INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700  800/521-0600
"he dreamed of dancing with the blue faced people . . . ."
THE YÉ'TI BICHEII DANCING OF NIGHTWAY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF DANCE IN A NAVAJO HEALING CEREMONY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Sandra Toni Francis, R.N., B.A., M. Hum.

The Ohio State University 1996

Dissertation Committee: Approved by
Professor Amy Zaharlick, Adviser
Professor John Messenger
Professor Patrick Mullen Department of Anthropology
ABSTRACT

Navajo healing ceremonies have been studied for many decades; however, their associated dances have received little attention. This study of Yé’ii Bicheii dancing in a Nightway ceremony employs the theory and method of labanotation to reveal the structure and effort patterns of the dances. These structural data, supplemented by information obtained from field interviews, films, sacred texts, and the anthropological literature, demonstrate (1) what the dances represent to Navajos, (2) what their ceremonial function is, and (3) how that function is achieved.

The masked Yé’ii Bicheii dancers are representatives of Navajo deities (Holy People). Their dancing recapitulates a healing event from sacred history wherein an earth-surface-person was restored to health by means of a ceremony which included dancing. The dance events, which take place on the final two nights of this nine-night ceremony, help restore the patient to hózhó—a state of order, balance, harmony, wellness, and beauty. This function is achieved in several ways. (1) The dances attract good. The appearance of the dancers (replicating the appearance of the deities) attracts the Holy People to the ceremonial site. (2) The dances demonstrate correct order. Through adherence to the principles of repetition, cardinal direction, fourfold repetition, sunwise motion, the open circle, even numbers, and, to some extent, right-footedness, the dancing reestablishes the order which became disturbed by the patient’s error and subsequent illness. (3) The dancing
brings to life a legendary healing event, causing it to happen again. Movement (the basis of life for Navajos) has life-giving and power-producing properties. Ceremonial movement is particularly powerful—it causes things to happen. The movement, singing, concentrated thought, and focused energy of the dancers bring the healing episode to life. (4) The dance event causes the patient to become identified with the hero of the legend. The patient, who blesses all dancers and who is present for all performances, is the focus of the danced action. Through offerings of prayer, corn meal, and prayersticks, the patient establishes harmonious relations with the Holy Ones and assumes the role of the legend's hero. Sacred time and present time merge; the patient and the hero become one; and the healing is achieved.
To Sam, David, Suzanne, Eva, and Hadd, with appreciation
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Amy Zaharlick, for intellectual and emotional support beyond the norm. I acknowledge also a large debt to Navajo culture scholars James Faris, Charlotte Frisbie, David McAllester, and Gary Witherspoon for sharing information and ideas with me and for commenting on a draft of this dissertation. Their help was invaluable; however, they are in no way culpable where the final product is concerned. I thank Adrienne Kaeppler, Ward Goodenough, Ann Hutchinson, and Roderyck Lange for their advice during the early stages of this research, and many thanks go to Nadia Nahumck for her preparation of the labanotation scores—an effort which bordered on heroic. Her patience, good humor, and untiring professionalism proved a great asset. I am very grateful to my mentor and colleague, Anna Bellisari, for making the 1995 field session possible, productive, and enjoyable.

I acknowledge also the assistance of several institutions. For their patient assistance I thank the following museum personnel: Janet Hevey of the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Leslie Freund and Judith Polanitch of the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, Gabrielle Vail and Lucy Fowler Williams of the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and Pamela Wintle of the Smithsonian Institution’s Human Studies Film Archives. I thank also the Graduate School of the Ohio State University for partially funding this research.

Most of all, I wish to thank the Navajo families and
individuals who took me into their homes and lives and taught me new definitions of 'health' and 'wellness.' May they walk in beauty.
December 12, 1945 . . . . . . . . Born - Dayton, Ohio
1989 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Master of Humanities, Wright State University
1995 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . University of Pennsylvania, College of General Studies--taught course entitled "Native Americans of the Southwest"
1991-1994 . . . . . . . . . The Ohio State University, Anthropology Dept. Graduate Teaching Associate--taught courses in cultural and physical anthropology
1991-1994 . . . . . . . . . Wright State University, Comparative Studies Program--taught course entitled "Non Western Cultural Systems"
1989-1991 . . . . . . . . . Wilmington College, Project Talents--taught courses in cultural and physical anthropology in Wilmington's prison education program
PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Anthropology
Studies In: Cultural Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, Cognitive Anthropology, and the Anthropology of Human Movement
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MAPS</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of this study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Navajo ceremonial dance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation of this study to other studies of Navajo ceremonialism and to other human movement studies</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory and method</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research goals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NIGHTWAY (Tłee'ji)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nightway ceremony</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ix
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published accounts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navajo ceremonies: Overview</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE DILKON NIGHTWAY</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dilkon family</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical setting</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the Dilkon Nightway</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilkon Nightway: Summary of Events</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightway: Observations</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. NIGHTWAY DANCERS: A CASE STUDY</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Corners family</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Corners dance team</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Data</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightway ceremony near Bluff, Utah--</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 5-6, 1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightway ceremony near Leupp, Arizona--</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12-13, 1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance rehearsal</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE DANCES</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typologies of Navajo Dance</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dancers</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regalia</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic structure and terminology</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map 1. Location of Nightway ceremonies attended in 1995 and 1996</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 2. Dilkon ceremonial site</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.</td>
<td>Dilkon Nightway: Summary of events</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.</td>
<td>Yéhi masks used in the Nightway ceremony</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.</td>
<td>Four Corners Family</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.</td>
<td>Navajo dance genres</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.</td>
<td>Nightway dance forms</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.</td>
<td>Nightway dances: Structural divisions &amp; descriptive terminology used in this study</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.</td>
<td>Effort patterns in Na’akai dances</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background of this study

In 1983, I began undergraduate studies in anthropology with a background in nursing and in dance. I had worked as an RN for ten years and had been a teacher and performer of international folk dance for over twenty years. During an undergraduate course in Native American religions, I learned about the ceremonies that Navajos use for healing. I discovered that dance was a component of some of the ceremonies, and I became interested in the issue of how a dance could make a person well. Later, through independent studies at the graduate level, I surveyed the anthropological literature on Navajo culture and also on dance, assessing what had been done and what remained to be done.

With regard to the literature on Navajo culture, I discovered that the Navajo are probably the most studied Native American group in North America. They have been the recipients of anthropological attention for the past one hundred years. Many components of their ceremonies have received attention, e.g., prayer, song, sandpainting, and myth. Among the works to be referred to in this study are the following: on prayer (Reichard 1944a, Matthews 1888, Gill 1974), on music and song (Matthews 1894a, McAllester 1954, McAllester and Mitchell 1983, Boulton 1992), on sandpainting (Newcomb and Reichard 1937, Wyman 1960,
Griffin-Pierce 1992), and on myth (Haile 1938a, Reichard 1944b, Wheelwright 1942, 1949, 1956, Matthews 1887, 1902, 1907, Sapir and Hoijer 1942, Luckert 1979, Zolbrod 1984). However, the dance component, which the Navajos term alzhish, has been overlooked. Even the meticulous work of Reichard (1950) contains only brief reference to dance.

Father Berard Haile (1945, 1946, 1947a), Washington Matthews (1887, 1902), James Stevenson (1891), and Luke Lyon (1985a, 1986b) among others, have provided descriptions of the three surviving ceremonial dance complexes: the so-called "Squaw Dance" of Enemyway, the Corral or Fire Dance of Mountainway, and the Yéii Bicheii Dance of Nightway. Although these descriptions contain valuable information, they are lacking in that they typically begin with the dancer's entrance onto the dance field. Crucial information about pre-event preparation and post-event evaluation is not included. Also, the works are descriptive; they tell us the who, what, where, when, and how of the dances but not the why. Why is the dance performed in this way? What does it all mean to the Navajo?

With regard to the anthropological literature on dance, I discovered that not only has dance escaped the attention of Navajo scholars in particular, it has been overlooked by anthropologists in general. The situation is certainly understandable. Dance is a highly complex entity, transient in nature, and multidimensional. Early researchers did not have the theoretical and methodological tools in hand for its successful study. By the 1960s, this began to change. A small but productive group of scholars began laying the foundation for the anthropological study of dance. The literature includes some survey articles (Kurath 1960, Royce 1974, Hanna 1979), some works intending to provide a theoretical and methodological framework for dance study in anthropology (Kaeppler 1967, 1972, Kealiinohomoku 1976, Williams 1982, Hanna 1987), at least one work suitable as a
general text for dance anthropology (Royce 1977), and numerous studies of individual dance cultures. Among the works on Native American dance are Sweet's study of Tewa Pueblo dance (1985), Kurath's studies of Iroquois (1964) and Tewa dance (1970, 1980), Brown's essay on the Deer Dance of Picuris Pueblo (1980), and Kealiinohomoku's analysis of Hopi and Polynesian dance (1967) to name but a few. And, finally, there are a few comparative treatments (see Royce 1977: 132-153).

It was decided that a study of Navajo ceremonial dance --beginning with pre-event decisions and preparations, through the dance event proper, and extending to post event evaluations--would constitute a significant contribution to both Navajo culture and human movement studies. The present study combines library, archival, and field research. Four trips were made to the Navajo reservation: two summer trips to study Enemyway, a summer ceremony (August 1992, August 1995) and two winter trips to study the winter ceremony of Nightway (November 1995, January 1996). Just under three months were spent in the field during which time I observed over forty hours of Nightway (yeibichai) dancing by approximately thirty dance teams and attended three Nightway ceremonies. (See Map 1 on page 13 for the locations of these ceremonies.)

Work was conducted primarily with two families. One family, living near the town of Dilkon (to be referred to as the Dilkon family), invited me to help with and participate in a nine-night Nightway ceremony. Also, a family of Nightway dancers from the Four Corners area (the Four Corners family) allowed me to interview family members, collect the family genealogy, attend a dance rehearsal, and trace the transmission of the dance tradition through four generations. A daughter of this family, who has lived in the Philadelphia area for nearly forty years, acted as guide and translator.
In conducting my fieldwork, I followed Navajo guidelines as they were explained to me by the individuals I worked with. I found that—since no adult Navajo has the right to speak for or make decisions for another adult—permission to carry out my work had to be negotiated on an individual basis. I identified myself as a nurse/anthropologist with an interest in Nightway dances. I explained that I would be writing my doctoral dissertation on that subject and that I was trying to understand how the dancing contributed to the healing of the one-sung-over. I entered into collaborations with two families who, in turn, explained my interests and intentions and negotiated on my behalf with the Medicine Men and other personnel at the ceremonies I attended. I operated within the framework that was outlined for me: I was not to tape or film the dancing, and I was not to be disrespectful or publish anything that would denigrate the Navajo people. My written work was sent to the families for their inspection and critique.

I found that my subject (the public dances of Nightway) was not a particularly sensitive ceremonial element to the individuals I worked with. That is, it was not a "secret" affair closed to outsiders. On the contrary, it was an event open to the general public, and virtually any sober, well-behaved Anglo traveling on the reservation today could observe these dances. On a few occasions I did touch on issues that were considered sensitive. For example, I asked to record the prayer intoned by the dancers before they put on their masks, but I was told that it was 'too sacred' and the matter ended there.

However, I am well aware that there are Navajos who would disapprove of sharing any ceremonial information with outsiders, and that point of view needs to be addressed. Also, the working philosophy which guided this research should be made explicit. This philosophy, which I developed over the past ten years, is based on my experiences with
Native Americans from North and South America. In my encounters with Native Americans, I have heard a recurring lament: 'Anglos do not understand us. They do not appreciate our accomplishments. They think we are inferior because we do not have what they have or live as they live. In their ignorance, they create stereotypes of us that are false and degrading, especially to our young people.' Very few Native Americans would disagree with these sentiments but they might vary in their response to the issue of Anglo ignorance of Native American culture. One response I have encountered is anger, resentment, and a refusal to have anything to do with Anglos. Another response may be termed a non-response: 'It is a shame about the Anglos but there is nothing I can do. The problem is too big.' And then there are those who feel they can do something about Anglo ignorance by agreeing to accept the role of teacher. I was fortunate to encounter individuals who were as eager to teach as I was to learn. We shared the belief that it is time to learn from the mistakes of the past and cooperate for a better future. This study is our effort in that direction.

Topic: Navajo ceremonial dance

Navajos participate in many forms of dance: ceremonial, Pow wow, Rock 'n roll, and Country and Western, to name a few. Although they use the same word—alzhish—to refer to all of these activities, they consider the ceremonial dances of Nightway, Mountainway, and Enemyway to be of a different category or type. Unlike the other dance forms, these are performed at healing ceremonies.

This study focuses on the Yé'ii Bicheii dancing of the Nightway ceremony. The term Yé'ii Bicheii refers to the masked impersonators of the Holy People who dance on the eighth and ninth nights of the ceremony. Although all three of the ceremonial dances complexes were examined by the author, either in person or through the study of films,
Nightway was recommended as the best vehicle for this study because it is considered by some Navajos to be the most powerful of all ceremonies and the most complex.¹

The Girls Dance of Enemyway has a strong social/courtship function and has been characterized in the literature as a Navajo "debutante ball" (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1962: 229). And the Fire Dance of Mountainway has been described as a "sacred vaudeville show" featuring a number of specialty acts which are performed for the entertainment of the audience (Wyman 1960: 59). In contrast, Yé’ii Bicheii dancing is more serious, i.e., not oriented toward entertainment and more narrowly focused on the patient. Each individual dancer is blessed by the patient who is present for the entire night of dancing. Further, the dance itself is spatially oriented toward the patient. The dancers do not "play to" or interact with the audience; they dance for the sake of the patient. The audience quietly observes the performance. There is no applause and very little talking while the action takes place. The only entertainment is supplied by a clown, an optional feature, who amuses the audience with his antics.

Nightway is also a difficult ceremony for an outsider to study. It is powerful and potentially dangerous and associated with many taboos. One is frequently reminded (by Navajos and Anglos alike) that a number of researchers and documenters have suddenly died or fallen ill after working on Nightway. To be sure this ceremony must be approached respectfully and with caution lest one commit errors or cause others to do so.

Orientation of this study to other studies of Navajo ceremonialism

and to other human movement studies

In the area of Navajo research, this study is informed primarily by the standard work of Reichard on religion and symbolism, by works on Navajo philosophy and worldview
This research effort can be considered supplemental to the works of Frisbie and McAllester on ritual performance and song, and it pays close attention to the admonitions of Faris (1990: 6,11) that what is needed in this area of inquiry are not more studies laden with "developed theoretical baggage," but rather works that respect the integrity of Navajo explanations. My effort is not concerned with the use of data to support a preconceived theoretical position; rather, I have attempted to allow the data, which include Navajo theories of ceremonial practices, to give rise to a range of meanings.

Within the field of human movement studies in anthropology, as surveyed by Hanna (1979), this study is placed in the structuralist category. Using the theory and methods of labanotation and effort analysis, the structure of the dances will be delineated and related to larger cultural patterns.

Attention has been paid to other works on the subject of Native American dance: Kurath's work on Iroquois dance (1964) and Tewa dance (1970), Kealiinohomoku's comparison of Hopi and Polynesian dance (1967), and Sweet's study of Tewa dance (1985). Of particular interest are the kinds of questions posed, the methods used, and the means of data presentation.  

The topic of Navajo ceremonial dance provides a fairly untrammeled terrain for the researcher who is then faced
with the responsibility for laying a solid foundation upon which others may build. That foundation must be composed of accurate and detailed empirical data. Native American dance study is in its infancy. My position is not unlike that of Boas at the turn of the century; I am not concerned at this stage with the construction of global theories of human movement, rather my focus is the detailed and systematic study of one aspect of Navajo culture. My effort is directed toward posing as many questions as possible about the action system which Navajos call alzhish and recording answers that knowledgeable Navajos accept as reasonable and valid. This research is structured around three fundamental questions:

(1) What is alzhish?
(2) What is the ceremonial function of alzhish?
(3) How is that function achieved?

**Theory and method**

The principal theory and method used in this study is Labanotation. This system of movement notation provided the tools (both analytical and methodological) for exposing the structure of the ceremonial dances and explicating their cultural meanings.

**History:** Rudolf Laban (1879-1958)—dancer, ballet master, and movement theorist born in what is now Bratislava, Czechoslovakia—developed a movement notation system in the 1920s (Laban 1928, 1960, 1966; Laban and Lawrence 1947). This system, referred to as Labanotation in the United States and Kinetography Laban in Europe, incorporated elements of a system invented by Beauchamp which was used and published by Feuillet (instructors of court dancing in France) in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Other contributors to and exponents of the system include Russia Bereska, Kurt Jooss, Albrecht Knust, Lisa Ullman, Ann Hutchinson, Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck, and Roderyk Lange.
Theory: The theory underpinning the system is based on the following premises: (1) human beings share a common physical structure which gives rise to a limited range of movement possibilities; (2) humans share a common repertoire of emotions which affect the execution of movement; (3) humans have the cognitive ability to exercise control over their movements and, therefore, are capable of deliberate and deliberately patterned action; and (4) humans attach meaning to movement; therefore, the concept of relativity must be applied when analyzing human action. For example, although the action of "taking a step" is universal to bipeds, the manner and meaning of the stepping may vary from culture to culture and from individual to individual within a culture.

These fundamental assertions are well supported by studies in physical and cultural anthropology. They form the logical basis for a notation system which records the details of movement in much the same way that musical notation and the phonetic alphabet capture the subtleties of music and language production respectively.

Method: Labanotation is based on observation of the bipedal, upright human body moving in time and space. This universal human stance produces a common orientation in space such that "up" is skyward, "down" is earthward, "right" and "left" are standardized, and "place" is where one is at any given moment in time. Labanotation records both the external form of the movements and the inner state of the performer. By means of symbols placed on a vertical staff, which is read from bottom to top, the notator records the following: the direction, progression, duration, and level of the movements, along with the part of the body involved. Markings outside the staff record the relationship of the action to musical beats, measures, phrases, etc. The psychological and emotional elements which "color" the movement are analyzed by the notator and
recorded in a variety of ways: through effort signs written alongside the staff, through descriptions included in the key signature, or through the use of an effort graph. Ethnographic word notes may also be added to the score to create a complete record of the outer form, inner workings, and cultural significance of the movements.

**Analytical usefulness:** The detailed and accurate record of danced action provides the empirical basis for analysis. Using this tool we can identify patterns and their structural principles, define dance genres and regional styles, and discuss possible external and internal influences. Once we have exposed the salient features of an action system, we can relate them to larger cultural patterns and issues in an effort to discover cultural meanings.

**Advantages and disadvantages of the system:** The advantages of the system are its economy— one can say with a few symbols what it would take paragraphs to describe in words— and its universal applicability. Its usefulness has been demonstrated in a variety of contexts: industrial, educational, therapeutic, and anthropological. Its continued use, some seventy years after its inception, is ample testimony to its validity and value. One disadvantage is the length of time needed to learn and become proficient in labanotation. This is not a situation that is likely to be remedied. The complexity of the system is necessitated by the complexity of the subject: the human body (having 206 bones and over sixty bending joints) moving in time and space. In addition, the system is not widely known and used in the United States. Certainly, it is not de rigueur for anthropologists. Therefore one may labor to create a record that can be understood and used only by a few.

**Use of a mentalist approach:** The theoretical approach used in this study can further be defined as cognitive or mentalist. This approach to culture assumes that the locus
of culture is in the minds of culture-bearers and that it is this cultural knowledge which shapes the behavior under study—namely, the dances of Nightway. This cultural knowledge is delineated in Navajo philosophy and worldview and represented in elements of expressive culture, i.e., the sacred narratives, songs, and prayers of Nightway. In this study, we will examine these various media in an effort to discern the meanings of the dances.

**Research goals**

The research goals for this project are defined as follows: (1) to provide detailed documentation of three forms of Ye'ii Bicheii dance as observed in 1995 and 1996, (2) to bring together for examination as much information about the dances as possible from a variety of sources (field data, films, sacred texts, and the anthropological literature—particularly accounts of the Nightway ceremony and various theories pertaining to Navajo ceremonialism), (3) to address the following research questions: a. What is alzhish? b. What is the ceremonial function of alzhish? c. How is that function achieved?, and (4) to contribute theories—regarding the role of alzhish in a curing ceremony and the importance of movement in the Navajo universe—to the literature on Navajo ceremonialism and worldview.

**Organization**

We will be proceeding from the general to the increasingly specific—from ceremony, to dancer, to dance, to dance meanings. Chapter 2 is devoted to an overview of the Nightway ceremony: its place in the complex of Navajo healing ceremonies, its composite parts, and its documentation. We move on in Chapter 3 to a description of a complete nine-night Nightway. Presented in Chapter 4 is a case study of a family of Nightway dancers who share personal experiences, information about their group, and explanations of the meanings of the dances. In Chapter 5, three dance forms are described in detail. And in Chapter
6, the analysis is presented, drawing on various types of data: notation scores, legends, songs, prayers, and films. The analysis concludes with the presentation of theories of movement and dance.

There is repetition in the material presented, for which I request the reader's indulgence. Information belonging in one section was also relevant elsewhere. Given the choice between repetition and omission of relevant data, I chose repetition. Also, the text is somewhat burdened with "minutia." I found that, where ceremonial dance is concerned, there simply are no "trivial" details. Every piece of information is important in some respect, and it is a stated goal of this project to "bring together for examination as much information about the dances as possible from a variety of sources." In an exploratory work, it is particularly important to establish an extensive data base. This is what I have labored to provide.

**Terminology**

Some comments about terminology are in order. The issue of which terms to use is a difficult one and is not easily resolved. For the most part, I have attempted to follow the preferences of my Navajo teachers, using, for example, "legend" instead of "myth." But I found that these individuals used various labels interchangeably: hataalii/Medicine Man/singer, patient/one-sung-over, chant/sing/ceremony, Navajo/Diné. I, likewise, have used them interchangeably. And, although I have supplied some terms in Navajo, I have kept this to a minimum following the reasoning that most readers of this work will not be fluent in Navajo and will find Navajo text hard to follow. Where Navajo terms are presented, I have followed the orthography of Young and Morgan (1987) except in those instances where I reference a particular source, in which case I follow the orthography of the source to avoid confusing the reader.
Map 1. Location of Nightway Ceremonies Attended in 1995 and 1996
 CHAPTER 2

NIGHTWAY (Tëe'ji)

We will begin with an overview of the Nightway ceremony, covering several associated topics: its purpose; its appearance in Navajo history; the number, qualifications, and obligations of its practitioners; and its documentation in written accounts and in films. We will also consider the more general topic of Navajo ceremonies. The salient features of these ceremonies will be identified and described in preparation for an indepth look at a Nightway performed in 1995.

The Nightway Ceremony

Nightway is a ceremony of the Holyway grouping. Ceremonies of this category function to attract good, in contrast to those of Evilway which expel evil. It is performed for individuals suffering from conditions of the head (e.g., blindness, mental illness, and deafness), forms of paralysis, and "deer sickness" which is associated with certain rheumatoid conditions (Sandner 1979: 45). It is also performed for individuals having some close association with Nightway who have failed to observe one of its many restrictions. This causes a condition known as "Yé'ii Bicheii sickness." The reasoning is that if you become ill because of a connection to Nightway, you must be cured by Nightway. This ceremony is performed in the winter months after the first killing frost, usually beginning in late October and ending by February first.
Origins of Nightway are traced by Navajos to this, the fourth world. It appears after the clan system was created and social relations were ordered, and it appears after the creation of human beings. It was given to the Navajo by the Holy People to provide a means of restoring the order and harmony which is the primal state of the fourth world. Nightway appears historically between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (Faris and Walters 1990: 2, 8-9; Faris 1990: 34). This corrective ceremony is considered, by my Navajo teachers, to be the most powerful of ceremonies, producing the therapeutic effect of all other ceremonies combined. It is also potentially dangerous and entails many precautions and restrictions.

Nightway has a number of forms and variations. It may be conducted in an abbreviated form or as a full nine-night sing. It encompasses a number of rites which may or may not be included at the request of the patient’s kin group. The public, all-night dancing on the ninth night is an optional element. There are several forms or branches of this sing. I was told by one apprentice that there are six forms currently in practice.6

On the reservation today there are a number of Nightway practitioners, referred to as hataaííí, singers, or medicine men. Frisbie, excerpting from the Navajo Ceremonial Practitioners Registry (1993: 81) lists twenty-five Nightway singers. Faris provides data on eighteen (1990: 96-99). The training of these healers is rigorous, comparable in complexity and time invested to that of western-trained medical doctors. The method of instruction is apprenticeship. It may take six to ten years or longer before an apprentice is ready to conduct an entire ceremony on his own. The use of the male pronoun is appropriate because, to date, there are no female practitioners who conduct entire Nightways; however, there are knowledgeable women who participate in the singing and sandpainting
construction. The hataalii must master an enormous amount of detail, including the texts of hundreds of songs and many prayers. He must supervise the correct construction of numerous offerings and elaborate sandpaintings. In addition to his memory, his voice is an important asset. The force of his speech and song is crucial in bringing about the healing. Proficiency in this complex ceremony is not a pathway to riches. hataalii are expected to be generous and to redistribute most of the food, blankets, and other goods presented to them. The cash fee is theirs to keep. Paris's rough estimate is from $25, for an abbreviated version of the sing, to over $1000 for the full nine-night version (1990: 101). The Medicine Man who presided over the nine-night ceremony I attended near Dilkon was paid $1,500.

In the early part of this century, approximately twenty-six different ceremonies were practiced, but many have since become extinct, and today fewer than a dozen are performed regularly (Kluckhohn and Wyman cited in Sandner 1979: 43). Nightway appears to be doing well. There is a Yé'ii Bicheii dance performed somewhere on the reservation virtually every weekend of the winter season.

**Published accounts**

These sources are nine in number and range from brief descriptions of selected elements to highly detailed studies of the full nine-night ceremony. They are listed as follows in chronological order by publication date: James Stevenson's *Ceremonial of Hasjelti Dailjis and Mythical Sand Painting of the Navajo Indians* (1891), Washington Matthews's *The Night Chant: A Navaho Ceremony* (1902), Edward S. Curtis's description of the Night Chant appears in Volume I of *The North American Indian* (1907), Alfred M. Tozzer's *Notes on Religious Ceremonials of the Navaho* (1909), Elsie Clews Parsons's *Note on the Night Chant at Tuwe'chiddu Which Came to an End on December 6, 1920* (1921), Clyde Kluckhohn's *The Dance of Hasjelti: Being an Account of the Yeibitchai Held at*
Thoreau, N.M., November 9th to 18th (1923). Erna Fergusson's account of portions of the Night Chant in Dancing Gods: Indian Ceremonials of New Mexico and Arizona (1931), Father Berard Haile's Head and Face Masks in Navaho Ceremonialism (1947a), and Simeon Schwemberger's description of a Nightway held in 1905 which has been published in a book by Paul V. Long entitled Big Eyes: The Southwestern Photographs of Simeon Schwemberger, 1902–1908 (1992). Of these accounts, five are descriptions of single ceremonies (Stevenson, Kluckhohn, Fergusson, Parsons, and Schwemberger), and the others are composite accounts based on observations of several ceremonies. A thorough critique of these works (excepting Fergusson and Parsons) is provided by Faris (1990). Given the complexity and variation characteristic of Nightway, it is not surprising that all of these efforts were found to contain errors and omissions. Matthews's work, based on twenty-one years of study, stands out as the most scholarly and Stevenson's account is praised by Faris as "the best actual description of a specific ceremony" (1990: 8, emphasis in original). Kluckhohn, however, does not fare well by comparison. Faris notes several instances of plagiarism from Stevenson (1990: 40, 69 n. 23). It is also noted that this brief article, which appeared in El Palacio, was Kluckhohn's first publication; it appeared before Kluckhohn began anthropological training.

For the purpose of this study of dance, only Matthews provides enough detail to be of value. Curtis and Tozzer provide no dance description. Stevenson, Fergusson, Parsons, and Haile devote a few pages, and Kluckhohn and Schwemberger supply a few lines.

Also of value to this study are the unpublished papers of Luke Lyon (1985a, 1985b, 1986b), supplied to me courtesy of James Faris. Lyon, a physical chemist from Los Alamos with an interest in Nightway dances, recorded his observations of the dancing at two Nightways held in 1985.
and 1986. He also describes what appears to be a Nightway ceremony conducted at a state fair at Shiprock, New Mexico, also in 1985.

Films

Luke Lyon has produced an historical sketch of film and photography of Native American ceremonies in the Southwest (1986a). Edward Curtis, Emery Kolb, and the American Indian Films Group have filmed portions of the Nightway ceremony. Edward S. Curtis in 1904 and Emery Kolb in 1911 produced footage of Nightway which includes Ye'ii Bicheii dancing. Unfortunately these products are of questionable value to the present study because the dancing was filmed out of ceremonial context and in the daytime—a very awkward and unnatural situation for the dancers which undoubtedly affects their performance (see Faris 1990: 71-72, n. 38).

Of great value are the films produced in 1963-1964 by the American Indian Films Group. Most of the rites of Nightway are documented in these films and approximately thirty minutes of dance footage are included. Here the dancing is presented in proper context. Both the eighth night unmasked rehearsals and the ninth night performances in full regalia are presented. Many dance teams are featured. It is this film, along with my ethnographic data and personal demonstrations, that provides the basis for the labanotation scores in this study.

Navajo ceremonies: Overview

The upcoming description of a Nightway ceremony should be prefaced by some information about Navajo ceremonials in general. Hopefully, this information, aimed at identifying major landmarks of Navajo worldview, will help us approximate a Navajo perspective.

Virtually any outsider can travel to the reservation today and observe some portion of a ceremony. It would be a mistake, however, for Anglos to believe that they are
experiencing the same event as the Navajos around them. It might be reasoned that all human beings have the same sensory apparatus (eyes, ears, noses, etc.) and that all observers of ceremonies take in the same sensory data. This may be true, but the Anglo brain will organize the data differently, for Anglos organize the world around them on different bases. They ignore some things that Navajos consider important, and they focus on things Navajos would ignore. All of this leads to the creation of different categories, explanations and meanings.

Before we venture into the Navajo mental landscape, it would be good to identify basic features, such as, how time and the observable world are structured, how the group explains causality, how wellness and illness are defined, and how illness is treated. We also need to consider some significant features of a ceremony (color, number, and direction) and we need to examine the significance of repetition.

The structuring of reality: Anglos have a tendency to compartmentalize reality by erecting fairly rigid boundaries between entities, e.g., animate/inanimate, natural/supernatural, dead/living, and conscious/unconscious. We even compartmentalize the human being as mind/body, and Freud went so far as to divide the mind further into id, ego, and super ego. These divisions are rather meaningless to a traditional Navajo who sees mountains, animals, and gem stones as possessed of spirit, who believes the Holy People and the spirits of the dead are potentially present in this world and, at times, involved with human affairs, and who knows that dreams are "real" and as meaningful as, if not more meaningful than, what is perceived in waking moments. It is understood that all elements of the universe (and all elements that make up the individual human being) are interconnected and mutually influential. In this worldview the human being stands in a
kin relationship to the universe and must behave responsibly toward the social group, the Holy People, and the physical environment and everything in it in order to remain well. This view is succinctly described by Reichard:

"...Navajo dogma connects all things, natural and experienced, from man's skeleton to universal destiny, which encompasses even inconceivable space, in a closely interlocked unity which omits nothing, no matter how small or how stupendous, and in which each individual has a significant function until, at his final dissolution, he not only becomes one with the ultimate harmony, but he is that harmony (1943: 360).

The structuring of time: In addition, the concept of time is structured differently. Anglos view time as linear, progressive, and compartmentalized. It "marches on." The present moment is forever now, the past is always behind us, and the future lies ahead. To the Navajo living close to the land and observing cycles of death and rebirth, disappearance and reappearance, waxing and waning, there is nothing rigid and compartmentalized about time. Things happen and, eventually, they happen again. According to Reichard "[Navajo] time is relative and, ritualistically speaking, past, present, and future are interchangeable" (1950: 24). She speaks also of time as an entity which, in the Navajo scheme, can be "telescoped or expanded" (ibid.: 54). This flexible sense of time is crucial where ceremonies are concerned. Ceremonial rites function to create a re-occurrence of a legendary event involving the healing of the legend's protagonist by the Holy People. Some of us may have experienced something similar to this reoccurrence phenomenon through theatrical or cinematic performances. There are moments when the actors, through the power of their performance, exert control over the audience in such a way that some observers lose their sense of time and place and get caught up in the action on stage, experiencing it as if it were "real." If we go, for example, to a play about the assassination of Lincoln and
experience that event as if it were really happening before us and find ourselves affected and in someway changed by the experience, we may be experiencing something similar to the power of a ceremony.

**Explanations of causality:** The issue of causality, or 'that which makes things happen,' is also important to an understanding of ceremonies. Anglos commonly rely on scientific explanations regarding laws of cause and effect. They also believe that things can happen accidentally. Although traditional Navajos also entertain the idea of accidents, they tend to associate both good and bad occurrences with the actions of humans (see Faris 1990: 15-16). For example, if a person becomes ill or begins to suffer "bad luck," the misfortune is due to the improper conduct of that person which has created a disharmonious state. Or, it could be that the person is a victim of witchcraft. This disharmony is corrected by means of a ceremony which engages the Holy People to sanction a cure.

The Navajo concept of wellness, illness, and treatment of illness: Navajos, in contrast to Anglos, have different ways of defining wellness, explaining illness, and treating the ill (see Reichard 1950: 80-103, 104-122). If we Anglos do not exhibit physical symptoms which can be validated by means of a variety of tests, we are considered "well." If these tests fail to demonstrate illness but we insist that we are unwell, we may be told that our problem is "psychological." Our physicians espouse a germ theory of disease. They may also trace the cause of illness to genetic predisposition or to an accident. These physicians rely heavily on medicines for treatment, and, in order to examine us and treat us, they typically separate us from our families. In American hospitals, healing is also separated from religion. Hospitals provide chaplains who take care of the spiritual aspect of a patient's needs and no doctor writes a prescription for a prayer. This entire approach to
treated illness would make little sense to a traditional Navajo.

To Navajos, a person who is not behaving correctly toward the social group, fulfilling ceremonial obligations, observing appropriate taboos, and relating correctly to the Holy People is not a "well" person. Not only is this person not well, his or her family and community are not well. The cause of this person's illness can be traced to some wrongdoing either on the part of the patient or one who is witching the patient. A ceremony to correct this wrongdoing is required. The ceremonial specialist does not treat the body only—the patient's whole being is treated: spirit, mind, body, emotions, thoughts, actions, and words. The patient's clan is intimately involved in and responsible for the treatment program—a program that is rooted in sacred knowledge and procedures.

