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The Anaktuvuk Mask and Cultural Innovation

Social perception determines the invention process in an Eskimo village and introduces cultural changes.

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At present many of the Nunamiut Eskimos at Anaktuvuk Pass are handcrafting caribou-skin masks for sale to tourists and curio shops in the cities of Alaska. Since these masks are highly stylized and bear little resemblance to the aboriginal masks (most of them made of wood or whalebone) used in ceremonials and rituals, it is of scientific interest to establish how and why the present practice originated, particularly since no member of the village had ever seen an aboriginal mask being used ceremonially (*1*).

How does an "Eskimo mask" come into being within an Eskimo group whose members have long since lost contact with the cultural artifact that was at one time an integral part of their ancestors' communal way of life? The answers to this and other questions give insight into cultural innovation which has important implications for several areas of the behavioral sciences.

Anaktuvuk Pass is in the heart of the Brooks Range, one of the most formidable ranges in Alaska, within 190 kilometers of the Arctic Ocean. Its 110 Nunamiut inhabitants are thus an inland group, unlike most Eskimos, who typically live along the coast. The pass is a natural migrating route for caribou, and it is around this animal that the Nunamiut has developed his pattern for survival. Originally the Nunamiut, the remnants of the Killik River people, lived in small isolated groups and led a nomadic life. In 1947 these groups united and settled permanently at Anaktuvuk Pass, largely in response to the encouragement of white men, who pointed out the main advantage: there is a plateau at the base of the pass large enough to make a landing field for regularly scheduled airplanes bringing mail, medical supplies, and other necessities.

Origin of the Mask

The idea for the mask developed under the following circumstances. Bob Aguk and Zak Hugo (*2*), both in their twenties at the time, were tending trap lines about 2 weeks before Christmas of 1951. One evening in their trail shelter the two men were discussing the approaching Christmas festivities at the village, and they looked forward to their participation in the celebration.

Among the Nunamiut, as among Eskimos in general, festive celebrations are a community activity in which everyone participates. Such celebrations, which are frequent and held whenever any occasion justifies this means of escape from the rigors of Arctic living, consist largely of group chanting and dancing. The natives sit in a circle, and three or four drummers beat out a rhythm in accompaniment to the group chant. The music begins and ends abruptly. Soon an individual enters the circle to dance, and before the evening is over most have taken part in the dancing; there is some pushing, cajoling, and encouraging of the more recalcitrant members to join in. Custom and group definition call for a good deal of mirth, joking, and humorous byplay. The group laughs and applauds when a reluctant member is pulled into the circle to dance; it indicates appreciation and merriment when an individual of particular status, such as the oldest member in the group, dances, or when a popular individual indicates fatigue after an exhausting effort. Even in its present attenuated form, the dance, like earlier dances, symbolizes hunting rituals and mythological communication, but it also provides merriment, enjoyment, and a release from tensions.

In their casual conversation about the prospective Christmas dance, Aguk and Hugo quite naturally imagined their own participation. According to both of them, they began to discuss what they could do to create more amusement, surprise, and laughter. They saw themselves, therefore, not in the role of exponents of the traditional symbolism or ritual of the hunt but in the role of amusers—an art with its own status, recognized and appreciated by the entire village.

In keeping with this desire, both agreed that they should appear at the dance in disguise. But with what could they disguise themselves? Even at the dance, the natives wear their usual winter apparel, which is highly stylized. The young hunters agreed that they would have to cover their faces. With what? It must be emphasized that neither man had ever seen an Eskimo mask nor even heard a description of one, but Hugo, a month or so earlier, had visited Fairbanks in one of his rare

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absences from home and, at the time, had been intrigued by the typical five-and-ten-cent-store Halloween mask of the white man. He had seen several in window displays and had handled one in a drug store. He says he was merely curious and amused by these masks. He recalled this experience in his conversation with Aguk. They decided that a mask would be an adequate disguise, and that one could be made in "about 2 hours," says Hugo. Actually, it took them the better part of 2 days' working time.

Not only did they lack proper facilities, but neither man had had any experience in mask-making. After a series of trial-and-error beginnings, they cut two oval pieces of caribou skin, to which they sewed features, separately cut. They surrounded the face with a fur ruff to simulate the parka hood; they used caribou hair to form a moustache, a beard, and eyebrows; and they sewed a nosepiece onto the facial disk (Fig. 1). They sewed these parts in place with caribou sinew.

They returned to the village about 2 days before the dance and concealed the two masks. On the evening of the dance, when the festivities were well under way, they appeared wearing their masks. They, and other informants, report that the results were instantaneous. Everyone laughed uproariously. The young hunters danced, spoofed, and tantalized their friends and relatives, who eventually guessed their identities. The occasion remains in the memories of the villagers as a delightful experience. Of importance to this article is the fact that, in a single episode, the entire village saw the masks and responded with enthusiasm. Informants repeatedly state that they defined the situation as an amusing one, as a part of the festivities, and saw in it no social or economic implications.

Sale of the Original Masks

Each hunter hung his mask in the corner of his sod house, and no further use was made of the masks. Four and a half months later, about the end of May 1952, Laurence Irving of the University of Alaska's Institute of Arctic Biology and Terris Moore, then president of the University, stopped at Anaktuvuk on their return to Fairbanks from a research expedition further north. Both these scientists met and talked to Simon Paniaq, who, by that time, was undoubtedly chief *umialik* (this is an honorific status roughly similar to that of an "elder" or "leader" of the village). Although Jesse Aguk (father of the mask-maker) and Elijah Kakinnâq still enjoyed similar status, their advancing age and failing sight had made them less active as leaders of the village. Paniaq had become chief *umialik* through communal acclaim. Also, his English is fluent and he has a natural appreciation of the work of the occasional white scientist who visits the area; thus Paniaq was frequently sought out as an invaluable source of information by scientists engaged in research programs. Finally, according to Eskimo custom, he would, as a leader of the village, have welcomed visitors in any case. These facts are significant because, later on, his encouragement and behavior played an important part in the development of the innovation.

