in which literature acts, so there is in scientific linguistics a subtle but unmistakable displeasure at the mobile, perhaps anarchic prodigality of natural forms. (p. 122)

This is good to remember when approaching Oquilluk's work, so as to dispel whatever temptation there might be to evoke mentally a picture of an Eskimo barely competent in English laboring over his writing with a dictionary at hand needed in the way a polio victim needs an iron lung, working from the known to the barely known. Steiner says that "translation is inward-directed discourse, a descent, at least partial, down Montaigne's 'spiral staircase of the self.'" He as well says that "when we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate." Taking this into the realm of criticism, what seems to be true is that Oquilluk's work of writing down involves basically a work of interpretation in the sense implied in the French word *interprete.* Steiner again:

> "Interpretation" as that which gives language life beyond the moment and place of immediate utterance or transcription, is what I am concerned with.

> The French word *interprete* concentrates all the relevant values. An Actor is interprete of Racine; a pianist gives une interpretation of a Beethoven sonata. Through engagement of his own identity, a critic becomes *un interprete* – a life-giving performer – of Montaigne or Mallarme. (p. 27)

I think in the end it is this word – performer – that best describes Oquilluk at work. He is performing – through interpretation – the stories of his people that were, have always been, performed, only now he is performing them on paper, and in English, for an audience which is largely waiting to be born, but very present to his mind.

The manuscript which is in the Elmer Rasmussen Library, Alaska and Polar Regions Dept. under the care of Archivist Paul McCarthy, consists of some two-hundred fifty pages of handwritten material. It was written over a number of years in whatever time Oquilluk could find in his daily life of laborer, riverboat crewman, hunter, etc, the varied things that local people must do to survive in the mixed economy of northern Alaska. It is not in a form ready for the typesetter: a "fair copy." There are marginal notes or jottings from dictionaries Oquilluk was consulting as any writer might. Here is my typed version of some of his pages from the beginning of the manuscript as it is ordered at the University Archive:

**Eskimo Legend**

Have bein told, of many many Century
ago, History bein told by our
Ancestors, to there descendent
they have past to many generation
to a generations, then to our
grand perants,
a very Historical, which are very
Important, to write it into a book
Actually no one have written it
as yet.

A History of our Ancestors life. very
valueable and very, very precious
It is very most true Historic
Therefore, I have force myself to

Volunteer, to write it, even tho
Im not Intelligene man.

I will write it, best of my knowledge
and memorize it, the way I heard
from our Ancestor have being told
to our Grand perant, a History
of, what happen to each,
individual Disasters, coming to poplated
area,
them three active Disaster, each one
is Difference, then others.
many have died earch time, when
Disaster, come.

If the there are very few Survive
each time, from the survives poplous
was growing in Western area.
If some one, very very intelligent
writes these stories, it would be
very introspection, to any one
who read it.

Now without comment, the "parallel" pages from the revised version from Alaska Methodist University Press' *People of Kauwerak:*

**PROLOGUE**

**THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK**

These stories began long, long ago. They have been told by our ancestors, from century to century, by passing them on from generation to generation, until I, William A. Oquilluk, came into this time.

I have heard of the Three Great Disasters of ancient times and saw the Fourth Disaster of later times. Each one killed most of the people, leaving only a few to survive on the land. Those who survived, each time, made the population grow up again in Northwestern Alaska. Each time those few left told their story of what happened in other centuries to the young ones while they were growing up.

> If someone writes these stories down, it should bring understanding and thoughtfulness to anyone who reads them. (xvii)

One way to think about this pairing is to imagine these pages from the manuscript and the printed book as in a situation something like that of two mimes on stage together, each performing the "same" actions in different styles, so that the viewer is seeing two versions of the "same" thing. But difference is at the forefront. The mimes don't talk, mimes don't talk at all, and yet though their eyes may not meet, and though one may have the center of the stage, these mimes are commenting on each other. I choose the metaphor of mimes because it is not some much the substance of these passages that are in dialog as it is the assumptions of each – the silent assumptions that are so noticeably different, even though the burden of the passages is the "same." In a sense we should view the situation this way: these two voicings of events and circumstances the passages are similar, yet based in different worlds, subjugated to different rules which are totally silent yet hold our attention more than anything which tends toward assimilation. These rules, never stated, seem to concern the teller's statements of relation to his tale and to his audience, as reflected in overt statements about his "right" to tell the tales and the pacing and tone of his telling. But the rules are buried, as are the rules governing the rules. When we read these two passages together, the urge to contrast them, and to find invidious and revelatory rule-conflict is overwhelming to the point of distraction.