**Significant Features of a Ceremony:** An Anglo observer of a Navajo ceremony will need to pay attention to some things which, in every day urban life, would be little noticed, such as color, number, and direction. Generally speaking, unless we are choosing an outfit, redecorating the house, or buying a car, we pay little attention to color. For Navajos, colors have meanings and multiple associations with Holy People, cardinal directions, and other aspects of life. Colors used in constructing such things as masks and sandpaintings are not randomly chosen because they are "pretty"; they are used because of their meaning as explained in legend. The Anglo observer would also need to pay attention to number and direction. For most Anglos, numbers are simply a means of identifying oneself, one's car, one's house, etc., and directions are used for getting around in the environment. In a ceremony, number and direction have sacred meanings. Of particular importance are: (1) **the number 4** (the ritual number of completion—an action must be performed four times in order to be
effective), (2) the clockwise or "sunwise" direction (representing the path that the sun travels across the sky—the natural or correct path), and (3) the cardinal directions each of which is associated with mountains, Holy People, colors, and social/spiritual meanings (McNeley 1994: 6-13). (See Reichard's discussion of these ceremonial features, 1950: color symbolism, pp. 187-240; number symbolism, pp. 241-249; and direction, pp. 161-170.)

The Significance of Repetition: Finally, this Anglo onlooker would have to attach a different meaning to the element of repetition. We tend to associate repetition with monotony and boredom. Repetition has a very different significance in a ceremony—it is power-producing (Reichard 1950: 117-118; McAllester 1979: 32). Through the singing, dancing, drumming, and rattling, hózhó (a state of beauty and order) is being created. Repetition, far from being boring, is tinged with dramatic tension and a sense of building toward completion or climax.

In the Nightway ceremony, ritual actions, words, sounds, objects, colors, numbers, and directions are manipulated for the sake of correcting an imbalance created as a result of the patient's error. If properly conducted, the ceremony will bring about a correction of the imbalance, and wellness will be restored.
CHAPTER 3

THE DILKON NIGHTWAY

A Nightway ceremonial is a complex event encompassing many types of activities. In the following account, I will attempt to give the reader some sense of that complexity. We will begin by introducing the main personnel involved: a kin group, which has come together for the sake of an elder member who is not well, and a Medicine Man or hataaiii who will preside over the healing ceremony. For months, prior to this ceremony, the Dilkon family was involved in negotiations with clan members and with the hataaiii. There were many decision to make, e.g., where and when to hold the event, whether to hold the shortened or full nine-night form of the ceremony, which of the many optional rites to include, and how best to organize resources to carry out and pay for the ceremony.

The following account includes descriptions of the personnel, physical setting, material culture, activities, and rites of this Nightway. We will focus especially on the dances by posing several questions: How was the decision to include the public dance event reached? How were dance teams recruited and what was their payment? How were the dance performances evaluated by audience members? And, finally, where does the dancing fit into the ceremonial structure and what or whom do the dancers represent?

The Dilkon family

In August of 1995, as a result of contacts with employees of the Historic Preservation Department of the
Navajo Nation Government, I was referred to a man who, it was thought, might be interested in my study and willing to help. This man, whom I shall identify as AP, worked as an administrator for the Indian Health Service at the time of my visit; he has since retired. He is in his early sixties. He and his wife, who also works for IHS, and their adopted daughter and extended family live near the town of Dilkon, about one hour's drive from the seat of Navajo Nation government in Window Rock. (See Map 1. on page 13.)

AP, a recovered alcoholic, is, like many Navajos I have met, a neo traditionalist. Both he and his wife were removed from their families and sent away to boarding schools at an early age. In these schools they were taught that the traditional way of life, including participation in ceremonies, was backward and unacceptable. Both AP and his wife eventually left the reservation to obtain master's degrees in social work.

AP states that he grew increasingly aware that—although he dressed like the Anglos, spoke their language, and was educated in their schools—he was not an Anglo; he was . . . something else. When he looked at a mirror in the morning, it was an Indian not an Anglo face he saw. After the breakup of his first marriage, he returned to the reservation and, after becoming the patient of several ceremonies, he experienced a healing that enabled him to remove alcohol from his life and reconstruct his identity as a Navajo.

This man and his wife have a small ranch near Dilkon, Arizona where they farm a little and keep livestock. They have created a tradition-based lifestyle with an emphasis on extended family and traditional healing practices. They have attempted to make 'returning to traditionalism' the focus of their social work efforts as well. It is their view that many of the problems on the reservation, e.g.,
alcoholism, domestic violence, and suicide among others, are due to the breakdown of traditional kin ties. It is also their view that traditional healing works. One of their projects, project k'eh (kinship), involves going into homes and working with troubled families to educate them in traditional values and practices. AP is also interested in creating a training program for Navajos which would provide instruction in both Western and traditional mental health therapies. It was through my efforts to assist him with this project that we first began to work together, and this collaboration eventually opened the door for my study of Nightway.

I spent time with AP and his family during August 1995. Some weeks later I received a call inviting me to attend a Nightway ceremony to be given by AP's wife's kin group for her uncle. To my great good fortune, it was AP's belief that the best way to learn about ceremonies is to participate in them. I was instructed simply to join the clan and pitch in.

The patient of this ceremony was Mrs. AP's maternal uncle, whom I shall now refer to as "Uncle" or "the patient." Uncle is a tall man of heavy build in his late seventies or early eighties, with a friendly smile and a marked sense of humor. He and his wife have a home in Prescott, Arizona but during the ceremony they occupied a small dwelling at the ceremonial site which had no electricity or running water. This land had been used by Uncle's family some time ago. He and his wife were trying to reestablish their rights to it.

Uncle had served in World War II and had also worked for the tribal police and later in construction. He was experiencing hearing loss and also what his niece called "identity problems." His wife stated that he had been crying a lot and had become "like a big baby." The family felt that Uncle was suffering from "Ye'ii Bicheii sickness."
He had been a Yé'íí Bicheií dancer for many years and, due to some error on his part, had fallen ill. (There were also several co-patients at this ceremony whose participation will be described later.)

The members of a patient's matriclein are responsible for carrying out the ceremony, which involves a large output of cash, food, time, and labor. AP's wife is of the Zuni White Corn People Clan, adopted by Edgewater Clan. The senior female of the family is Uncle's sister (AP's mother-in-law). She is a devout Christian with no interest in ceremonies. Normally, she would have been expected to take a major role in the organizing of this event, but the responsibility fell to her daughter, Mrs. AP. The senior male in charge was one of Uncle's sons, identified as EL. Interestingly, this young man, probably in his early thirties, is a student of anthropology at Prescott College and Nightway is the topic of his senior thesis.

The presiding hataalii of this ceremony was Roy Lester. A man in his early forties, he is an imposing individual with a powerful voice and amazing stamina. EL, who served as an assistant to Roy, informed me that Roy had quite a following on the reservation. A number of people, including dancers, like to participate in Roy's sings. I found this to be true when I later returned to attend two more Nightways, which happened also to be conducted by Roy, and I saw many familiar faces in the hooghan and around the campfires. (Note: The hooghan is the traditional Navajo dwelling and site of indoor ceremonial rites.) According to EL, Roy was a student of Nightway Singer from Steamboat—a man who was "fierce" and who could "burn a hole through you with his eyes." EL related Roy's statement that his teacher never raised his voice to him because "I always did what he asked." EL's characterization of Roy is interesting. He referred to a book about Winston Churchill entitled: The Last Lion. The author of this book viewed Churchill as a man
rooted in the past (the Victorian Era) who used traditional values to address contemporary problems. EL feels that the same is true of Roy Lester.

It was this family's intention to put on the best, most complete, most correct Nightway possible. They considered it their contribution, not only to the well being of Uncle, but to the surrounding community as well. According to EL, this ceremony was the "From the Log Way" version of Nightway.

Nightway ceremonies serve many purposes and occasion various social, economic, political, and spiritual/ritual activities. For this particular Nightway, the following list of activities and functions was compiled:

--healing of the patient
--healing of the co-patients--The co-patients pay to be included in sandpainting rites and treatment by the masked representatives of the gods.
--beneficial to all observers--The audience receives pollen blessings and, if they bid farewell to the Ye'ii at the close of the ceremony, are assured that prayer requests will be answered.
--source of living for the singer and some income for his assistants
--source of food for all participants who share in common meals and feasts
--social event, much like a family reunion--Relatives come from miles around to participate. One of the patient's sons traveled from Washington, D.C.
--redistribution of wealth--A full Nightway is a great expense for the sponsoring family who must pay the singer and his assistants. They give blankets, sheets, and fabrics to the singer who redistributes these goods to his family and helpers. They provide food for the entire crowd, which can grow to 400-500 people on the final two nights. They must also pay the dance teams--typically one sheep per team
and some cash to the opening and closing teams. The reported total cost for this Nightway was $10,000.

--politicizing and alliance building—There is plenty of time to talk between ceremonial events. Much time is spent around campfires. News gets transmitted, grievances aired, and projects discussed. During this Nightway, some time was devoted to strategizing with the patient's son, EL, who is trying to establish a scholarship fund for Nightway apprentices."

--an occasion for expressing and reaffirming traditional identity

--an aid to several acculturated individuals, often highly educated, who are trying to reconnect with their traditions

--an occasion for the initiation and education of the young

(Two initiation rites took place at this sing.)

--a source of entertainment, provided especially by the clowns

--a vehicle for prestige--The sponsoring family, the singer, the apprentices, and the dancers may gain prestige by performing well.

--an economic opportunity for some--The large audience is a source of potential customers. There were many jewelry makers at this ceremony. I was frequently invited to look at their products. Also concession stands were set up along the dance field on the ninth night for the sale of coffee, hot chocolate, hamburgers, etc. The owner of one stand was donating profits to three students at Navajo Community College.

--a vacation for some individuals--One woman had taken the week off from her job and considered this her vacation for the year. One member of the sponsoring kin group and her children spent the week camped out in a trailer near the kitchen, freed from work and school.
Physical setting

The ceremonial site was located just a few miles from AP's home. At the junction where the dirt road leading to the ceremonial site turned off from the paved road, a hand lettered sign was put up which read simply "yeibichai." The dirt road led past the ceremonial hooghan (where the indoor rites were held), past the small dwelling where the patient and his wife were staying, and continued on to the kitchen complex. (See Map 2 on page 65.)

The central kitchen was that of AP's wife. It contained two rooms. Just inside the entrance was an eating and cooking area with a stove, wash stand, picnic table, and some cabinets. Behind this room was a sleeping and storage room where two beds were set up, along with a space heater, a refrigerator, and a very large cardboard box which served as the kitchen's pantry. On either side of this central kitchen were two similar kitchens belonging to female relatives of AP's wife. Mrs. AP's brother was the main organizer of kitchen operations. He presided over butchering and food preparation. He and some male friends frequently slept in the adjoining bedroom.

There were campfires outside the doorways of the three kitchens. A large wood pile was located a few yards away to the east of the kitchens and a goat and sheep corral was on the west side. A large tank of water was positioned in front of Mrs. AP's kitchen. Two porta-potties were placed behind the kitchens. These restroom facilities were a luxury not typical of ceremonies where hundreds of attenders are usually expected to share one or two outhouses. The camp was constantly under construction. It was only toward the end of the ceremony that things seemed finally to be finished. And then it was time to dismantle everything and go home.
My participation

I was accompanied on this trip by my friend and colleague Dr. Anna Bellisari, a medical anthropologist from Wright State University. We followed the same basic routine for the duration of this ceremony. We arose between 6:30 and 7:00 A.M. to breakfast with AP's family, with whom we were staying. We were at the ceremonial site by 8:00 A.M. We would first visit the hooghan to find out what events would be taking place. Then we would go to the kitchen to see what help was needed. Typically we assisted with food preparation, cleaning up, grocery shopping, and sometimes butchering. Also, we gave rides to family members.

Although there was plenty of work to do, and it was expected that we would pitch in, our hosts were always concerned that we not miss any of the ceremonial events. Someone would come and fetch us if things were happening in the hooghan.

We usually left the site at some point in the early afternoon. We made trips into town for supplies, to the Trading Post (the nearest available telephone), and back to AP's house for naps. We would return in the evening for the evening meal and clean up, and then we would attend the evening rites. Afterward, we would return to AP's house and sit around the stove conversing with the family until bed time.

The nine-night ceremony was an excellent "lab" for my studies. During frequent breaks around the campfire and while working and eating, I had an opportunity to talk to probably two-hundred people of varying ages and degrees of acculturation from all over the reservation. AP and his wife acted as translators when necessary. I was able to pose the same question to many individuals and arrive at some sense of which views were shared by the majority and which ones were more singular. No photographs were taken and no audio tapes were made. Field notes were written in the jeep between breaks in the activities.
Description of the Dilkon Nightway

First night: Friday, 11 November: Dr. Bellisari and I were delayed in Albuquerque and did not attend the rites of the first night. We were told that we missed the treatment of the patient by the Yé'ii. The Yé'ii are Holy People, distinguished by the fact that they are voiceless. They produce only their characteristic calls. These Holy People perform many 'treatments' on the patient throughout the ceremony. (For illustrations of the Yé'ii performing in this ceremony, see Figure 2 on page 66.)

Fortunately, I was later able to observe one of the missed rites in person, and I viewed the other rite on film. They are also well documented in Matthews (1902: 67-70), Stevenson (1891: 237-239) and Haile (1947a: 40-42). A generalized description follows:

(1) Treatment of the patient by Talking God (Haashch'ééjí')—hooghan rite: Talking God, the grandfather of the Yé'ii, is the central figure of a Nightway ceremony. In this rite, he enters the hooghan and applies his special talisman to the body of the patient. The talisman is in the form of a quadrangle composed of four sticks attached together with cotton string. Downy eagle feathers are attached to the strings (see Matthews 1902, Plate IV, Figures A and B). According to Stevenson, the talisman of Talking God represents "the concentrated winds" (1891: 239). The object is collapsible and is applied to the patient in a prescribed manner:

[Talking God] opens his talisman . . . to its quadrangular form and places it around the patient four times, accompanying each motion with his peculiar cry of 'Wu' hu' hu' hu'. The first time he places it around the waist; the second time around the chest; the third time around the shoulders; the fourth time around the head; taking it completely away from the body and folding it up in his hands after each application (Matthews 1902: 69).
On a subsequent evening I was able to view this rite and it was performed as Matthews described.

(2) The "unraveling of small hoops" (as termed by Haile 1947a: 40)—hooghan rite: Twelve small hoops, approximately four to five inches in diameter, and composed of sumac twigs, cotton string and yucca fibre are used in this rite (for an illustration see Matthews 1902: 68). The participating Yéʾii are variable in number and in kind. They take turns administering the treatment of pressing the hoop to the patient's body in a ritual manner moving from foot to head: soles of the feet, knees, palms of the hands (which are placed upward on the legs), front of the chest, center of the back, right shoulder, left shoulder, and top of the head. For this treatment, as for all other treatments occurring in the hooghan, the patient is seated at the west end facing east. He is sitting on a rug or mat with legs outstretched and hands grasping the legs below the knees. He places his hands palms up when it is time for the treatment.

The final gesture of the treatment involves placing the hoop over the patient's mouth and unraveling the cotton string which remains attached to the hoop at one end. The hoop is then dragged on the ground when the Yéʾii exits the hooghan. The unraveling gesture symbolizes the extraction of harmful elements from the patient (Kluckhohn and Wyman 1940: 79-80).

First day, second night: Saturday, 12 November:

(1) Sweat rite—to the east—outdoor rite: In the morning the sweat rite was carried out for the patient, which we did not get to observe. This rite was performed on four consecutive mornings and we were able to observe it twice. It will be described later.

We arrived at the site in the afternoon amid a flurry of activity as the family attempted to organize kitchen activities and prepare the evening meal. We were
immediately put to work chopping mutton for stew, peeling chilies, and assisting with fry bread. A large iron pot containing oil was set up over a small fire inside the kitchen. My contribution was to turn the breads over with a pointed stick as they cooked. While we worked in the kitchen, preparations were being made in the hooghan for the evening rites. This involved the cutting and tying of evergreen garlands.

After a meal of coffee, mutton stew, and fry bread, we visited the patient and his wife in their little house lit by two small candles. We heard stories of how the two met over fifty years ago. I am not certain how many children they have. I soon learned that this can be a painful question. The infant mortality rate on the reservation is high as are the numbers of accidental deaths, primarily from driving accidents. Most families I encountered had lost children and/or close relatives.

When the patient was called to the hooghan we were able to be of some assistance as the possessors of a small flashlight. We were able to light his way through some bumpy terrain. Around 7:00 p.m. the rites of the second night began. We entered the hooghan after the patient. Women sat on the north side and men were supposed to sit on the south; however, due to crowding, a few men filtered over to the women's side.

The ten-sided hooghan, which could hold about one hundred people (uncomfortably), was beautiful and carefully constructed with walls of white dry wall and a wooden ceiling with beams projecting outward from a central disc, creating a sunburst effect overhead. There was one curtained window to the south and a wood-burning stove was situated to the east, several feet inside the hooghan entrance. The Medicine Man and his apprentices sat against the west wall and were joined by the patient who sat on a blanket facing east.
The rite of the evergreen dress—hooghan rite: Two assistants, one being the patient's son EL (the student anthropologist), attached garlands of evergreens to the patient's legs, chest, arms, and head. The Medicine Man, his apprentices and assistants began to chant.\textsuperscript{11} The only accompaniment was a gourd rattle shaken by the Medicine Man. Then the Warrior Twins—Monster Slayer (Naayée'íneizghání) and Born for Water (Tó Bájíshchíñí)—entered. Their masks looked very similar to Matthews's rendition (see my Figure 1 on page 66). Born for Water's fox collar was a complete fox pelt hung around the neck. His hands to above the wrist were covered with white clay with a queue symbol (\(\text{\(\Box\)}\)) painted on the lateral forearm. He was bare chested and wore a kilt of store bought material decorated with bric-a-brac and spangles. He wore woven knee bands and moccasins and carried a stone knife.

Monster Slayer's body was blackened. He wore the black mask as depicted by Matthews, but the mask had no lightening symbol on the face that I could see. He too was bare chested with a decorated kilt, knee bands, and moccasins. His hands were also whitened and what appeared to be hunting bow symbols were painted on the forearm (\(\text{\(\Box\)}\)).

The Ye'ii began to cut loose the patient's garlands. Then Monster Slayer held the garlands while Born for Water cut each individual tie. (Each garland was composed of several segments of spruce all knotted together.) Care was taken to cut through each knot, symbolizing the severing of the hold of illness or disorder. The garlands absorb disease; as they are cut away and discarded, the illness is removed (Stevenson 1891: 248; Matthews 1902: 84). Then the Ye'ii picked up the piles of evergreen bits and one would place them on the patient's head while the other brushed them away with a feather bundle, the brushing gesture symbolizing the brushing away or expelling of harmful
elements. They repeated this action of placing the debris on the head and brushing it away four times and then left.

A man entered and deposited hot coals on the ground in front of the patient. Another man sprinkled dry material on the coals for fumigation. The patient cupped his hands and gathered the smoke which he rubbed on his lower limbs, upper limbs, and face. Then the patient left.

The women were instructed to leave, as was always the case when the Yé'ii representatives needed to dress or undress. We stood outside by the campfire and chatted. These breaks were welcome as they gave me an opportunity to retire to the jeep to write notes by flashlight and to talk to others to verify my impressions and ask questions.

No description of a Nightway would be complete without mention of the general atmosphere. It is a sensual experience. Foremost in my memory are the smell of cedar smoke from the campfires (accompanied by the stinging of sparks and considerable eye and throat irritation from the smoke), the ever present dirt and dust, the sometimes sweltering heat of the hooghan juxtaposed with the often freezing temperatures outside, the packed dirt floor of the hooghan pressing uncomfortably against one's backside for hours, the tastes of mutton stew, fry bread, blue corn meal mush, and campfire coffee, and in the background the beautiful sound of male voices chanting. Covering all of this—the canopy of the winter sky, filled with more stars than I ever knew existed, with the Milky Way directly overhead. But most memorable were the people: friendly, hospitable, inquisitive, witty, and patiently willing to answer questions.

Second day, third night: Sunday, 13 November:

On this morning, around 8:00 AM, we observed the second of four sweat rites, generally referred to as "roasting the patient." On the first day, the pit was dug toward the east. On this day it was dug toward the south, on the
following day it would be in the direction of west, and the next day toward the north. These pits were dug in the open area between the dance field and the main kitchen complex (see Map 2 on page 65).

(1) Sweat rite—to the south—outdoor rite: For this rite, a sweat pit was dug, about three to four feet deep. Hot coals were placed at the bottom and then covered with evergreen boughs. The Medicine Man's assistant placed twelve feathered prayer sticks (k'eeťáán) around the bed. (For an illustration of these prayer sticks see Matthews 1902, Plate IV, Figure A). The patient was called to the site where he stripped down to swim trunks and laid down on the smoking, evergreen bed. He was then covered with several blankets over which an animal hide was placed. It was the job of one or two individuals to keep the ends of the blankets tucked in, which was difficult because the patient turned frequently. It was important to keep the air out, lest the coals flame up and burn the patient.

After the patient was covered up, the Medicine Man and apprentices began chanting. A gourd rattle was shaken by the Medicine Man during the chanting. When the song sequence was finished (perhaps ten to fifteen minutes later), the patient arose, covered with sweat and pine needles. He then dressed and sat on a blanket in his usual ceremonial position, facing east, legs outstretched, hands grasping legs just below the knees.

(2) Treatment by Talking God—outdoor rite: Talking God first gave the patient an infusion from a small shell cup. Then he switched to a crystal bowl and gave a second infusion. The first infusion was offered four times; the second infusion was offered once. Then he took the crystal bowl and anointed the patient from toe to head and afterward gave the bowl to the patient who anointed himself similarly. Next, Talking God went to the foot of the pit and collected two prayer sticks and then picked up a hard object from the
ceremonial basket, which, according to Stevenson, is the horn of a mountain sheep (1891: 241). Talking God pressed these objects to the patient's body in the usual foot to head manner. He then gave his call loudly in each of the patient's ears: right, left, right, left, and then toward the face. After this, the patient led the procession back to the hooghan.

(3) Pollen blessing--hooghan rite: A bag of corn pollen was brought around by EL and given in turn to everyone in the hooghan. Those of us who did not know what to do were instructed to dip a finger in the pollen pouch once and put it in the mouth, then dip it again and touch the top of the head, then dip a third time and follow with a gesture toward the east.

(4) Ritual lighting of what Matthews has called "cigarette" offerings (1902: 37-38; AP called them "sacred tobacco offerings") and preparation of offering packets--hooghan rite: When we arrived, one of the Medicine Man's assistants was painting the sacred tobacco offerings and sealing the tips with corn pollen. The patient was given a crystal for the ritual lighting of the offerings. He did this by holding the crystal up to the east and then touching each tip.

The sacred tobacco offerings were sprinkled with corn pollen by the Medicine Man and folded into four cloth packets which were given to the patient to hold. The patient also added a substance to the packets. The Medicine Man, seated on the patient's right, began the prayers. EL later explained that these were prayers over the four offerings mentioning four Yé'ii and their attributes. These four Yé'ii were later represented by the four First Dancers. The patient repeated the prayer, line by line, along with or just slightly after the Medicine Man. Then the patient left the hooghan to deposit the offerings accompanied by AP and a few other men. The Medicine Man cleaned up the debris.
left the hooghan and went back to work in the kitchen. After dinner, the evening rites began.

(5) Treatment of a young female patient—hooghan rite: When we were called back to the hooghan a young female in her teens was present, dressed in jeans and bra (having removed her blouse for the rite). We were later told that she had become "overwhelmed" during the ceremony and had to be treated for "excessive emotion." She lay down on the dirt floor on her left side facing east, not far from the entrance to the hooghan. She was covered with a sheet. The Medicine Man placed a bundle of feathered prayersticks on top of her body and walked clockwise around her making symbols in the dirt at each cardinal point. The symbols looked like a large plus sign with four vertical parallel lines to the right (\[1111\]). He sprinkled these symbols with pollen. Then coals were placed near the girl's face for fumigation and the sheet was removed.

The girl sat up facing east and the Medicine Man began to massage her with prayer sticks and another object (animal horn), moving upward from feet to head. This was a vigorous massage of major joints. She was also given a pollen blessing. The girl then massaged herself similarly and got dressed.

(6) Rite of the sapling and mask—hooghan rite: Prior to our entering the hooghan, a hole had been dug in the floor and rimmed in white. The patient sat facing east with the hole directly in front of him. Talking God and Female God (Haashcheeh ba'áád, impersonated by a male) entered. Talking God carried an evergreen sapling which was placed in the hole and bent over so that a string tied to the top of the sapling could be attached to the top of the mask that was worn by the patient. This appeared to be the mask of Male God (Haashcheeh bikä). When the sapling straightened, the mask was whisked off, symbolizing removal of harmful
elements/illness (Matthews 1902: 104). Afterward, fumigation was administered and the evening rites ended.

Third day, fourth night: Monday, 14 November:

(1) Sweat rite—to the west—outdoor rite: The rite did not get underway until around 8:30 AM. It was the same rite as the one described for November 13th, except that the pit was located to the west side of the ceremonial grounds. It was noted that participants were very careful to correct any errors. The apprentice who placed the prayersticks around the sweat pit was corrected for placing them too close to the pit or to each other. In ceremonial matters, great care is taken over order, sequence, direction, and placement. For example, when shouting into the patient's ears, Talking God adjusted the angle of the patient's head several times so that he was shouting directly into the ear. No one is shy about correcting the mistakes of others and no one appears to take offense at being corrected.

Back at the kitchen we watched as blankets and bolts of cloth were carefully laid out and bundled in preparation for the evening's events. They were to be given as partial payment to the Medicine Man, and the masks were to be laid on them during the vigil of the masks.

The main work of the morning was goat and sheep butchering. I attempted to assist but was probably mainly in the way. Mrs. AP's brother was very skillful. The first goat took about forty-five minutes from beginning to end. The animal's throat was slit quickly and it was left to bleed over a hole dug in the ground until movement ceased. The pelt was removed and the carcass hung by one leg from a nail driven into a tall post. The entrails were removed and the genitals and gall bladder discarded. Next, the limbs were removed and the thorax, limbs, lungs, stomach, and omentum were taken into the kitchen, hung from a clothes line, and covered with flour sacks. We later ground the entrails, except for the intestines, in a meat
grinder and added onions, potatoes, and carrots to make Navajo meat loaf. The intestines (considered a delicacy) were roasted. The heads were put to some use that I did not observe. I found them charred and lying on the ground outside by the campfire and inside by the stove. By the time we were finished with an animal, there was nothing left but a spot of blood on the ground and a few discarded parts. The pelts were hung on a fence and left to dry out. Children watched this whole procedure with great interest. They played with discarded parts, at one point using the gall bladder as a kind of ball.

Another job was preparing the corn. It was first steamed in the ground in the husk and then hung up to dry. We shucked the corn and gave it to the male helpers for grinding. It was to be used in the ancient foods feast later in the evening. We were advised to return to AP's house for a nap in preparation for the upcoming all night vigil over the masks. We returned to camp just in time to get a seat in the hooghan which was filling rapidly. We witnessed the treatment of the patient by the Ye'ii.

(2) Treatment involving sacred tobacco offerings—hooghan rite: The patient was treated by Talking God, two Female Gods, and two Water Sprinkler clowns (Tó Neinilii). The Ye'ii entered one at a time and approached a seated man who held the ceremonial basket containing the offerings. The patient was treated in the following way: The offering was pressed to the patient's soles, shins below the knees, palms, chest, back, right shoulder, left shoulder, and top of head. Then the offering was held close to the patient's nose and then directed, with a sweeping motion, toward the east. The Ye'ii gave their distinctive calls as they administered this treatment.

The clowns were enjoyed by all. They adjusted each other's outfits, expressed mock impatience with the basket holder when he failed to deliver the offerings promptly, and
one attempted to insert a log up the other one's backside. After this rite, the women were asked to leave.

(3) Singing—hooghan rite: Shortly thereafter, the singing began and lasted 1 1/2 hours. At this point there were between 90 and 100 people in the hogan and it became very warm.

(4) The prayerstick ritual involving the virgin girl and boy—hooghan rite: On this evening an important role was played by a virgin girl and boy. The girl appeared to be in her early teens and the boy was probably in grade school. They took two feathered prayersticks each and dipped them in a basket of water which was placed in the east. Then, facing each other with a stick in each hand (arms extended forward), the boy and girl, began to rotate the sticks with circular, overlapping motions (like children manipulating two jump ropes for a play activity called "French rope"). They were standing at the eastern end of the hooghan. Next they shook these sticks over the audience. They also anointed the masks.

(5) Smoking, feeding, and waking the masks—hooghan rite: The twenty-four Yé'ii masks were laid out in two rows on the blanket bundle that was prepared earlier. Also laid out were the bowls of "ancient foods," (wild greens and corn dishes.) Smoke was blown over the masks and a pipe passed to the audience; this passing of the pipe occurred more than once. The tobacco was not too strong, but it produced a laxative effect on some individuals. The masks were sprinkled with pollen or meal and the pollen bag was passed around the hooghan. The Medicine Man touched the masks with a crystal and shook them individually beginning with the front row (closest to the hooghan entrance) and moving right to left. Each mask was then lifted by grasping it at the top and gently moved side to side. This action was accompanied by a song which, according to Mrs. AP, had a theme: "The masks are moving."
After hours of singing, a male seated to the right of the patient got up and washed his own hair with yucca suds and put on white body paint. He then left the hooghan but I do not know what his ritual role was. Mrs. AP's role for this evening was that of White Shell Woman *(Yoolgai 'Asdzáán)*. White Shell Woman is related to Changing Woman *(Yoolgai 'Asdzáán)*, the principal female deity. Mrs. AP was expected to be present in the hooghan for the entire evening. She did not leave, nap, or move the entire evening. The virgin girl and boy and the patient did nap from time to time; they were awakened when necessary.

6. Redistribution--hooghan rite: The final act of the evening, which ended just before dawn, was the distribution of the blankets. The Medicine Man and his wife distributed goods to helpers keeping a few items for themselves.

**Fourth day, fifth night: Tuesday, 15 November:**

1. Sweat rite--to the north--outdoor rite: We did not observe this rite, although we did observe the second and third rites. We were called upon to drive Mrs. AP's brother to his job in Holbrook. The long drive gave us a chance to chat and we learned about a complication involving this ceremony. Someone in the clan had passed away either before the ceremony began or just after it started. The decision was made to continue, which was frowned upon by some. This brother said that some of the Medicine Man's helpers went to look after the family of the deceased and perform special rites. We got back to camp in time for the evening meal and rites.

2. Singing--hooghan rite: We entered the hooghan about 7:45 PM for about 45 minutes of singing. The three Anglos present (an Anglo physician from Phoenix, my colleague, and me), having little knowledge of Navajo, all felt that this singing was different from what we heard before, i.e., more forceful or powerful. We were later
told that the songs took the patient through his developmental stages from embryo to present. After the singing, the fumigation was administered followed by a brief break.

(3) Preview performance of the First Dancers
(’Átsá’leeh)—outdoor rite: Around 9:30, the First Dancers (the four apprentices of the Medicine Man) came out for a brief appearance. They left the hooghan and walked toward the east where a pile of spruce and gourd rattles were lying on the ground about twenty-five yards from the hooghan entrance. Each man held a rattle in his right hand and a sprig of spruce in the left. They returned single file to face the patient who had come out of the hooghan and was seated just a few feet from the entrance. Structurally, this was a simple dance which will be described in detail in Chapter 5. It included a formalized introduction, movement in place like soldiers marking time in line, then a turning sequence involving two clockwise 1/2 turns ending with the dancers facing the patient as in the beginning. This basic dance—marking time in place followed by turning—was repeated four times. Then the men simply turned and returned their spruce and gourds to the pile and went back into the hooghan. After this performance we were told by a woman in the audience that there would be no more events. We found out the next day that the dancers returned for a second performance of the same dance, using six men instead of four.

Fifth day, sixth night: Wednesday, 16 November: We arrived at the hooghan to find a sandpainting in progress, which was the focus of an afternoon rite. A western border had been created. There was a central Ye’ii figure (colored blue) with a feathered headdress and strings dangling from the elbows, and objects (possibly a pouch and a water container) hanging from each hand. There was a bird directly over the head of this figure. Although we did not
see the completed sandpainting, what we did see resembled the "Water Sprinklers" paintings reproduced in Paris (1990: Plates 5 and 13). We were asked to leave the hogan so that the Begging Gods could get dressed.

(1) Begging Gods--outdoor rite: Two Water Sprinklers made their way around camp looking for booty. They carried pillow cases and all were expected to contribute something. After requesting, through gestures, that we give them our car keys and wrist watches, they settled for dollar bills, a pair of nail clippers, and an ink pen.

(2) Sandpainting rite--hooghan rite: Unfortunately, we were sent to Window Rock for supplies and missed this rite. However, we were able to see subsequent sandpainting rites. We returned to camp for the evening meal, and then the evening rites began.

(3) Rite of initiation--hooghan rite: Again, the hooghan was filled almost to capacity. The initiates (six males and four females, all adults) were seated in a semi circle toward the center of the hooghan facing east. Both AP and Mrs. AP's brother (the mainstay of kitchen operations) were being initiated. The males were stripped to the waist. All initiates had their shoes off. All had removed their jewelry. The males wore cloth headbands.

The males, seated toward the north side, were initiated first. Talking God administered a pollen blessing to each initiate. He was followed immediately by Female God who touched the initiates with crossed yucca blades. Both Ye'ii gave their calls. When they reached the females, Female God switched from yucca blades to two objects which appeared to be small corn cobs wrapped in spruce. Again the process was: pollen blessing followed by application of ritual objects from soles upward. Next came the action of looking through the mask: Female God removed her mask (actually his mask since this was a female impersonator) and approached the initiates, males first, one by one. He carefully placed
the mask over the face of each initiate, taking care that the eye holes of the mask and the eyes of the initiate were aligned. He looked into the eyes of the initiate and gave Female God's call.