The scientists were familiar with the usual *objets d'art* which the natives occasionally sold—dolls, toys, and the like. No one recalls who first mentioned masks, but the word did crop up in the conversation. Irving is not sure, but it may have been he, since he is familiar with the fine aboriginal collection at the University of Alaska Museum. Paniaq sent two boys to the homes of Aguk and Hugo to get the masks he knew were there. These were purchased by the scientists, but the matter of price is interesting, and it was crucial to subsequent developments. There being no precedent for such a sale, the scientists offered $10 for each mask, but Paniaq thought this too much and suggested $5 per mask. Paniaq knows the value of money, but here the Eskimo sense of value and ethics were obviously involved. The deal was consummated, the money was given to the original mask-makers, and the masks were forgotten.

Aguk and Hugo were on the trail again when these masks were sold. On returning to the village and learning of the sale their immediate sentiments were of gratitude, since Paniaq had, as the leader of the village and in keeping with the communal mores, acted wisely and in the best interests of the young hunters.

There is absolutely no evidence that anyone made another mask at Anaktuvuk for the next 4½ years. This raises some significant points. Aguk and Hugo are genuine innovators. They borrowed an idea from a different culture which led to the innovation—to creation of an artifact in terms of their own culture. With the sale of the masks they became aware that these artifacts were saleable. It is believed that most of the important members of the village quickly learned of the sale of these masks. Five adults (who currently make masks) were immediately aware that the masks had been sold. And yet it occurred to no one to make masks for sale.

Most of the male informants give the same reasons Aguk and Hugo give for not having made other masks. The innovators state that, while the cash value for these masks was a fair one (having been established by the *umialik*), they did not feel it worth their while to spend 2 days in the handcrafting of masks when they had pressing duties such as hunting, caring for sleds and dogs, gathering of willows for fuel, and skinning. In terms of Nunamiut values, no matter how sizable a sum of money $5 may be, it had little meaning in comparison with the routine demands that the life of the village imposed on the young males.

On the other hand, why did others who had more time—the women, for example, or the older men—fail to make masks, since, in the absence of other urgent activities, the established price would be significant? Problems in communication make it difficult to arrive at conclusive answers. However, one obtains a strong impression that the answer lies in the sphere of interpersonal rules and norms among the villagers. This crucial question is treated later.

Paniaq's Masks of Wood

In the summer of 1956, Mrs. Ethel Oliver, a school teacher at Anchorage, revisited the area, this time with three of her friends. She had, with her husband, taken the first rough census in the area in 1950, some 3 years after the village was established. Her interest in the people had led her to make periodic visits and to take with her gifts and supplies as tokens of friendship. She states that in July 1956 she saw no masks in the village but was aware that the usual toys were being made. She suggested to Paniaq that other things of commercial value might be made, as a source of income for the villagers. This conversation was general, and nothing was said about masks. Shortly before Christmas of 1956 she

received a package of 12 masks, three for each of the women, as a gift in appreciation of the many kindnesses they had shown the natives. The masks were made by Paniaq and Kakinnâq. They were carved of wood (Fig. 2) but looked like the first two made by Aguk and Hugo, with fur ruffs, moustaches, and beards.

Mrs. Oliver and her friends proudly showed these masks to their friends, who expressed a desire to own similar ones. Mrs. Oliver then talked to Harry Briggs, co-owner of a local tourist gift shop, who had made the acquaintance of Paniaq the previous year when the latter had been hospitalized briefly in the Anchorage area. It was agreed that the curio shop would take, on consignment, 30 masks. Briggs was willing to pay $20 for each mask. It is not known on what basis Briggs calculated their value, but his figure was probably in line with current prices for other village-made objects being sold in Anchorage.

One of the first masks to arrive in Anchorage was a caribou-skin mask made by Paniaq's wife. She states that she found carving one of wood, as her husband had done, too difficult. Hence, she duplicated the essentials of the original Aguk-Hugo mask, using the same techniques. At about the same time, Kakinnâq's wife also made one of the first skin masks. The women generally agree that they found manipulation of the cutting tools in carving wood too difficult. Also, wood carving is, by social definition, usually a male activity. Why Paniaq and Kakinnâq made their masks of wood to begin with is a moot question. Interviews on this point indicate that a desire to be different or not to "copy" the original masks may have been an important motivation, but this is not clearly established. Moreover, just as whittling or carving is a male activity by social definition, sewing is generally a female activity. The men may have preferred to carve their masks for these reasons. It is also possible that Paniaq recalled having read of wooden masks.

Mikiâna's Technique

That there was correspondence between Anchorage and the village concerning masks soon became general knowledge. Only Paniaq and Kakinnâq and their wives, however, were actively engaged in this handicraft. It cannot be established exactly how Justice Mikiâna entered the picture. But during the correspondence he too became interested. Mikiâna enjoys a reputation in the village as a superior craftsman. His sod house, for example, has furred-out walls covered with linoleum; no one else's does. He makes what are conceded to be the best snowshoes in the village. He seems more "individualistic" than the other villagers, frequently hunting alone, and he is a creative person—for example, he made one of the caribou-antler pen and pencil holders and lamps, for the white school teacher in the village.

For reasons which are difficult to determine because of obvious psychological factors, Mikiâna never discussed masks with Paniaq's wife or with Kakinnâq's wife, her close relative, who lives near Mikiâna's hut. Mikiâna states that he did not see Paniaq's wife, nor did he care to talk to her about the techniques the two women were using