Another way to look at these passages involves terms such as: right and wrong, presentable and scandalous, correct and incorrect, draft and revision. This analysis differs from the one above by its assumption of only one set of rules that applies at all.

Another analysis could invoke the terms associated with translation: literal and "of-the-same-spirit." This case involves another hidden model – the vanished originals told to Oquilluk and others in the original circumstances. Here we follow Hymes' idea: the circumstances are part of the narration and performance is essential to meaning.

Other useful ideas in approaching the texts lie in some terms of Dennis Tedlock's: 'audible measure," "readable measure," "open text," which he defines as "a text that forces even the reading eye to consider whether the peculiarities of audible sentences and audible lines might be *good speaking* rather than *bad writing.*"[7] We can situate Oquilluk's handwritten version between oral versions and the printed text, which means between performances by certain men in a time

and place now unrecoverable withnessed by a man now dead, and blocks of black print on paper, prose of a more or less colloquial style; as Dr. Bland mentions in her "Note" to the Second Edition (x), Oquilluk "expected the stories to be read aloud and he wanted them to sound the way an Eskimo elder would tell them."

One may expect that Oquilluk had the same intention in his first, handwritten version as in the revision. We are told that he read and revised the entire typed manuscript. For Oquilluk the situation of writing alone was likely different from writing in collaboration with a Ph. D. anthropologist; for an Eskimo elder, the demands of situation are as strong as they are for anyone else. There is also the inherent constraint of editorial practice in book publishing for general audiences and children of school age. This brings up a question of "correct" English, "correct" enough to be easy to read for children who are in their school lives subjected to the same training as everyone else in school: *Harbrace Handbook* standards of correctness. Obviously such are not the standards of Oquilluk's manuscript. But the book more or less meets them well enough, despite its colloquial nature. These are some of the rules I refer to in speaking of presentability and scandal, right and wrong. If Oquilluk is to be brought before the public as other than a specimen of strangeness, a victim of cultural displacement, then he must seem to master the language of his listeners, according to their tastes. He does not have the rights of an artist to make demands the way Joyce or Robbe-Grillet might. For the world he has no poetics, no aesthetics beyond the obvious: teller of Eskimo stories in English like everyone else's. *Or* he can be a specimen, like the Indians brought back to England to entertain royalty. Then the more strange, the better. But this is no face to present to the chilren, the young people coming along:

> Have bein told, of many many Century
> ago, Hsitory bein told by our
> Ancestors, to there descendent
> they have past to many generation
> to a generations, then to our
> grand perants

Better to say, "These stories began long, long ago" and so on. These sentences are short, come to rest soon enough to be hardly at all conflictive with common-prose rhetorical expedations. There are not redundancies. There are not extensive

periods. There are not long interpositions within sentences, or sentences within sentences. Below I have marked these elements, to be discussed in detail shortly:

⟦Have bein told, of many many Century
ago, History bein told by our
Ancestors, to there descendent
[(they have past to many generation
to a generations, then to our gran
grand perants,)
a very Historical, which are very
Important, to write it into a book
(Actually no one have written it
as yet.)]

A History of our Ancestors life. very
valueable and very, very precious
It is very most true Historic⟧

⟦Therefore, I have force myself to
Volunteer, to write it, even tho
Im not Intelligene man.
I will write it, best of my knowledge
and memorize it, the way I heard
from our Ancestor have bein told
to our Grand perant, a History
of, what happen to each,
individual Disasters, coming to poplated
area,
[(them three active Disaster, each one
is Difference, then others.)
many have died each time, when
Disaster, come.]

(If the there are very few Survive
each time, from the survives poplous
was growing in Western area.)
If some one, very very intelligent

writes these stories, it would be
very introspection, to any one
who read it.)]]

In contrast, the linear structure of the printed version projects a drive toward the end, conflating elements from various pages of the manuscript, shortening the material, organizing it along different poles. It might be worthwhile here to quote again from Tedlock. He is here talkingabout Zuni narratives, and about translation, but his pointed observations about style might help us to focus on some aspects of narrative voice and voicing in our material:

> While it may be that past translations of Zuni narratives have suffered somewhat from neglect of the linguistic features of style discussed above (onamatopoetic wordings), they have suffered much more from neglect of "oral" or "paralinguistic" features such as voice quality (tone of voice), loudness, and pausing. Boas wrote long ago that "the form of modern prose is largely determined by the fact that it is read, not spoken, while primitive prose is based on the art of oral delivery and is therefore more closely related to modern oratory than to the printed literary style." .... But Boas and his followers, in translating oral narratives, have treated them as if they were equivalent to written prose short stories, except in cases where the originals were sung or chanted. Jacobs has called for a "dramatistic" approach to oral narratives and has made extensive use of dramatic terminology, but his translations follow the familiar short-story pattern, except for occasional notations of voice quality..... The presence of the tape-recorder has so far failed to wean post-Boasians from the short-story approach. (p. 45)

What is useful to us here is only marginally useful. But it will have to do, and will do, if it can direct our attention to the qualities of form that produce features of voicing essential to the things that Tedlock is talking about.