After all initiates had looked through the mask, Talking God and Female God walked to the north side of the hoopihan door, turned to face the center of the room, and placed their masks on the ground in front. Each initiate in turn, proceeding around the semi circle from males to females, approached to administer a pollen or meal blessing to the masks and to the Yé'ii representatives. Then the initiates put on their clothes and jewelry and the rite was over.

(4) Preview performance by the First Dancers—outdoor rite: The First Dancers, again the four apprentices of the Medicine Man, came out and repeated the dance they did on the previous night. They returned shortly with two more dancers to perform the same dance, which caused me some confusion as I understood that the dance done by the First Dancers invariably had four dancers. However, Haile describes a version of this dance, called Talking God First Dancers, with six dancers (1951: 120-121). This may be what I saw, but I do not recall anyone taking the role of Talking God.

Sixth day, seventh night: Thursday, 17 November: We arrived at camp to find the helpers just beginning the construction of a sandpainting. We went to the kitchen to help with food preparation and fortunately met the man in charge of registering the dance teams. GD, a middle aged man, lived twenty-five miles east of the ceremonial site. He, like many others (including one of the Medicine Man's apprentices) could be called a neo traditionalist. He lost his parents at an early age and, after working his way through high school, attended college. He lived away from the reservation but returned and was recruited to become a
dancer at the age of twenty-two. He worked part time for several radio stations doing commercials and sound effects. He had been offered full time work but refused it because he wanted to be free to attend ceremonies. He particularly liked to participate in ceremonies conducted by Roy Lester. His job was to act as Master of Ceremonies on the final two nights, register the dance teams, and record their payments.

I also had an opportunity to "talk" with an elderly woman (she with no English and me with no Navajo). Through vigorous sign language, it was communicated that the woman was having problems with her hip and leg. She also had a skin condition. She was hoping that the Ye'ii would help her.

(1) Begging Gods--outdoor rite: Again two Water Sprinkler clowns made their way through camp requesting contributions.

In the late afternoon, between 3:30 and 4:00, the sandpainting rite began. The sandpainting was large and impressive, nearly filling the central space of the hooghan. It contained 12 Ye'ii (6 males and 6 females) led by Talking God and an unidentified Male God with Rainbow God serving as the border. (This painting was similar to one depicted in Matthews 1902: Plate VII, which represents the na'akai dancers.)

(2) Sandpainting rite--hooghan rite: First a pollen blessing was administered to the sandpainting figures by the Medicine Man, the patient, and several people from the audience. Then Water Sprinkler dipped an evergreen wand in a bowl of water with vegetation floating in it and anointed the sandpainting figures and the border.

Uncle disrobed to his shorts and sat on the fourth Ye'ii from the right. Then the co-patients followed. An older man and a boy stripped to the waist and sat down on other figures followed by two older women. One was the
woman who tried to talk to me earlier about her skin and leg problems.\textsuperscript{16}

The rite of identification of the patients with the Ye'ii began with Water Sprinkler touching the feet of every Ye'ii then the feet of the corresponding patient. He moved in ritual order from the soles of the feet upward to the top of the head. An infusion was administered to the patients and their ears were shouted into by the Ye'ii. Finally, a large plastic bowl with herbal tea was carried around by the Medicine Man's assistant and given to everyone in the hooghan. It had a rather pleasant taste, like tarragon water. Then the women were asked to leave.

(3) Distribution of Begging Gods' booty--hooghan rite: When we returned to the hooghan five men were kneeling, facing east, with masks in front of them. These were the men who had represented the Begging Gods earlier. Spread out before them on a blanket was the booty they had collected from the camp. The Medicine Man took one large can of lard, then his assistant passed out the remaining goods to the crowd. I was given one apple, one orange, and a boxed fruit drink. The masks were blessed and everything was put away.

(4) Preview performance by the First Dancers--outdoor rite: These two dances were performed by the same men and in the same way as on the previous evening.

Seventh day, eighth night: Friday, 18 November: The morning was taken up with more butchering. The large crowds began to arrive and anyone who entered the kitchen expected to be fed promptly. As soon as one group had eaten, we (the kitchen helpers) cleaned up quickly and served the next group. This went on all day and far into the night. Another kitchen complex was set up near the patient's dwelling to accommodate Uncle's relatives who arrived in a steady stream. Inside the hooghan, the sandpainting was under construction: it depicted the na'akai dancers.
The dance field was raked and leveled for the evening's activities. This area, about forty yards in length, stretched from the hooghan entrance eastward. Two large lights were set up on either side of the hooghan entrance to illuminate the dance field. A spruce shelter, which served as a dressing room for the dancers, was constructed at the far east end. Concession stands were set up on the northern side of the field and an auxiliary kitchen was located on the southern side. Mrs. AP had food sent down from the main kitchen so that more guests could be served. (See Map 2 on pg. 65.)

(1) Attacking the patient from the four directions—outdoor rite: Between 4:00 and 5:00 PM, the patient came out and sat near the hooghan smiling and appearing well. He wore a white cloth head band and was draped in a beautiful blanket. He carried a shallow ceremonial basket containing corn meal. The basket was wrapped in a cloth. A large buffalo robe was brought out for the patient to stand on.

Uncle was approached by Talking God (Haashch'elit'i), Fringe Mouth (Zaha'doolzhaaf), and Female God (Haashch'eeh ba'áád). Female God had a relatively passive role; she held a basket as Talking God approached the patient with rapid running steps, sprinkled the patient, and gave his call. Then Talking God approached Female God and called toward her. Fringe Mouth repeated the actions of Talking God. This treatment was repeated four times from the four cardinal directions. The patient (and as much of the audience as could get in) went into the hooghan for the sandpainting rite.

(2) Sandpainting rite—hooghan rite: We were unable to observe this due to the overcrowding of the hooghan.

(3) Rite of initiation—hogan rite: The second rite of initiation was conducted this evening. One of the initiates was the patient's son who had arrived from Washington, D.C. The rite was performed just as it had been
on the sixth night. Initiates were not all youthful; they ranged from puberty to old age. Many of the neo traditionalists, AP included, have gone through initiation as adults as part of their attempt to reconnect with their traditions.

(4) Eighth night performance of the First Dancers (unmasked)—outdoor rite: The same four apprentices performed as they did on the fifth, sixth, and seventh nights. They wore their good clothes for this event. The outfit consisted of slacks, dress shirts (rather than work shirts), moccasins, head bands, and large amounts of jewelry. They also wore studded, fringed pouches with long straps that were worn bandolier style. The strap was slung over the head and across the chest (resting on the right shoulder). The pouch was positioned on the left hip.

(5) Eighth night performance of Na'akai Dancers (unmasked)—outdoor rite: There were six male dancers per team and approximately ten teams performed on this evening. (As I will explain later, it is difficult to determine accurately the number of participating dance teams.) They too were dressed in their good clothes. On the ninth night they would appear masked and in full ceremonial regalia. A car with a loud speaker was parked near the dancers' dressing shelter and GD, the Master of Ceremonies, announced the teams as they appeared. They were identified by the name of the lead dancer and the locale, e.g., Joe Benally, Tuba City.

I spent some time with GD, himself a dancer, discussing the criteria for judging a "good" dancer or dance team. According to GD, a good dance team is well rehearsed; they perform their movements in sync with each other and with the singing. Some teams have remained together for years, and these tend to be the best. Others are what GD termed "pick up" teams—they come together ad hoc because someone says "Hey, let's dance." As I stood beside GD watching the teams
perform, we easily agreed on who was "good" and "bad." This was not a difficult thing to do. Some of the groups obviously had a strong group identity as evidenced by their matching clothes, even matching carrying bags, and their locale name prominently displayed on their sashes. Other teams seemed to be composed mainly of borrowed dancers from other teams. GD identified Grey Mountain as the "best" team on the reservation and remarked that some people would drive a long way to see them perform.

The teams performed all night long, ending near dawn. There were sometimes lengthy breaks between performances allowing the patient and the dancers some time to rest. We looked forward to the following evening when the formal performance in full regalia would take place.

Eighth day, ninth night: Saturday, 19 November:

We arrived at camp early to take breakfast into the hooghan for the Medicine Man and his apprentices and helpers. People took turns doing this, and the men enjoyed good quality food throughout the ceremonial. On this occasion the food was an interesting mix of traditional Navajo foods--fry bread, mutton stew, and blue corn meal mush--and such Anglo 'delicacies' as Tatertots, Twinkies, and Rice Crispie Treats. These men ate in the hooghan and did not take any meals in the kitchen.

(1) Dawn rite with Black God (Haashch'ééshzhini)--outdoor rite: We regretted not having stayed even later the previous evening as we missed an interesting dawn rite which was later described to us by Mrs. AP. At about 5:00 AM, Black God left the hooghan carrying an item (a cloth, I was told) that was supposed to contain the collective illnesses of the community. He was to carry this item far away and burn it. (Black God is also known as Fire God.) In his zealous efforts to rid the community of illness, he accidentally set the surrounding range on fire. Individuals who carried his lunch to him found him frantically trying to
put out the fire. Unfortunately, only those who had seen him depart at dawn were permitted to go to him; therefore, the lunch carriers could not return to camp for more help. Fortunately, the fire was successfully put out and the incident provided the camp with good jokes for the rest of the day. Mrs. AP, in telling the story, laughed so hard she cried and could barely finish the tale. AP recently informed me that "a special cooling off of Mother Earth ritual was performed by a female chanter immediately after extinction of the prairie fire" (letter, October 11, 1996).

By late afternoon the area surrounding the camp began to fill up with cars. We were cautioned to park near AP's kitchen area so that we would not be blocked from leaving. After a quick trip to AP's house for a nap, we returned for the dancing which lasted until dawn.

(2) Dance performances of the ninth night, in full regalia--outdoor rites: The dancers wore the mask of Male God (which was the same mask as that worn by Water Sprinkler). The mask, which fit over the head like a bag, was made of animal skin and colored blue. It had small, half dollar sized holes for the eyes and a gourd mouth piece. The hair on the mask was horse hair, dyed red. There were two eagle tail feathers attached to the hair near the part. There was a thong or string that extended from the chin area of the mask; this thong was held by the dancer and served to keep the mask away from the face to facilitate breathing and to position the mask downward so the dancers could see. A large collar of spruce fit around the dancer's neck. Masks are the property of the Medicine Man as are the gourd rattles. The rest of the ceremonial dress (kilts, pouches, arm and leg bands, and moccasins) are the property of individual dancers. These items will be described in detail in Chapter 5.

The audience was positioned on the northern and southern sides of the dance field where the campfires were
located. People vied for good seats, upwind of the fires, to receive the heat while avoiding the smoke and sparks. Many people brought lawn chairs and bedding. Some people stood for hours in the cold, wearing only thin jackets. The audience was quiet and attentive while the dancing was going on. They never applauded although some made quiet remarks about the dancing. Once the dancing began, no one was allowed to walk across the dance field. To get to the opposite side it was necessary either to walk around the hooghan or around the dancers' dressing shelter. One small child wandered across the dance field to the consternation of many. The negative reaction of the adults startled the child and she burst into tears and was then comforted.

After the First Dancers were finished, the na'akai teams performed until dawn. The following teams performed at this Nightway:

- Phillip Begay, Ganado
- Leo Barker, Wood Spring
- Tom Someth, Cornfields
- Steven Dale, Cornfields
- Tom Todacheenee, Ganado
- Paul Talker, Cameron
- Roy Boone, Grey Mountain
- Raymond Dalagi, Cornfields
- Tommy Talker, Shadow Mountain
- Richard White, Tuba City
- Pat Bitsuie, Lower Greasewood
- Charley T. Yazzie, Jeddito
- Tommy Lee Yazzie, Pinon
- Joe Nelson, Smoke Signal
- Joe W. Yazzie, Sonton
- Edison Benally, Chichiltah, NM
- Kee Tso Yazzie, Cameron

While the dancing was going on outside, there was singing in the hooghan. Between 5:30 and 6:00 AM the
hooghan songs ended with a sequence called the Bluebird Songs (also known as Dawn Songs) and the Medicine Man came out as the last group of dancers approached.

Ninth day: Sunday, 20 November: The audience quickly rose and stood along the northern and southern sides of the dance field in anticipation of the dawn rite.

(1) The dawn rite: farewell to the Yé'ii—outdoor rite: The dancers stood single file in the middle of the dance field and turned to face east. The bystanders, now numbering about fifty, obtained some meal from the patient's basket and formed a corridor on either side of the dancers. We blessed the Yé'ii one by one as they moved eastward, returning to their homes. We were instructed to pray for whatever we needed during this rite and were told that our prayer requests would be answered. Of all the rites observed in eight days and nine nights, this was, for us, the most moving. The sun was just coming up over the mesa, outlining the rock faces in pink and gold. The Yé'ii were framed by the dawn light as they exited. There was a sense of satisfaction and completion along with sadness—the kind of sadness you feel when you bid farewell to loved ones.

Dilkon Nightway: Summary of Events

Figure 1 on the following page outlines the major rites observed in this ceremony and identifies the personnel administering the rites along with the time of day (A.M. or P.M.) that the rite occurred.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY/TIME</th>
<th>RITE PERFORMED</th>
<th>PERSON/S ADMINISTERING THE RITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First night</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Talking God treats the patient</td>
<td>Talking God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unraveling of small hoops</td>
<td>Yé'li, variable in number &amp; kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First day, second night</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Sweat rite to the east</td>
<td>Talking God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Rite of the evergreen dress</td>
<td>Monster Slayer &amp; Born for Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second day, third night</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Sweat rite to the south</td>
<td>Talking God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Ritual lighting &amp; preparation of tobacco offerings</td>
<td>apprentices &amp; patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment of young female</td>
<td>Medicine Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sapling and mask rite</td>
<td>Talking God &amp; Female God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third day, fourth night</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Sweat rite to the west</td>
<td>Talking God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Treatment with tobacco offerings</td>
<td>Talking God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prayerstick rite</td>
<td>Female Gods (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking, feeding, &amp; waking the masks</td>
<td>Water Sprinklers (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redistribution rite</td>
<td>virgin girl &amp; boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medicine Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medicine Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth day, fifth night</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Sweat rite to the north</td>
<td>Talking God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>First Dancers, preview</td>
<td>four apprentices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth day, sixth night</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Begging Gods</td>
<td>Water Sprinklers (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Sandpainting rite</td>
<td>(did not observe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rite of initiation</td>
<td>Talking God &amp; Female God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Dancers, preview</td>
<td>four apprentices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. Dilkon Nightway: Summary of events (Continued)*
**Nightway: Observations:**

Having the opportunity to observe and participate in many of the activities of Nightway was an invaluable experience which allowed me to address a number of dance related issues. Research goals for this fieldwork session were as follows: to document the danced action in detail, inquire into the decision-making process regarding dance, take note of post dance event evaluations, and assess the place of dance within the larger ceremonial context.

### Sixth day, seventh night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Participant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Begging Gods</td>
<td>Water Sprinklers (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Sandpainting rite</td>
<td>Water Sprinkler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Distribution of Begging Gods' booty</td>
<td>Medicine Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>First Dancers, preview</td>
<td>four apprentices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Seventh day, eighth night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Participant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Attacking the patient from the 4 directions</td>
<td>Talking God, Fringe Mouth, Female God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Sandpainting rite</td>
<td>(did not observe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Rite of initiation</td>
<td>Talking God &amp; Female God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>First Dancers, unmasked performance</td>
<td>four apprentices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Na'aksi Dancers, unmasked performances</td>
<td>10 teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Eighth day, ninth night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Participant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Dawn rite: Burning community's ills</td>
<td>Black God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>First Dancers performance (masked/unmasked?, uncertain)</td>
<td>four apprentices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Na'aksi Dancers, masked performance</td>
<td>17 teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ninth day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Participant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Farewell to the Ye'ii</td>
<td>Audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documentation of danced action: See Chapter 5, "The Dances."

The decision to include the public dance event: While I was not present for the planning phase of this ceremony, I was able to speak at length with AP and his wife, who were key participants in the decision making. This family did not consult a diagnostician in order to decide which ceremony to hold for Uncle. Due to Uncle's long association with Nightway and his symptom picture—hearing loss, mobility problems, and identity problems—it was obvious to the family that he was suffering from Yé'ií Bicheii sickness which required a Nightway. The decision to include the public dancing was also rather straightforward. AP used the following analogy: "If you go to the doctor and he prescribes a treatment for you, you can't just take part of the treatment and expect to do well. For best results you need the full treatment—no shortcuts." The decision to hold the full nine night sing was based on the desire for maximum therapeutic benefit and on the desire to benefit the community by holding a full and correct Nightway.

Post event evaluations: There were at least three types of evaluations that occurred in relation to this Nightway. There was the family's evaluation of the overall event, the spectators' evaluation of the event, and the dancers' evaluation. The family's evaluation was expressed during the clean up after the ceremony.

After the dawn rites on the final morning, the weary family remained behind to break camp. This involved cleaning up; dismantling the kitchen complex; returning the generator, porta-potties, and outdoor lights; and hauling furniture, kitchen supplies, and left-over food back to the ranch. Many evaluative comments were made during this work. All agreed that the entire ceremony had been properly done. Mrs. AP's comment was: "This area hasn't seen a ceremony like this one in a long, long time." Everyone agreed that
the music in the hooghan and the dancing were especially moving and satisfying. Everyone also agreed that it would be quite a while before they would want to host such an event again.

The family members knew that their efforts were being evaluated by others. The quality of the food and hospitality were critiqued. Also, the issue of whether or not the ceremony was properly conducted was important. In nine days, I overheard no negative comments. The only complication for this ceremony, that I am aware of, involved the death of a clan member--an occurrence that might cause a ceremony to be cancelled. In this case, the Medicine Man sent a party to look after the needs of the deceased's family (which may have involved the performance of special rites), and the Nightway ceremony continued. Another happening that would detract from the correctness of the event would be drunkenness. This family took steps to make sure that this did not occur. Prior to the large gatherings of the eighth and ninth nights, a sign was posted at the end of the ceremonial site's driveway: "Please don't drink and drive. We welcome you as an honored guest." In addition, tribal police were asked to set up a check point and any individuals in a questionable state of sobriety were turned away.

Finally, the dance teams evaluate their performances, the performances of others, and the ceremony in general. A ceremony is not the appropriate time and place to question dancers--they are far too busy and preoccupied with performing. However, on a subsequent visit to the reservation, I was able to work with one dance team for several weeks. (This field work is described in Chapter 4.) I was told that dancers do talk about their performance, particularly any problems that may have occurred (problems with masks, voice problems, etc.). They are also aware of their status in relation to others. There is definitely a
competitive aspect to the dancing, and this is a cause for concern for those who believe that dancers should be focused on the patient's well being and not their own "ratings." Also, the actions of the patient and Medicine Man are evaluated by the dancers. It is disconcerting, for example, if the dancers have to stand and wait for someone to fetch the patient for the blessing of the dancers. The patient should be ready and waiting outside the hooghan when the dancers arrive. Dancers want to participate in a well organized, properly conducted ceremony.

The place of dance within the larger ceremonial complex: As can readily be seen, Nightway is composed of numerous rites, all of which contain patterned movements and many of which include singing. However, only the actions of the First Dancers and Na'akai Dancers are labeled alzhish which glosses as 'dance' in English. The dancing of the eighth and ninth nights is enthusiastically anticipated by participants. The brief previews on the fifth, sixth, and seventh nights serve to pique interest. The dance performances conclude the week of ritual effort and, to Anglo eyes, appear to be the climax of the ceremony. But as McAllester (1980: 234-235) and Frisbie (1980b: 82-83) have noted, the ethnographer's notions of "high points" and significant components of a ceremony and Navajo notions of the same may differ greatly. I did note that certain song sequences and sandpaintings generated as much verbalized interest and enthusiasm as did the dances.

Central to the meaning of the dance is the relationship between the Yé'ii and the Navajo. The entire ceremony, and the dancing in particular (with dancers representing the Yé'ii), serve to establish harmonious Navajo/Yé'ii relations. The Nightway legend (the episode of The Visionary) tells us that long ago an earth surface person ventured among the Holy People and was taught the Nightway ceremony. This ceremony included performances by the First Dancers and the
Na’akai Dancers. The hero of the legend was then instructed to return to his people and teach them the ceremony so that, henceforth, the Navajo would have a means of restoring themselves to health and harmony. The dancing we saw was a reoccurrence of the event described in sacred histories.

The efficacy of the ceremony: This event was expensive and time consuming for the family. A reasonable question to ask is: Was it worth it? Did it work? The issue of the efficacy of traditional healing practices is a complex one. AP and his wife have had difficulty raising funds for their proposed training program in Western and traditional mental health treatments because Indian Health Service decision makers are not convinced that traditional healing is effective. Scientific proof regarding cure rates is requested. As far as I know, this "scientific proof" has not been produced, which is not surprising as such an effort would be plagued with difficulties. First of all there is the question of what constitutes a "cure." And, assuming that one could define the term, there follows the problem of how to measure a cure. It is difficult enough to discuss cure rates in relation to Western therapies; medicines, treatments, and surgical procedures work for some individuals and not for others. This does not cause practitioners to discard an approach because it is not 100% or even 50% effective.

Very few physicians would refute the fact that those patients who have a positive attitude fare better in any therapeutic situation than those who do not. And this is where Western health care providers have a great deal to learn from the Navajo, whose ceremonies are so effective in producing the positive attitude essential to healing.

During a healing ceremony such as Nightway, whose focus is the correcting and reordering of the patient's relations to the social, natural, and sacred environments, the patient's thoughts, words, and actions are directed through
a variety of rites toward healing. His or her role is by no means passive. The 'one-sung-over' sings, prays, massages, anoints, and blesses; he or she becomes, in a sense, empowered. In addition, this individual becomes the focus of an enormous family and community effort.

It is difficult for me, as RN/anthropologist, to imagine Anglos duplicating such an event. It is often difficult to get even immediate family members involved in the care of the elderly in many American communities. We can only imagine what it must feel like to have dozens of one's relatives travel for miles, expending time, money, and labor, for the sake of one's health. Then we would have to imagine the surrounding community turning out and contributing as well. Virtually any individual would benefit from being at the center of such a demonstration of caring. In the case of this particular ceremony, it was easy to see the effect on Uncle.

When we first arrived, Uncle (who spoke to us in English) was pleasant and talkative but a bit vague and uncertain in memory. He was extremely hard of hearing and suffered stiffness of the joints. After the series of sweat baths, he became noticeably more supple, able to sit for hours and then move to a standing position without notable difficulty. Likewise, his hearing began to improve. His son reported that he raised his voice to converse with his hard-of-hearing father and was told, "You don't have to shout. I can hear just fine." Uncle's wife commented several times on his mental improvement, stating: "I know he's getting better. He's getting mean again. He used to be like a big baby." By the end of the ceremony Uncle was the picture of a happy, well man. As we broke camp he moved among us laughing and talking, grateful to all who had come to help. His final words to us were: "It's good to be alive!"
Humor, mistakes, and incongruities: Some other aspects of the ceremony deserve comment. The tremendous labor involved in hosting this Nightway was lightened by humor. Navajo humor is not raucous or slapstick in kind. It is subtle humor, delivered in a low-key style, usually involving making fun of oneself or others or of a situation. For example, the patient's son, asking us if we had been visited by the Begging Gods, said: "Have you seen the Trick or Treaters?". The patient, disrobing for a sandpainting rite, looked around at observers and remarked: "strip tease!". Two older women (sisters who know the song sequences of Nightway and who travel about the reservation assisting with the singing) were labeled the "Golden Girls" after a situation comedy on television by the same name. According to one Anglo woman who was present on the eighth evening and who had a long friendship with a Navajo family, "you know you're accepted by the Navajos when they make fun of you." She described a visit from her Navajo friends who, for a joke, cooked whole prairie dogs "eyeballs, teeth, and all" in her crock pot. When our co-workers began to make fun of our fry bread making and goat butchering abilities, we felt more accepted.

Our attention was also drawn to the presence of incongruities, meaning the juxtaposition of traditional and non traditional or modern elements. These items seemed "incongruous" from an outsider (not a Navajo) perspective. The patient's front door had a crucifix drawn on it and there was a rosary hanging from a nail just inside the doorway. It seemed odd to watch the patient, wrapped in his beautiful blanket, head band in place, with jewelry gleaming, move past these symbols on his way to the ceremonial hooghan.

The material culture associated with the ceremony was also a mix of traditional and modern. On the western wall of the hooghan many items were hung from pegs on the wall.
We saw Yé'ii kilts, masks, bags of prayer sticks, and feathered talismen alongside of ball caps, Stetsons, and baseball jackets with team logos. Materials for the sandpaintings were kept in coffee cans and styrofoam bowls in place of the bark and shell containers that were once used, and the floor was littered with chewing tobacco tins.

The Medicine Man, too, was a study in contrasts (at least to the Anglo eye)—steeped in tradition but living in the present. At one point, we entered the hooghan to find him supervising the construction of a large sand painting. He was seated on a chair wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, eating a bag of Fritos, and balancing his check book.

We were also rather surprised to see the patient's son hurrying into the hooghan with Sinutab, Nyquil, and Pepto Bismol in hand to treat the Medicine Man's helpers who were suffering from stomach upset and cold symptoms. Actually, this should not have been surprising. Navajos readily concede that Anglo medicine is good for some things. Its shortcoming is that it does not get at the root cause of illness—the imbalance in the individual that leads to the development of illness.

And the attire of audience members was also a study in contrasts. Some women were dressed in the full skirts and velveteen tops that date back to the coming of the Spanish to the Southwest. And alongside these women were girls in Gap jeans and tee shirts who would not have been out of place at any shopping mall in America.

At this ceremony, formality and solemnity co-existed comfortably with casualness and humor. The traditional and the modern rubbed elbows and the past and the present merged.

One last observation was made regarding the issue of mistakes. In the literature on Navajo ceremonials, there is no clear consensus regarding the evaluation of errors. That is, we do not know which errors nullify a therapeutic
effect. It was obvious, during this ceremony, that mistakes can and do occur without such invalidation. For example, one fellow, who seemed rather slow-witted, made many errors in his pollen sprinkling despite loud corrections and advice from the audience. He never did do it properly and the rite continued. Also, it is important to move in the correct direction when one is inside the hooghan. Men who wished to move from the north side to the south side were told repeatedly to go around the stove (to travel clockwise). Some failed to do this and were criticized but then the action continued. There are corrective prayers, songs, and rites that remove the bad effects of mistakes. The only mistake I am aware of that could bring a ceremony to an unsuccessful end would be a mistake in the song performed by the First Dancers while dancing. This song must be sung correctly. I was told that an error would cause the halting of the ceremony.

After returning from this session of field work, I quickly made arrangements to return to the reservation. The focus of my second visit was a family of Nightway dancers living in the Four Corners area.
Figure 2. Yééii Masks Used in the Nightway Ceremony: Taken from Matthews 1902: Plate III, Courtesy of AMS Press.

A. Talking God, B. Hogan or Calling God, C. Monster Slayer, D. Female God, E. Born for Water, F. Fringe Mouth, G. Male God, H. Humpback
CHAPTER 4

NIGHTWAY DANCERS: A CASE STUDY

Participation in the Dilkon Nightway afforded an opportunity for viewing many dance performances. It also allowed me to assess the place of dancing within the framework of a complete ceremony. However, a ceremony is not a propitious occasion for interviewing dancers; they are too preoccupied with performing. A subsequent field trip was made in January 1996 for the purpose of talking to dancers.

A collaboration was formed with a Navajo woman living in Philadelphia, who shall be referred to as Maralyn. Maralyn, who married an Anglo and moved to Philadelphia forty years ago, is from a family of Nightway dancers, the tradition having been passed on through at least four generations. She arranged for us to stay with members of her large family and spend time with her dancer brothers.

The Four Corners family

Maralyn's family home is in the Four Corners area near the Utah border. Her father (Red House Clan), who died in 1992, had fifteen children by his first wife (Salt Clan). Maralyn was their second child and eldest daughter. There were six surviving children from this union. Maralyn's mother died in 1953 and her father remarried. He had nine children with his second wife. One son from the first marriage, two sons from the second, and several grandchildren carried on the tradition of Yé'ii Bicheii
dancing which began with Maralyn's grandfather. (See Figure 3 on page 87.)

The Four Corners family, like the Dilkon family, was a complex and ever shifting unit encompassing the offspring from two marriages. AP of the Dilkon family had settled on the land of his mother-in-law. In the six months that I knew the family, I saw various individuals move into and out of AP's home, including his mother-in-law and her aging partner, and two adult children from AP's first marriage.

The family home of the Four Corners family was on their father's land. Two of Maralyn's brothers and their families had houses there with no electricity or running water. Also a granddaughter and her family settled there. One of Maralyn's brothers lived in Utah; other family members were scattered about the reservation.

In both of these families one could see a range of religious, economic and educational conditions: There were devout Christians with no interest in traditional ways and, at the other extreme, members deeply rooted in traditional beliefs and practices. Some family members were relatively well off with steady jobs, homes, electricity, running water, and working vehicles; other members were on public assistance and dependent upon the better-off siblings for various kinds of help. Some siblings had been sent away to boarding school and were fluent in English with a good understanding of Anglo institutions, while others had received little or no formal education and had to rely on literate siblings for assistance in dealing with the Anglo world. The "haves" were expected to share with the "have nots," which put considerable strain on the "haves." In spite of all of these different orientations and personal circumstances, the families remained strong and viable. This may be due in part to the traditional value placed on reciprocity and the individual's right to choose. Sharing of resources has been the basis of Navajo survival for
hundreds of years; it continues to be important today. Equally important is the right of an adult individual to make decisions for him or herself. Although there may be differences of opinion within a family, they do not tend to blossom into full fledged conflicts and irreparable splits because no one has the right to "boss" anyone else. The differences are acknowledged and they are simply lived with. Within this social system it is expected that one will remain true to oneself while maintaining ties to others.

I will always be grateful to Maralyn and her family for their hospitality and cooperation and for allowing me to participate in their family life. Much of our time was spent with Maralyn's sister (pseudonym Emily) who lived very near the family home. We also visited a brother in Utah and another sister near Dilkon. The family, though large and scattered, is close. Effort is made to keep in touch by phone when possible, and there is a great deal of inter­visitation which usually includes eating, sharing news, and playing games, such as, bingo, po-ke-no, and football. As with the Dilkon family, we were simply expected to join the group and pitch in—a thoroughly enjoyable experience and a privilege.26

During this visit, I conducted several interview sessions with three of the brothers, attended two more Nightway ceremonies (eighth and ninth night dance performances only), and observed a dance rehearsal. A great deal of information was also obtained from Maralyn and her sister Emily.

The Four Corners dance team

There were six regular members of this team: Maralyn's full brother, who shall be referred to as Lead Dancer, was the leader of the group, as was his father before him. Also participating were two of Maralyn's half brothers: the elder we will call MMD (for Medicine Man Dancer—in addition to being a Ye'ii Bicheii dancer he was also a Blessing Way
singer), and the younger we will call End Dancer, referring to his position in the dance line. Two other men (classificatory brothers) completed the group. The Four Corners team had a special relationship with a team from Shiprock; each team borrowed dancers from the other team when necessary. Lead Dancer and MMD began dancing in 1975, and End Dancer began in 1973 or 1974. These men had been dancing as a group for at least two decades. They were chosen by the Medicine Man (Roy Lester) to perform as the closing group at a Nightway near Bluff, Utah, which is an indication of their high status. Their singing has been taped commercially.

Lead dancer: Much of my attention was focused on this dancer—the leader of the Four Corners dance team. He seemed eager to cooperate with my project and made himself as accessible to me as possible. Lead Dancer spoke little English; therefore, we communicated through Maralyn. Lead Dancer had a powerful singing voice and Maralyn was much moved by his performances, noting that he looked and sounded like her father.

In my efforts to understand how the na'akai dance was performed, I paid particular attention to the actions of Lead Dancer. My intention was to learn the movements of the dance well enough to lead a line—a goal I never reached. I would watch Lead Dancer to see if I could anticipate his actions. Unfortunately, I was never able to pick up the musical cue which tells the leader when to begin moving the line and when to resume the stationary part of the dance. This was very frustrating for me as an experienced dancer. During my performing career, I often had the job of leading dance lines. Typically the leader of a line must know the dance very well because other less experienced dancers look to the leader as a guide. The leader must also have a good sense of timing and must be able to move the line through various figures using an allotted number of beats.
Lead Dancer attempted to help me identify the musical cue. My ear was able to distinguish a few gross differences in the song: There was a section sung in bass (Whoah ho ho ho...); during this part of the singing the dancers were nearly always stationary. Then there was a switch to falsetto, and at this point the dancers were nearly always moving. It was never possible for me to count beats, that is, to figure out how many beats were used in the stationary and moving sequences of the dance. However, it was obvious that the dancers spent far more time moving than they did staying in line (at least two to three times as long). My situation was complicated by the fact that there were many different na’akai songs used, and in each song the duration of the stationary and moving figures varied. But by the end of my stay, I knew that I could join a na’akai line in the middle and get through the dance without mishap.  

Medicine Man Dancer: With Lead Dancer, most of our discussions focused on dance performance and the role of the dancer. With MMD I attempted to explore the philosophical underpinnings of alzhish. Although MMD was not the senior male of the family, he had a position of some status. MMD was the most educated of the sons. He was a Blessing Way singer, a Roadman in the Native American Church, and a former official of the Diné Cultural and Spiritual Society (formerly known as the Medicine Man's Society). MMD conducted seminars at Navajo Community College on worldview and he shared with me some of that material, which will be presented in Chapter 6 under Navajo theories. In responding to my questions about his dancing, MMD always emphasized the spiritual and philosophical aspects of his experience.

MMD appeared to be the quintessential neo traditionalist, educated in Anglo ways but preferring his own traditions. His comment to me was: "We have tried your ways. They just don't work for us." He and his large family had a home on Maralyn's father's land. MMD did not
participate in the dancing when I first arrived as the birth of his sixth child was imminent. Later we attended the baby shower for his new son. It was a lively celebration with philosophical talks, prayers, songs, and games. MMD was obviously a man dedicated to the task of maintaining a strong family unit through adherence to traditional values.

End Dancer: This man, Maralyn's younger half brother, was the "jokester" of the family. His siblings frequently complained that, for a joke, their brother would say things that were not true. However, he would not reveal to others that he was joking. They had to find that out for themselves. At one point he entered Emily's home and announced, in my presence, that there would be no dance rehearsal because the dance season had ended. He announced loudly and dramatically: "No more Yé'ii Bicheii dancing!". Knowing his reputation, I decided to wait-and-see and, as I suspected, the whole thing turned out to be a "joke." Although End Dancer had been dancing a year or two longer than his brothers, I decided not to interview him for this study as it would have been too difficult to tell if he was serious or joking.