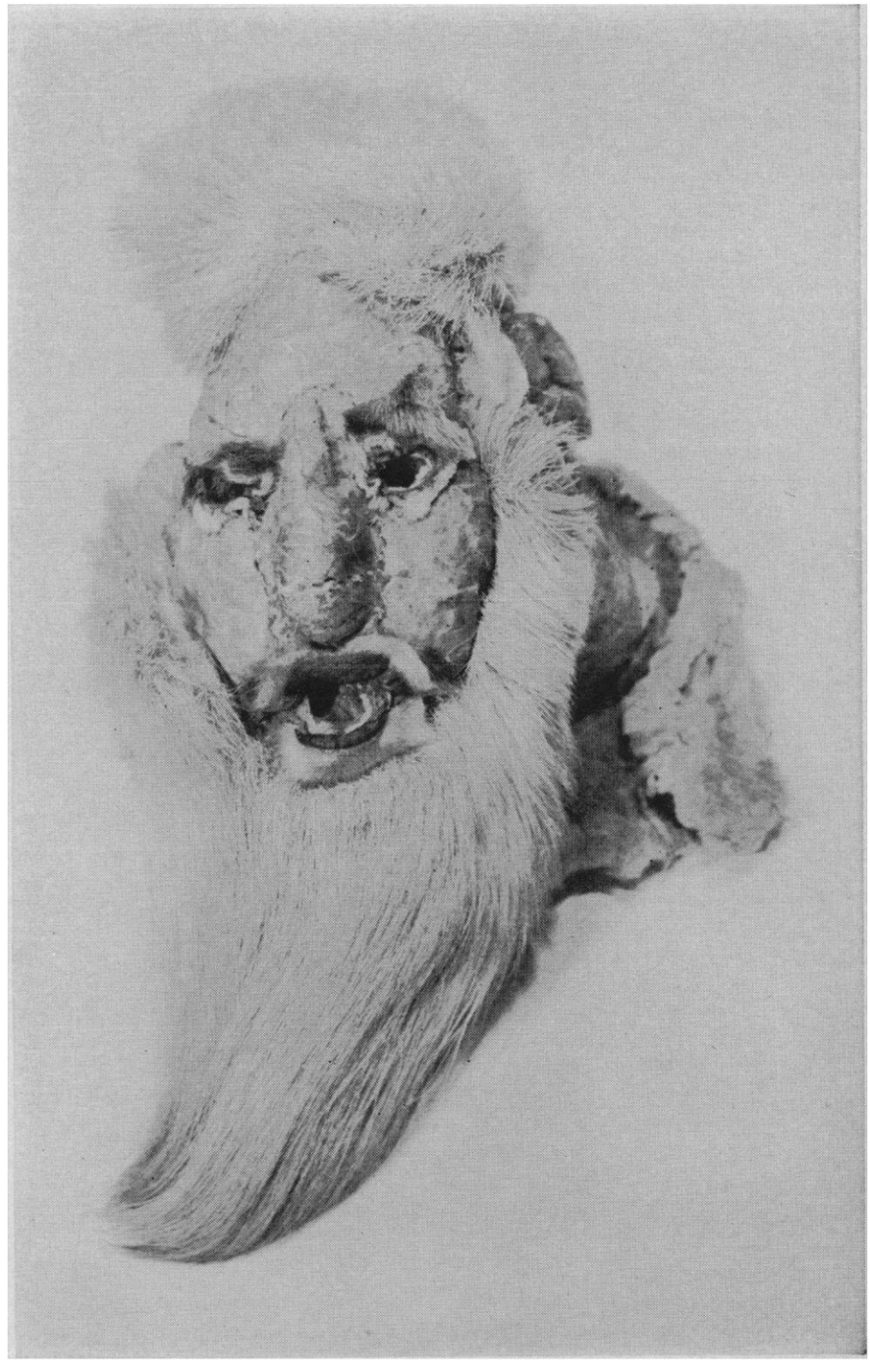

Fig. 1. One of the two original masks made by Aguk and Hugo.

in making the masks. But he did see their masks and had a general knowledge of the way the skin masks were made.

He indicates a distinct attitude concerning the skin masks: sewing such a mask was too time consuming. He had seen at least one of the wooden masks carved by Paniaq or Kakinnâq. His attitude here was that carving the wooden masks was also time consuming. He did not discuss techniques with any of the original handcrafters. One can only speculate about male-female status, pride, and the creative desire to be different. But his subsequent approach to the problem is interesting. He states that there was no trial-and-error experimenting on his part. He first planned systematically and had a clear mental image of the way in which he would go about making his masks. He, like all the natives, had a lifetime of experience with caribou skin and was thoroughly familiar with its properties, characteristics, and multitude of uses. He simply associated the idea of the primary skin mask with that of the secondary wooden mask, and came up with the next logical alternative—a combination of the two achieved by a different handcrafting method. He used a single wooden form from which he made a copy in skin.

First he carved a wooden facial disk and cut out the eye and mouth slits. He stretched, next, a piece of soaking-wet caribou skin around the disk and, with caribou sinew, laced it tightly around the back. Sinew was passed through small holes punched around the nose, then passed through holes in the wooden form, and then tied in the back. The skin dried tightly and held its form; this was especially true of the nose, and the difficult problem of affixing a separately cut and formed nose piece was thus eliminated. The slits for eyes and mouth were cut through, and the mask was removed from the wooden form after it had dried. It was then dyed, a fur ruff was sewn around the edges to simulate the parka hood, and the fur moustache and beard were sewn onto the face piece, as were eyebrows and eyelashes.

This was the decisive invention. What motivated it? Mikiâna, like the rest, had known for 4½ years of the saleability of these masks, and yet he had failed to act on this knowledge. His explanation of the situation is unequivocal. He simply states that, when he found he could earn $20 per mask (the price eventually established in Anchorage), then he was very much interested in handcrafting them, except that the previously established techniques took too much time. So he deliberately set out to streamline the procedure, once it was financially worthwhile.

Mikiâna could complete such a mask in a day. He made more forms and had several masks drying simultaneously. He sent the first six or seven masks to Anchorage for sale on a consignment basis. This was in the first quarter of 1957. Later he carved more wooden forms and sold them to other villagers who could not carve their own. His invention became the adopted way of making the mask.