Looking back over the passages quoted from Oquilluk's manuscript and the subdivisions of them I have attempted, one sees something like a layering or stacking of statements, creating a complex of rhythm and tone-coloring. very different from the printed prose version. The narrator sets up two major points, one of exposition, one of argument. Within this major structure there is a series of substructures. I have marked off the major structures with square brackets and subordinate structures with round brackets, single and double. The first structure states the position Oquilluk finds himself in: thrown (in Heidegger's sense) into his culture, he finds himself in possession of History coming to him as his fate, first the fate of others, then his. He has not learned this history in

the scholar's sense. It is only that it has been told to him. It has the character of an inherited duty.

The second major structure concerns his response to this situation, again not quite a free or chosen response. If left to his own devices, Oquilluk would remain in his minimal social role. But because of the value of his inheritance, he must force himself to take on a role of volunteer: this paradoxical role is his by a default on some other's part, someone who is really qualified to do this work. There is in this statement of Oquilluk's a seed of the idea that if he is not qualified, then he has no business to do the work. But there is also the idea that no one else is volunteering to do it, and so Oquilluk must write it to the best of his abilities. The resultant of these two opposed notions is never stated. The fact is the contradiction is held in suspension forever.

Within the first major structure there are three interposed passages. The larger of these completely encloses the others, and takes the form of an expansion of the meaning of the word History. One part of this larger syntactic unit relates the telling and the truth of this history to known people of our time: Oquilluk's grandparents, respected as such and as elders. Another part takes note that no one has yet written out this history. The central portion of this section reinforces specifically the idea of the value of this History, taking it beyond mere legacy and fixing it firmly into the realm of truth, or even Truth.

The second major structure, as I have said, involves not purely exposition, but also argument to justify his action of writing down the stories. There are three subsections discernible in this second structure, each elaborating on the character and effect of the Disasters. They have no part in the main line of argument of this section. One of these subsections encloses another, and all are inconsecutive with the surrounding statements.

To describe these segments does not really express the felling of them. It really only sets the stage for further efforts to capture the effect these shifts have in creating the voice we hear when we read the manuscript and in contrast the voice we hear when we read the printed text. We can consider these voices now.

A striking aspect of contrast in the two passages lies in some things mentioned in the manuscript that are left out of the printed version. These elements, noted previously in discussing the structure in the manuscript, involve Oquilluk's self-deprecation and unsuitability for his task. This typification has two expressions in the manuscript:

even tho
Im not Intelligene man.

and

If some one, very very intelligent
writes these stories, it would be
very introspection, to any one
who read it.

In the book, we get only this by way of personal reference:

> They have been told .... by passing them on from generation to generation until I, William A. Oquilluk, came into this time.

The particular formality of the statement of identity is taken from the manuscript very near to the beginning, though these lines are not found on pages previously noted. The phrasing "from generation to generation" is found also on that later page. There are other common elements. Some of the printed text comes from the earlier pages of handwritten work, and some from the later. But taking these two sections into consideration, what is most interesting is not what is included from this part or that, but what elements found in either place are simply ommitted. The presence of the narrator to us, our sense of his self-concept or pose, is sharply influenced by his self-deprecation. Even the function of the formal identification of the writer "William A. Oquilluk" has changed. In the manuscript the phrasing is like this:

.... generation to generation
until, I, William A. Oquilluk, time ....

Here the name serves apparently as a characterization of time: William A. Oquilluk's time. The point is only to fix the time as contemporary. Self is secondary. But the practical effect of the *printed* passage is to throw emphasis onto the man. What is erased is the presence of formalized self-effacement, and thus the presence of a certain type of man capable of the sort of humility which in fact is necessary for him to complete his task, even though he must manifest that humility by denying his fitness. It is a kind of social role appropriate in the presence of elders and betters, when one must perform.