Utah Brother: Maralyn had another full brother in Utah whom we visited. Although he was not a Yé'ii Bicheii dancer, he was extremely knowledgeable about dance. I questioned how the brother living off the reservation and least involved in ceremonial matters could be so knowledgeable and Maralyn explained: MMD was the brother who was sent away to school. Because of his knowledge of English and his ability to negotiate Anglo institutions (Navajo governmental and educational systems are based on Anglo models), he emerged as a spokesperson and was called upon to teach Navajo worldview and ceremonialism to both Anglos and Navajos. He was, however, not necessarily the most knowledgeable person in the family with regard to some ceremonial matters. While MMD was off at school, his brothers remained at home close
to the grandparents and they became the repositories of the family lore. Utah Brother was especially close to his grandfather and recollected his teachings well.

Utah Brother was particularly informative on the topics of taboos and requirements relating to dancing. I had been told at the Dilkon ceremony that it was necessary for a man (or woman) to be initiated twice (some said once) before becoming a dancer. According to Utah Brother, the requirements were more stringent. He had been taught by his grandfather that it was not enough to simply "look through the mask." There was a special sandpainting rite and corresponding songs that needed to be performed. During a nine-night ceremony, an individual would be required to go through initiation plus the sandpainting rite at least twice (preferably four times) in order to become a dancer. Utah Brother expressed misgivings about the attempts of many young dancers to take shortcuts by going through only one or two initiations. He believed that such individuals could become victims of Ye'ii Bicheii sickness later on.

Another source of concern was the presence of females in some dance teams. Although there has long been a male/female version of the na'akai dance, traditionally the female roles were acted out by short males of slight build (Stevenson 1891: 273-275; Matthews 1902: 147). According to Utah Brother, his grandfather did not approve of this dance form; instead he used the six man form. Some family members are concerned about the fact that the Four Corners team performs the male/female version of the dance. Team members have responded to this criticism by pointing out that they have been told that parents should involve their children in ceremonial traditions. By including daughters as well as sons, they feel that they are meeting this obligation.

One last concern was voiced regarding the preparation of the dancers' regalia. Maralyn's sister Emily prepared
the regalia for the Four Corners team. The feeling was that, since Emily has not been properly initiated, she should not have undertaken this task as it could result in health problems later on.

These data illustrate a point made by París and Walters about the anxiety associated with the powerful and potentially dangerous Nightway (1990: 9, 15, n. 14). This attitude by no means characterizes the majority of Navajos, but it is obviously present in some.

**Dance Data**

The following section contains the summary responses of members of the Four Corners dance team.

**Language:** Of interest were the terms for dance and dancer and how those terms were applied within the context of Nightway and in the context of daily life. The Navajo words for dance and dancer are *alzhish* and *alzhishii*, respectively. In a Nightway ceremony only the actions of the First Dancers and Na'akai Dancers are referred to as *alzhish*. This same term would be applied to Pow wow dancing, Rock 'n Roll dancing, and ballroom dancing. In essence, Navajo use of the word *alzhish* is similar to our use of the word 'dance.' It refers to actions that are patterned, stylized, expressive, and typically accompanied by music and/or song (for a more extensive discussion of an American concept of dance, see Francis 1996).

**How and why one becomes a dancer:** Members of this group became dancers because they grew up watching male relatives dance and gradually became interested. Also, they witnessed the benefits of being a *Yé'ii Bicheii* dancer; as one man remarked, "if you're good, there's prestige in that; your family can be proud of you." And finally, these men knew that their father would be pleased to see them carry on the tradition. One member, MMD, spoke of the spiritual benefits of dancing; he felt he gained hózhó or spiritual balance through dancing.
As for how one becomes a dancer, the importance of initiation was stressed although there were different views regarding the number of initiations and the rites involved: One must go through initiation twice; one must go through initiation four times; one must be initiated—the number of times is up to the Medicine Man; one must be initiated at least twice and go through a sandpainting ritual at least twice. Once these requirements have been satisfied, the process of learning to dance with the team begins, which involves part practice and part osmosis: "You first learn the songs, then you start to work with the rattle and learn the movements; we grew up going to ceremonies and seeing and listening to this--after a while it gets to be a part of you." In response to the question: How does one become a lead dancer? I was told that both seniority and ability were important. In the case of this team, Lead Dancer was not the senior member (End Dancer was). However, Lead Dancer was by far the strongest singer.

Criteria for judging a "good" dancer/team: The following criteria for a good dance team were given: The group will be well rehearsed. The dancers' movements will be coordinated with the music and with each other. When a group sings and they move you with their singing--that's a good group. They will be serious about what they're doing and will be strong as a group--some groups are just thrown together. Somebody says "Hey, there's a dance this weekend; let's do it."

And, conversely, bad teams are disorganized and awkward. Their singing is weak. And teams who have an inappropriate attitude, i.e., they focus on the competition and not on the person who is ill, are not considered "good" teams.

In response to the question--What does it take to be a good dancer?--I was told that a strong voice and stamina are important. Dancers who lose their voices are not effective,
nor are those who cannot stay awake all night and endure the cold.

The mental/emotional state of the dancer: All dancers stressed the importance of concentration. Lead Dancer described his mental and emotional state as follows: "I feel like an athlete before a competition. The adrenaline really gets going. I concentrate completely on the song. I'm not even aware of the audience. There's a place at Shiprock where we dance. The audience sits on a hillside. After the dancing, you can hear them in the dark. It sounds like bees buzzing. But while you're dancing, you don't notice that." MMD added: "Sometimes, I think about my father. I feel like he's watching me and he approves of what I'm doing." All dancers denied any feeling of being transformed into a Ye'ii, although it was stated that when the mask is put on "you feel the seriousness of that."

Preparation and prohibitions associated with dancing: Lead Dancer stated that going to the sweat lodge before a performance is a good idea: "It purifies you and strengthens the voice." And, prior to putting on the mask, a special prayer is said.

A number of prohibitions were mentioned: You don't sleep with your wife for four days before you dance and you don't touch blood. After you have removed your body paint, you should wait four days to bathe. If there's a death in the family you don't dance. Also, if your wife is pregnant you don't dance. (There may also be some food taboos associated with dancing, but I was unable to verify this.)

Creation, ownership, and meaning of the dances: I was told that the Holy People created the dances a long time ago and that they gave the dances to the Navajo people as part of the ceremony. The na'akai songs, however, may be created by team members. In the case of this team, some of their songs were handed down by their father while others were created by team members. Medicine Man Dancer described the
song-making process: "Sometimes I'll be driving in my car and a song comes to me. I keep a tape recorder in my car so I can tape it. Or a song could come in a dream."

In response to questions about the meaning of the dance and of specific movements, I was told that the meaning of the dance was told in the legend: It was performed for the Holy People to heal an earth surface person. And I was told that it was not the individual movements that were important to the meaning or power of the dance—it was the song. This last point should be elaborated upon as it came as a surprise to me. Throughout my questioning of the dancers, I focused on movement. My hypothesis was that the movements of the dance conveyed meaning. I noted that my teachers had difficulty answering movement-related questions. Finally, Emily identified the reason for the difficulty: "You know it's not the movement that's important—it's the song."

Lead Dancer nodded vigorously in agreement.

The ceremonial importance of song in Holyway ceremonies is summed up by Wyman: "Singing accompanies nearly every act and in Navajo thought it is the one indispensable part of any ceremonial; without it there can be no cure, indeed no chantway" (1983: 550). Dance is an optional rite in a Nightway ceremony. The patient's kin group decides whether or not to include it. The singing, however, is not optional. As I will argue latter, this emphasis on song does not negate the importance of movement as a means of facilitating healing, but it does indicate that, to my Navajo teachers, dance serves primarily as a vehicle for presenting the songs.

Dance teams: composition, organization, performance decisions and payment: I asked a number of questions about dance teams and how they operate. I asked how many teams there were on the reservation and was told it was a difficult question to answer: "It's very hard to say. Groups are identified by the name of the lead dancer and the
place they're from. Sometimes we give [Lead Dancer's] name, then a few hours later we switch and give [End Dancer's] name. That way we get paid two sheep instead of one. But it's really just one group." Regarding the payment of one sheep per team, I asked how the sheep was divided among the dancers. I was told that there was no set way. Some dancers request their favorite part. Also I asked if the team was ever paid in cash and the answer was no. I mentioned the Dilkon ceremony and the cash payments to the first and last teams. The response was: "Maybe they do things different over there."

The order of dance teams at a ceremonial was discussed. I was told that there is prestige associated with being chosen to be the first or last team. "The Medicine Man chooses those teams. If you're the last team you have to know special songs. To be first or last you should know what you're doing." I wondered if the order of dancers within a line had any significance. I found that the order has nothing to do with social status (ranking within the clan) or religious symbolism; rather, it is a practical matter. According to Lead Dancer, "You put your strongest singers at the head and end of the line. As long as those two stay coordinated, the rest of the dancers can follow."

I asked if members of a dance team were of the same clan and was told yes, but I do not know if this is invariably the case. And I asked if there were regional styles associated with Yé’íi Bicheii dancing. The answer was yes, but no one could really define or describe the variations, and I was not knowledgeable enough to pick them out during performances. I was merely aware that some teams were better organized and more coordinated in their actions than others.

I asked how dance teams were chosen or recruited for a ceremony and also how teams decided whether or not to perform. I knew from the Dilkon ceremony that some
decisions regarding dance teams could be made by the patient's family and the Medicine Man. In the case of that ceremony, it was decided that no female dancers would perform. Otherwise the decision to participate is left up to individual teams. News of an upcoming ceremony gets transmitted via newspaper, radio, and word of mouth. The team leaders usually let the family know if their group is planning to participate. All teams register when they arrive so that the announcer can identify them and record their performance payment. The decision to perform is a practical one mainly influenced by the availability of dancers and of a place to stay near the ceremony. The Four Corners team performs six to eight times per season. To the question of how rehearsals are conducted, the following response was given: "The leader of the group calls the rehearsal and you go to someone's house at night. You wear your street clothes and you use different rattles that the group has—not the ones you use at a ceremony. Those belong to the Medicine Man. Then you just go through the songs and dances, again and again."

_Dance paraphernalia:_ A number of questions were asked regarding preparation, ownership, and symbolism of dance paraphernalia. The dance masks and rattles are owned by the Medicine Man and may be inherited from his teacher or made by his apprentices. If they deteriorate, they are ritually buried under a tree with special prayers. When asked about the function or purpose of the mask the response was: "You wear the mask so the Holy People will recognize their images. They see that and it attracts them to come." The ceremonial dress of each dancer is that person's property. In the case of this team, the dance regalia was made by the brothers' sister.

I inquired into the symbolism associated with dancing and dance paraphernalia and gleaned a few responses. MMD told the story of the birth of Changing Woman (principal
female deity) whose breath fell upon an evergreen tree and made it sparkle. He said that is why the dancers carry spruce today. There is some suggestion that the sound of the dance rattles symbolizes the sound of rain, but I was unable to verify this. Also, the masks are said to represent the true appearance of the individual Yé'ii.

The sacredness of song and dance: I was generally aware that certain elements of a dance or a song were considered more sacred than others, but I did not understand the determining factors. I was told, for example, that, if a group wished to take Yé'ii Bicheii dancing and present it outside of its ceremonial context, certain sacred components had to be eliminated—certain songs could not be sung and the masks and rattles were not to be taken across the San Juan River. I was told also that the song of the First Dancers and the Dawn or Bluebird songs should not be recorded. However, it was permissible to record na'akai songs. But I never discovered the basis of sacredness. One person told me that the song taboo had "something to do with the Dawn People" but could not elaborate.

How does the dancing contribute to the healing? I posed this question more often and to more people than any other. The members of this team gave the following responses: "It's what the Holy People did. They danced to make someone well. They gave us that dance." And, "It's related to the story [legend]. It makes the story happen again."

Nightway ceremony near Bluff, Utah—January 5-6, 1996

During the week, our time was occupied with visiting and talking to family members. On the weekends (Friday and Saturday nights) we attended the eighth and ninth night dance performances of Nightway ceremonies. The first one was near Bluff, Utah. (See Map 1 on page 13.) We were especially interested in attending this ceremony because the Four Corners team had been chosen as the final team (the focus of the dawn rites).
This ceremony was hosted by Bitter Water Clan, assisted by Edgewater. The hataalii was Roy Lester. It was pleasant for me to see so many familiar faces from the Dilkon ceremony in the hooghan. The patient was a young man, in his late twenties or early thirties. His personal story was a familiar one--that of a neo traditionalist. This college educated man was a former announcer for the NBA (National Basketball Association). We had an opportunity to speak with him at length and he described his experiences in the Anglo world. Although he met and worked with famous people and achieved "success" in material terms, he did not find personal satisfaction. He voiced the sentiments I had heard before: "That way of life was fine, but it was not me. This is me." As he stood before us tall and resplendent in his beautiful blanket wrap, jewelry, and white headband, he seemed like a man at peace with himself and his surroundings. Picturing him in a suit and tie behind the microphone at an NBA game was difficult.

This patient had many Anglo friends who were busily helping out in the same way that Dr. Bellisari and I assisted at Dilkon. At times there were nearly as many Anglo faces in the hooghan as Navajo ones. The patient took some time to answer my questions about the dancing. In his view, the dancers represented stars, and the pattern of the dance was linked to cosmology. This was not the first time it was suggested to me that there was a connection between dance and cosmology. According to Gary Witherspoon, zhish (the stem of alzhish) relates to the movement of celestial bodies (interview, December 5, 1992). Although I explored this idea at every opportunity and later questioned leading scholars in the field of Navajo studies, I was unable to clarify the nature of the dancer/star connection.
We were grateful to the patient for taking the time to talk to us. I noticed his pronounced limp as he walked away and was told later that he had been involved in an auto accident.

On the eighth night of this ceremony (when the dancers appear unmasked and without ceremonial dress) our observations were hampered by the bitter cold. The campfires were contained in metal drums standing on legs about ten inches above the ground. The drums had holes along the sides allowing the escape of some heat. The smoke and sparks were diverted out of the top and away from the people. Although this arrangement diminished some of the discomforts from smoke and sparks, it created other ones more severe. Fortunate individuals located themselves near the heat holes but kept the warmth from reaching others. Only about a dozen people could keep warm; the other twenty or thirty froze.

We did brave the cold long enough to watch several performances by male/female teams. I was most eager to see this version of the na'akai dance as it had not been performed at the Dilkon ceremony. It was performed much as Matthews describes (1902: 147-150). This dance involved the separating of dancers from a single line (in which males and females alternated) into two sex-segregated lines. This was followed by a promenading of couples down the aisle formed by the two lines. (This dance will be described in detail in Chapter 5.) Fifteen teams performed at this event.

At dawn, the Four Corners team emerged from the brush shelter to receive the final blessing. The audience formed two lines on either side of the dancers and sprinkled them with corn meal and pollen as they exited to the east—enacting a return of the Yé’ii to their homes. It was difficult for Maralyn, watching her brothers and remembering
her father, to control her emotions. I found it difficult too.

Nightway ceremony near Leupp, Arizona—January 12-13, 1996

The last ceremony we attended, and the next to the last ceremony of the Nightway season, was held near Leupp. (See Map 1 on page 13.) It presented an interesting contrast to the two ceremonies previously observed. The hosting clan was Bitter Water assisted by Many Goats (Red House). Since Maralyn was "born for" the Red House Clan, she was able to find classificatory brothers and sisters to talk to. The patient of the ceremony was a young woman whose name I did not record. She appeared to be in her late twenties or early thirties; she also appeared quite tired and ill. It became obvious that the all night responsibilities of the eighth and ninth nights were difficult for her. When the First Dancers approached for the prayer and blessing that begins the dance event, the patient was not present. Someone had to fetch her while the dancers waited. A large park bench of wood and wrought iron was situated in front of the hooghan on a buffalo robe. After blessing each dance team, the patient retired to the bench and was immediately attended by a relative who covered her with blankets and supplied a foot rest, which Maralyn explained was a large bag of hot sand. There were lengthy breaks between dance performances, presumably allowing the patient time to rest. I was not able to find out how many teams performed.

There was rather a strange feel to this event. Although I was told that Roy Lester was the singer, he was not seen on either the eighth or ninth nights. On the eighth night we heard no singing in the hooghan, which seemed strange. The dancing on the eighth night was relatively poor and illustrated for me some points made by Lead Dancer who explained to me the importance of having lead and end dancers who are strong singers in the six man na'akai dance. During the traveling part of the dance, the
end dancer typically turns to face the lead dancer—their voices and movements are synchronized and the rest of the dancers simply follow their lead. During the Leupp ceremony, we saw what can happen when the lead and end dancers do not coordinate successfully. The result is not pleasant to watch. You no longer have a coordinated team, you have six individuals doing slightly different versions of the same dance and song. The consensus among those seated around me was that they were 'weak.'

On the ninth night, better coordinated performances were seen. It may have been the case that we were seeing the least experienced teams on the eighth night. Lead Dancer had explained to me that many teams do not like to appear in the early slots. This is mainly because of the masks which are stiff and uncomfortable early in the evening. It is difficult to hear with the masks on. Also, they are not yet "warmed up" or resonant so the dancers’ voices do not project well when they sing. Eventually, due to body heat and the dancers' breath, the masks become pliable and dancing and singing become easier. According to Lead Dancer, it is the custom to "send out the scrubs" early and let the more experienced teams follow.

We did get to see more performances of the male/female na'akai. I was surprised to see a female dancer lift her mask to speak to another female. It is my understanding that it is strictly prohibited to speak while "in the mask."

All in all the tenor of this ceremony was somewhat low key. There were far fewer people attending on the eighth and ninth nights. The eighth and ninth night audiences at Dilkon and Bluff numbered about 500. At Leupp we saw 150 to 200 people at most. It seemed a less ambitious venture when compared to Dilkon and Bluff and it appeared, at times, disorganized.
Dance Rehearsal

Throughout my stay with the Four Corners Family I anticipated attending a dance rehearsal. Unfortunately, this event was repeatedly cancelled and rescheduled. One evening we found ourselves at Medicine Man Dancer’s home waiting for the rehearsal to begin when we got word that two members of the team would not be able to attend and it looked as though practice would be put off again. MMD, Lead Dancer, Maralyn, Emily, and I were present along with assorted young family members. Fortunately, MMD was able to recruit two of the younger males (Lead Dancer’s sons) for the rehearsal and we quickly made our way several yards through the darkness under a starry sky to the family hooghan. We were told that Maralyn’s father helped build the hooghan when he was fifteen years old, which would have made the structure about sixty-five years old.

An oil lamp was hung from the rafters, casting a soft light on the dancers. The men conferred briefly, got into line, and began to sing and dance. They sang two songs and did two dance sets. In such close quarters, the sound was overwhelming. We could appreciate the impact of Lead Dancer’s singing. His voice was as powerful and well trained as that of any opera singer and his breath control was remarkable.

Lead Dancer told me earlier that males wishing to become dancers learn the songs first. Gradually they begin to work with the rattles and add the movements. Learning is mainly a matter of repetition. One learns by doing. The older men of this family had learned by watching their father and uncles rehearse and perform. Now the sons of Lead Dancer, Medicine Man Dancer, and End Dancer were learning the same way.

Lead Dancer did not function in the manner of a dance master at rehearsal. He did not instruct or correct. The activity was carried out the way most Navajo activities are
carried out: in a pragmatic, ad hoc fashion. Individuals contributed comments, suggestions were made, adjustments followed, and things got done.

I was given permission to tape the singing and was asked to play the tape later so that the group could listen. I also taped the casual talk that went on before and after the dancing, which provoked some laughter during the replay. Although it is forbidden to tape these songs during a ceremony, the same songs may be taped in an other-than-ceremonial setting, e.g., in a recording studio or at a rehearsal.

During the time I spent with this family, I was repeatedly struck by the love and respect of the siblings for their deceased father. Much of what they are, they feel they owe to him. Much of what they do, they do because of him. MMD summed up the sentiment when he said, "When I dance I feel like my father is watching me. I feel like he approves." As I watched the sons and grandsons of this remarkable man dancing in the hooghan he built, I could feel his presence too. My final observation is that any parent would be proud of such children.
Father's First Family: (Darkened symbols represent dancers)

Maralyn (Ego)

Emily Lead Dancer

Died in Infancy
Gender & Birth Order Uncertain

Father's Second Family:

Medicine Man Dancer

End Dancer

Dancer, but not with Four Corners Team

Figure 3. The Four Corners Family  (Darkened symbols represent dancers)
The preceding chapters provide some sense of the ceremonial context in which Nightway dances occur along with a glimpse of the people who perform the dances--their feelings, attitudes, concerns, and explanations. Now we will lift the dances out of context for the purpose of examination and subsequent analysis. We will begin by situating Yé'ii Bicheii dancing within the larger picture of Navajo dance genres.

Typologies of Navajo Dance

Dance genres: There are several forms of dance (alzhish) participated in by some of the Navajos on the reservation today. There are, of course, dances performed during the Nightway, Enemyway, and Mountainway healing ceremonies. These ceremonial dances may also be performed, with modification, outside of ceremonies, e.g., at state fairs, rodeos, chapter houses, and school auditoriums.

One example of ceremonial dance occurring in a nonceremonial context would be the Song and Dance competition, a relatively recent development which originated in the late 1970s. In this venue, songs and dances from the Enemyway ceremony are performed competitively, frequently at a chapter house (the site of local government), but also at schools, fairs, and rodeos. Admission is charged and any group can sponsor the event. It is typically done as a fundraising effort, very often to aid college students.
Participants wear numbers so that they can be identified by judges. Winners receive a prize.

Luke Lyon has described both a Song and Dance competition and a Nightway ceremony that were performed at the Northern Navajo Fair in Shiprock, New Mexico, October 4-6, 1985 (Lyon 1985b). It would appear from his description that an actual Nightway ceremony was performed at the fairgrounds. He describes rites of the eighth and ninth nights, including performances by the First Dancers and Six Man Na'akai teams in mask and full regalia.

Navajos also participate in non-Navajo dances. As a result of the pan-tribal movement and the creation of pan-Indian pow wow events, some Navajos have learned Plains Indian dance forms, such as the Round Dance, the War or Grass Dance, and the Sneak Up or Scout Dance (McAllester, letter dated September 1, 1996).

In addition, some Navajos enjoy Anglo dance forms, particularly Rock n' Roll and Country and Western. McAllester has advanced the interesting thesis that ceremonial, pow wow, and rock n' roll dance can all be considered "sacred" dance:

"Motion is a key to sacred power in Navajo thought. Wind is the basic metaphor of the power of motion. Speech, song and prayer are wind in motion shaped by the added power of human articulation. It follows that all song and all movement partake of this power and this is why a thoughtful Navajo might hesitate to categorize a Rock dance as merely secular. Energy has consequences. People moving together in constructive ways must be building hózhó (1979: 31-32).

Although this hypothesis has gone untested thus far, the propositions should be investigated. Given the relationship between movement and power in Navajo worldview (which will be discussed in Chapter 6), the ideas seem quite plausible.
The following figure illustrates the major dance genres and their associated members. As I have already pointed out, it is risky to impose rigid boundaries where Navajo life and thought are concerned. My typology is meant simply to identify various dance types found on the reservation today. There is flexibility and overlap in the scheme: If my reading of Lyon is correct, a Nightway ceremony along with its dances can be conducted at the site of a state fair; Anglo dances could conceivably be done at a ceremonial site, particularly late in the evening after the ceremonial rites have concluded. And, as I was told at the Dilkon ceremony, a few young dancers performing the male/female version of the nav'akai dance demonstrated the influence of pow wow dancing in their vigorous and (according to Maralyn), "showy" movements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremonial Dances</th>
<th>Navajo Ceremonial Dance Modified and Done Outside of Ceremonies</th>
<th>Anglo Dance Forms</th>
<th>Plains Indian Dance Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nightway: Ye'ii Bicheii Dance</td>
<td>Ye'ii Bicheii Dance</td>
<td>Country &amp; Western</td>
<td>Round Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountainway: Fire or Corral Dance</td>
<td>Fire or Corral Dance</td>
<td>Rock N' Roll</td>
<td>War Dance/Grass Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enemyway: Girls Dance (&quot;Squaw Dance&quot;)</td>
<td>Song &amp; Dance (Enemyway)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sneak Up/Scout Dance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Navajo Dance Genres
Nightway dances: There are three basic dance forms associated with Nightway: First Dancers, Six Man Na’akai, and Male/Female Na’akai. All three forms may be performed with or without Talking God and Water Sprinkler Clown. These dances and their variations are presented in the figure below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST DANCERS</th>
<th>NA’AKAI DANCERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Regular&quot; W/ 4 men</td>
<td>Six Man W/ Biological Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Talking God&quot; w/ 6 men</td>
<td>Male/Female W/Female Impersonators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/ TG&amp;WS</td>
<td>w/o TG&amp;WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o TG&amp;WS</td>
<td>w/ TG&amp;WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/ TG&amp;WS</td>
<td>w/o TG&amp;WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o TG&amp;WS</td>
<td>w/ TG&amp;WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/ TG&amp;WS</td>
<td>w/o TG&amp;WS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Nightway Dance Forms (TG=Talking God; WS=Water Sprinkler)

Setting

The dances of Nightway are invariably performed outdoors. A dance field is cleared in front of the entrance to the ceremonial hooghan. Prior to the eighth night of the ceremony, the field is raked of debris and leveled. The three fields observed in this study were approximately 40 yards long, as measured from brush shelter to hooghan, and 20-25 feet wide. At the eastern end of the field a brush shelter is constructed which serves as a dressing room for the dancers. It has a central campfire.

The dance field is flanked by campfires; there are typically four on each side. The audience stands or sits in the vicinity of the fires along the northern and southern borders of the field. The patient sits a few feet outside.
the entrance of the hooghan facing the dancers and is present for all of the performances on the eighth and ninth nights. High powered lights are often set up to illuminate the dance field.

The earthen surface does not appear to present problems for the dancers, although a little dust can be kicked up. However the cold and smoke do present challenges. The scantily clad dancers must exert themselves in freezing temperatures and sing forcefully while inhaling smoke.

Nightway is a winter ceremony, performed from late October to early February. Although there may be preview performances on the fifth, sixth, and seventh nights, the main events occur on the eighth and ninth nights. The dancing is always performed after sundown, usually between 8:30 P.M. and 9:30 P.M. It continues until dawn.

**Personnel**

Ceremonial roles are filled by the *Medicine Man* who blesses and intones the prayer before the First Dancers’ performance, the *Medicine Man's apprentices* who perform as the four First Dancers, the *patient* who blesses all dance teams and serves as the focus of the danced action (there may also be co-patients), and the *dancers* who, as representatives of the Ye’ii, recreate a legendary healing event. There is also a *master of ceremonies* present whose job it is to register dance teams and record their payments, identify the teams to the audience before they perform, and make announcements during breaks in the action.

Also playing a crucial role is the *host family* who plan and pay for the ceremony and who are often so busy with the duties of cooking, serving, constructing, repairing, cleaning, fetching, and fund raising that they have little time to spectate.

Finally, we have the *audience* which grows to the hundreds by the eighth night. News that a Ye’ii Bicheii dance is occurring is transmitted in a number of ways: via
newspaper notices, radio announcements, word of mouth, and signs posted by the road at the entrance to a ceremonial site. Navajos, non Navajo Indians (e.g., Pueblos and Apaches), and Anglos attend the public dancing. The only persons who may be barred from entering are inebriates.

The dancers

The dancers are (ideally) initiated males, and sometimes females, who are typically members of organized teams and (according to the Four Corners team) members of the same clan. Most of the dancers observed in this study ranged in age from their late twenties to late sixties. I did see some grade school aged children perform at the Leupp ceremony on the eighth night only. Some audience members seemed pleased by this and commented on the cuteness of the children. Others were concerned that these possibly uninitiated children might suffer harmful effects in later years.

Some teams, such as the Four Corners group, are well organized and have been performing together for many years. Other groups are thrown together rather quickly. I observed some last minute attempts on the part of a few groups to recruit dancers from the audience and borrow from other teams.

Regalia

For the eighth night performances good clothes (that is dress-up rather than every day) are worn. Full ceremonial dress is worn for the ninth night only.

Male attire:

Kilts: reach to just above the knee on most dancers and are form fitting. They are made of store bought material, probably cotton, wool, polyester, or some blend (not traditional woven cloth). They are decorated with notions: beads, spangles, gold lame ribbons, sequins, etc. A variety of colors are used, but black and red predominate.
Some teams have matching kilts; others show variation in this item.

Belts: All men wear silver concho belts, usually with a fox pelt hanging from the back.

Pouches: A leather pouch is worn which is studded and/or fringed. It has a long leather strap which is slung (bandolier fashion) over the head so that the strap rests on the right shoulder and the pouch on the left hip.

Jewelry: Silver rings, watch bands, necklaces, and belts are worn.

Knee bands: These are woven with tassels or streamers and are worn by some but not all men.

Elbow bands: Woven with tassels or streamers, are worn by some men.

Stockings: These knee high stockings are dark in color and are worn by most but not all men.

Moccasins: The traditional Navajo moccasin is worn by all dancers. It is of reddish brown hide with a silver disc at the outer ankle. It reaches to about an inch above the ankle. The sole is white or cream colored.

Body paint: This is a white clay substance called dleesh in Navajo. It is worn on the exposed flesh of the chest, arms, back, hands, and legs. Some dancers, for protection against the cold, wear white long johns, and the paint is visible only on their hands.

Torso covering: Most men are bare chested, except for those who wear long johns.

Sashes: Some men wear a woven or silken sash, which has an opening for the head and hangs down the back, extending to or just below the knees. One team had the name of its hometown woven into the sash.

Hair: Most men have short to collar-length hair. A few wear traditional buns (see Witherspoon 1983: 525 for photographs of this hair style).
Masks: Male God masks are worn by all dancers. They are the property of the Medicine Man and are shared by all teams. (The same mask is worn by Water Sprinkler clown.) The masks are made of hide and fit over the head like a bag. The face is painted blue. There are half-dollar sized openings for the eyes and no opening for the nose. There is a protruding gourd mouthpiece with downy eagle feathers at the base, which has the appearance of a bird beak. The hair is dark red in color and typically made of horse tail. There are two eagle feathers attached near the part in the hair. Typically there is a thong about a foot long extending from the chin area of the mask, which is gripped by the dancer and used to keep the mask in position. Resting on the shoulders of the dancer is a large spruce collar. This collar is not attached to the mask.

Note: As is the case with the eighth night performance in dress up clothes, the outfits are usually not identical. That is, there is variation in kilt decoration, pouches, jewelry, knee and elbow bands. A few teams, perhaps six out of the thirty or forty I observed, had identical dress.

Ritual Paraphernalia: Two items are carried by the males: a sprig of spruce is carried in the left hand and a large gourd rattle (property of the Medicine Man) is carried in the right hand. Some of the dancers carry a small bit of spruce in the right hand along with the rattle. The masks themselves may be considered as ritual paraphernalia. Like the gourd rattles, they are the Medicine Man's property.

Female attire:

Dress: The dress is traditional (pre Spanish) in style. It resembles two narrow blankets sewn together over the shoulders and along the sides (see Gill 1983: 503 for an artist's rendition of this garment). Like the man's kilt, it is made of store bought material (cotton, wool, polyester, or some blend). The dresses reach from just below the knee to the mid-calf area.
Apron: A small ornate apron is worn, reaching to mid-thigh. It is decorated with notions similar to those used on male kilts and is said to symbolize the male dance kilt. (When male impersonators dance as females, they wear a kilt of the same style as the males.)

Belts: A silver concho belt is worn along with a woven belt. The woven belt is tied and the ends (about a foot in length) are left dangling to one side.

Elbow streamers: These were noted at the Leupp ceremony where many females performed. They were made of thin ribbons and hung perhaps one or two feet from just above the elbow. Not all women wore these streamers.

Knee streamers: Some women wore knee streamers made of ribbons or woven material. Some streamers had bells attached.

Moccasins and leggings: Females wore the same traditional moccasin as that of the men but with leggings attached. The leggings, white or cream colored, extended to just below the knee.

Sash: A silken or woven sash, encircling the head and dangling down the back, was worn by some women.

Jewelry: Silver belts, bracelets, rings, and necklace were worn by all women.

Body paint: Dleesh was visible on the hands and arms of the women.

Hair: The hair was worn loose. I saw no traditional buns.

Masks: The square-shaped women's masks were smaller than the men's, covering the face rather than the entire head. The mask was blue with an apron-like extension at the lower edge extending to just below the chin. A horizontal white ladder symbol was painted just between the eyes and extending to the top of the forehead. (See Figure 2, pg. 66, mask D.)
Basic structure and terminology

Before describing the three Nightway dance forms, I will outline the basic structure of the dances and explain the terminology used in describing them. All three forms have stationary segments, wherein the dancers mark time in place in a single file line, followed by either a turning in place (in the case of the First Dancers only) or a moving sequence (for the na'akai dancers) in which dancers travel and return ultimately to their original position.

I have described the dances in terms of the "basic dance," the "dance set," and the full "performance." The basic dance consists of a stationary part followed by either a turning sequence or a traveling sequence, depending on the dance form. A set consists of the basic dance done four times. A performance contains four sets which are performed consecutively with brief breaks (1-2 minutes) between sets. These divisions are illustrated in the figure below.

---

**First Dancers**

Basic dance = 1 stationary part + one 360 degree turn  
Set = basic dance x 4  
Performance = 4 sets (basic dance done 16 times)

**Six-man *a'akai**

Basic dance = 1 stationary part + 1 CW circuit  
Set = basic dance x 4  
Performance = 4 sets (basic dance done 16 times)

**Male/Female *a'akai**

Basic dance = 1 stationary part + 1 promenade of all couples  
Set = basic dance x 4  
Performance = 4 sets (basic dance done 16 times)

---

Figure 6. Nightway dances: Structural divisions & descriptive terminology used in this study
Now we will move on to the descriptions of the Nightway dances. The labanotation scores for these dances can be found in Appendices A, B, and C. These descriptions represent the typical pattern observed during three Nightway ceremonies in 1995 and 1996.