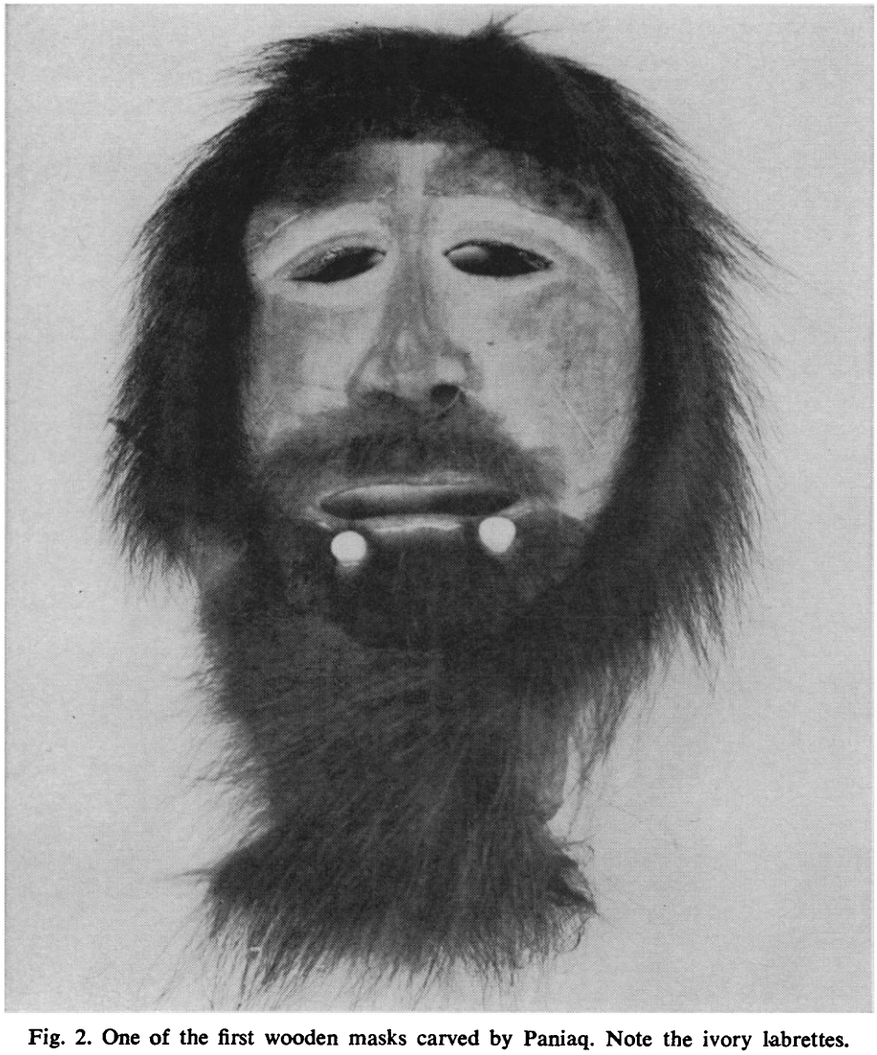

Fig. 2. One of the first wooden masks carved by Paniaq. Note the ivory labrettes.

Further Encouragement

Other individuals figure significantly in this narrative. A certain O'Connell who had the rudiments of a trading post at the village in 1956 or 1957 encouraged the village leaders to produce more of the masks, saying that he would be willing to market them. In 1957 a Miss Bortell, the new village school teacher, arrived, and she also encouraged the making of masks. Sometime later the trader abandoned his trading post and left the area. Toward the end of 1958, six or seven people were making the caribou-skin masks by means of the techniques invented by Mikiâna. In 1963 Mr. and Mrs. Lockwood arrived as the new school teachers. At present they are the only permanent white residents of the village. Scientific and government personnel and an occasional pilot or hunter frequently stop by to pay the Lockwoods a courtesy visit. In the Lockwood home several masks are on constant display, thus it provides an unofficial "information department" where interested buyers can be referred to

the maker of a particular mask. The teachers, too, have exerted a positive influence on the native craftsmen, mainly through emphasizing the fact that high-quality workmanship increases sales.

Since 1956, many scientists, government workers, pilots, hunters, and others have visited the village sporadically, and informants state that all of them expressed interest in the masks and had a word of encouragement for the mask-makers. By 1957 it was obvious to the entire village that the caribou-skin mask was a "going thing." Shortly thereafter, the number of mask-makers increased to essentially the present number (*3*). The youngest member of the village to have made and sold a mask made it when he was 17 years old. Using this as a cutoff point, we note that there are 52 people in the village who are 17 and over, in a total population of 110. Of this group, 36 people were actively making masks in 1964; 13 of these were women, all of them married.

In 1963, one of the young Anaktuvuk women married a man from Point Barrow, some 325 kilometers distant. She had made several masks prior to this; when she moved to her husband's village at Point Barrow she took with her a wooden form and her knowledge of mask-making.

Paniaq estimates, somewhat roughly, that about a thousand masks have been made and sold thus far. The skin masks are selling, currently, for $12.50 to visitors or traders in the village itself. At this rate, masks produce a significant part of the total income of the village. Outside the village, in the cities, the masks sell for at least twice this amount. However, these higher-priced masks are usually of better quality, the merchant usually being more careful in his purchase than the casual tourist.

The Later Masks

I have described the changes which took place in the handcrafting technique. Other changes, of a qualitative nature, are also apparent. The earlier masks are more caricatured and "primitive." The masks now being made (Figs. 3 and 4) tend to be more "realistic" and natural. Mercerized cotton thread is being used in place of sinew for sewing on the fur ruffs. Eyebrows, whiskers, eyelashes, and moustache are being glued onto the facial disk with glue or mucilage. Coffee and tea have been used as coloring agents, but this is too expensive. Normally, therefore, what is probably iron oxide, dug from local river banks, is used. A reddish dye from alder bark has also been used. The coloring agent most frequently used is caribou blood. The use of portions of caribou skin with longer hair (from the forelegs, for example) to form realistic moustaches and beards has given way to use of skin from any part of the animal; thus the present masks appear flatter than the earlier ones.

Most of the craftsmen who use glue and thread do so because they find this easier than sewing with caribou sinew. Apparently most of them do not understand that masks put together with glue and thread are less durable. One informant who does understand this states that it does not make any difference because "the white man does not know the difference, anyhow." Most of the craftsmen indicate that the trend toward a stylized, stereotyped mask which lacks distinctiveness or individuality is an accommodation to the white man's tastes. That is, the usual visitor has tended to purchase the more stereotyped masks. It is apparent that the native craftsman has evolved a style which accommodates the white man's preferences and taste. The penchant for "realism" has recently led to the insertion of hair inside the nostrils! (See Fig. 5.) The craftsman who experimented with this just "to add something different" recalls that the white man who bought the mask was impressed with this feature. He assumes that others will be too, and continues making his masks that way.