The layering of statement discussed earlier also has a powerful effect on

our sense of the narrator. As Tedlock reminds us, quoting Boas," primitive prose is based on the art of oral delivery" and this art of oral delivery includes features such as voice quality (tone of voice), loudness, and pausing, Tedlock says. The pacing of Oquilluk's original writing seems a matter of complex rhythms proceeding together, thoughts taken up, stacked, overlapped, but on the whole proceeding through the major rhythm: *circumstance* ("Have bein told . . . ") and *response* ("Therefore, I have force myself to Volunteer . . ."). Threaded through this major structure are repetitions of words, phrases, thoughts, each repeated or modulated in a context of other motifs similarly modulated. The result is a fabric of rhythms and motifs interesting in itself and suggesting complexity of tone, pausing, loudness and softness, pitch in the narrating voice, and a concommitantly complex message.

But as we know, Oquilluk has *two* voices, the other being that of the printed book. They are very different. The voice Oquilluk projects in the book is much flatter in tonal variation, pitch, loudness. There is little change in this level tone during the passage quoted, and indeed during the course of the book. There are not many excursions from "Standard English"; those that occur are minor. The overall effect is of a composed, tranquil narrator's presence, evenly narrating triumph and tragedy in the same spirit. The personality of the narrator is distinct, but drawn within narrower limits of diversity and with lesser definition. These effects are produced by regular and relatively simple sentence structure throughout, linear ordering of thought without the tendencies to repeat and circle back found in the manuscript, regular and predictable paragraphing, a very standard diction, orthodox spelling (which has the effects of dismantling the feeling of idiosyncratic strangeness in the manuscript and of assuring the reader about continuity of his linguistic world with that of the narrator). The diversity of vocabulary in the manuscript is less (slightly, about 10% fewer words) than that of the book, but this factor is outweighed by others mentioned above.

But we have looked at only two small parts of the work – a few lines of manuscript, a few lines from the book. Any complete study must stand on the basis of an edition of the manuscript which has yet to be produced. However this may be, whether the manuscript is left to gather dust in Fairbanks or sees the light of day, certain ghosts will not go away, ghosts haunting this work, short and tentative as it is, and that are ready to haunt any future work. Tedlock deals with these ghosts or demons. Tedlock contrasts audible text with notebook text of the ethnographer. Audible text is the tape recording of a performance of a storyteller:

> .... unless the mythographer has imitated studio technicians, producing a decontextualized voice that is in some ways the auditory equivalent of a carefully edited and printed text on a clean white page, the information on the tape is not limited to what that voice sounded like at the moment it left the lips. Even the performer's bodily movements are in evidence, affecting the sound of the voice as the head moves with respect to a microphone that was not tied around the neck. Also on the tape is evidence of the remarks or movements of an audience (including the mythographer), along with evidence as to whether the performance took place indoors or out, whether seasonal birds or insects were singing, and whether there was a violent wind or a thunderclap. (p. 4)

Like much of what Tedlock says in this book, the passage quoted is very fertile. What he would say about video-tape is tempting to imagine. But we can see even in his statements above that what the mythographer is reaching out for is a grasp of the life/world of the performer, the life/world being the creative matrix of the words, and a simultaneous grasp of the fleeting life of the words in that world. Tedlock goes into the matter of trying to re-inject the life of the living word into texts previously collected by the old notebook method:

> ... if the study of an audible text does disclose passages with at least statistical patterns in the interrelationships between pitch and timing, on the one hand, and syntax and meaning, on the other, it may be possible to carry out a hypothetical reconstruction of the oral delivery of a dictated text from the past – given passages whose syntax and wording resemble those of passages from aud-ble texts. But even then it will be difficult to predict the foregrounding of a particular meaning that is made possible by a sudden break in a pattern of pitch and timing, and it may be necessary to leave the straight narrative passages as prose, with their dramatic timing to be improvised by the reader.

The effort is to restore context – which is to restore as fully as possible the meaning of the text. And this must be the meaning as understood together by performer and audience – including the ethnographer, but certainly his sense of the meaning of the text will be partial and different in kind as well as quantity from that of the audience.