First Dancers: Description

First Dancers (’Atsáleeh): These dancers are four in number, invariably male, and are typically apprentices of the Medicine Man.29 (The labanotation score for this dance is found in Appendix A.) At the Dilkon ceremony, the First Dancers put on preview performances on the fifth, sixth, and seventh nights of the ceremony. They performed unmasked on the eighth night and in full regalia on the ninth night. They always dance first. The dancers represent Holy People—The first dancer in line represents initial corn, second is child rain, third is vegetation, and fourth is corn pollen. They are also said to represent "thunder-birds" (Matthews 1902: 141; see also Klah in Paris 1990: 205). The structure of the dance is as follows:

Entrance: The dancers leave the hooghan (or the brush shelter on the ninth night) and walk to the pile of spruce and gourd rattles on the ground at the eastern end of the dance field. There they pick up gourds which they hold in the right hand and small sprigs of spruce are held in both hands. After picking up the spruce and gourds, dancers walk single file to the western end of the dance field where the patient is waiting outside the entrance of the hooghan.

Prayer: On the ninth night of the ceremony only, the Medicine Man recites a prayer just prior to the performance of the First Dancers; it is repeated line by line by the patient. The dancers remain still during the prayer and subsequent blessing.

Blessing by the patient and Medicine Man: The Medicine Man followed by the patient moves down the line; they bless each dancer with corn meal. The patient carries a shallow
basket, similar in shape to a plate with upcurving edges, which contains corn meal. He uses this basket in blessing all of the teams throughout the eighth and ninth nights. His right hand describes a clockwise arc over the dancer’s head from the right shoulder to the left. A pinch of meal is placed in the dancer’s left hand. As the night wears on and the patient tires, this blessing becomes abbreviated to a tossing of meal in the direction of each dancer. Note: the First Dancers are blessed at the outset of a performance; they are not blessed at the beginning of each set.

Formal opening: After the blessing, the patient returns to a chair in front of the hooghan entrance and sits facing the dancers. The Medicine Man returns to the hooghan where he spends the evening conducting the song sequences. The dance begins with a formal opening, which is the same for all three Nightway dance forms.

The dancers, who have been standing single file facing west, make a 1/4 clockwise (henceforth CW) turn to the right, facing north. Dancers bend at the waist, about 45 degrees, and extend the right hand as far as it will reach to the right side of body. The rattle is held about 6 to 12 inches off the ground. The lower left arm is flexed forward of the body at approximately a 45 degree angle to the upper arm which hugs the torso. Spruce is clutched tightly in the left hand. The left arm and hand position remain fixed through the entire dance. (A few dancers flex the left arm more tightly, nearly 180 degrees, so that their left hand is near the left armpit.)

When the torso is bent and the right arm extended, the rattling begins. The rattles are shaken close to the ground as they are moved from the right side of the dancer to the left side. A call is given during this dipping motion:
Ah oo, Ah oo. After this motion and call are completed, dancers immediately make a 180 degree CW turn to face south. The dipping motion with the rattles is repeated, moving from right to left, just as before. Dancers then make a 1/4 CW turn and end facing the patient again.

Stationary part: If the group has a Talking God representative, the dancing begins just after TG stamps his foot at the end of the formal introduction. (Note: TG's role will be described later in this chapter.) After this stamp, the lead dancer begins to step in place and shake the rattle. Other dancers quickly fall into rhythm (or try to). After about four preliminary rattle shakes, the singing begins. If there is no TG, the above actions are carried out immediately after the formal introduction. There is no need to wait for the stamp.

Accompanying themselves with singing and rattling, the dancers remain in place for a time. They are looking straight ahead but not at the face of the patient. Their expressions are serious. They are concentrating on the perfect execution of the song. They mark time in place with a simple transferring of weight from the right foot to the left. The feet are not much lifted off the ground during this transfer. A few dancers lift the right foot about an inch. There is slight side to side movement of the body due to the shifting balance, but it is not pronounced or exaggerated. There is also a constant up-and-down bounce (a slight bounce) in the body. The head and upper body as a unit are inclined slightly forward. Only the feet and rattling hand are noticeably in motion. The downbeat is accented with a downward stroke of the rattle coinciding with the transfer of weight to the right foot, i.e., the rattle goes downward as the right foot hits the ground. There are brief pauses (about two seconds) at the end of some song lines: Ohohoho ehehehe heya yea, pause. Ohohoho
ehehehe heya yea, pause. Otherwise, dancers are constantly in motion.

Turning sequence: Following some musical cue, which I have yet to identify, the dancers, using the simple in-place right-left stepping, begin to turn slowly in place 180 degrees CW to face east, ending with their backs toward the patient. They shake the rattles rapidly (tremolo, or "rattle roll") as they execute the turn. They remain briefly in this position, marking time with their feet and singing, until the next musical cue which prompts them to again turn in place 180 degrees CW, and they are once again facing the patient. Again, the rattle roll is executed while turning.

Brief exits between sets: This basic dance is repeated four times. Using my terminology, this constitutes a set. At the completion of a set, the dancers are facing the patient. The end of the dance is marked by cessation of singing and a brief (maybe three second) rattle roll. The lead dancer then "peels off" to the right (clockwise) and is followed by the other dancers in turn. The men, still in single file formation, walk to the eastern end of the field. They quickly turn clockwise and return to face the patient, ready to begin a new set. A total of four sets are performed, which means that the basic dance is executed sixteen times.

Final exit: The final exit is not stylized, except that the dancers remain in their single file formation. After the dancers have completed the fourth set, they exit in the manner described above. But instead of returning to the dance field they return their spruce and gourds to the pile at the east end of the field. Then they enter the hooghan on the eighth night or the brush shelter on the ninth night.

Comments: This is not what a Western trained dancer would call a "polished" dance performance, perfect execution
of the song being the main concern. The lead dancer is typically more precise and sure in his actions than the other dancers. Turns are not made in careful unison. Not everyone is on the same foot at the same time. Rattle strokes are not executed in unison, etc.

**Accompaniment:** This is provided by the singing and rattling of the dancers. No one else joins in this singing. The audience does not clap or participate in the accompaniment.

**Texts:** Matthews has provided texts for (1) the song that is sung when the First Dancers paint themselves with dleesh (1902: 286), (2) the song that the dancers sing while dancing, which must be performed without error (ibid., pp. 286-287) and (3) a portion of the long prayer that the Medicine Man and patient render to the First Dancers just before the dancing begins on the ninth night (ibid., pp. 143-145). These texts will be presented and discussed at length in Chapter 5.

**Tempo:** The tempo of this dance is slower (approximately 78 beats/minute) than that of the na'akai dance (approximately 104 beats/minute). This may be due to the tremendous need to concentrate on the song which must be performed without error. In the na'akai dancing, where correct rendering of the song is not so critical, the dancers move more quickly.

**Regalia:** Accounts in the literature invariably describe First Dancers as appearing masked and in the same ceremonial dress as the na'akai on the ninth night. Although I saw three ninth night performances of the First Dancers, I do not recall ever seeing them in mask or regalia. But the matter remains unclear. According to my notes, I was always able to identify individual dancers and their line order. This may be because I was always able to see their faces. But it could be that they were identified by some other means, perhaps by item of clothing or body
build. Another possibility is that the unmasked performance of the First Dancers is a feature of a Roy Lester ceremony. Roy was the hataalii at all three of the ceremonies I attended.

**Six-man Na'akai dance: Description**

*Na'akai*: Na'akai is a descriptive term meaning: "groups moving here and there" (Haile 1947a: 73). The dancers are also referred to as 'Atsáleehs'osi or Slim First Dancers. The labanotation score for this dance is found in Appendix B.

**Entrance**: The six men leave the brush shelter, pause to pick up their spruce sprigs and rattles from a pile on the ground west of the shelter, and proceed single file to the western end of the field where the patient is waiting.

**Blessing by the patient**: The patient, moving down the line, blesses each dancer with corn meal which is carried in a basket. Using the right hand, the patient describes a clockwise arc over each dancer's head from right shoulder to left. A pinch of meal is placed in the left hand. As the evening progresses this blessing is simplified to a tossing of meal at each dancer. Note: Each team is blessed at the outset of a performance. If the same team appears more than once during the evening, it will receive a blessing before each performance. However, a team is not blessed before each set in a given performance.

**Formal opening**: After the blessing, the patient returns to a chair in front of the hooghan entrance, faces the dancers, and the dance begins with a formal opening, which is the same for all three Nightway dance forms. All dancers, who have been standing single file facing west, make a 1/4 CW turn to the right, facing north. The dancers bend at the waist, about 45 degrees, and extend the right hand as far as it will reach to the right side of body. The rattle is held about 6 to 12 inches off the ground. The lower left arm is flexed forward of the body at
approximately a 45 degree angle to the upper arm. The left hand clutches spruce and the upper arm hugs the torso. The left arm and hand remain in this position through the entire dance. (A few dancers flex more tightly, nearly 180 degrees so that their left hand is near the left armpit.)

When the torso is bent and the right arm is extended, the rattling begins. The rattles are shaken close to the ground as they are moved from the right side of the dancer to the left side. A call is given during this dipping motion: Ah oo, Ah oo. After this motion and call are completed, dancers immediately make a 180 degree CW turn to face south. The dipping motion with the rattles is repeated, moving from right to left, just as before. The dancers then make a 1/4 CW turn and end up facing patient again.

Stationary part: If the group has a Talking God representative, the dancing begins just after TG stamps his foot at the end of the formal introduction. (The roles of Talking God and Water Sprinkler will be described later in this chapter.) After this stamp, the lead dancer begins to step in place and shake the rattle. Other dancers quickly fall into rhythm (or try to). After about four preliminary rattle shakes, the singing begins. If there is no TG, the above actions are carried out immediately after the formal introduction. There is no need to wait for the stamp.

Accompanying themselves with singing and rattling, the dancers remain in place for a time. They are looking straight ahead but not at the face of the patient. Their eyes are focused on the ground about five feet ahead. They mark time in place with a simple transferring of weight from the right foot to the left. The feet are not much lifted off the ground during this transfer. A few dancers will lift the right foot about an inch. There is slight side to side and up and down movement of the body due to the shifting balance, but it is not pronounced or exaggerated.
Arms are kept close to the body. The lower arm is bent at approximately a 45 degree angle to the upper arm and hands are positioned forward. In the left hand a spruce sprig is tightly held with the sprig projecting skyward. In the right hand a gourd rattle is held, often with a small spruce sprig. Also, the thong which hangs from the lower front edge of the mask is held in the left hand. Pulling on the thong pulls the mask away from the face to facilitate breathing and keeps the eye holes properly positioned.

The knees are slightly bent (relaxed). The head and torso as a unit are slightly inclined forward. This slight inclination of the upper body forward is probably due to the mask which has only small holes for the eyes. Dancers must bend the head and body slightly forward in order to see the ground. The head and upper body remain in the slightly inclined position throughout the dance. Only the feet and rattling hand are noticeably in motion. The downbeat is accented with a downward stroke of the rattle coinciding with the transfer of weight to the right foot, i.e., the rattle goes downward as the right foot hits the ground.

It is during this stationary part that a 'free style' element was observed. While dancing in place, some dancers turn slightly right and left, some 30-40 degrees, some 180 degrees, and a few 360 degrees. (Some dancers do not turn at all.) The dancers turn independently of one another. According to Lead Dancer of the Four Corners team, this independent turning projects the voices of the dancers, ensuring that the audience on both sides of the dance field can hear.

During the stationary part of the dance you hear the "Whoa ho ho ho, eh he yeh, he yeh, he yeh, Whoa ho ho ho." This is sung in deep baritone, not quite bass. This part typically takes from 25-30 beats. Each time the right foot hits the ground, this counts as one beat in my calculations.
**Circuit:** When the singing changes to falsetto, the circuit begins led by the lead dancer. The leader brings the line around in a slow clockwise turn using the same bent-kneed, right-left, almost shuffling step. The feet are never lifted far from the ground, but they do not drag on the ground either. The line becomes bowed during the turn and when the first dancer and last dancer are abreast of one another, the last dancer will typically turn to face the first dancer. The last dancer backs up as the first dancer advances and when the last dancer approaches the place where the patient is seated, he turns CW 180 degrees and quickly rejoins the rest of the line. Now the line has made a complete revolution and has returned to its original position, facing the patient. At no time do the dancers form a closed circle. A gap of several feet is maintained between the lead and end dancers. The straight line gradually arcs to the right and returns to its original position. (This formation is illustrated in the ground plans of Appendix B.)

At the widest part of the circuit the lead dancer usually travels about 10-20 feet from the rest of the line, as measured at the widest part of the arc. However, I saw a few leaders travel only a few feet from the line. The complete circuit takes about 40-50 beats of the music. Basically, the circuit takes two to three times as long to complete as does the stationary part. I cannot be more precise about this feature because many different na'akai songs are used and the timing varies with the song, that is, the number of beats devoted to the stationary and traveling parts of the dance varies.

**Spacing:** The spacing between dancers is about 3-4 feet, making the line of six dancers about 20-25 feet long.

**Brief exits between sets:** The basic dance is repeated four times in a set. When the dancers begin their final (fourth) circuit in a set, they do not return to their line
facing the patient. Instead, they continue to walk eastward and, at some point, they stop singing, shake their rattles rapidly, and then walk to the western end of the field (near the spruce pile), maintaining their line formation. They turn CW and quickly return single file to face the patient and begin a new set. Each team performs a total of four sets in a single performance, which means that the basic dance is done sixteen times in all.

Final exit: During the fourth circuit of the final set the dancers exit in the manner described above but instead of returning to face the patient, they walk to the spruce and gourd pile, return their paraphernalia, and go on to the arbor dressing room where they remove their masks for use by the next dance team.

Accompaniment: As is the case with all Nightway dances, the dancers are self-accompanied via their singing and rattling. The audience does not contribute in any way to the accompaniment.

Texts: No prayer is made before the na'akai performance, and no translations of their songs exist. The songs are made up of vocables which cannot be translated. Some songs are quite old and have been handed down. New songs are created by the dancers from time to time. Musical scores for two na'akai songs can be found in Matthews (1994 [1896]: 283-284). There is a special prayer associated with donning the mask, but I have been unable to obtain the text.

Tempo: The quarter note equals approximately 104 beats per minute.

Regalia: (See the full description of male attire beginning on page 93.)

Na'akai dance: Description of male/female version

This form of the dance has twelve dancers: six males and six females. The female roles may be enacted by males in the dress of Female God, or by biological females. The
songs accompanying this dance form are the same as those for the six man version of the dance. The labanotation score for this dance is found in Appendix C.

Regalia: See the complete description of male and female regalia beginning on page 93.

Entrance: The twelve dancers leave the brush shelter in single file formation, males and females alternating. The line is led by a male. After pausing to pick up gourd rattles and spruce (the females do not carry a rattle; they hold spruce in each hand), they stand before the patient and receive the blessing.

Blessing by the patient: The patient, moving down the line beginning with the lead dancer, blesses each dancer with corn meal which is carried in a basket. The meal is held in the patient's right hand which travels from the dancer's right shoulder, over the head, to the left shoulder. A pinch of meal is then placed in the dancer's left hand. As the evening progresses and the patient fatigues, the blessing becomes simplified to a simple tossing of meal at each dancer. At times no actual meal makes contact with the dancer. Note: Each team is blessed at the outset of a performance. If the same team appears more than once during the evening, it will receive a blessing before each performance. However, a team is not blessed before each set in a given performance.

Formal opening: After the blessing, the patient returns to a chair in front of the hooghan entrance and is seated facing the dancers. The patient remains present for all dance performances throughout the long night, leaving only when there are breaks between performances.

The dance begins with a formal opening, which is the same for all Nightway dance groups both First Dancers and Na'akai Dancers. All dancers, who have been standing single file facing west, make a 1/4 CW turn to the right, facing north. Dancers bend at the waist, about 45 degrees, and
extend the right hand as far as it will reach to the right side of body. The rattle is held about six to twelve inches off the ground. In the case of the females, who do not carry rattles (only spruce in both hands), they too extend the right hand and make the sweeping gesture with the spruce. The lower left arm is flexed forward of the body at a 45 degree angle to the upper arm. The left hand clutches spruce, which projects skyward, and the upper arm hugs the torso.

When the torso is bent and the right arm is extended, the rattling begins. The rattles are shaken close to the ground as they are moved from the right side of the dancer to the left side. A call is given during this dipping motion: Ah oo, Ah oo. After this motion and call are completed, dancers immediately make a 180 degree CW turn to face south. The dipping motion with the rattles and spruce is repeated just as before. Dancers then make a 1/4 CW turn and end facing patient again.

Stationary part: If the group has a Talking God representative, the dancing begins just after TG stamps his foot at the end of the formal introduction. (The roles of both Talking God and Water Sprinkler will be described later in this chapter.) After this stamp, the lead dancer begins to step in place and shake the rattle. Other dancers quickly fall into rhythm (or try to). After about four preliminary rattle shakes, the singing begins. As soon as the singing begins, the females separate from the males by side stepping toward the right (north). The step is right-close-left, right-close-left. When the females are about five to six feet from the males, they make a 1/4 turn to the left and end facing the male line (south) while the males continue to face the patient (west).

Promenade: At some musical cue, the men's line begins to move forward and the women's sideways. Therefore, both lines are progressing westward. The men use the same bent
kneed stepping and the women are side stepping. As a woman steps sideways onto her right foot, she thrusts both hands forward about one foot waist high, and when she brings the left foot to the right foot and transfers weight onto the left, the hands move back toward the waist.

The lead male begins his CW turn, the lead female leaves her line and moves toward him, making a 1/4 turn to left until both are facing east. She links her right arm through his left and they promenade down the aisle formed by the two lines. When they reach the end of the aisle, he turns CW to rejoin his line, she makes 1/4 CW turn and backs up to rejoin hers. At this point, the next couple in line begins the promenade. The pairing off and promenading continues until the lead male and lead female are again at the heads of the lines; this constitutes the basic dance.

Exits—between sets and final exit: When the fourth promenade in a set begins, the couples immediately fall in behind the lead couple and all exit toward the east. When the singing stops and the rattle roll is finished, the females step back into the male line and all walk off. At the end of the first, second, and third sets the line makes a clockwise turn, enters the dance field, and begins the next set. On the final exit (after the fourth set), they return the spruce and gourds and continue to the brush dressing room.

Duration: Duration of the entire performance of four sets is 20 to 30 minutes.

Note: Structurally, this is the same basic dance as that performed by the six man team. The movement is from line, to arc, to reformation of the line. The part of the females is added on with the women creating a near mirror image of male actions, with the exception that females face a different direction. In order to maintain this mirror image, the females must travel counter clockwise. This is
the only counter clockwise movement I observed in Nightway dancing."

**Compare and contrast: First Dancers and Na'akai dancers**

**Regalia:** I do not believe that the First Dancers I observed appeared masked or in ceremonial dress on the ninth night, but this is questionable. The na'akai dancers did.

**Number of dancers:** The First Dancers I observed were four in number as compared to the six man na'akai team and the male/female version which has twelve dancers. Haile (1951: 120-121) mentions a variation of the First Dancers using six men instead of four. This version is identified as "talking god first dancers" (emphasis in the original). I did not observe this version. (See also Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 259, 524 n. 15:230).

**Song:** The song sung by the First Dancers while dancing (which contains vocables as well as words) has been translated into English (Matthews 1902: 286-287. Recording of this song is not permitted. The na'akai songs have been recorded but not translated as they are composed of vocables which are said to be untranslatable.

**Dance structure:** The dance structure is very similar in these two forms of Nightway dances. The same type of footwork is used, the formal introductions are identical, and the stationary parts are similar; however, the turning and circling sequences are performed differently. The First Dancers make a 360 degree turn in place (two half turns) while the Na'akai Dancers travel as a group in a CW arc or a CCW arc in the case of females). In both cases, the line ends in its original position (i.e., the position they were in when the singing and the dancing began).

**Tempo:** The tempo for the First Dancers is slower by some 16 beats per minute and contains some pauses.

**Actions of Talking God and Water Sprinkler**

All three forms of Nightway dances may be performed with or without Talking God and Water Sprinkler. If these
Yé'ii are included, their actions are similar in all three dance forms.

(1) Six man na'akai performance, with Talking God and Water Sprinkler: The basic dance does not change. The parts of Talking God and Water Sprinkler are simply added as follows:

Entrance: Talking God leads the dance line onto the field. Water Sprinkler is at the end of the line. After the blessing by the patient, TG steps about 4-6 feet to the right side of the lead dancer. He carries no rattle or spruce, only his pouch—sometimes deerskin, sometimes squirrel. According to Stevenson (1891: 262, 264) TG carries tobacco in his squirrel pouch and sacred meal in his fawn skin pouch. WS (also carrying a pouch) likewise leaves the line by stepping to the right.

Formal opening: When the dancers perform their rattle dipping introduction facing north, TG turns 180 degrees CW and rushes (with small running steps) in a straight line toward the east, lifting his pouch in his right hand and giving his call at the end. Water Sprinkler clown, positioned toward the end of the line, rushes in the opposite direction, lifts his pouch too, and calls. They pass right shoulders.

When the dancers perform their introduction facing south, TG turns 180 degrees CW and rushes in a straight line toward the west, again lifting his pouch and calling. Water Sprinkler does the same in the opposite direction. Then, while the dance line is making its 1/4 turn to face the patient, TG walks over to face the patient, bends his knees and stamps his right foot while calling once into the patient's face. This signals the beginning of the dance. (I saw one TG who did not stamp his foot; he merely bent both knees and called.) Immediately after stamping, TG begins a leisurely CW circuit around the line of dancers. He uses a simple, low skipping step.
Circuit: By the time the dance line has finished the stationary part of the dance and turned to begin forming the arc, TG has arrived at the northeastern corner of the field. He makes a 180 degree CW turn to face the advancing dancers. With his skipping step he approaches the lead dancer. When they are a few feet apart, TG begins to skip backwards until he again reaches the northeastern corner. Then he lifts his pouch and calls to the first dancer. Next TG advances to meet the second dancer, then retreats backward, lifts his pouch and gives his call again, and so on until all six dancers have been approached and saluted. When the dancers return to their line facing the patient, TG and Water Sprinkler again begin their leisurely circuit around the dance field.

Brief exits between sets and also final exit: The exit occurs at the middle of the final (fourth) circuit in a set. TG advances to meet the lead dancer but simply makes 180 degree CW turn to face east and leads the line off the field then turns and leads the line back for the next set. For the final exit, TG leads the dancers off to the east where they return their rattles and spruce and walk to the dressing room.

Water Sprinkler: The role varies depending on the individual performer. After the formal opening, WS may do anything and go anywhere. He frequently interacts with audience members. He may mock the dancers. One WS I observed, a rather young one, simply followed TG around and did little or no clowning. WS usually joins TG for the saluting of the dancers by raising his pouch and giving his call.

(2) N’akai Dance, Male/Female version, with Talking God and Water Sprinkler: The basic dance remains the same. The parts of TG and WS are added on and are very similar to what is done for the six man na’akai.
Entrance: TG leads the dancers onto the field. WS brings up the rear.

Formal opening: After the pollen blessing, TG moves to the right of the lead dancer. WS also leaves the line at the rear by stepping to the right. When the dancers face the north and dip their rattles and spruce, TG rushes to the east about twenty feet, while WS rushes to the west. At the end of their run, both raise their pouches and call. This same action is repeated (with TG rushing westward, and WS eastward) when the dancers face south and perform the dipping motion. When the line of dancers turns to face the patient again, TG steps in front of the patient, bends his knees, stamps and calls. Then the rattling begins.

Stationary part: When the singing begins and the male and female lines separate, TG and WS make their lengthy CW circuit around the periphery of the dance field, arriving at the eastern end, between the two dance lines, in time to advance and meet the first promenading couple. When they are within a few feet of the advancing couple, they begin to skip backwards and when the couple reaches the end of the aisle formed by the two lines TG and WS raise their pouches and give their calls. Then they advance to meet the next couple and so on.

Exits: When it is time for the fourth promenade of a set, all couples fall in behind the lead couple. TG and WS advance to meet the lead couple but, instead of retreating backwards, TG and WS turn 180 degrees CW and face the same direction as the dancers. They lead them off the field. If this is the final exit after the fourth set is completed, the dancers deposit their gourds and spruce and continue to the brush dressing room. If this is not the final exit, TG and WS lead the dance line back onto the field for another set.

(3) First Dancers with Talking God and Water Sprinkler: Although I did not see a performance of the First Dancers
that included TG and WS, I did observe this version in the films of the American Indian Films Group (1963-1964). The actions of TG and WS for the entrance, formal opening, and exit segments of the dance were identical to their actions in the na'akai performances: TG entered and exited at the head of the line and WS's position was at the rear. During the opening, they made their eastward and westward rushes, and TG signaled the beginning of the dance with his call in the face of the patient. During the stationary and turning parts of this dance, TG and WS walked or skipped in a leisurely manner around the dance line. At times they paused and did nothing at all, merely waiting to rejoin the line for an exit. Since the First Dancers never traveled from their original positions in line, there was no occasion for the advancing, retreating, and saluting actions that are seen in the na'akai performances.

Now that we have examined the dances in considerable detail, we can move on to the next task, i.e., the analysis of available data.
CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS

Analyzing the dances of another culture involves certain basic tasks. One must identify sources of information about dance. One source is the dance itself. The researcher must document how it is performed, when, where, why, and by whom. Knowledgeable individuals must be consulted, such as, the dancers themselves along with their kin, audience members, dance creators, ceremonial specialists, etc. Information about the dances may also be found in other examples of expressive culture. Songs, poems, prayers, and legends can tell us about the meaning and symbolism of danced action. Of course, one can also consult previous studies, if such exist.

For the following analysis, several types of data were studied: (1) labanotation scores, (2) descriptions of Nightway dancing in the anthropological literature, (3) various prayer, song, and legend texts associated with Nightway dancing, and (4) a number of emic and etic theories pertaining to Navajo healing ceremonies.

Analysis began with an examination of the labanotation scores. Before one can entertain questions about the cultural/ceremonial meaning of a dance, one must demonstrate what that "dance" consists of. The labanotation scores, which were constructed from ethnographic data and film footage, revealed the basic form of the dances along with their underlying structural principles. They showed what was done, where it was done, when, and by whom, and they
revealed those segments where variation did and did not occur. Next, my dance data were compared to descriptions of Nightway dancing in the literature, which spans a period of over one hundred years, and some sense of consistency and change through time was gained. This was followed by an examination of the various texts (prayer, song, and legend) associated with Nightway dancing. Thematic content and symbolism were analyzed in a search for the ceremonial meanings of the dancing. And finally several emic and etic theories associated with Navajo ceremonialism in general and the dancing of Nightway in particular were compared and evaluated in relation to my field data. It was hoped that the sacred texts and theories of ceremony would provide answers to two important questions: Why are the dances done this way? And precisely how does the dancing contribute to the healing of the patient?

What the labanotation scores reveal

The labanotation scores were created from my ethnographic data (along with personal demonstrations) and from film. Two very important points about the scores need to be stressed. (1) The mere act of recording these dances on paper creates an impression of permanence and rigidity that is not inherent in the dancing itself. An ethnographer studying different Nightways at other times and places would produce similar yet different scores, and all of these scores (if recorded accurately) would be 'valid' representations of Nightway dancing. (2) The scores in this study represent the typical ninth night performances of the three dance forms I observed in the field. In short, this is what most of the dancers did most of the time. The scores do not represent the "only correct form" of the dances, and they do not strictly represent the filmed dancing, which was performed in the 1960s. The films allowed Dr. Nahumck, who is unfamiliar with the Navajo environment and culture, to see the physical environment,
the dancers and regalia, and the major segments of the dances. Most of what is depicted in the films is very similar to what I saw in 1995 and 1996. Where the film differed from what I saw, we followed my ethnographic data. Before proceeding with the structural analysis of the dances, more will be said about the films and their usefulness.

Films used in Labanotation: The Nightway films were produced in 1963 and 1964 by the American Indians Films Group. The project, a product of the Film Production Laboratory, University of California at Berkeley, was directed by Samuel A. Barrett with William R. Heick as cinematographer. The funding was provided by the National Science Foundation. The collection was transferred to the Lowie Museum in the 1960s. Museum records list a total of thirteen reels of film and thirteen or fourteen audio tapes in the collection.

Four hours of film were viewed, depicting most of the major rites of Nightway including the initiations, the exorcistic rites of the first four days, the sandpainting rites, and the dances. The tape used for labanotation consisted of approximately thirty minutes of dancing from the eighth and ninth nights of the ceremony. Three dance forms were depicted: First Dancers, Six Man Na’akai, and Male/Female Na’akai. All segments of the dances were shown: entrances, prayers, blessings, formal introductions, basic dances, and exits.

The quality of the film was good—images were clear and the cinematographer took care to capture context by moving from dancers, to audience, to patient, to surrounding environment, etc. However, two factors made notation and analysis difficult. The films were silent but accompanied by audio tapes which, unfortunately, could not be synchronized precisely with the visual images. Also, the camera cut from shot to shot abruptly, resulting in a loss
of continuity. My knowledge of the dances made it possible
to restore continuity, but the linking of action to music
and song proved difficult. In fact, a precise match was not
possible, nor, as I will argue later, entirely
appropriate.  

Participant observation, film analysis, and analysis of
labanotation scores revealed the following dance features.
These features are associated with all three Nightway dance
forms.

Dance structure and characteristics: The three Nightway
dance forms that I observed exhibited a similar structure
involving a formal opening, followed by a stationary segment
performed in a line, and continuing with clockwise movement
performed either by lines traveling as a unit or by
individuals turning in place. The basic dance (consisting
of one stationary part and one turning or moving part) began
when the singing started and ended after the singing stopped
and a rattle roll was completed. Line formation was
maintained during entrances and exits. The movement was
earthbound and contained in character. There was no
leaping, jumping, or hopping. Skipping was done by Talking
God and Water Sprinkler only. Arms were held close to the
body. The head, torso, and upper limbs remained locked in
position throughout the dance.

The organizing principles that structured the dances
were the same as those for other Nightway rites: repetition
as a means of accruing power; fourfold repetition to assure
completion and efficacy; clockwise or sunwise movement
to establish the correct, natural order; and attention to
cardinal direction with its associated social and spiritual
meanings. There was also some indication that a right-
footed principle was operating, at least among the lead
dancers (and those who successfully followed their lead).
This involved the tendency to lead with and accent stepping
on the right foot. This may relate to the belief that evil
spirits step with the left foot first (Kluckhohn and Wyman 1940: 86). Certainly it would be inappropriate for the Ye'ii to lead with the left foot. Also, the principle of the open circle was followed. A closed circle can be dangerous in that it leaves no opening for evil to exit or for good to enter (Reichard 1950: 89-90). During the traveling segment of the na'akai dancing, although the line curved, the dancers I observed never formed a closed circle. There was always a gap between the lead and end dancers. We are told in the origin legend, that Changing Woman danced on the four sacred mountains in a sunwise circuit without making a complete (closed) circle (Matthews 1897: 147). This would be another example of the demonstration of 'correct order' in the dances. Finally, there was adherence to the principle of even numbers. As stated in Reichard: "The rule is that blessing and divinity are represented by even numbers, evil and harm by odd" (1950: 244). Although older sources suggest that this principle may not have been rigidly followed in the past (Stevenson 1891: 274-275; Parsons 1921: 241-242), it was an invariable feature of the dancing I observed with regard to the number of dancers performing (either four, six, or twelve, depending on the dance form) and the number of sets performed (four). 

The dances I observed were a study in bounded variation, i.e., certain aspects of the dance were fixed while others were variable. This may be an example of what Faris has termed "[t]he never-changing/ever-changing dialectic" characteristic of Nightway practices (1990: 106). In the case of Ye'ii Bicheii dancing, I saw a stable structural framework demonstrated within which variation occurred, giving the appearance of stability and variability simultaneously. Orientation toward cardinal direction; attention to the principles of even numbers, fourfold repetition and the open circle; and performance of clockwise motion were unchanging features. In over thirty hours of
observation of dancing in three ceremonies, I saw no change in these elements. Dancers did not arbitrarily decide to face east (away from the patient) instead of west; they did not perform two or three sets instead of four; they did not decide to travel counterclockwise for a change; and they did not perform without the requisite number of dancers.

It was mainly during the stationary part of the dance that variation was seen. Some dancers turned a little in place from right to left, some made half turns, a few made full turns, and some hardly turned at all. In addition, not all end dancers turned to face the advancing lead dancer during the traveling sequence of the na'akai dance. And Talking God did not always stamp when calling into the face of the patient at the beginning of a dance. Such variation is apparently permissible and does not interfere with the function of the dance—which is to restore correct order and balance when these elements have been disturbed.

The patient, who blessed each team and was present for all dance performances, was the focal point of the danced action. The dancing was not gestural in nature; the dancers I interviewed did not attach meanings to motions of the hands, feet, or head. (However, meanings were attached to the organizing principles outlined above.) The dancers stressed song over movement when talking about what is important in a dance. It would appear then that, to these dancers, dance is a vehicle for presenting and enhancing the song.

Effort analysis: Labanotation is a descriptive tool used to record the external form of movement. Effort is an analytical tool designed to expose the internal workings of the movement (Laban and Lawrence 1947; Bartenieff 1962, 1963; Bartenieff and Davis 1965; Dance Notation Bureau 1966). The analyst must infer the mental (cultural) or emotional state affecting the quality of the movement. Briefly stated, effort analysis is concerned with certain
aspects of time, space, control, and weight. Time refers to the management of clock time. It refers also to the dancer's internal sense of time which is described in terms of pacing (what to do and when to do it) and the dancer's sense of "slow" (leisurely) and "fast" (frenetic)—or how much to do in a given period of time. The dancer's orientation toward space is an important consideration. It can be described as "directed" (focused, purposeful) or "undirected" (unfettered, unrestrained). Control of movement may be "bound" (internally controlled—the dancer is not free to improvise) or "free" (unrestrained—the movements seem to resist control). Weight has to do with whether one indulges or resists gravity. Movement that has weight is "strong." Movement that appears weightless is "light." Weight here refers to the dancer's sensation of the movement and to the appearance of the movement (not to poundage).

For the purpose of this study, we have considered how Nightway dancers manage time and space. And we have identified the characteristics of their effort patterns. In Ye'ii Bicheii dancing, the following features were identified.

The dancer's orientation to space is described as follows: The body occupies space; it does not cut through it. Each dancer operates in his or her own little world and does not interact with others. However, included mentally in this little world is the entire ceremonial cast. Dancers are limited in what they do by their assigned part in the production. Dancers do not indulge much in improvisation; they are restricted by what they are supposed to do. Dancers follow a clearcut, predetermined path oriented to cardinal directions. They operate on a fairly level plane with very limited up-and-down or side-to-side movement. The dancer's use of space is directed and controlled and the amount of space utilized is limited. The
shapes formed in space by the dancers' movements are rigid in design and tradition-bound.