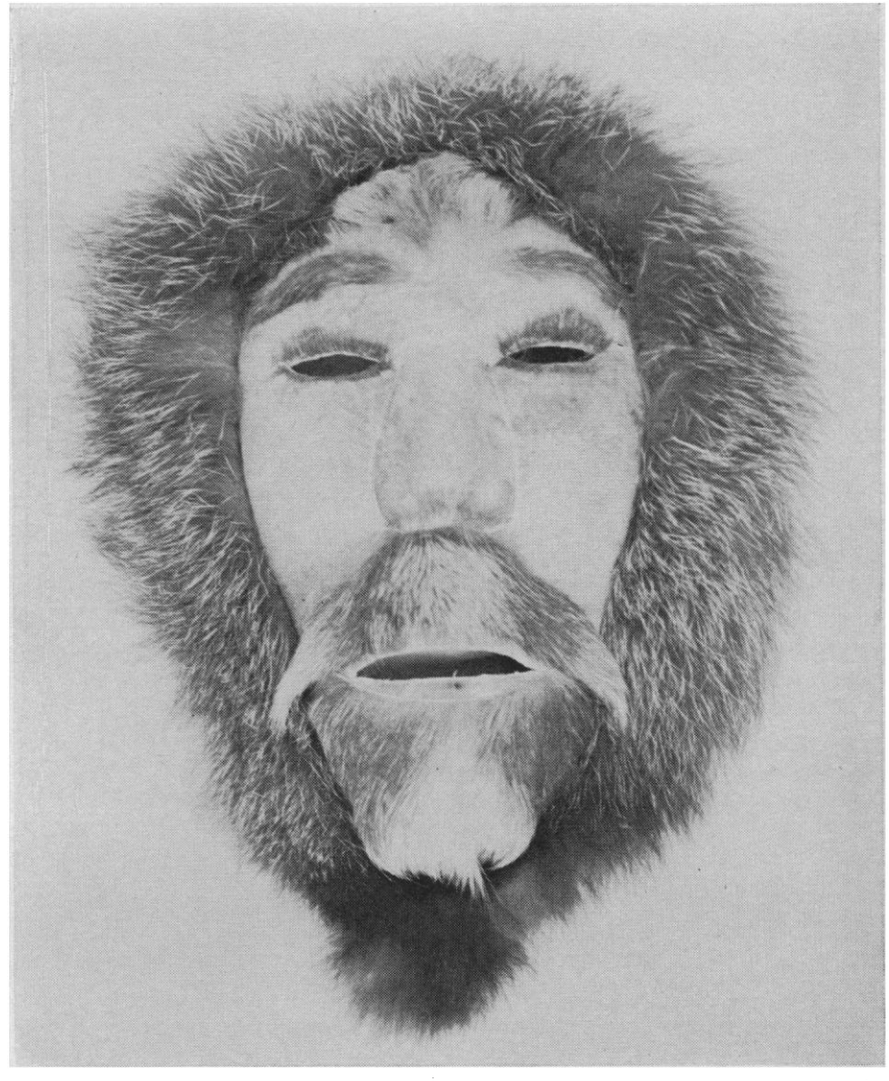

Fig. 3. "Modern" skin mask of the kind being made for sale at the time of this study.

Awareness-Need Question

The development of the Anaktuvuk mask, from its inception to the present, raises many interesting questions, some of which have an important relationship to theory. Hence, the story of the mask may, within obvious limitations, serve as a "test case" for some theoretical considerations, among which only one is discussed here. This is the problem of awareness and need as related to innovation.

In what has been termed (*4*, p. 76) the adoption process ("the mental process through which an individual passes from first hearing about an innovation to final adoption"), the important problem is the "chicken and the egg" riddle: Which comes first? In this case, "Does a need precede awareness of an innovation or does awareness of a new idea create a need for that innovation? The available research studies do not yet provide a clear answer to this question, but tentative evidence suggests the latter is more common" (*4*, p. 82).

Usually, the "awareness-need" issue is related to "consumer" and innovation. In the usual case, the consumer does not play a part in the invention or innovation of the item to be used or consumed in one way or another. An example of a noninnovating consumer is the housewife who adopts a new mechanical kitchen implement. On the other hand, the innovator himself may be a consumer, or he may invent for someone else's consumption. He, too, may be involved in an "awareness-need" issue. The question of whether his "mental processes" and those of the noninnovating consumer are similar may require further study and clarification of concepts and use of them. The observation is made here only to account for possible differences in the "mental processes." Uncritical use of the concept may overlook important differences in motivation, perception, and the like.

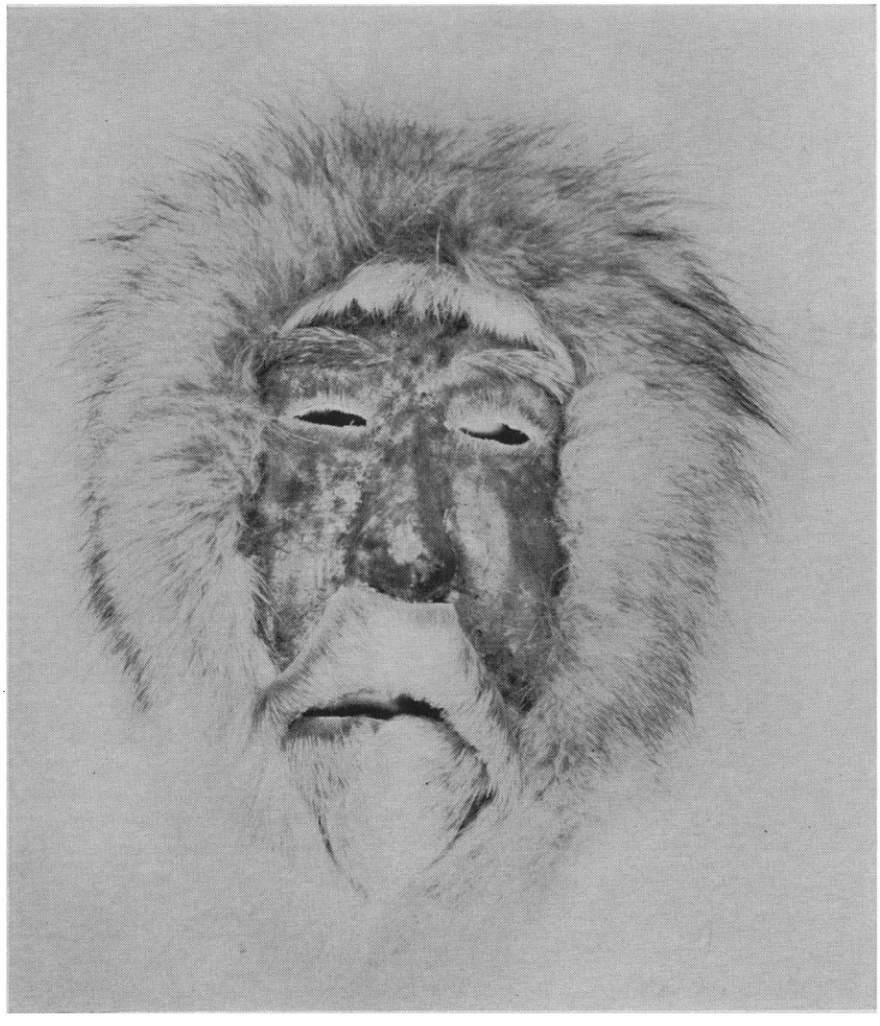

Fig. 4. "Modern" skin mask. This and the mask of Fig. 3 are typical of the best craftsmanship.