There enters one ghost: *whose* meaning is carried over into the reading of an Eskimo story told in English in print? One cannot rest content easily here. Though we may declare Oquilluk's work to be non-translations but original writing in English, the ghost of inter-textuality will not go away. In this case the demand intertextuality makes is for us to see the work in hand as being

spoken through by other texts, some past, some future, since we know books vex culture into making new books. But though English-language traditions recede into a well-lit past, Eskimo traditions recede elsewhere but into written tradition, leaving aside the fragments of collection and writing (such as Oquilluk's) that do exist. It is not just a matter of lack of knowledge on the part of readers. The whole line of intertextuality proceeds in a medium different from print or any kind of writing. It proceeds by occasions which it is beyond the capacity of *anyone* to more than dimly imagine. The thread is broken, though bits and pieces of it, even some longer lengths, can still be found. Tedlock devotes much attention in *The Spoken Word* to questions of style in translating American Indian oral narrative. He focuses our attention on certain qualities of these narratives – some of which we have mentioned above, others are questions involving realism, the description of emotional states or the absence of such description – and his conclusion is that such oral narratives should be treated as "dramatic poetry" rather than short story, the usual approach (see *The Spoken Word*, pp. 47-61). Based on the bits of thread left, and on some of the qualities shared by Oquilluk's writing and the texts Tedlock presents, I think that this is in fact the way to look at Oquilluk's work.

If we look at some of Tedlock's translations we can see some of these shared qualities. Here is one text from Zuni (softer portions in parentheses):

> At that moment his mother
> embraced him (embraced him).
> His uncle got angry (his uncle got angry).
> He beat
> his kinswoman
> (he beat his kinswoman).

Tedlock tells us that "this passage might have appeared in a conventional prose rendition as 'At that moment his mother embraced him. His uncle got angry. He beat his kinswoman.' " What is lost in the prose version is nuance and intensity, which in the poetic version are conveyed through "repetition, the changes in loudness, and the frequent pauses" (pp. 53-54). To this we can add that the "stand-alone" visual aspect of the lines holds them up to the eye for inspection in a way that their being buried in prose does not. I think it is fair to say that all these points which Tedlock makes can be transferred with no loss of force to the reading of Oquilluk's manuscript. If other lines of inquiry

can help narrow the focus, so much the better, but at least one has begun to recognize the poetic, and the poetics, in his work.

This paper is only a start in the work standing to be done on Oquilluk, even as he might say his work is only a beginning in itself. In this present case, there exists a great store of material which has bearing on the manuscript – and then there is the manuscript itself, existing only in xeroxed copy for the few scholars knowledgeable about it, or even aware of it. I have touched on only a very small part of it here. There are hundreds more pages to read, analyze, compare. In addition there are many other sources that should be consulted to more fully develop – almost in the photographic sense here, through an accretion of clues Oquilluk's sense of poetics.

Some of those sources are direct links to William Oquilluk. In the University of Alaska Archives, in 1983, a number of audiotapes were deposited through the kindness of Dr. Laurel Bland. These include tapings of William Oquiluk alone and in conversation with others, and tapings regarding ceremonies described and explained in the book and the manuscript. This last item involve music as well as words. Of course one recognizes in these the "audible texts" Tedlock works to explain. There are also many materials which could shed more light on Oquilluk's ideas on history. These include maps, and histories and descriptions of most of the places mentioned in the manuscript and the book. What would be of interest is to see what transformations take place in the identities and character of places and processes in their transits between one context and another. Of course this opens up the question of history – its shape, its flow – in the book and manuscript.

Dr. Bland invites all to compare the work in book form with the work in manuscript. I have made some little start on this, but I hope it is only the thin edge of the wedge. There is no hidden agenda in what I have done, at least in the direction of proving that one version of Oquilluk's work is superior to the other in all respects, or that one has been or deserves to be suppressed. It seems to me that the best idea on this double voicing is that one might expect such in a bi-tri-multicultural world, and that the transmutations of voicings, their multiplications, have only just begun in the meetings of people in Alaska, that these voices will continue to be heard beyond the boundaries of Alaska, for much the same reasons that Levi-Strauss ascribes as lying behind the proliferation of myth: there are some problems that can't be solved, but only "played." Oquilluk's work is a part of that play.

## Footnotes

1. (Philadelphia: University of Penna. Press, 1981), p. 6.
2. Anchorage: AMU Press. This and all subsequent references are to 2nd edition, 1981. This quotation is from the Foreword, viii.
3. In the second edition of *People of Kauwerak,* Bland clarifies her methods of working with Oquilluk. These methods will be discussed at some length and detail below.
4. In *The Native Americans* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), song ownership among Eskimos is mentioned in relation to shamanic and hunting spells. As in Oquilluk, no mention is made of personal or group ownership of legends. See further comments of Robert F. Spencer on p. 149.
5. "In *Vain I Tried to Tell You*". In a complaint to which Dennis Tedlock's work is an adequate response, Hymes says "literary scholars have mostly assigned the subject to folklore and anthropology. . . . linguistics has focused on methodology and grammar" (p. 7).
6. George Steiner, *After Babel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 22.
7. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Penna. Press, 1983), p. 7 ff.

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