In terms of management of time, the pacing is quick; the dancers are in constant motion. We note that the movement is cued by the music. Therefore, the music has an insistence to it which creates a heightened effect. A quick impulse is associated with both movement and music in the na’akai dancing. (This characterization does not really apply to the performance of the First Dancers whose movements are slower and more deliberate due to the prohibition against error.) There is an accented beat. The meter of the na’akai dancing is binary or ternary and the tempo designation is as follows: the quarter note equals approximately 104 beats per minute. The duration of a four-set performance is approximately twenty to thirty minutes for na’akai dancing and approximately fifteen minutes for the First Dancers.

Finally, the quality of the effort is related to the central purpose of the dancing which is healing. The effort can be characterized as purposeful and strong. The movement is restrained, self-controlled, directed, and meaningful. It is not highly embellished or decorative in nature. It is performed not primarily for personal pleasure or for the entertainment of the audience; its function is to restore correct order. The inner state of the dancer is serious and focused. The exertion is characterized as "easy." The dancing, though vigorous, is not gymnastic in character; unusual movements and postures, such as are found in ballet, are not seen here. There is little resistance to gravity. The movement is earth-bound. If we likened the dancers' effort to fabric (as is sometimes done in effort analysis), we would find the texture firm, rough, and thick. The following figure illustrates the effort characteristics demonstrated in na’akai dance movements.
Figure 7. Effort patterns in Na'akai dances.
Dr. Nahumck's observations of the movements and effort patterns of Yé'ii Bicheii dancing led to the following general impressions. "If the Navajo people have the capacity for producing this kind of effort, it suggests the following characteristics: self control, self reliance, determination, the ability to carry through any task they believe in, a strong communal sense, and a strong belief in self and culture."

**Relationship of movement to music and song:** No in-depth study of Nightway music has been done, and such will not be attempted here. Of particular interest in this study is the relationship between music and/or song and the movements of the First Dancers and Na'akai Dancers.

For the song sung by the First Dancers during the outdoor performance, I have found no musical score. There is, however, a snatch of this song on the audio tape accompanying the Nightway films of the American Indian Films Project (Tape # 24-3020). There is currently a strict prohibition against recording this music; therefore, commercial recordings are not available. We find the song text, in Navajo and English, in Matthews (1902: 286-287). My only observation regarding this song is that its tempo is slower than that of the na'akai songs. Our metronome reading was approximately 78 beats per minute as compared to approximately 104 for the na'akai songs. The need for an error-free performance results in a slow, careful, deliberate execution. This in turn slows the movements of the dance. We do not find the "quick impulse" which, according to Dr. Nahumck, characterizes the effort of the na'akai dancers. Further, the song cues the movements of dancers, telling them when to initiate their 180 degree turns in place. It also signals the beginning and ending of the danced action. Even if we had a film record synchronizing music, song, and movement, we would not be able to make a precise match between movement and musical
note or song lyric. Such precision is not typically present in Nightway dancing. As mentioned previously, the dancers are not highly coordinated in their actions, particularly with reference to footwork. They do not, for example, all step on the same foot, or turn in perfect unison, or use the same number of steps to perform a figure. However, the better rehearsed and coordinated teams gain greater prestige and those with the most moving song performance received the highest evaluations from the Four Corners team.

For the genre of na'akai songs we have more information. Musical scores can be found in Matthews (1897: 283-284) and McAllester (1983: 621-622), and a song text in Navajo and English is provided in Matthews (1902: 152). Recording of these songs is not prohibited and several commercial and research recordings have been produced (see Faris 1990: 72-73, n. 46).

Of special interest is the Laura Boulton recording—Navajo Songs: Recorded by Laura Bolton in 1933 and 1940—released in 1992 by Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings and annotated by Charlotte J. Frisbie and David McAllester. Included in this selection are six Yeii Bicheii songs. Also included are descriptions of the Nightway ceremony, its music and dances. We have already noted that these song texts are not entirely fixed, as is the song of the First Dancers. Teams frequently create new songs; however, the songs exhibit a similar structure. The structural features are identified by McAllester (1971, 1983) as a common duple meter, a formulaic recurring phrase ("I-hi-yi hi-ye hi-ye, o-ho-wo ho!") and other characteristic vocables ("us and uwus."). Another stable feature, according to Sapir and Hoijer is the presence of "the characteristic words háha·ya and náha·ya." Otherwise teams are free to "make up new tunes and words [vocables]" (1942: 503, n. 15:26).

However, in the na'akai song text recorded in Matthews, we find "Há'hayá'" (see lines 14 and 16) but not náha·ya (1902: 126).
Matthews points out that the songs are mainly composed of vocables which are said to be currently "meaningless." However, there are a few phrases to which meaning is assigned: "Há'huizánaha, sihiwánaha" (The corn comes up, the rain descends) and the converse, "Sihiwánaha, Ha huizanaha" (The rain descends, the corn comes up).

The dancers interviewed for this study persistently stressed the importance of the songs. If we are told that these songs are composed largely of "meaningless" vocables, we may question how they could be "important." Frisbie's work on Navajo vocables provides information regarding the types, characteristics, and functions of vocables in ceremonial music. She finds "that vocables can be archaic or obsolete words, that they can imitate animal cries, that they are a fixed, integral part of the music and poetry, that they are genre specific in some song styles, and that they fill out melodies and weld texts to songs" (1980a: 347). 'Not translatable into English' obviously does not mean 'insignificant' to Navajos. The fact that something other than everyday language is used is, in itself, significant, as McAllester has noted:

The vocables with the many us and uwus give the voices a sound unlike that of other Navajo (or other Indian) singing. The persistent, shifting syncopations, the shouts at the beginning and in the body of the song, the gourd rattles, and the held notes are additional special features. All these differences are intentional for it is the voices of the gods that are heard in Yeibichai songs and they should not sound like ordinary singing. There is also a strong prohibition against using ordinary speech while wearing the masks (1983: 609).

According to the dancers I interviewed, it is the quality of the musical performance and its ability to move the audience and create a mood that is important. Na'akai singing has been characterized by McAllester, in his review of the recording Night and Daylight Yeibichei (1971: 168) as "extraordinarily beautiful"; he cites Roberts, Boulton, and
Rhodes who further describe the singing as impressive in its use of "...falsetto...together with...rapid pulsing bounding movement and...restless beautiful melodies" and as "displaying almost acrobatic feats in bounding back and forth between octaves." It is characterized as "haunting" and as having "hypnotic power." I doubt that anyone who has listened to these songs on a cold night under starry skies would find this praise excessive.

The relationship between na'akai songs and danced movements is similar to that described for the First Dancers, an exception being that the prohibition against error is lifted. A related difference is that the tempo is quicker and this gives the dancing an energy that we do not see with the First Dancers. The singing cues the beginning and ending of the danced action and tells the dancers when to begin and end the traveling sequence. And, as with the First Dancers, the relationships among musical note, word/vocable, and movement are imprecise. The dancers, ideally (in the minds of those I interviewed) are doing roughly the same thing at the same time, but we cannot pin down their performance more precisely than that.

What the Nightway literature reveals

Of the nine descriptions of Nightway in the literature, six contained little or no information about dance (Tozzer 1909, Schwemberger [1902-1908] 1992, Curtis 1907, Fergusson 1931, Kluckhohn 1923, and Parsons 1921), two were somewhat useful (Haile 1947a, Stevenson 1891), and one contained sufficient information to be of value (Matthews 1902). Also of value were the unpublished papers of Luke Lyon (1985a, 1985b, 1986b). Taken together these sources, spanning the past one hundred years, provide a near panoramic view of Nightway and add some time depth to this study. We will take up these descriptions in turn to see what can be learned about the performance of Nightway and its dances through time.
Alfred M. Tozzer: Tozzer, whose description is based on a Nightway he attended in 1901 in Chaco Canyon, does not discuss Ye'ii Bicheii dancing. He does, however, present a rendition of the sandpainting which depicts the Na'akai Dancers (1909: Plate III). This version has four rows of dancers (twelve per row) in contrast to the two-row versions displayed in Matthews (1902: Plate VII) and in Stevenson (1891: Plate CXXIII). Matthews has this to say about the dry painting: "It is said to depict the naakhai, or dance of the last night as it took place among the gods... and disregarding such mythic accessories as clouds and rainbow, it represents also the dance as it is now conducted among the Navahoes" (1902: 128).

In all three versions of this sandpainting we see Male Gods (with round heads) and Female Gods (with rectangular heads) arranged either in two single sex lines—as they are found preceding the promenade in the dance—or in lines with males and females alternating—as they appear when entering and exiting the dance field." Stevenson and Matthews show two single sex lines of six dancers each. Tozzer shows four lines of alternating males and females, with twelve dancers per line (if we include TG as a dancer in the first line at the top of the page). In Matthews and Stevenson, Talking God is shown at the head of the line and Water Sprinkler brings up the rear. In Tozzer, TG appears in the lead but WS is not clearly shown. All females are depicted holding spruce in each hand while all males hold the gourd rattle in the right hand and spruce in the left. It appears that both males and females wear a decorated kilt (today females wear a woven dress, but their decorated aprons are said to represent the kilt) and both have decorated pouches (today only males wear pouches). Elbow and knee streamers are worn by both sexes as they sometimes are today. We can conclude that the sandpainting of the na'akai dancers is a graphic
representation of the living dancers, illustrating their appearance, paraphernalia, and line formations.

Simeon Schwemberger: Schwemberger (1867-1931), a Franciscan brother who eventually left the order to enter secular life as a photographer, post master, and trader, devoted only a few paragraphs to the dancing. From his account we learn that "the dancers commence to sing and dance most fantastically" and he does mention the corn meal blessing and prayer for the First Dancers, but we learn little else (1992: 74-75). Unfortunately, no photographs of the dances were taken although many excellent photographs of other Nightway rites (with especially striking photographs of Talking God and other Ye'ii) appear in Paul Long's book about Schwemberger's photography (1992).

Edward S. Curtis: Curtis (1868-1952), also a photographer with an interest in Indians, produced a brief account of a Nightway ceremony, supposedly observed during a trip in 1904, which mentions but does not describe the dancing. Faris has pointed out that this could scarcely be a first hand account as the visit was in the summer when the full Nightway with public dancing could not be performed (Faris 1990: 68, n. 16). Curtis probably errs in stating that, "[n]o qualifications are necessary other than that the participant be conversant with the intricate ritual of the dance" (1976: 35). According to my Navajo teachers, at the time of Curtis's visit to Navajo land, ritual qualifications for dancing would probably have been more rigidly adhered to than today.

Curtis also produced a motion picture of "staged" Ye'ii Bicheii dancing. This segment was filmed in the daytime and obviously not in ceremonial context. I deemed it inappropriate for this study of the role of dance in a curing ceremony.40

Erna Fergusson: Fergusson, in her book Dancing Gods, devotes several pages to the dancing of the ninth night.
She was a native of the Southwest and a "dude-wrangler" in charge of taking tourists to see ceremonies. She believed that the dances were art forms and worthy of study, and she described Ye'ii Bicheii dancing as "the best dancing the reservation can show" (1931: 245). Fergusson, like many others, relies heavily on Matthews, frequently without crediting him. In addition, her account contains what I believe to be inaccuracies. In her description of the formal opening that begins the performance of the First Dancers, she mentions the rushing of Talking God toward the east. During this action, the dancers are said to have "whirled to the west" while shaking their rattles. And they are described as having "beat the ground vigorously with their right feet" (1931: 244). This does not correspond to the introduction I observed where the dancers invariably faced first north and then south while dipping their rattles and they did not "beat the ground vigorously with their right feet." She may well have been following Matthews's account, to which I will later refer in detail, or she may have been describing the action with reference to the movement of the rattle—the rattle does indeed whirl to the west and then to the east. Later, in describing the male/female version of the Na'akai Dance, she refers to feet (I assume) "pounding up and down," gods scooping up goddesses, and couples prancing (1931: 245). Neither I, nor the other documenters of Nightway, observed such actions. Although not very informative where dance is concerned, Fergusson's fifteen page description of Nightway is more personal, sensuous, and lively than most and conveys some sense of what it actually feels like to be present at such an event.

Clyde Kluckhohn: Kluckhohn's first hand account of a Nightway was published before he received anthropological training and, as Faris has pointed out, it contains numerous instances of plagiarism (Faris 1990: 69, n. 23). This
The author also pays little attention to dance, and his brief description is peppered with unfortunate word choices. The First Dancers perform "a short weird dance." The singing of the na'akai is "patently barbarian yet haunting." He finds the dance movements "almost impossible of description" (1923: 192). And surely it would be impossible to create a coherent description based on only one or two nights of observation.

Two other pieces of information are questionable. The twelve na'akai dancers are said to represent "old man and old woman of the original world six times duplicated" (ibid.). I believe he is referring to First Man and First Woman of the Navajo creation legend. To date, I have been unable to find support for this statement. Also, Kluckhohn describes the First Dancers as chanting "a reminder to the people" focusing on the importance of corn, rain, vegetation, pollen, and other things (1923: 192). He is probably referring to the song that the First Dancers sing while dancing. If so, it is chronologically out of place. He has placed it before the prayer delivered by the Medicine Man and patient prior to the dancing; the "chanting" comes after the prayer and meal blessing.

Elsie Clews Parsons: Parsons, a student of Boas, published a "note" about a Nightway conducted in 1920 at Tuweitchedu which served two purposes: to point out two variations from Matthews's account and to present Yé'ii Bicheii dancing as viewed through Hopi and Tewa eyes.

Regarding the variations from Matthews, Parsons places the entrance of the brush shelter dressing room toward the east rather than the west, as she maintains Matthews had done. If she is referring to Matthews's Fig. 15, he has placed the entrance of the brush shelter (or arbor) toward the south, not the west (1902: 140). At any rate, I agree with Parsons that the entrance is to the east, as is true.
for all ceremonial structures (brush arbor, sweat lodge, hooghan, etc.).

Parsons also refers to the patient’s blessing of the dancers. She maintains that the motion of sprinkling the dancers with corn meal proceeds "not from right to left, but in the usual sunwise direction, from left hand up left arm across chest and down right arm to right hand." She is apparently contradicting Matthews's description (1902: 142)--a description with which I agree. I find Parsons's account confusing. According to my observations, the patient and dancers face opposite directions (dancers west, patient east). The patient is positioned at the right side of the dancer. The blessing gesture, as I observed it countless times, traveled from the dancer's right shoulder or biceps area, over the head, and down the left arm, to end with the placing of a pinch of meal in the dancer's left hand. In fact, if the sprinkling did occur as Parsons describes, it would be a counter clockwise (counter sunwise) motion which is unthinkable in a rite of blessing as it is counter to the natural order. She may be describing the motion from the perspective of the dancer which does not make much sense. The direction of ritual actions is invariably described by Navajos with reference to the person executing the action. (See also Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 517 n. 15:158 for a description of the blessing motions using prayer sticks instead of meal.)

More interesting and enlightening is the Hopi and Tewa critique of the Ye'ii Bicheii dancing—a critique which is largely negative. The Navajos are faulted for not measuring up to Hopi/Tewa standards: "'They pay no attention to each other, and they don't know how to step,'" (1921: 240). Also criticized was the lack of uniformity in ceremonial dress. The article does emphasize the close relations between some Navajos and some Pueblos. Due to periods of cohabitation (during the Pueblo revolt) and to intermarriage between the
two groups, there are close ties between some Navajo and Pueblo clans. It is apparently not unusual for Pueblo teams to appear at Nightway ceremonies. As Mrs. AP of the Dilkon family pointed out to me, Pueblo masked dancers (Kachinas) are considered "compatible" with the Ye'ii.

Father Berard Haile: With Haile we move on to those studies that contain more dance information. Haile, a Franciscan father residing at St. Michaels mission until his death around 1958, has references to Nightway dances scattered throughout his 109 page Head and Face Masks in Navaho Ceremonialism (1947a). It is from Haile that I learned of the two forms of First Dancer performances: the "regular" form using four dancers, and the "calling god first dancers" using six men all in the mask of Calling God (1947a: 73; 1951: 121).

He also mentions the prestige associated with being the first or last na'akai team, the taboos associated with dancing (no menstruating females and no open sores or red spots on the skin), and, although he does not describe the actions of dancers, he does demonstrate the ordering of dancers in lines (1947a: 73, 75).

Haile emphasizes the importance of the perfect execution of the First Dancers' song and also mentions the na'akai songs which, he states, may be chosen from a collection but which must contain the phrases "it comes out" and "it comes down." He concludes that this is a reference to rain and infers from this that "the masked dance is a prayer for rain" (1947a: 92-93). He also explains why dancers should not speak in the mask. This is because the Ye'ii were created without the ability to speak--they can only give their calls. The dancers, as their representatives, are expected to be speechless as well (1947a: 91). The consequences of breaking this taboo are cough, sores, small pox, and stomach problems (1947a: 24).
Haile provides more dance information in his work: *A Stem Vocabulary of the Navaho Language: English - Navaho, Volume Two* (1951), particularly in the entries for "dance" (pp. 71-75), "first dancers" (pp. 120-121), and "ye-i bichai dance" (p. 326). His description of the male/female na'akai dance in this volume bears little resemblance to what I saw. I did not see males and females face each other after separating into two lines. I did not see men and women "[reverse] sides passing each other," nor did I see the women "swing their spruce twigs right and left" (1951: 74).

Luke Lyon: I am indebted to James Paris for sharing three of Lyon's unpublished papers (1985a, 1985b, 1986b). Lyon, now deceased, was a physical chemist at Los Alamos. He produced descriptions of the public dance events at two Nightway ceremonies. The earlier one took place at Tohatchi, New Mexico on November 9-10, 1985 (1985a). In his six-page paper, he provides a synopsis of the ninth night outdoor events: attacking the patient from the four directions (an exorcistic rite), the First Dancers' performance and the na'akai performances, with diagrams.

In a larger document (twenty-eight pages), he describes the ninth night indoor and outdoor rites of a Nightway that was performed at Mexican Springs, New Mexico on November 1, 1986 (1986b). The hataalii was Alfred Yazzie. This is a highly detailed account with both written descriptions and simple diagrams of the three Nightway dance forms. The diagrams are easily assimilated. They depict the basic segments of the dances and show the positions of the dancers during each segment. Labanotation, of course, provides greater detail and continuity. We know not only where the people are but also how they got there and how long it took. We also know what all parts of the body are doing at all times. To obtain detail, however, one must sacrifice ease of reading. Labanotation scores can be read only by specialists.
Lyon's accounts, produced nine to ten years before my observations, correspond to the dancing I saw with some minor variations. Lyon depicts the hataalii as being present during all dance segments. At the ceremonies I attended, he was present only for the prayer and blessing of the First Dancers; he then retired to the hooghan. Lyon does not show the actions of Talking God and Water Sprinkler during the formal opening when they rush past each other headed east and west, and he does not show their skipping circuit around the dance field.

Interestingly, on the final page of his 1986 account, Lyon provides a simple diagram and some written description of a Hopi Bean Dance from the last night of a Powamu Ceremony. This ceremony took place at Tewa Village, Hopi First Mesa on February 10, 1985. The dance appears similar to the male/female na'akai dance in that it has separate lines of males and females who couple up and progress down the aisle formed by the two lines. There is also mention of a meal blessing for the dancers and of rattle shaking and singing accompaniment by the dancers.

James Stevenson: This author, who attended a Nightway near Keams Canyon in October of 1885, has provided translations of the prayer to the First Dancers and their song while dancing. He mentions the formal introduction performed by the First Dancers but stops short of describing their actual dance. He does, however, produce a fairly detailed, albeit somewhat jumbled, description of the male/female na'akai dancing (1891: 273-275). Stevenson has the dancers beginning the dance single file, then splitting into two lines (women to the north and men to the south, which corresponds with my record. Then he has them quickly regrouping "into a promiscuous crowd." This is followed by a brief description of the formal introduction with confused reference to cardinal direction, and then the line splits once again into two single sex lines. His report, which may

136
be borrowed from Matthews, differs from my own in that the "promiscuous" line of alternating male and female dancers was formed only for the entrance and the exit. The description of the promenading part of the dance is easier to follow, and the advancing and retreating of Talking God and Water Sprinkler (whom he identifies as "Hostjoghon") to meet and salute the advancing couples is similar to what I saw.

According to Stevenson, the number of times the dance set was repeated was variable: 12, 21, and 19. And apparently the number of dancers per team was variable as some participants "dropped out from weariness, which caused diminution in some of the sets" (1891: 275). This does not match my observations of all teams having a requisite number of dancers (either four, six, or twelve—depending on the dance) and all sets being performed four times per performance without variation. Stevenson could mean that teams gave several performances until 12, 21, or 19 sets in total were performed, but the idea of 19 or 21 sets is problematic. It disobeys the principle of even numbers, which holds that "blessing and divinity are represented by even numbers, evil and harm by odd" (Reichard 1950: 244). This principle was rigidly applied at the ceremonies I attended.

Stevenson provides the English translation of one prayer text, which I have not found elsewhere. This prayer occurs on the second day and is associated with the preparation of offering packets and sacred tobacco offerings. It includes with a request for a good dance (1891: 244). This prayer will be presented in a subsequent section on Nightway texts in this chapter.

Washington Matthews: By far the most informative source on Nightway dancing is Matthews. Not surprisingly, he is the author most frequently borrowed from by others— with or without benefit of citation; his Night Chant volume is based
Matthews' description of the First Dancers' performance includes all parts of the event: entrance, blessing, prayer, formal introduction, dance, and exit (1902: 141-146). This account matches my observations with a few exceptions. During the prayer for the First Dancers, Matthews states that "the dancers keep up a constant motion, bending and straightening the left knee and swaying the head from side to side" (1902: 143). The First Dancers I observed stood still for the blessing and prayer (as did all the following dance teams), and they did not move until the onset of the formal introduction.

For the formal introduction, Matthews indicates that the dancers faced west and then east. All formal introductions I saw were performed facing north and south. According to Matthews (referring to the First Dancers), the dancer's left arm "hangs inactive." His subsequent description of the na‘akai dancers better matches my observation of all male dancers: "the veritable male dancer holds the upper arms hanging by the side, the forearms partly flexed, a gourd rattle in the right hand, a wand of spruce in the left" (1902: 145, 149).

Matthews states that, before the turning sequence, the First Dancers "poise themselves on the toe of the left foot" (1902: 145). At the three Nightways I attended the dancers turned with a simple flat-footed stepping in place.

Matthews describes a role for Talking God that I was unable to detect in my fieldwork or film analysis. He
states that TG whooped at the close of each stanza "to indicate that he is satisfied with the way in which the song has been sung, that he has detected no error" (1902: 146). He also states that the First Dancers may be given "cigarette" offerings during the blessing. These four offerings are "sometimes made and sacrificed on the fourth day" (1902: 142). At the ceremonies I attended no such offerings were given to the dancers. At the Dilkon ceremony we did witness the preparation and ritual lighting of these sacred tobacco offerings on the second day.

Matthews follows with a description of all parts of the male/female na'akai dance with Talking God and Water Sprinkler participating, which again is very similar to my record with a few differences (1902: 147-150). He describes the dancers as being in motion during the blessing, which, again, I did not see. And, as was the case with Stevenson (who undoubtedly borrowed from Matthews), he maintains that the line of dancers with males and females alternating, split into two sex segregated lines briefly, then regrouped into their single line, then split again. The dance teams that I saw divided as soon as the singing began and did not reform their single line again until the moment the singing stopped during an exit.

Another small point of difference occurs during the promenade. Matthews says that the male "offers his left arm" to the female. The males I saw did not make this gesture. The females simply approached and slipped their right arms through the men's left which, given the flexed position of the male arm, was easy to do and required no adjustment on the man's part. Matthews's description suggests an interaction between male and female that would seem out of place today in Nightway dancing—with the man proffering his arm "much in the manner in which civilized people perform this act" (1902: 148). The attention of the Nightway dancers I interviewed was focused on song and
movement, not on the audience, and not on other dancers. The only slight interaction I observed was between lead and end dancers during the six man na'akai. These two did seem to "pay attention" to each other. Otherwise each dancer was internally focused. In fact one of the Hopi/Tewa criticisms of Yé'ii Bicheii dancers as relayed by Parsons was: "'They pay no attention to each other,'" (1921: 240). Aside from this, Matthews's description of the promenade, including the actions of Talking God essentially matches my own.

The exit, however, differs slightly. The exit I witnessed began with the fourth promenade of the lead couple. All couples fell in behind and Talking God, positioned at the east end, simply waited for the lead couple to approach. He then turned clockwise to face east and led the line of couples off the field. As soon as the song ended and the rattling stopped, the females reentered the male line. According to Matthews, males and females reform the single line facing west after their fourth set. Talking God is positioned at the eastern end of the line. The dancers turn to face east and are led off the field by TG (1902: 149).

His section pertaining to the dancers' footwork when moving is rather difficult to reconcile with my own: "the men lift the feet well from the ground; but the women do not do this; they shuffle along on their toes, lifting the feet but little" (1902: 150). He also speaks of males having a raised right foot "for a period of two notes." The footwork I observed was nearly identical for males and females and consisted of the simple 'marking time' in place for the males with the females changing to a right-close-left step while progressing sideways in line and promenading down the center.

It is not clear to me what Matthews and others mean when discussing the number of repetitions of the dance. They could be referring to repetitions of the basic dance or
of dance sets (which, using my scheme, consist of four repetitions of the basic dance). Part of the confusion comes from terminology: I have divided "the dancing" into the basic dance, the set (the basic dance done four times), and the performance (four sets). (See Figure 6 on pg. 97.) I have also used the word team to refer to the group of dancers because that is the word used by my teachers. Matthews is using the word "set" to refer to a dance team and he states that "[t]he most desirable number of repetitions for the dance is said to be forty-eight, when four sets of dancers each perform twelve times" (1902: 150). I would construe this to mean that four teams performed three sets each which would add up to forty-eight repetitions of the basic dance. If we allow twenty to thirty minutes per set, with lengthy breaks between team performances, this would add up to a full nine or ten hours for the complete dance event.

Matthews notes considerable variation from the norm of forty-eight repetitions. It could be that the standard was adhered to when there were fewer Ye'ii Bicheii teams available. Today such teams are numerous. At the three ceremonies I attended, there were from seventeen to fifteen and fewer teams participating.

The variations of the na'akai dancing described by Matthews were not observed by me (1902: 151). He does not describe or mention the six man version that I have documented.

I can only add myself to the list of admirers of this remarkable scholar. Following in his footsteps one hundred years later, I find his account clear, intelligible, and highly useful.

Following this lengthy comparison of Nightway accounts, which provide a diachronic view of the dancing, we are brought to the question of change through time. The issue of change is a difficult one to discuss where Nightway is
concerned. Faris and others have pointed out the tremendous variation in Nightway practice. Nightway is not unlike a surgeon's kit from which may be taken the appropriate instrument or procedure for the task at hand. Similarly, the Nightway specialist can draw upon a store of songs, sandpaintings, prayers, prayer sticks, rites, and dance forms in consultation with the patient and the patient's family.

The content of Nightway is enormous. The practices show great variation, yet one is told that each Nightway must be performed exactly as was done in the time of the legend in order to be effective. Faris calls this: "[t]he never-changing/ever-changing dialectic" and further refers to "the 'paradox' in Navajo knowledges--the simultaneity of continual change, and unaltering constancy" (1990: 106, 22 n. 11). This makes any discussion of change and continuity through time in relation to the dances nearly impossible. I can state that in 1995 and 1996, in viewing the performances of over thirty dance teams, I saw aspects of dance that varied and aspects that did not. Had I been able to view all Yé’ii Bicheii dancing for the entire winter season, I might have come away with a different picture. And, although I have reviewed one hundred years of Nightway reporting and found differences between what others describe and what I saw, it is difficult to attach meaning to the differences.

The consistency is certainly remarkable. I can read Matthews's work and state: Yes, this is basically what I saw. I can view the American Indian Films Group's footage from the 1960s and say the same. The only general impression of change that I have is that there may be a trend toward increased standardization in the dancing. Several early sources report variation in such things as the number of dancers per team and the number of dances performed per team (Stevenson 1891: 274-275; Matthews 1902:
The 1960s film footage also showed male/female na'akai teams with what appeared to be ten rather than twelve dancers. In the field, I saw no such variation. All teams had to have the required number of dancers. If dancers were missing, substitutes had to be recruited. Even the rehearsal I attended could not be conducted until the required number of dancers were present. And the rule of four-fold repetition was rigidly adhered to: all teams (both First Dancers and Na'akai Dancers) performed four sets each. The principle of even numbers was followed as well, both in terms of number of dancers and in number of sets. I do not mean to imply that variation in these characteristics never occurs; I merely state that I did not see it.

I was told repeatedly that the na'akai dancing at Nightway ceremonies had become more competitive through time. Also new venues for ceremonial dancing have opened up in the past thirty or forty years which also emphasize competition and 'showiness.' Here I refer to the Song and Dance competitions and performances of Nightway and Mountainway dancing at fairs and rodeos. It could be that increased competition and the new emphasis on 'putting on a show' has led to the intrusion of Anglo performance values and to increased standardization, but that is only a possibility.

What the Nightway ceremonial texts reveal

A number of song, prayer, and narrative texts relate to Nightway dancing. They were studied in an effort to explore the meanings and decode the symbolism of the dances. We will begin with the prayers, but before these texts are presented, we should consider the function of prayer or ritual language in a ceremony.

Prayer: According to Kluckhohn and Leighton, "[t]he prayers are usually regarded as the most powerful features of a chant" (1962: 221). I am not sure how ceremonial
power can be measured, but there is no question that words have power in Navajo worldview. In fact, it was through the agency of thought and word that the universe came into being. Witherspoon has this to say about the functions of ritual language: "It commands, compels, organizes, transforms, and restores. It disperses evil, reverses disorder, neutralizes pain, overcomes fear, eliminates illness, relieves anxiety, and restores order, health, and well-being" (1975: 76).

Reichard's views on the ceremonial role of prayer are well known: The "main purpose is compulsion by exactness of word" (1944a: 10)." That is, if the words are produced correctly, the Holy People are compelled to cooperate. This view is critiqued by McAllester (1980: 231-234) who finds Reichard's comments on "the high valuation of cooperation and reciprocity within the community" to be closer to his understanding of the nature of prayer persuasion (see also Gill 1977; Griffin-Pierce 1992: 33-34). This interpretation, which emphasizes persuasion instead of coercion and reciprocity instead of compulsion, is deemed more suggestive of the benevolent kin relationship that exists between the Navajo and the Holy People.

The two items for consideration in this study are the lengthy prayer performed before the First Dancers' performance (one hundred lines) recorded by Matthews and the short prayer, found in Stevenson, which follows the preparation of offerings on the second day of the ceremony. We will begin with the shorter text:

People of the mountains and rocks, I hear you wish to be paid. I give to you food of corn pollen and humming-bird feathers, and I send to you precious stones and tobacco which you must smoke; it has been lighted by the sun's rays and for this I beg you to give me a good dance; be with me. Earth, I beg you to give me a good dance, and I offer to you food of humming-birds' plumes and precious stones, and tobacco to smoke lighted by the sun's rays, to pay for using you for the dance; make a
good solid ground for me, that the gods who come
to see the dance may be pleased at the ground
their people dance upon; make my people healthy
and strong of mind and body. (Stevenson 1891: 244).

Stevenson relates that the offering packets are placed
at the edge of the dancing ground in front of the hooghan.
We did not see the placement of these offerings at any of
the three ceremonies we attended, but we did see their
preparation. It is evident from this prayer that the
patient is expected to pay both the Holy People and the
earth for their cooperation in giving "a good dance." It is
also understood that the Holy People will be present at the
dance and it is hoped that they will approve of "the ground
their people dance upon." This brings to mind the issue of
the relationship between the dancers and the Holy People.
Although I was told that in earlier days it was the belief
of some that the dancers became transformed into Yé’ii
during a ceremony (Haile 1947a: 6), today neither the
dancers nor the audience members I interviewed hold such a
belief. The consensus is that the dancers are human
representatives of the Yé’ii. Sapir and Hoijer refer to the
dancers as "intermediaries between the patient and the gods
prayed to" (1942: 517, n. 15:158). The masks worn by the
dancers are believed to represent the true appearance of the
Holy People who are attracted to their likenesses. Through
prayers of invitation, ritual offerings, and other
enticements the Holy People are attracted to the ceremonial
site and encouraged to reciprocate by sanctioning a cure.

The next prayer is delivered by the Medicine Man and
the patient before the First Dancers’ performance on the
ninth night of the ceremony. It is performed only once and
marks the beginning of the public dance event. The chanter
addresses each of the four gods represented by the dancers:
corn, rain, vegetation, and corn pollen. Matthews has given
us free and interlinear translations of the prayer to the
Pollen God. This basic prayer is repeated to each of the Yé’ii in turn. The attributes of the particular Yé’ii being addressed are added (Matthews 1994 [1897]: interlinear translation, 269-272; free translation, 273-275). The comments below refer to the free translation.

The first thirteen lines evoke the sacred landscape: "In Tsegíhi [possibly Canyon de Chelly] . . . In the house made of dawn, . . .". These are references to locations visited by the wandering hero of the legend with whom the patient is meant to identify. They are the homes of the Yé’ii (Haile 1947a 1947: 7). In line fourteen, the male divinity is addressed: "Oh, male divinity!". This is followed by multiple requests to "come to us" with references to various accoutrements: come to us "With your moccasins of dark cloud . . . With the dark thunder above you. . ." (lines fifteen through thirty-five). Lines thirty-seven and thirty-eight refer to offerings that the patient has made. This is followed by requests that various body parts be restored and that evil be taken away (lines thirty-nine through forty-eight). Then comes the announcement of healing: "Happily I recover. . . . Happily I hear again. . . . Impervious to pain, I walk" (lines forty-nine through fifty-nine). Lines sixty through seventy-seven express the desire for fertility (rain, vegetation, pollen, corn) and other kinds of abundance (goods and jewelry). The prayer continues with assurances that the people will appreciate what is given to them and it concludes with an affirmation of wellness and the pronouncement that "It is finished in beauty" (lines ninety-one through one hundred).