What insights does the innovation of the mask provide concerning the "awareness-need" question? To begin with, the innovation discussed here has two distinct phases. The first phase concerns Aguk and Hugo's original innovation and their desire to participate in the village festivities. This desire preceded the innovation. The second phase concerns the collective desire of many individuals to make masks, after Mikiâna's invention had created awareness of the innovation.

Here I will say something about the concept of "need," since, as Barnett has observed, it has several undesirable connotations implying mandatoriness or an imperative quality which may not really be applicable in a given case. The term *want*, which he uses, does seem more desirable, since it is "more clearly assertive of the personal element in motivation than 'need' is and because it has fewer of the objectionable overtones . . ." (*5*, p. 99). The statements of both Aguk and Hugo indicate that what they desired or "wanted" easily falls within the category of "credit wants," the expression Barnett uses (*5*, p. 101) to describe the motivational basis (which has to do with esteem, gratification, recognition, and so on, from the group) for a cleverly conceived presentation of self to the group. Such motives provide an adequate explanation of why the two men, in response to a "want," set about innovating anything—in this case a mask which met that want. The mask idea, and not something else, evolved into reality because it was an inseparable part of the "mental picture" held by both men.

This "mental picture" was associated with a specific social context with the following elements: a village dance, the spirit of Christmas festivities, the innovators' participation in it, the desire to inject a surprise into an otherwise familiar situation, and the desire to appear different to the group in such a way as to elicit surprise, ending in laughter and mirth. Hugo's experience with the Halloween mask in the drug store provided the idea for what he and Aguk decided was the optimum solution for obtaining the anticipated ends. For the innovators, the want preceded the innovation. It is probable that most innovators have some want, no

matter what the motive, which gives rise to the innovation—the satisfaction of that want. For the innovator, therefore, it is a safe assumption that want precedes innovation or invention, except, perhaps, in those few instances wherein a chance or random activity of some sort produces an "innovation" first and a desire for it later.

Mikiâna's monetary-gain motive is sufficient to explain why he deliberately set about inventing his wooden form. However, the motivation did not emerge in a vacuum independently of the total social context. In fact, the motivation might never have arisen, since it had failed to arise during the previous 4½ years. Even if a want existed during those years, sufficient motivation to translate it into overt action or creativity had been lacking. Mikiâna's motivation is related to three factors in the total social context: (i) Paniaq and Kakinnâq had already carved wooden masks which had been sent to Mrs. Oliver; (ii) the wives of both Paniaq and Kakinnâq had made skin masks more or less according to the Aguk-Hugo technique; and (iii) an interest and a sales outlet had been established in Anchorage. These occurrences provided the context in which Mikiâna conceived of his invention and the possibility of financial gain.

Basic Process in Innovation

A brief digression may be in order. The basic process in innovation has been frequently studied. Mikiâna's invention bears out Barnett's concept of "configurations." The invention is a true synthesis in that the properties of two essentially different objects (skin mask and wooden mask) are united so that the properties of both emerge in a new form (*5*, p. 182). The synthesizing fusion takes place on a personal and "mental" plane. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in Mikiâna's observations of the two kinds of masks, in his mental structuring and relating of the two ideas and properties of the masks, and in his mental picturing of what the new form and process should be, without further experimentation. Once he had formed the mental picture or configuration, the mechanics involved in the actual handicrafting was already indicated, to a great extent, by the configuration.

Moreover, the roles of Paniaq and Kakinnâq become critical. These two villagers not only carved the wooden masks which served as a prototype for Mikiâna's invention but they set in motion the chain of events which created wants for the white man in Anchorage. The nature of these wants was relayed back to the village, and the wives of Paniaq and Kakinnâq then made skin masks, not to be used as gifts or to be used personally, but to be put up for sale. Mrs. Oliver and H. Briggs become advocates for the innovation. They create a market and provide the context within which Mikiâna's invention becomes meaningful. It is only after these events have taken place and these wants have arisen that Mikiâna's invention occurs; that the village sees the mask, in its more easily produced form, as a saleable object; and that individuals begin to make the masks.

The roles of Paniaq and Kakinnâq are worthy of brief comment. Kakinnâq is certainly respected as one of the elders in the village, but his advanced age (past 70) and his failing sight and health have made him less prominent in village affairs than he formerly was. Paniaq, on the other hand, is *umiliak*, and his status and prestige are acclaimed by all. The strength of his personal influence bears out one important aspect of theory. Rogers has pointed out (*4*, p. 237) that "opinion leaders differ from their followers in information sources, cosmopolitness, social participation, social status and innovativeness." Paniaq fulfills this description almost to the letter. His superior intelligence, his linguistic fluency, his contact and experience with white functionaries (with many of whom he had participated in various scientific projects), his own "innovativeness" with the wooden masks, and his venerated status in the group—all contributed to a change in the total

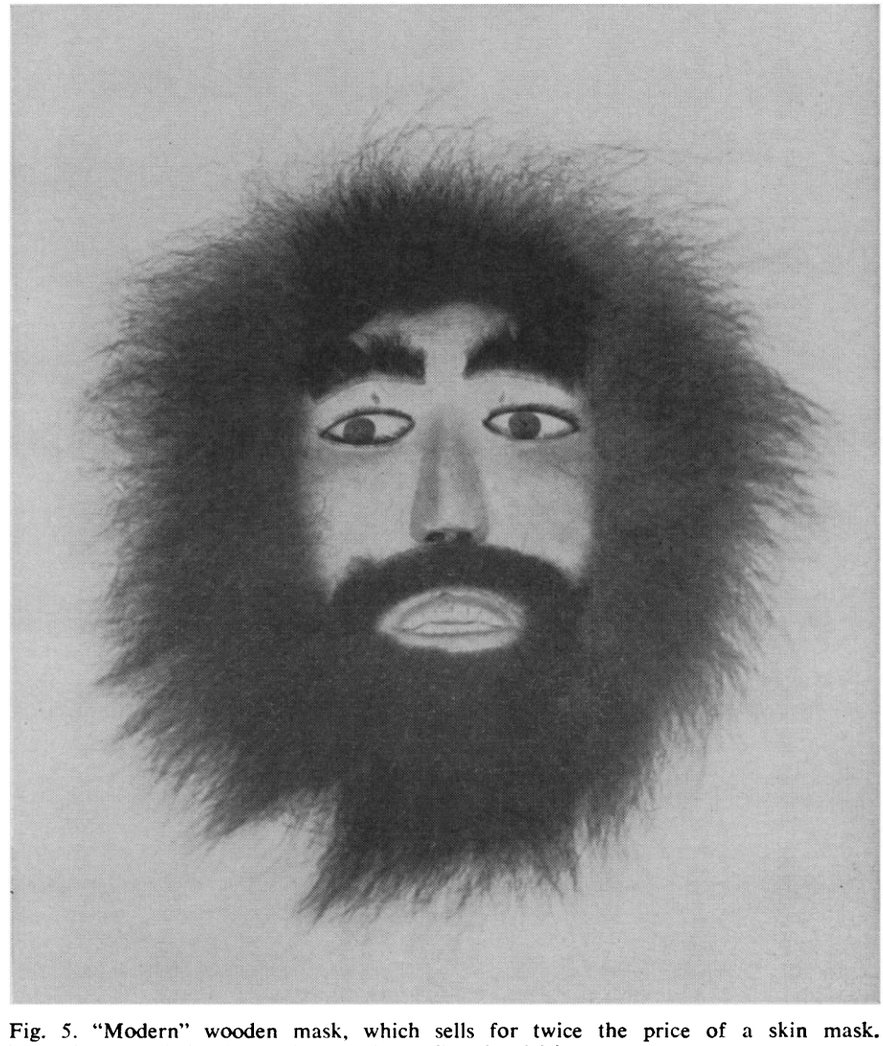

Fig. 5. "Modern" wooden mask, which sells for twice the price of a skin mask. Note the nasal hair, the teeth, and the caribou-hoof irises.

social context. In a very real sense it was Paniaq who gave the sanction and authority—who, knowingly or unknowingly, legitimatized the change in the perceptual processes of the individual villagers. The villagers' perception of, and response to, the Aguk-Hugo mask festivity was one thing; their perception of, and response to, the possibilities of financial gain opened up by the Paniaq-Kakinnâq-Mikiâna masks was something else.

The second phase of the total process occurred when the entire village became aware of the new handcrafting technique and the new use and value of the mask. The adoption of the technique followed the awareness. In general, which comes first in a community, the members' need for (or want of) an innovation or their awareness of an innovation? As may be seen in this instance, the situation is a complex and dynamic one and cannot be explained in simple mechanical terms of an "either-or" nature. The answer to the question depends on the critically important third variable which intervenes between want and awareness: the social context. It is the social context which provides the determinants for (i) perception, (ii) evaluation, (iii) attitude, and (iv) response. The innovation cannot be understood apart from the context in which it occurred (*6*).

Norms and Values

The Nunamiuts of Anaktuvuk, like many other Eskimos, have strong norms and values concerning "communal" or "common" property or the collective sharing of property and objects which, in American society, would be defined as "private," "personal," and "nonsharable." This is especially true of food; for example, during times of acute shortage, anyone in the village has access to caribou from anyone else who has it to share. It has been stated (*7*, p. 113) that the Eskimo does not condone competition—in fact, his entire social life is so structured that competition (as the white man knows it) cannot be condoned, probably because of its disruptive effect. Many anthropologists have noted, therefore, the lack of role differentiation or "individualism" based on competition, and the similarity of appearance, behavior, and attitude among Eskimo individuals. It may be inaccurate, however, to conclude that the Eskimo is "egalitarian" (*7*, p. 112) in the sense in which the white man uses the term. Observers who have made this risky assumption have, nevertheless, correctly pointed out that the Eskimo does not lack "autonomy and latitude in making his own decisions" (*7*, p. 123).

The difficulty may arise from the structured perceptions of the white man's cognitive processes, which do not readily respond to extremely subtle differences. Social differences *do* exist among Eskimos, as well as "individual" differences. The stigma placed on overt competition restrains the individual from flaunting his superiority, or abusing it; conversely, the comparatively inadequate or inferior person recognizes another's superiority and respects it or affirms it openly, no matter what envy he may feel secretly. Personal achievement and, therefore, status differentiation, far from being obliterated in some "egalitarian" fashion, are given communal acclaim. Everyone in Anaktuvuk knows, and will readily state, who is the best hunter, the best snowshoe maker or sled maker, the individual with the most physical stamina on the trail, the best mountain climber, and so on. There are even status differentiations within a single category—for example, the best Dall sheep hunter, the best caribou hunter, the best moose hunter, the best ptarmigan hunter, the best trapper. This is quite unlike the white man's "egalitarianism," wherein, very often, an individual denies that another has superior talent because of invidious comparison with his own inferior talent. Invidiousness does not appear overtly in the Eskimo as a group-tolerated attitude. It is ability or talent that counts, and not a professed ideal. The reward is not necessarily a material advantage for the individual in question but recognition and affirmation of status or prestige and of the person's true uniqueness. Truly, the person becomes almost "sacred," and there is no question of violating his "rights" or attributes. The person who affirms the other's superior worth in a given situation is not necessarily disparaging his own worth. In fact, to fail to affirm another's worth is the best possible way to lose face.