Once the sacred context has been established with reference to places from the legend, the gods/dancers are greeted, their presence at the ceremony is requested, they are reminded of offerings that have been made to them, their aid in the restoration of the patient is enlisted, the
healing is announced, their help with crop fertility, goods, and jewels is requested, and assurance of appreciation is given. This prayer in particular, and the ceremony in general, serve to reestablish and reaffirm benevolent relations between certain Holy People and the Navajo, and a link between the past, when the Holy People took pity on an earth surface person, and the present is forged. The occasion for reciprocal exchange has been carefully constructed. And the expected result is the restoration of order, the well being of the patient, the environment, and the community.47

Song: A number of scholars have attempted to define the role of song in Navajo ceremonies. According to Reichard, "[t]he primary function of song is to preserve order, to co-ordinate the ceremonial symbols; a secondary purpose must be enjoyment, . ." (1950: 288). Farella, in his discussion of the Navajo account of creation, refers to the summoning of the Holy People through singing (1984: 88). Witherspoon describes the role of song in the creation of the world: "The form of the world was first conceived in thought, and then this form was projected onto primordial unordered substance through the compulsive power of speech and song" (1977: 47). Faris characterizes the songs of Nightway as appeals to and invitations to particular Holy People (1994: 190-191).

In summary, ceremonial songs preserve order, co-ordinate ceremonial symbols, provide enjoyment, serve as a vehicle for appealing to and extending invitations to the Holy People, and songs can also project order onto matter. One could argue that the role of song in creation is demonstrated in ceremonies today—the songs construct the sacred realm and connect listeners (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually) to that realm; they, in effect, transform the ceremonial site into the sacred site of the legends.
Matthews has mentioned 576 songs in relation to Nightway, and this count is by no means complete (1902: 270-271). In the corpus of Navajo songs, Ye'ii Bicheii songs are considered unique. They have been characterized as "hypnotic," "powerful," and as "displaying almost acrobatic feats of bouncing back and forth between octaves" (McAllester 1971: 168). McAllester comments elsewhere that these songs are purposefully different from others: "for it is the voices of the gods that are heard in Yeibichai songs and they should not sound like ordinary singing" (1983: 609).

The songs that are of particular interest here are the song of the First Dancers and the na'akai songs. We will begin with the song sung by the First Dancers during their outdoor performance. This song must be performed without error; otherwise, the ceremony is promptly cancelled. The following text is taken from Matthews (1902: 286-287), the first thirteen lines consist of vocables which have been omitted. (My use of italics does not conform to the original):

\[
\text{Ha'hózánaha sihiwánaha.} \\
\text{The corn comes up the rain descends.} \\
\text{Tsínatáa bí'líniya.} \\
\text{The corn plant with it arrives} \\
\text{Aíaheóo aíaheó.} \\
\text{[vocables, not translatable]} \\
\text{Sihiwánaha hohezánaha.} \\
\text{The rain descends the corn comes up.} \\
\text{To'biázi bí'líniya.} \\
\text{The child-rain with it arrives.} \\
\text{Aíaheóo aíaheó.} \\
\text{[vocables, not translatable]} \\
\text{Óhohohó éhehehé héya héya.}
\]
Nanisée  
Vegetation  
Thadítíni  
Pollen

The song contains many vocables, which are said to be untranslatable. First Dancer of the Four Corners dance team referred to these sounds as "Ye'ii language." (See Frisbie 1980a for a discussion of the types, characteristics, functions, and construction of vocables.) Meaningless should certainly not be construed to mean 'unimportant.' No change is permitted in the song of the First Dancers—the vocables are considered to be as significant as the translatable words. The song contains references to the four gods represented by the dancers: initial corn, male rain, vegetation, and corn pollen. The theme is plant fertility.

Matthews has also supplied musical scores for two na'akai songs (1994 [1897]: 283-284) and also the text in Navajo of one song (1902: 152). While the song text for the First Dancers is invariable, the na'akai songs may be created anew following a basic structure. They consist mostly of vocables. Out of sixteen lines produced by Matthews, only two are capable of translation, lines thirteen and fifteen: "The rain descends. The corn comes up" (1902: 152). According to Haile (1947a: 92-93), these two lines ("it comes out" and "it comes down") must be present in every na'akai song. Haile interprets these lines as referring to rainfall. He infers from this "that the masked dance is a prayer for rain" and that the prayer is addressed to Talking God (the god in charge of corn), an interpretation that was not verified by my Navajo teachers.

Sacred narratives: The relationship of sacred narrative to ceremonial practice is a subject of some interest. According to Matthews, the relationship is variable; the
legendary accounts refer to the various rites of the ceremony, sometimes in a prescribed order and sometimes in a less orderly way (1894b: 246). We cannot say how narrative and practice evolved. Perhaps rites were developed and narratives followed to provide explanation and clarification. Perhaps the reverse occurred, or the two may have developed together. It is McAllester's view that "the 'narratives' are derived from the songs. The song sequences are the living entities, and only certain gifted practitioners were able to manufacture narratives out of them to satisfy the Anglo need for a story" (McAllester, letter dated September 1, 1996).

Symbolism may be deciphered through study of the narratives as Matthews points out: "A primitive and underlying symbolism, which probably existed previous to the establishment of the rite, remains unexplained by the myth, as though its existence were taken as a matter of course, and required no explanation. Some explanation of this foundation symbolism may be found in the creation and migration myth or in other early legends of the tribe; but something remains unexplained even by these" (1894b: 246). Reichard, of course, devoted two volumes to an explication of this symbolism (1950).

In Matthews's view, the myths can function as memory aids for the performance of lengthy song sequences. He illustrates this by presenting a set of Home God songs and their corresponding narrative passages (1894a: 186-194; cf. Reichard 1950: 282-283).

Faris examines in detail the topic of Nightway narrative texts and the anthropological errors committed in relation to them. He criticizes the "essentially demeaning vocabulary of the discipline," the reduction of human experience and ceremonial details to a search for rationalist universals, "central mandates, archetypes, and cardinal themes," and the "obsession with texts" resting on
the faulty assumption that "all ceremonial practices could be accounted for in a single coherent account" (1990: 25-29). Paris points out that Nightway narratives are "episodic" in nature and that concatenated texts, such as that elicited by Mary Wheelwright from Hosteen Klah, are "artificial" products (1990: 28, 176).

The various narrative episodes constitute a repository of knowledge and explanations which can be consulted to suit the purpose at hand. I found that whenever I posed a "why" question or inquired into the meaning of some practice, my teachers invariably consulted sacred histories. This is done not only to address questions of anthropologists but also in teaching Navajo youth about their traditions. Consequently, we will devote some attention to the narratives in an effort to learn more about the meaning and symbolism of the dances.

Out of the corpus of possible Nightway narratives, three have been documented: The Visionary (along with a variant), The Stricken Twins, and The Whirling Logs. In these accounts the experiences of an earth surface person (or, in the case of The Stricken Twins, two brothers) are related. The hero's encounters with the Holy People result in his learning the Nightway ceremony. He returns to his kin to pass on this knowledge and eventually goes to live among the gods--sometimes taking the form of some natural phenomenon so that he can be seen and remembered forever. Part of the acquired ceremonial knowledge (particularly in The Visionary) pertains to dancing.

Reviewed for this section were Klah's narrative in Faris (1990: 177-233), the Slim Curly narrative in Sapir and Hoijer (1942: 137-259), and the narratives in Matthews (1902: 159-265), Stevenson (1891: 280-284), and Haile (1947a: 95-101) which Faris tells us were probably taken from Tall Chanter, Laughing Singer, and Slim Curly respectively (1990: 36).
These histories record the first observations of the Nightway dances by an earth surface person—who, in one account, "dreamed of dancing with the blue faced people" (Paris 1990: 178). In some cases the dancing is being performed by crows on opposite sides of a cañon: "The crows were of both sexes in each place, yet because they sang on opposite sides of the canon is the reason that to-day the yébaka [male gods] and the yébaad [female gods] stand opposite one another when they sing in the rites of the night chant" (Matthews 1902: 160). "These people [the crows] did not remain on one side of the canyon where the first fires were built, but they crossed and recrossed in their dance and had fires on both sides of the canyon. They danced back and forth until day light . . ." (Stevenson 1891:281). Today, the dance field with its campfires on either side and the rows of male dancers and female dancers who briefly form couples (cross and recross) constitute a recreation of this scene from long ago.

At other times the dancing is performed by Holy People in the form and dress of contemporary dancers. In the account in Stevenson, the hero is told by the Holy People: "We will dress you like ourselves and teach you to dance; . . .". He was also "instructed to have twelve in the dance, six gods and six goddesses, with Hasjelti to lead them. He was told to have his people make masks to represent them" (1891: 283).

Performances of the First Dancers are also described. In Sapir and Hoijer we learn that the four dancers were chosen from four assembled groups, and that to this day members of the same group (clan) do not follow each other in line (1942: 145, 179). Comments by Haile are added in a note: "... two persons of the same clan should not stand behind one another, but must have a person of a non-related clan standing between them. This rule applies to the first (song) dancers and other groups of masked dancers" (502 n.
By "other groups of masked dancers" Haile must be referring to the na'akai teams which is puzzling to me, since I was told that members of such teams are typically of the same clan.

Also in Sapir and Hoijer are instructions regarding how the song of the First Dancers is to be performed with references to "corn," "water's children," "growing things," and "pollen" which are the elements the dancers are said to represent (1942: 145, 503-504 n. 24, n.15:26).

These narratives contain little description of dance movements; we are simply told that the dancing was done "as we dance it to this day," "as we do now," or "just as they do now" (Matthews 1902: 166, 169; Faris 1990: 199). The exceptions are brief passages describing the formal introduction: "They made such motions as our dancers make at this day with their rattles, sweeping them downward to the west and to the east, and whooping their call at each motion" (Matthews 1902: 203; see also Faris 1990: 205); this gesture is also referred to as the "pulling-out motion" or "Things Are Pulled Out" (Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 145, 502 n. 15:21). Such pulling motions in Navajo ceremonies are generally exorcistic in nature. Also movements associated with the blessing of the dancers are mentioned, using prayer sticks instead of corn meal: "Immediately, in a sunwise circuit, he did in this way to them, above their heads" (Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 213, 517 n. 15:158).

A number of taboos associated with the dancing are found in the narratives. The prohibition against dancers of the same clan standing side by side in line has already been mentioned. Also the audience received instructions "not to move or speak while the first dance and song went on . . . because it was very holy"; the commentary is added: "nowadays they don't care so much" (Klah in Faris 1990: 181). A restriction is placed on the First Dancers; when applying their body paint they are not to "look over the
entrance curtain [of the hooghan] yonder" or "there will be
danger from the Wind Gods" (Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 179).
And finally the prohibition against continuing a ceremony
when someone has died is mentioned in the context of the
crows' dance that the hero observed or overheard (Faris
1990: 178).

Also described are the sounds made by dancers (Sapir
and Hoijer 1942: 215), the prayerstick offerings made for
the dancers (Faris 1990: 191; Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 205),
the sandpaintings relating to dance (Matthews 1902: 165,
183; Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 253, 508 n. 15:65, 509 n.
15:72), and the use of masks by the dance teams (Sapir and
Hoijer 1942: 255, 523 n. 15:222).

Some other features of the dancing are worth
mentioning: the application of body paint by the First
Dancers, as described in the narrative, relates to the song
that is now sung during this procedure: "They painted
themselves with black clouds, they say. Putting their heads
in the male rain, they prepared themselves" (Sapir and
Hoijer 1942: 179). The song that is sung in the hooghan
makes reference to "dark cloud" and "mizzling rain," among
other things (Matthews 1902: 286). The hero's act of
making a personal prayer request (to return home to his kin)
while blessing the dancers relates to the current practice
of audience members making a personal request when they
bless the dancers and bid farewell at the final dawn rite
(Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 215-217, 523 n. 15:223). The
participation of different tribes in the dancing is
mentioned in the Klah text (Faris 1990: 218). Also
mentioned is the association of the First Dancers with
Thunderbirds (Faris 1990: 205) and the dancers' practice of
wearing fox or coyote tails (Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 213,
517 n. 15:155). Finally we are told that "No one will ever
again see the God People as the Visionary has seen them"
(Sapir and Hoijer 1942: 518 n. 15:171). Therefore at
ceremonies today, although the Holy People are expected to be present, they are not expected to be visible.

I also consulted the Navajo origin legend as recorded in Matthews (1897), Sapir and Hoijer (1942), and Zolbrod (1984). In Matthews's rendition of the legend we find song lyrics (1897: 126, 128, 132), but no real description of dancing. We learn simply that long ago dancing was a part of ceremonial life in the fifth (present) world. There is an interesting reference to Changing Woman "dancing" on four sacred mountains and following a sunwise circuit but without making a complete (closed) circle (Matthews 1897: 147). Also there is some indication of the power of song in one episode. First Man goes to investigate a dark cloud that is covering a mountain. First Woman expresses concern for his safety and he responds: "Nothing will go wrong. For I will surround myself with song ... You may be sure that the words of my songs will protect me" (Zolbrod 1984: 172-173).

In sum, the origin legend and the sacred narratives associated with Nightway contain fragments of information about dance. Included are such things as the hero's observations of the na'akai and First Dancer events as performed by Holy People and sacred animals, the number and sex of performers, the formation of the dances, the line order of the dancers, and a bit about the direction of certain movements. We also learn something of the taboos and ritual paraphernalia associated with the performance along with some of the symbolic connections, e.g., between dancers and Thunderbirds or Crows, or between dancer and the elements of corn, rain, vegetation, and pollen. What we do not find in these narratives is a detailed description of how the dances were performed. There is no prototypic blue print that dancers today follow. We are told simply that the dances were done then just as they are done today.
What theories of ceremony reveal

Before we can entertain the subject of how the dances contribute to healing, we must consider how the ceremony as a whole works to bring about healing. Several scholars of Navajo culture (both Navajo and Anglo) have constructed theories of ceremony which explain how the ceremonial goal of restoring health and well being is achieved. Very few have incorporated dance into the analysis, although some have made important statements about the significance of movement in Navajo world view. We will first examine the various theories, both etic and emic, and then turn our attention to the ceremonial role of movement and dance.

We will begin with the anthropological literature on Navajo ceremonialism where we will find, of course, areas of consensus and of dispute. There is certainly agreement that the purpose of most Navajo ceremonies is curing—or the restoration of beautiful conditions (balance, harmony, and correct relations to the natural, supernatural, and social realms). However, another issue, involving the nature of Navajo/deity interaction in the context of a ceremony, has given rise to interesting debate, which we will examine shortly. An appropriate starting place for an examination of how Navajo curing ceremonies work is the research of Gladys Reichard.

Anthropological theories: Reichard, a student of Boas, devoted some thirty years to the study of the Navajo. She was the participant observer par excellence. Fluent in the language and an accomplished weaver, she not only studied ceremonial life but was, on occasion, the focus of it as the 'one sung over.' Reichard's descriptions and explanations are couched in the accepted terminology of the era; she speaks of imitative and sympathetic magic, animism, magical formulas, and supernaturals. We have since found other ways of saying similar things, but in the past fifty years there have been few to substantively challenge her findings as
expressed in the classic work—Navajo Religion: A Study of Symbolism (1950). Her theory of ceremony is expressed throughout this work and in several articles (1943, 1944a, 1944b, 1945).

To understand how ceremonial goals are achieved, one must first consider the nature of the human being, the nature of the deities, and the relationship between the two. The Dīyin Diné’ē are referred to as Holy People in the literature. Reichard identifies nine categories of Holy People having different attributes and tendencies (1950: 63-79). These deities are not hierarchically arranged; however, they are related as kin. They are spoken of either as having always existed without creation or birth, or as having been created from existing matter, e.g., corn, turquoise, or shell. They are not all good; they can be dishonest and lacking in compassion. And they are not omnipotent. A deity who may be helpful in a given situation may be powerless in another. Dīyin Diné’ē are superior to humans as possessors of inherent knowledge, which humans must be taught. Also they are powerful and mysterious and they can do things that humans cannot, e.g., change to animal form.

Human beings or "earth surface people" (nihokáá diné’ē) are closely related to the deities. Reichard tells us that "man is so closely related to deity that it is impossible to draw a sharp line between the human and the supernatural" (1950: 28, see also Farella 1984: 23-31). In some sacred histories, humans are created by First Man and First Woman from ears of corn; Changing Woman is also said to have created humans by sloughing off layers of her skin. Humans are under the protection of the Holy People who gave them the ritual tools for attracting good and exorcising evil, with "good" being defined as order and control while "evil" is defined as "that which is ritually not under control" (Reichard 1950: 5). Humans functioning on their own cannot
eliminate evil; they must have the cooperation of the appropriate Holy People. Reichard defines the corrective process which must be gone through which involves identifying the error that brought about the imbalance or disorder, acknowledging one's part in committing the error, and choosing the appropriate means for removing evil or attracting good (1950: 107-118). According to Reichard, if the rites of the ceremony are performed correctly, the Holy People must sanction the cure. This view of a ceremony as operating in a rather mechanistic fashion is reiterated in Kluckhohn (1968), Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962), and Witherspoon (1977). Central to the issue of how a ceremony works is the relationship between Navajos and their deities. We will look at Witherspoon's discussion of this relationship.

Witherspoon is, like Reichard, a fluent Navajo speaker with a long and close relationship to the Navajo people. According to Witherspoon, "the primary purpose of Navajo ritual is to maintain or restore hózhó . . . everything that is good, harmonious, orderly, happy, and beautiful" (1975: 76-77). He defines the relationship between the Diyin Dinéé and the earth surface people as follows:

At the core of Navajo ritual is the relationship between the Diyin Dinéé 'Holy People' and the nihokáá dinéé 'earth surface people'. Diyin may be translated as 'immune' for the Holy People are people who are immune to danger, destruction, and death as a reflection of their inherent knowledge. Earth surface people may incorporate this power and immunity by knowing how to control and compel the Holy People who possess it. The symbolic action of ritual is the process by which the Holy People are controlled and compelled (1975: 77).

Elsewhere he explains how this control is effected:

Control of a particular diyin dineé is accomplished by knowledge of his or her symbols (particularly his or her name), knowledge of his or her offering, and knowledge of the smells, sights, and sounds which
attract, please, and compel him or her. The correct songs, prayers, and symbols are irresistible and compulsive. A Navajo does not supplicate or worship his gods; he identifies himself with them and both controls their power and incorporates their power within himself. To control the gods, he must raise himself above them; for if he lowered himself below them, why should they identify themselves with him? He does not say 'not my will but thine be done'; he says 'my will be done' (1977: 61).

Finally, we have his views regarding what happens at a ceremony: "Curing rites, often referred to as 'sings', re-enact the creation of the world through myth, song, prayer, and drama, and place the patient in this re-created world, closely identifying him with the good and power of various deities . . . . Ritual identification with them neutralizes the contaminating effect of dangerous things or evil deeds and restores one to the good and harmony of hózhó" (1974: 56).

Thus far, the outcome of the ritual process has been described in strong terms: the Holy People are brought under control; they are compelled to cooperate with those who petition their aid. An alternative view is offered by McAllester who finds the notion of compulsion, as advanced by Reichard (1944, 1950: 126, 181, 267-276) problematic with regard to Navajo/Diyin Diné' ceremonial relations. He finds the idea of compulsion difficult to reconcile with Reichard's "unpersuadable deities" category (1950: 63-70). He prefers the term 'reciprocity,' finding it more compatible with the language of some prayers which describe a reciprocal exchange of favors between the Navajo and the Holy People. Further, he maintains that successful ceremonial treatment is a complex process frequently involving a great deal of trial and error and not simply a mechanical matter involving the application of a formula (McAllester 1980: 231-234, see also Gill 1977; Griffin-Pierce 1992: 33-35).
The notions of compulsion and control do seem problematic. Certainly the prayer associated with the First Dancers' performance (previously discussed, pp. 146-147) is suggestive of reciprocal exchange. But more significantly, it is difficult to reconcile the idea of ritual control of deities by earth surface people with the realities of Navajo social life as guided by the maxim that no adult has the right to force another to a course of action. The difficulty lies with the choice of the word "compel" (which connotes force) to describe human/deity relations in a ceremonial context. In the American Collegiate Dictionary, compel is defined as follows: 1. to force or drive, esp. to a course of action. 2. to secure or bring about by force. 3. to force to submit, subdue. 4. to overpower. It is difficult to understand how a behavior abhorrent in social relations could be condoned as the appropriate method for dealing with one's most respected elders--the Holy People. It is also difficult to understand how one can overpower those who are more powerful. However, these seeming incongruities are products of Anglo thought and English semantics. They do not constitute a problem in the minds of Navajos.

It is Witherspoon's view that the "problem" is the result of the Anglo practice of labeling with a few English words something that requires extensive description and explanation. He suggests that the study of the Stricken Twins episode, associated with Nightway practice, teaches us much about deity/human relations (see Matthews 1902: 212-265). In this story, the twins, who are stricken blind and lame, approach the Holy People for assistance but are unsuccessful because they come with no offerings. The Holy People are at first untruthful and uncaring but ultimately they are made to comply with the twins' request for healing when the correct offering is made. Witherspoon points out that it may seem strange to us that an inferior being can
gain control over a superior being but we should recall that it was the Holy People who gave the Navajo the means to control them. In sum, through correct ritual procedures "the Navajo beseech the Diyin Diné' in ways they cannot resist (Witherspoon, phone interview, September 16, 1996).

It would seem that the compulsion vs. reciprocity issue rests on the question of whether or not the Holy People have the option of refusing to cooperate—if they cannot refuse, then they are truly compelled. According to Witherspoon, this would not be a meaningful question to ask a Navajo. It is a cultural given that the Holy People will comply with human requests if the ceremony is performed correctly. On those occasions when a ceremony is not successful, i.e., the patient does not improve, Navajos invariably attribute the failure to human error. It is never suggested that the ceremony failed because the Holy People did not feel like cooperating.

In addition, there is the issue of predictability to consider. In sacred narratives the quality of 'fickleness' or 'unpredictability' is attributed to some Holy People. One might question how this characteristic affects ceremonial relations. It is Witherspoon's view that outside the realm of ritual control some Holy People may behave unpredictably; however, this quality is not expressed when correct ritual procedures are followed.

When discussing Navajo/deity relations it is important to distinguish between everyday life and ceremonial events. McNeley (referring to Witherspoon's emphasis on Navajo ritual control of deities) has stated that, "His vision of Navajo control over the gods (Witherspoon 1977:61), while applicable to the ideal ritual occasion, does not seem to be descriptive of the man-god relationship in the everyday world as conceived by the Navajo. There, guidance and control of the Navajo by supernatural powers, rather than the reverse, seems to be the norm" (1981: 58). It is
McNeley's view that the Holy People associated with the four cardinal directions guide and instruct the Navajo in their daily lives by means of messenger winds.

Conflicting models?: We are left with two models which explain how the goal of curing is achieved in a ceremony. The mechanistic model places control in human hands. Illness and misfortune are brought about by human error and curing is the result of human ritual efforts. If those efforts are correctly executed, the desired outcome is assured. This view is clearly expressed in Kluckhohn's treatise on Navajo Philosophy:

It is a lawful universe. The notion of causation is essentially mechanical. Although at the beginning of things certain happenings occurred at the will of the divinities, they themselves were henceforth bound by the consequences of their own acts. Once the machine had been started, it ran according to irreversible laws. There is no place in Navaho thought for a god who can capriciously (from the Navaho point of view) grant the petition of humans. The divinities, too, follow the rules" (1968: 679).

Alternatively there is what may be termed the reciprocity model as espoused by McAllester (1980: 231-234) and reiterated in Griffin-Pierce (1992: 32-35). Griffin-Pierce maintains that Reichard's emphasis on the compulsive effect of properly executed prayer "dehumanizes" the kin-based, reciprocal exchange between human and deity in a ceremony and makes of it "a mechanistic transaction laden with magical overtones" (ibid.: 33). According to Griffin-Pierce, the Holy People cooperate not because they are forced to but because they want to: "Although a reciprocal relationship is established in the course of the ceremonial that, in a sense, obligates the Holy People to help, this relationship is patterned after that of a family wherein one wants to render aid to a family member" (ibid.). This model emphasizes prestation and the kin relationship between the Holy People and earth surface people. The curing of the
one-sung-over becomes, in essence, a gift given in return for gifts received. ¹⁰

Basic to a situation of reciprocity is a condition of mutual need—one can scarcely reciprocate unless one possesses something that the other party wants or needs. And the question arises: Do the Holy People, with their superior, "immune" status, need anything from the earth surface people? Farella, who describes the human/deity relationship as a symbiotic one, offers an answer:

But, these gods also very badly need the Navajos. . . . corn meal and corn pollen are . . . the food of diyinii, and these are returned to diyinii in the form of offerings. This food provides sustenance both to diyinii and to the earth-surface beings. With such sustenance the Navajos reproduce and grow in population, and there are more people to grow more corn. Similarly, the beings that are on the diyin side also increase, and thus there is more Water, and the Sun becomes more powerful [and they too can contribute to the corn's growth]" (1984:30).

The two models may not be that far apart, and the argument may be a sterile one in that it rests on a false dichotomy which is entrenched in anthropological thought—that of power versus influence. This dichotomy provides the framework for anthropological discussions of political systems. Beginning students of anthropology are told, for example, that a headman has influence rather than power. Because he is respected and has certain skills and knowledge, he can persuade others to a course of action; however, he cannot force anyone to do anything. Power enters the picture only with state-level organization and leaders who have the power of physical sanction. Such leaders have prisons and police forces—they can force their subjects to comply. In many contexts the power vs. influence boundary becomes quite fuzzy, and we find that "influence" is "power" wearing a velvet glove. If I put my case to you in such a way that you feel you cannot refuse,
then indeed I have power over you. I have controlled you even though there may be no threats or weapons involved. There are many ways for humans to get control through the skillful manipulation of others: deception, passive aggression or non cooperation, prestation, flattery, etc. All of these can effectively be used to achieve the same goal: making others feel compelled to cooperate with one's agenda.

Whether we use the terms compulsion or reciprocity, or, as Wyman has expressed it, "[compulsion] by the ethic of reciprocity," (1983: 537) to describe ceremonial transactions, it can simply be stated here that through correct ritual procedures the earth surface people gain the cooperation of their powerful relatives, and a state of imbalance and disharmony is corrected by their mutual efforts.\textsuperscript{61}

**Theories of my Navajo teachers**

The following three theories of ceremony were collected in the field. My collaborators were responding to two questions: (1) How does a ceremony make a person well? And (2) How does the dancing make a person well?

**AP's theory:** AP was the individual who invited me to attend the Dilkon Nightway. I have described him as a neo traditionalist who was removed from his family at an early age and sent to boarding school. AP joined the military as a young man and later received a degree in social work. He developed problems with alcohol and was eventually made well through the ceremonies of Beautyway, Lightningway (also known as Shootingway), and a brief Enemyway.

It is AP's view that the Holy People symbolize the healing forces inherent in the human being. The rites of the ceremony serve to stimulate and release these forces. According to AP, "The rites help us focus the energy we were born with to heal ourselves. I call this 'self efficacy.'" AP described his own experience as the one-sung-over in
Lightningway. One of the rites involved the construction of an evergreen covering that encased his head. When the covering was cut away, AP experienced a tremendous sense of release, as if all the anger, hurt, and confusion of the past were dropping away leaving him free. It was not unlike being released from a prison.

AP also mentioned the fact that certain songs in Nightway take the patient through the developmental stages of life—from embryo to the present. This is not unlike what occurs in psychotherapy. Through this process, harmful elements or experiences from the past are exposed and expelled. One's proper place in the scheme of things is reinforced. In essence, a massive 'realignment job' is done on one's sensibilities.

With regard to the dances of Nightway, AP felt that they served to stimulate, focus, and release the patient's healing energy. He recalled seeing a patient, who was extremely feeble and ill, become so invigorated by watching the dancing that he got up and danced.

AP's psycho/symbolic theory has some support from Anglo scholars. A different point of view is expressed by Wyman: "...Navajo Holy People (gods) are conceived to be greater-than-human configurations of reality who are actually encountered in the Navajo environment. Not even the most analytically inclined Navajo singer will think of his gods as personified processes" (1983: 557). Faris also expresses discontent with explanations that stress "symbolic healing, symbolic manipulation, or psychosomatic technique" (1990: 239).

Here it would be good to pause and consider what I believe to be one of the most significant statements regarding Navajo "meanings." The statement is found in Frisbie's article about vocables in which she cites a personal communication with Marcia Herndon: "in studying vocables, archaic words, or anything else, we are, as
Herndon (1979) emphasizes, 'dealing with a range of meaning rather than the meaning.' In the same article, Frisbie stresses the following: "researchers must attempt to determine and identify the degrees of knowledge characteristic of their collaborators and results must speak only for those providing them" (1980: 364-365). AP is an acculturated individual trained in social work and psychology; he is not a ceremonial specialist. However, his views are no less 'valid' than those of any other Navajo. They are part of the 'range of meaning' that I found associated with the Nightways I observed, and they stress a 'truth' that I heard repeated by relatively unacculturated individuals as well—that potentially there is a Holy Person inside each individual and that through ceremonial involvement and correct living that Holy One within is activated.

EL's theory: EL is the son of "Uncle," the one-sung-over at the Dilkon ceremony. He is college educated and, when last heard from, he was planning to go to law school. He was at one time a Christian fundamentalist minister, but he felt disenfranchised when church officials refused to allow him to incorporate traditional symbols and elements into church services. Like so many others, he is now trying to reorient his life toward traditional values. EL has close ties to a Nightway singer and when I met him he was assisting the singer and writing about Nightway for a college program.

EL subscribes to the ritual drama theory and views the Nightway ceremony as a re-enactment of the healing of the Visionary from the sacred narrative. A primary purpose of the ceremony is the identification of the patient with the protagonist of the legend. This is an example of what EL calls "reoccurring medicine," a concept inherent in Navajo healing practices. According to EL, the dancers are impersonators of the gods whose performance creates a
conduit from past to present. They become, in essence, a channel through which blessings and healing pass. He translated a portion of the First Dancers song that is sung inside the hooghan: "Of a truth, they have now become divine." He stressed that although dancers represent divinities, they are not transformed into Yé'ii. Possession is not a part of traditional Navajo spiritual experience. In fact, if a Yé'ii Bicheii dancer had such an experience he or she would be considered ill and would have to have a Nightway performed.

To EL, Nightway is not unlike an opera with many scenes and acts. The earlier acts pertain to exorcism and purification (the first four days), and the later acts, including the dancing, are devoted to recreation of the sacred episode and to identification of the patient with its protagonist.

Medicine Man Dancer's theory: This member of the Four Corners Yé'ii Bicheii team was a dancer, a Blessingway singer, and a former official of the Dine Cultural and Spiritual Society (originally known as the Medicine Man's Society). He gave two impromptu lectures in his home on the subject of traditional culture and values. He did not discuss the topic of how ceremonies effect healing but he did discuss the dancing. MMD's explanation is straightforward: the Nightway dances originated with the Holy People who taught them long ago to the Visionary. The dances were part of the corpus of healing practices of the Holy People. They were passed on to the earth surface people by the Visionary and they are done today as they were done then. As for the issue of how and why they work, again, the answer is straightforward: They work because they were designed by the Holy People to work. MMD's theory is fundamentalist or literal in nature rooted in Navajo truths about the role of the Holy People in human healing.
The foregoing theories of ceremony are not viewed here as incompatible. They tend to stress different aspects of the healing process. They can be synthesized as follows: The Holy People and the earth surface people (the Navajo) are closely related. However, the Holy People are superior in knowledge and power, and they are immune to such things as illness, old age, and death. Sacred narratives tell us that long ago certain Holy People took pity on earth surface persons and taught them ceremonies to be used for the purpose of healing. Some of these ceremonies continue in use today. The songs, prayers, dances, offerings, sights, smells, and sounds of the ceremony please the deities and attract them to the ceremonial site. If the ceremony is correctly conducted, the deities invariably cooperate by sanctioning the healing. Human beings by themselves cannot defeat evil; they must have the cooperation of their powerful kin.

Certain rites of a ceremony such as Nightway are devoted to purification and exorcism (those of the first four days). The remainder of the rites (e.g., songs, prayers, sandpaintings, and dances) function to attract good and bring about a dramatic reoccurrence of the legendary healing episode.

The ceremonies bring about the healing of the one-sung-over by recreating an episode from sacred history and by identifying him or her with the protagonist. They also enhance the inherent sacredness within the individual. The ceremonies were created by the Holy People to restore wellness and beautiful conditions; if they are performed correctly by earth surface people, this effect is assured.

The role of movement in the Navajo universe

A number of authors have stressed the importance of movement in Navajo life and thought. Motion is a key feature of Navajo language, philosophy, social life, oral literature, and ceremonial practice. Before we discuss the
role of dance in healing, we must first consider the power and various meanings of movement.

Language: Reichard has described the Navajo language as "rich in words of motion" (1944a: 31). Witherspoon has remarked on "the astonishing degree to which the Navajo language is dominated by verbs." He elaborates as follows:

There seem to be few, if any, nouns that are not either passive forms of verbs or derived from verbal forms. Particles, prefixes, and postpositions are used primarily as verbal modifiers. The dominance of verbs in Navajo also corresponds to the Navajo emphasis on a world in motion. . . . I once conservatively estimated that Navajo contained some 356,200 distinct conjugations of the verb 'to go.' These conjugations all apply to the ways in which humans normally 'go.' If we added all the verbs relating 'to move,' as well as 'to go' such as in walking or running, the number of conjugations would be well into the millions (1977: 48-49).

Astrov, commenting on this verb-laden language, infers that "the Navaho are likely to be people more interested in the action that leads to this or that condition than in the condition itself; more in the type of motion that leads to some goal, than in the goal itself" (1950: 46). Linguistic analyses clearly indicate that the concept of movement is important to Navajos. Other sources explain how, why, and in what way it is important.

Philosophy: The importance of movement is demonstrated in a number of ways in Navajo philosophy. It has been described as "the essence of life and being" (Witherspoon 1977: 48). To be without movement is to be lifeless. Recalling the sheep butchering at the Dilkon Nightway, the animal could not be butchered until it had ceased to move. To my Navajo teachers, this marked the occurrence of death.

The concept of the soul has been interpreted as a "moving power" (Haile 1947a: 6). Navajos also use movement as a basis for organizing their thinking about the world around them. Living beings are classified according to their mode of locomotion as two-legged, four-legged, winged,
or as those who swim in the sea. Witherspoon tells us that movement is a key feature in Navajo determinism: "the crucial question in Navajo determinism is who can control what or who can control whom. This is determined primarily by the level of one's intelligence and, to a lesser extent, by the potency of one's animation" (1977: 77). 'Potency of animation' here refers to one's ability to move or be moved. The higher the intelligence and mobility of an entity, the higher its position in the Navajo hierarchy of control.