One other factor should be noted. It has been frequently (and correctly) observed that his culture (and not necessarily a certain kind of "mental ability") makes abstract thinking difficult for the Eskimo (*7*, p. 128). In fact, it may be that the very culture and conditions of existence in his world makes such thinking unnecessary. In any event, the Eskimo does not easily separate in his mind the physical person and the individual's abstract "qualities" or attributes. He sees "person-attribute" as an integrated whole, and his response is to a totality, not to its segments. His response is not, for example, to Aguk, a man who made a mask once, or to Aguk who, like any other man, can make a mask. The response is to Aguk-the-mask-maker, or to the mask-maker-who-is-Aguk. There is no separation between the man and his attribute; symbolically, they are one and the same. To affirm the mask is to affirm Aguk. To negate the mask is to negate Aguk. To negate Aguk is to negate the mask. To affirm Aguk is to affirm the mask. This phenomenology is applicable to any other of a person's attributes. The attribute almost becomes a "concrete" or "real" object of worth and value. It cannot be "separated" from the physical person, and it is defined as uniquely personal or private. The entire group of Nunamiut adult individuals defined the masks as the properties and rights of the persons who were the innovators. If the persons are respected and acclaimed, then so are their attributes, and vice versa. This places a kind of psychological "off limits" sign on the masks to begin with, since the innovators are "off limits" so far as denial of worth and invidious comparison are concerned. Moreover, the masks were associated with a specific situation—a festive occasion wherein the masks were viewed as a device for producing merriment and mirth. One might suppose that when the original masks were sold and it was established that masks had some monetary value, villagers whose activities left time for mask-making would have copied the original masks, since these had sold for a sum which, though not large, was still significant by Nunamiut standards. But this did not happen. To have copied the mask would have been to "copy" the innovator—a violation of the integrity of the total person as the Eskimo perceives it. The group's definition of the situation underwent change only when the *umialik*, the respected leader and elder, sanctioned, authorized, and legitimatized the idea of the mask as an object with sale value. The mask was no longer defined as the "private" or "personal" property

of two persons, devised and made for their personal use, but was then defined as a "communal" or "group" or "public" property which could be made for sale.

Thus, the redefinition, after 4½ years, took place because of phenomenological factors arising within the social context. The Aguk-Hugo mask was "depersonalized"—it was divested of the attributes which Aguk and Hugo had given it. Until this had happened no one had "appropriated" or "taken over" or tried to "own" the idea of the mask because this would mean, symbolically, "appropriating" or "taking over" or "owning" the persons of Aguk and Hugo, and this is unthinkable: the group has too much respect for the person and his "possessions" to do this.

After the redefinition, the mask concept could be "appropriated" by everyone because it had been "depersonalized"—"freed" from the ownership and person of the innovators—by the action of the *umialik*. Once the concept had been "freed" in this fashion, anyone had access to it, and Mikiâna could proceed to make masks without hindrance or censure. Paniaq had already acted in the best interests of Aguk and Hugo. The other inhabitants of the village could now participate in mask-making not only because the physical means for so doing had become available but because, normatively, it had become *permissible* to do so. The newly emerged "want" for financial gain or for using masks could be satisfied because the mask had been sanctioned as "communal" or "group" property.

Competition, as a social process, is not an end in itself but a means to an end—acquisition. Eskimo norms, by restricting competition, have restricted what can be acquired. According to these norms, acquisition (of an innovation) is permissible if competition is not involved. Competition is not involved, or is involved minimally, if the innovation can be "separated," in the mind of the individual, from its symbolic relationship with the innovator. A hypothesis for further testing suggests itself: In nonacquisitive or noncompetitive societies, the innovations most readily adopted are those which are not symbolically related to the innovator.

References and Notes

1. Given the normal distribution in the age range, this seems incredible, but it is true. Only Simon Paniaq, the present leader of the village, has any knowledge of the aboriginal masks, and this he gained from reading and from verbal accounts. The two oldest surviving members of the village have failing memories, but Paniaq, who knows them intimately, doubts that they ever saw aboriginal masks in use. It is my opinion that the aboriginal mask dropped out of general use as the religious orientation changed with the advent of the missionaries, long before 1900. By 1915 most of the villages had a church or some form of regular religious service. If the ceremonial use of aboriginal masks had been generally abandoned by this time, then none but the oldest members of a village would have seen them in use. Whatever the general case may be, in this particular case the evidence is simply that no one at Anaktuvuk can recall having seen aboriginal masks in use.
2. The "rules" for spelling Eskimo names are inconsistent, if not chaotic, due to the lack of a written language and to the many dialects. I have followed the spelling used by Helgar Ingstad in his book *Nunamiut*.
3. Since completion of this study in 1964, some further changes have taken place in the crafting of the mask. Very recently, some masks have appeared which are approximately half the size of the earlier ones (earlier masks were about 25 to 30 centimeters high). Sales have increased to a point where, one correspondent informs me, the more successful mask-makers are "several months behind in supplying orders." If this is correct, mask-making may be evolving into the principal economic activity of the village, with obvious implications of social change. Further research is necessary to determine this. One other change has occurred. The most recent masks bear the hand-written name of the craftsman. This may have resulted from a chance remark I made to some of the natives, the name having been added so that buyers could identify more easily a particular craftsman whose work was in demand. Finally, I am told of, but have not yet seen, a mask which is supposedly made in my image! One informant states that it is supposed to honor the "white man scientist from the University," and another states that it is to honor the fact that I killed a rabid fox just before it broke into the compound where the sled dogs were kept. The village had been on the lookout for several of these animals, and it was my luck to be at the right place at the right time. If my informants' statements are correct they may indicate that, for the first time, these masks are being used to commemorate a "story" or "legend" built up around persons and events. If time and further developments bear this out, the modern Anaktuvuk mask may indirectly take on a function somewhat similar to that of aboriginal masks: ceremonialization of significant social experiences. Until now the masks have had no such significance.
4. E. M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1962).
5. H. G. Barnett, *Innovation* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1953).
6. I and my student assistant Al Haynes returned in February 1964 from the last field trip we made to Anaktuvuk in connection with this study (we and the pilot, Doug Philipsen, barely escaped with our lives after a crash landing in a snowstorm on the frozen Yukon River). Between that date and September 1964, when the paper on which this article is based was read, I had reexamined the "Which comes first?" question in the light of the social context and had reached the conclusion presented here. In July 1965 Richard LaPierre's book *Social Change* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1965) was published. LaPierre, at the time of the occurrences related here, had independently reached the same conclusion that I had. He says (p. 168): "Since most social elements function in a larger context, the value of an innovation ultimately depends, not only upon the innovation itself, but also upon the context in which it operates."
7. S. Parker, in *Alaskan Native Secondary School Dropouts*, C. K. Ray, Ed. (Univ. of Alaska Press, College, 1962).