Additionally, motion is perceived of as a link between thought (a wish) and action (an accomplishment) (Reichard 1950: 294). Put another way, action is thought set in motion. In sum, motion is the force that animates the Navajo people, shapes their language, and structures their thinking about the world and their place in it.

Social life: When the Navajo entered the southwest some five hundred to one thousand years ago (according to archaeological reckoning), they were nomadic gatherers and hunters. They maintained a semi nomadic lifestyle through the tenure of the Spanish. Mobility, in fact, facilitated their cultural survival. The Spanish were unable to exert the same kind of control over the Navajo that they did over the settled Pueblos. Today, mobility is still important to the Navajo. Even relatively acculturated, wage-earning individuals are not prone to settle in one place for any length of time. This was certainly true of the families I worked with. One of the great challenges of fieldwork involved locating people. It was often necessary to "track" an individual for days or even weeks before a meeting could be arranged.

Astrov cites several types of migrations among families in the "Canyoncito" area: There are "major moves" which may cover some distance and extended periods of time. And within the major moves there may be lesser ones associated with pasturing livestock or harvesting piñon nuts. There
are also migrations related to wage work. [It is possible that movement is associated in the Navajo mind with freedom and independence.] It is Astrov’s view that this has engendered in the Navajo a "deep-rooted aversion toward any fixation of anything" (1950: 54-55).

Oral literature: The sacred narratives of the Navajo are replete with stories of wandering heroes. It is during these journeys that dangers are met, lessons learned, and blessings received. The Visionary of Nightway is a case in point. He wanders away from his family. He makes any number of journeys among the Holy People. Then he returns to his family only to leave again. Movement is also a central theme of the creation account which describes the evolution of life in terms of an upward progression through four lower worlds to the present fifth world (Astrov 1950: 47).

Also stressed in the narratives are modes of travel. The Holy People are distinguished from the earth surface people partly by their method and rate of locomotion. They travel on rainbows and sunbeams and can make journeys in an instant. This preoccupation with journeying is, as we shall see, evident in a number of ceremonial rites.

Ceremonial behavior: The songs and prayers of Nightway are filled with references to walking, wandering, journeying, traveling, arriving, approaching, ascending, and descending. The very act of singing or praying involves motion. According to McAllester, "Motion is a key to sacred power in Navajo thought. Wind is the basic metaphor of the power of motion. Speech, song and prayer are wind in motion shaped by the added power of human articulation" (1979: 31).

In the structure of sandpaintings and in their associated rites the theme of motion is again expressed. McAllester notes that, in the sandpainting depicting the na’akai dancers, "the feathers on the headdresses [are] bent
over with the thrust of the motion of the figures" (letter
dated September 1, 1996). In certain sandpainting rites,
the one-sung-over is made to step on prepared footprints so
that he or she, in essence, 'walks in the footprints of the
gods.' Witherspoon, citing several studies of the motif of
motion in sandpainting structure, concludes the following:
"Movement under control in Navajo sandpainting provides the
basis for the balance, harmony, and order that are expressed
in these works of art (1977: 169-172).

The dance teams that perform during Nightway are
identified in terms of their manner of going. They are
called na'akai, meaning "groups moving here and there"
(Haile 1947a: 73). I was told by the sister of a Nightway
dancer that this refers to the fact that the teams travel
around, going to different ceremonies.

The theme of movement has been examined by scholars as
it relates to songs, prayers, narratives, and sandpaintings.
Now we will consider its most prominent example--alzhish.

Theory of dance

Although I am mindful of the fact that the dancers I
interviewed stressed the significance of song over movement,
which suggests that dance is a vehicle for presenting and
dramatizing the songs, I do not construe this to mean that
the movement is unimportant or insignificant to the outcome
of the ceremony. The dancers, their paraphernalia, their
singing, and their movements serve to summon and focus power
toward the healing of the one-sung-over. However, the role
of movement, rather than being explicitly defined by the
cancers, must be inferred by the ethnographer. It is my
view that the significance of movement as a power-
generating, life-giving force is so fundamental to Navajo
thought that it operates as a given and does not, for
Navajos, require explanation.

The rites of the latter half of a nine-night Nightway
function to attract good, create order, recreate a sacred
episode, and identify the one-sung-over with the main character of that episode. The dances, as a part of this complex, serve the same functions.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{Attraction of good:} The appearance of the dancers pleases the Holy People who are attracted to their own images. The song, prayer, corn meal, and prayerstick offerings, which are associated with the dance rite, also please and attract.

\textbf{Creation of order:} An error committed by the patient has brought about an imbalance that has affected his or her health, family, and community. Ritual control must be exerted so that the imbalance is corrected and order is restored. The movements of the dancers, which are structured according to principles of repetition, direction and number, are a demonstration of correct order.

\textbf{Recreation of a sacred episode:} Nearly every element of the dance event is related to the sacred narrative. When the \textit{Yé’ii Bicheii} dancer enters the dance field, he or she is a symbol set in motion, or rather a collection of symbols. The masks, ceremonial dress, and paraphernalia represent the actual appearance of the deities. The songs are sung in their untranslatable language. The dance field itself recreates the scene from long ago when the Visionary, huddled in the darkness on the rim of a canyon, observed the campfires on either side and watched the sacred beings criss-crossing in their dance. The repetitive, correctly executed movements of the dancers are generative and power-producing—they bring the legend to life.

\textbf{Identification of the one-sung-over with the legend’s hero:} The one-sung-over is not a passive observer at the dance event; he or she plays an active role and serves as a focal point. The \textit{Yé’ii} are dancing for the patient (and also for all attenders who benefit from the ceremony as well). The patient assumes the role of the Visionary in the sacred history. In a correctly executed ceremony, his or
her offerings (prayerstick, prayers, corn meal, etc.) prove irresistible and the healing is assured.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This project is best summarized in terms of the goals that were defined at the outset. The goals of this research were four in number:

(1) Documentation—The creation of detailed written descriptions and labanotation scores were the first order of business. These data provided the basis for the structural analysis. They were then compared to existing Nightway accounts for the purpose of diachronic analysis. And, finally, they were used in the formulation of theories of movement and dance.

(2) Compilation—Fundamental to this project was the task of gathering information about Nightway dances from as many sources as possible. The anthropological literature, films, oral traditions, songs, and prayers provided information about the origins, meanings, purposes, and performance of the dances.

(3) Theorization—This study concluded with the presentation of two theories. The first theory demonstrated the significance of movement in Navajo life and thought and focused on the power-generating and live-giving properties of ceremonial movement. The second theory explicated the role of alzhish in the Nightway ceremony emphasizing its ability to attract the Holy People, reorder the disorder produced by the patient's illness, recreate a healing event from the sacred past, and identify the contemporary patient with the first earth surface person healed by Nightway.
Research questions--Three fundamental questions were addressed in this study:

What is alzhish? The individuals interviewed for this project, applied the label "alzhish" in virtually the same way that Anglos would apply the label "dance." The term is used to refer to human action (mainly involving movement of the feet) that is stylized, rhythmic, patterned, expressive, and accompanied by music and/or song. Although the Nightway ceremony contains many rites that incorporate singing and patterned movements, the term alzhish is applied only to the performances of the First Dancers and the Na'akai Dancers, for it is only in those performances that we see all of the above-mentioned elements combined.

What is the ceremonial function of alzhish? When I first read about Navajo ceremonial dances, their function was unclear to me. The confusion was engendered mainly by certain characterizations of the dances in the literature. The Girls Dance of Enemyway was likened to a Navajo "debutante ball" (Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962: 229), and the Corral Dance of Mountainway was referred to as a "sacred vaudeville show" (Wyman 1960: 59). It was reported that the dances occurred on the final night of the ceremonies and that they drew very large crowds from all over the reservation. Anglos were not denied entrance. This contrasted with my preliminary notions of healing ceremonies as private, serious, sacred affairs. It was unclear to me whether the dancing was part of the ceremony proper or simply a post-ceremonial social function. I discovered that the Navajo, who are not given to erecting rigid boundaries, create no firm division between what we would term sacred and profane behaviors. An event can be social and entertaining and yet sacred and serious in purpose. The dances are indeed part of the complex of rites associated with the ceremonies and they serve the same fundamental purpose--that of restoring a person to health.
How is this function achieved? Dance facilitates healing in a number of ways, e.g., through the processes of attraction, recapitulation, re-creation, and identification. By their appearance, the dancers attract the Holy People; by the recapitulation of correct order in their dancing they correct the imbalance that was brought about by the patient's error; and by the life-giving power of their movements they bring to life a healing episode from sacred time, causing it to happen again. The patient, as the central focus of the dancing, becomes identified with the protagonist of the sacred narrative. This individual becomes the Visionary, witnessing the dancing of the Holy People and being restored by means of it.

This study, which must be considered preliminary and exploratory in nature, constitutes a step toward the documentation and examination of Navajo ceremonial dance. Much work remains to be done. An expanded study of Yé’ii Bicheii dance, involving work with more teams and observation of ceremonies from more areas of the reservation, would be of value and could lead to identification of regional styles and could also provide support for or refutation of ideas expressed in this study. Also needed is an in-depth study of the music associated with the three dance forms we have examined. Such a study would make possible an analysis of the relationships among music, song, and movement.

Moving beyond the Nightway ceremony, the dances associated with the Enemyway and Mountainway ceremonies have yet to be fully documented. Their documentation along with an ethnomsemantic study of the lexicon associated with the domain of alzhish would allow us to move, from a discussion of the role of alzhish in a particular ceremony, toward an expanded exploration of the role of alzhish in Navajo worldview and ceremonial life.
Our understanding of this aspect of Navajo culture will undoubtedly be limited. Some sacred areas are not to be probed and some questions, put forth by the uninitiated outsider, must go unanswered. However, this need not deter us from cultivating an understanding and appreciation of the power and beauty of Navajo ceremonial dance.
END NOTES

1 "Squaw Dance" and "Corral or Fire Dance" are inclusive terms encompassing many dance sub-types. For example, at a Squaw Dance one may see a Round Dance, Circle Dance, or Skip Dance, among others. A Corral/Fire Dance features any number of dance specialties from other Chantways. (See Matthews 1887, Wyman 1975).


3 Gary Witherspoon, interview, December 5, 1992, Eatonville, WA.

4 I found Kealiinohomoku's "Field Guides" particularly useful (1972: 245-260). They were used in two ways: (1) as a means of double-checking my own questionnaires—to see if anything had been overlooked, and (2) as a model for organizing my field data into a computer file—for this task I used the "Dance Compendium Questions."

5 I do not suggest here that exorcism has no role in a Nightway ceremony. The rites of the first four days, which are described in Chapter 3, are exorcistic.

6 Four Nightway branches are mentioned in Sapir and Hoijer (1942: 500 n. 15:1) and in Haile (1951: 207). See Faris (1990: 31-32, 39-40) for a discussion of branch designations.

7 I am indebted to Pamela Wintle of the Human Studies Film Archives of the Smithsonian Institution for a copy of a paper by Luke L. Lyon entitled "History of the Prohibition of Photographs of Southwestern Indian Ceremonies." This paper, along with records provided by the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley, CA provide the background information on the American Indian Films footage used in this study.
It was Dr. Bellisari, with minor input from me, who put together this list of Nightway functions. I have edited the list for presentation here.

Other types of political activity may take place at a ceremony. Speeches are sometimes given over public address systems by members of tribal government or by those seeking such office. (See Fergusson 1931: 239-240.)

Errors have been found in these drawings taken from Matthews. See Sapir and Hoijer (1942: 505 notes 15:44, 15:48).

The term "apprentice" is used for those Medicine-People-in-training who intend one day to conduct the ceremony on their own. There are also any number of "assistants" at a ceremony who help out in a variety of ways, e.g., with sandpainting construction.

Both Faris and Mc Allester (written communications, 1996) have stressed the point that k'eeCaan are not "cigarettes" although they are labeled as such in English. They are offerings or invitations to the gods. Matthews has used the term 'cigarettes' to refer to a k'eeCaan made of hollow reed as opposed to those made of sticks of various kinds of wood (1902: 37-38).

Only one mistake was made that morning. The esophagus must be tied off when the carcass is attached to the pole to prevent spilling of stomach contents. The butcher accidentally cut the esophagus and a semi liquid load spilled on my colleague's shoes and trousers. Dr. Bellisari recovered quickly and continued with the work.

Overcome by fatigue and heat at this point, I left the hogan to rest. This portion of the ceremony was described to me by Dr. Bellisari, who was present for this entire segment.

Changing Woman and White Shell Woman, Monster Slayer and Born for Water, Talking God and Calling God are all associated as pairs in Navajo sacred knowledge. The nature of the pairing relationship is unclear to me. They are not opposites of each other. It seems to me that one is almost like a shadow or aspect of the other.

The order of events here is not clear in my fieldnotes. It is possible that Uncle was seated and completely treated before the co patients sat down.
"Attacking the patient from the four directions" is the terminology used by EL, son of the patient, assistant to the hataali, and student of anthropology.

This roster was taken from GD's handwritten list, which he intended to recopy later. The spelling has not been verified.

To compare this list of events with those witnessed by Matthews and by Tozzer, see Tozzer 1909: 314-316.

Typically, a person who is not well goes to a diagnostic specialist (usually not the Medicine Man) who uses one of several techniques to "see," "hear," or "feel" the cause of the illness (Reichard 1950: 99-103). The diagnostician matches the patient's symptom picture to the condition of one of the legendary heroes and prescribes the corresponding ceremony.

For a more complete discussion of ceremonial decision-making and evaluations, see Frisbie 1980: 89-101.

Eight months after the ceremony both Mrs. AP and Uncle's son (EL) reported that he continued to show improvement in mobility, mental attitude, and hearing.


Since Uncle and his wife had only recently inhabited this little house, it may be that the Christian symbols belonged to the preceding inhabitants.

Evaluations of errors may vary with the singer, the patient, or the patient's kin group. There may also be regional variation (Charlotte Frisbie, written communication, September 11, 1996).

Accompanying me on this trip was my son Hadd, who functioned as driver, general assistant, and cheerful companion.

I never had an opportunity to join a dance line, e.g., during rehearsal. It seemed inappropriate for a woman to be doing the six man version of the na'akai dance, which is never performed by females. For this reason, I did not make the request. (Anglos tend to believe that 'it doesn't hurt to ask.' I found that, if the request is inappropriate, it makes one's hosts uncomfortable and is, in a sense, hurtful.) However, during my sessions with Lead Dancer, we would both frequently jump up from our chairs and
do sections of the dance. At that point we forgot about Navajo/English translations. Our bodies were the instruments of communication. This is how I tested my understanding of basic movement patterns.

28 Navajo individuals are members of their mother’s clan. However, they are “born for” their father’s clan and are prohibited from marrying members of either clan group.

29 I am grateful to Haile for solving a mystery for me. At the Dilkon Nightway, on the fourth, fifth, and sixth nights, the First Dancers gave preview performances. These always began with the four dancers who were apprentices of Roy Lester. However, these four dancers were later joined by two more men and they repeated the very same dance. These may have been the “regular” and “Calling God” versions of the dance mentioned by Haile, the former having four dancers, and the latter having six. However, I do not recall Calling God appearing with the six men.

30 Faris has questioned whether or not female impersonators are still used in Nightway dancing (letter dated July 13, 1996). Males do play the role of Female God in, for example, the initiation rites; however, I did not see any males dancing as females at the three ceremonies I attended.

31 In Navajo ceremonials, counter clockwise movement is generally considered exorcistic (see Reichard 1950: 182). But in male/female na’aakai dancing the counter clockwise movement of the women appears to be necessitated by the structure of the dance. It is the way females must travel if they are to pair up with the males.

32 In an ideal world, this study would have been conducted differently. A team approach (consisting of ethnographer, labanotator, and ethnomusicologist) would have been used. This team would have recorded the movement, music, and cultural information in situ. Unfortunately, even if such a ‘dream team’ had been assembled, their efforts would have been seriously hampered by prohibitions against filming, photographing, audio taping, and note taking.

33 The collection was transferred to the museum unedited and with scant documentation. Individual items were identified in several ways: catalogue number, reel number, original can number, and roll of film number. No system was consistently followed; therefore, precise identification of the materials used in this study is difficult.

34 As best I can identify it, the video tape we used for labanotation is catalogue number 26-645. The corresponding
audio tapes are numbered as follows: 24-3019, 24-3020, and 24-3021.

35 There was no clear cut correlation between audio tape and film reel. After locating the audio tape that correlated to the ninth night dance footage, it was not possible to synchronize precisely the visual image with the sound.

36 Parsons states that "the number of repetitions by each set was extremely erratic" (1921: 241). Stevens corroborates this and refers also to dancers dropping out from fatigue leaving some sets diminished (1891: 274-275). Frisbie also reports seeing teams perform without the ideal number of dancers, usually because of some circumstance occurring just before the performance (written communication, September 11, 1996). This is not what I observed in 1995 and 1996. What Parsons and Stevens describe violates the principle of even numbers—good (blessings, sacredness) being associated with even numbers and evil or harm by odd.

37 The only mild forms of interaction I observed among dancers involved the coupling of male and female na‘akai dancers and the coordinating efforts of lead and end dancers.

38 There is another characteristic of na‘akai songs that has, until recently, gone unnoticed. In his review of an album of Ye’ii Bicheii songs, "Night and Daylight Yeibichei" performed by a team from Klagetoh whose leader is Boniface Bonnie, McAllester relates information about two types of yeibichai songs (1971: 167-170. There are those sung at night (which are attributed to the Holy People of Navajo Mountain) and those sung near daylight, which belong to Mount Taylor deities. The daylight songs, according to Bonnie, are meant to appeal to children. McAllester finds in them "more melodic playfulness in the phrase structure." In a separate article, McAllester states that "Criers may wake up the people and urge them to bring their children to hear the songs, since they were especially composed for children. The dancers often step higher and 'act up' for the children" (McAllester and Mitchell 1983: 609). I did not see this kind of interaction at the ceremonies I attended and, if there was any change in the character of the singing toward morning, I did not notice it.

39 The difference in male and female head shapes in the sandpaintings corresponds to the shapes of the dancers' masks. The male mask fits over the head like a bag and is rounded, while the female mask is worn over the face and is shaped more like a rectangle.
40 See Faris (1990: 71-72 n. 38) for more information regarding the Curtis film.

41 See, for example, her description of the color symbolism of Male God's mask (1931: 241) which corresponds to Matthews (1902: 16).

42 The lack of attention to uniformity may be related to the value Navajos place on individualism and to the possibility that they do not see uniformity as a goal to be pursued (McAllester, phone interview, October 6, 1996). In describing the group singing of Enemyway, McAllester encountered the same lack of concern with uniformity and precision that I found in Nightway dancing—it was apparently not crucial for everyone to be doing things the same way and at the same time (1954: 74).

43 Unfortunately, I find Haile's illustrations of dance lines confusing. He uses numbers to represent various Ye'ii. His numbering system is presented on page 13, far in advance of his diagrams on pages 73 and 75. Number 1 is Talking God who "leads the four [First Dancers] to the grounds" (p. 73). Number 2 is Calling God, Number 3 is Male God, and Number 8 is Water Sprinkler, whom Haile calls Gray God. I can make sense of this description only if I combine Numbers 1 and 2 into the role of Talking God whose function is to lead the dancers in their entrances and exits and, in a sense, to direct their actions.

44 As previously mentioned, I did not see Talking God perform with the First Dancers. I did, however, see this performance on the film used for labanotation. This film did not have a synchronized soundtrack; therefore, I could not hear the "whoop" of satisfaction described by Matthews. In the film TG appeared to be wandering around the dance field rather casually; his only visible function was to lead the dancers onto and off of the dance field and to participate in the formal introduction.

45 See Reichard for an explanation of this principle: "The rule is that blessing and divinity are represented by even numbers, evil and harm by odd" (1950: 244).

46 Competition and standardization seem naturally to go together. For example, before athletic teams can compete, standardization in terms of number of players, type of equipment, adherence to rules, etc. must be assured so that like is competing against like.
47 Following the Klah text in Faris (1990: 188), this prayer is meant to benefit all present—not just the one-sung-over.

48 I have italicized the Navajo text to make the interlinear translation easier to follow. I was unable to reproduce the typeface used in Matthews. This excerpt comes as close to the original as possible.

49 The text in Haile, relating the origin of the ye’i, contains only one reference to dance which mentions the prayerstick offering and meal blessing for dancers and also suggests that dancer and ye’i are “conceived as one person” (1947a: 6).

50 In Sapir and Hoijer (1942: 141) the hero, camped on the canyon rim, hears voices of “beings” which are understood in the context of the story to be crows conducting a dance.

51 Again, I find the directional orientation of this gesture confusing as described. The note in Sapir and Hoijer says the rattle dipping or “pulling-out motion” is performed “facing the patient and then whirling about and making the motion and call in the opposite direction” (1942: 502, n. 15:21. This would be to the west and then east. I saw it performed facing north and then south. In the Klah text in Faris (1990: 205), the movement is described not in relation to the direction the dancer is facing but in relation to the direction in which the rattle is moving: The dancers make the motion “with their rattles turning toward the right, then did the same toward the left...”. This could mean the rattles are moving from the dancer’s right side to left side. Or, more confusing, the entity doing the turning here could be the dancer, in which case orientation to cardinal direction is lost.


53 Zolbrod, drawing upon the works of Matthews, Reichard, and Haile, and with the help of Navajo collaborators, created a rendition of the origin story that attempted to capture the poetics of oral performance which are left out in other translations.

54 This is not meant to be an exhaustive survey of all works on Navajo ceremonialism, which may number in the hundreds. I have focused on the items most useful to this study of the role of dance in Nightway—general works on philosophy and ceremonialism, studies of Nightway, and discussions of ceremonial music.
When exploring a complex topic, one often generates more questions than answers. This has been true for the author in the area of Navajo ceremonialism. Some of the more intriguing issues are as follows: Do Navajos have a high/creator god? Reichard's view is that they do not (1950: 59). McNeley (citing Goldtooth in Fisher) suggests that the omniscient and omnipresent Sacred Wind may fulfill this role (1981: 2). What is the attitude of the Holy People toward earth surface people—is it protective, hostile, or indifferent? Perhaps it is all of the above, depending upon the context of the interaction and the Holy People involved. What is the role of the Holy People in causality? Do they harm or punish humans? They must have some role in making things happen; otherwise, their assistance would not be needed at a ceremony. What is the relationship between the sacred narrative and its associated ceremony? There is general agreement that Medicine Men need not know the narrative, or they may know only parts of it. This makes it seem that knowledge of the legend is not crucial to the performance of the ceremony, since the Medicine Man need not know it. However, it would seem necessary for someone (possibly the Medicine Man?) to educate the patient regarding the story. Otherwise, how could that patient successfully identify with its protagonist? Hopefully, these topics will be addressed in future research.

The Holy People are not holy in the sense of being wholly good. Rather, they are powerful, mysterious, and, as Witherspoon points out, immune from dangers humans must face, such as, old age and death (1977: 35). This is what gives them their elevated or 'holy' status.

Farella discusses the characteristics of Diyin Dinéé in relation to humans (1984: 26-29). He refers in a footnote to "skinwalkers" or were-animals taking animal form. In this note he identifies skinwalkers as humans (ibid: 28). However, this is the only instance I know of where an earth surface person (or some sub-category thereof) has shape-shifting capability.


It is not so unusual for a behavior, which is prohibited in daily life, to be sanctioned in ritual context. In previous studies of ritual lives of Amazonians and of Andeans I found that such things as adultery, drunkenness, and mockery of authority figures could be 'gotten away with' during rituals. The same behaviors exhibited in daily life could result in ostracism or even death (Francis 1983, 1989).
My efforts to reach Dr. Griffin-Pierce (for the purpose of clearing up my confusion) were unsuccessful. I find the discussion of Diyin Dinéé human relations in her recent book difficult to follow (Griffin-Pierce 1992). The Holy People are described as "dangerous and often capricious beings who may inflict great harm and even death upon humans," yet they have a "beneficent nature" and are "compassionate and desirous of rendering aid to humans in a ceremonial context" (ibid: 32-33). General statements about "the Holy People," their nature and actions, are likely to engender confusion. Any discussion of Holy People/human relations must specify which Holy People are involved and what the context of interaction is, i.e., ceremonial or daily life.

Another puzzling reference has to do with offerings that humans make during a ceremony to obligate the Holy People to reciprocate. According to Griffin-Pierce's interpretation of Navajo ethics, "one does not give aid or gifts with the expectation of returned aid at a specific time in the future" (ibid: 34). However, it seems to me that ceremonial offerings are certainly made with the expectation that blessings and aid will be received, not eventually, but forthwith.

Faris has strongly emphasized human agency in his book about Nightway (1990: 14-15). Human actions bring about misfortune and illness; human ritual actions bring about correction of these conditions. Not so well defined in the role of the Holy People in causality. The deities must play a crucial role in effecting a cure; otherwise, their cooperation would not be solicited.

According to Faris, the Holy People "do 'bless' or lend 'holiness' to the proceedings, but they do not effect the healing" (letter dated 23 August 1996). The issue remains unclear to me. If a cure cannot take place without their cooperation, then it would seem that, in some sense, they help effect the cure. This is yet another "problem" rooted in Anglo thinking and English semantics, not in Navajo philosophy.

There is a psychoanalytic/psychological lineage in Navajo scholarship that began with Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962) and continued with Levy (1963), Bergman (1973) and Sandner (1979), among others. See Wyman 1983: 557 for some discussion of this research tradition.

It may be that at least some of my observations about the role of dance in the Nightway ceremony will be found applicable to the dances of Enemyway and Mountainway as well. However, at present, this theory must be confined to Nightway dancing only.
As mentioned in Chapter 2 pg. 15, the public dancing of Nightway is not compulsory. The Dilkon family chose to include it because they wished to provide the maximum therapeutic effect for Uncle (Chapter 3 pg. 57). However, patients can be healed using the abbreviated form of this ceremony which does not include dance. This fact does not alter the theory presented here, which outlines what the dances provide when they are included. When they are absent, other rites of the latter half of the ceremony (for example, the sandpainting rites) serve the same functions as the dances, i.e., attraction of good, creation of order, recreation of the sacred episode, and identification of the patient with the main character of that episode.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Astrov, Margot
1950 The Concept of Motion as the Psychological Leitmotif of Navaho Life and Literature. Journal of American Folklore 63: 45-56.

Bartenieff, Irmgard

Bartenieff, Irmgard and Martha Davis
1965 Effort-Shape Analysis of Movement: The Unity of Expression and Function. Unpublished monograph, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, New York.

Bergman, Robert L.

Boulton, Laura
1992 Navajo Songs: Recorded by Laura Boulton in 1933 and 1940. Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings. Annotated by Charlotte J. Frisbie and David McAllester.

Brown, Donald N.

Curtis, Edward S.

Dance Notation Bureau
1966 The Effort-Shape Training Program. New York: Dance Notation Bureau.

Farella, John R.

Faris, James C.
1996 Telephone interview, July 12, 1996.

Faris, James C. and Harry Walters

Fergusson, Erna

Francis, Sandra T.
1983 Dance in the Amazon Basin. Ms. on file, Department of Anthropology, Wright State University, Dayton, OH.

Frisbie, Charlotte J.

Gill, Sam D.

Griffin-Pierce, Trudy

Haile, Father Berard
1947b Starlore Among the Navaho. Santa Fe: Museum of Navajo Ceremonial Art.

191

Hanna Judith Lynne

Kaeppler, Adrienne

Kealiinohomoku, Joann Wheeler

Kluckhohn, Clyde

Kluckhohn, Clyde and Leland C. Wyman
Kluckhohn, Clyde and Dorothea Leighton

Kurath, Gertrude Prokosch

Laban, Rudolf von

Laban, Rudolf von and F. C. Lawrence

Lamphere, Louise

Lange, Roderyk

Levy, Jerrold E.

Long, Paul V.
Luckert, Karl W.

Lyon, Luke

Matthews, Washington

McAllester, David P.
1995 Interview, January 10, 1995, Monterey, MA.
1996 Letter dated September 1, 1996
1996 Telephone interview, October 6, 1996

McAllester, David P. and Douglas F. Mitchell

McNeley, James K.

Newcomb, Franc Johnson and Gladys A. Reichard

Parsons, Elsie Clews
1921 Note on the Night Chant at Tuwełchëdu which Came to an End on December 6, 1920. American Anthropologist 23(2): 240-243.

Reichard, Gladys

Royce, Anya Peterson
Sandner, Donald

Sapir, Edward and Harry Hoijer

Stevenson, James

Sweet, Jill D.

Tozzer, Alfred M.

Wheelwright, Mary C.

Williams, Drid

Witherspoon, Gary
1992 Interview, December 5, 1992, Eatonville, WA.
1996 Telephone interview, September 16, 1996.
Wyman, Leland C.

Wyman, Leland C. and Clyde Kluckhohn
1938 Navaho Classification of Their Song Ceremonials. Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association 50. Menasha, WI.
1940 An Introduction to Navaho Chant Practice: An Account of the Behaviors Observed in Four Chants. Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association 53. Menasha, WI.

Young, Robert W. and William Morgan, Sr.

Zolbrod, Paul G.
1984 Diné bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press.
APPENDIX A

FIRST DANCERS

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE DANCES
Sandra Francis: Dance data guide: THE CEREMONIAL DANCES OF NIGHTWAY;
YEIBICHAI dance questionnaire, FIRST DANCERS description;
video tape showing excerpted footage of rehearsals and performances
of the dances (American Indian Films Group, tape #26-645)
Charlotte J. Frisbie: VOCABLES IN NAVAJO CEREMONIAL MUSIC
David P. McAllester: Review of Tony Isaacs' recording of Night and Daylight Yeibichei
Songs, cassette recordings and transcriptions
Washington Matthews: THE NIGHT CHANT: A NAVAHO CEREMONY
Edward S. Curtis: THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN, excerpts from Vols. 1-22

AREA OF DANCE SPACE
Approximate size: 40 yds long by 20-25 ft wide

east end entrance to
dressing room

198
CONTINUITY OUTLINE OF DANCE SECTIONS

DANCE I - FIRST DANCERS

1. ENTRANCE: no music, four dancers pick up gourd rattles and sprigs of spruce.
2. PRAYER delivered by Hata‘alli and repeated by Patient
3. BLESSING by Patient and Hata‘alli
4. FORMAL OPENING
5. BASIC DANCE
   a) Stationary Part
   b) Turning Sequence = one SET
   c) End of dance
   d) repeat 5a-c (total of 4 SETS)
   e) Final exit after 4th SET

DANCE II - SIX MAN NĀ‘AKAI DANCE

1. ENTRANCE - similar to FIRST DANCERS
2. BLESSING - similar to FIRST DANCERS
3. FORMAL OPENING - similar to FIRST DANCERS
4. BASIC DANCE
   a) Stationary Part = one SET
   b) Circuit
   c) End of Dance
   d) repeat 4a-c for a total of 4 SETS
   e) final exit after 4th SET

DANCE III - MALE/FEMALE NĀ‘AKAI VERSION - 6 male and 6 female

1. ENTRANCE - similar to FIRST DANCERS
2. BLESSING - similar to FIRST DANCERS
3. FORMAL OPENING - similar to FIRST DANCERS
4. BASIC DANCE
   a) Stationary Part
   b) Promenade = one SET
   c) End of dance
   d) Repeat 4a-c for a total of 4 SETS
   e) Final exit after 4th SET
GLOSSARY OF SIGNS AND SYMBOLS : FIRST DANCE
IDENTIFICATION OF CHARACTERS IN THE CEREMONY

P = patient: may be male or female , TG = talking god
H = hataali (medicine man), WS = water sprinkler (clown)

\[ \downarrow = \text{male} \quad \downarrow = \text{female} \quad \bigcirc = \text{a person of either gender} \]

D = dancer, D1 = first dancer in file, D2 = 2nd in file, D3 = 3rd etc.

\( \text{(4) \quad \downarrow = \text{4 men in a file formation, one behind the other}} \)

\( \text{sprig of spruce} \)

STANCE VARIANTS - STEP PATTERNS

stand on both feet, very slightly apart, knees a little bent just enough to maintain resilience.

stand on both feet, a little more apart than in 1a, knees slightly flexed.

on count 1 of each measure, step on the right foot.
on count 2 - step on the left foot, raise the right foot about an inch off the floor jutting the knee slightly forward with a light, sharp accent.

For entrances and exits: TG
D1
D2
D3
D4
WS

The 4 dancers are led onto the dance field by TALKING GOD;
WATER SPRINKLER joins the end of the line.
GROUND PLANS - FACING DIRECTIONS - PATHS OF LOCOMOTION

A rectangle representing approximate shape and dimensions of the dance area contains several indications for the number of performers, their directions of facing and paths traversed. All facing directions relate to the major compass points.

- □ = an area
- ◼ = eastern end of the dance area
- ▼ = western end of area
- ◁ = face west
- ▷ = face east
- ◁ ◁ = face north
- ◁ ◁ ◁ = face south

PATHS traversed by performers are represented by straight or curved lines. Straight paths proceed forward toward the west end where the patient sits, or toward the east end where the shelter exit is located. Curved paths, i.e. 180 degrees of a circle, nearly always move clockwise. Examples:

The pin indicates gender and facing direction of the performer, the arrow at the end of the straight path marks the distance to be travelled.

A male performer travels 180 degrees in a clockwise direction.

DURATION of paths is usually coordinated with staff movement notations by numbering dance measures on the basic staff and below each ground plan. Because these dances may be performed to one of a number of songs, the length of the piece may vary. We have therefore numbered the ground plans consecutively and indicated along the movement staves the corresponding numbers for easy recognition of the measure when a particular path begins.

Example:

GP1 indicates the measure of movement where Ground Plan 1 begins. The pattern indicated on the actual Ground Plan is in effect until the next indication GP2, etc.

BAR LINES drawn across the vertical staff mark off measures (meter). When movement is performed unmetered, without singing, bar lines are not shown and the movements are performed freely for the purpose of arriving at a place on the dance area where song and dance occur.

METERED

UNMETERED
FIRST DANCERS = GROUND PLANS

GROUND PLAN #1: P & H enter from Hogan. Dancers 1-4 are led in from shelter by TG. Dancers pick up gourd rattles & twigs.

GROUND PLAN #2: Dancers approach P and H. #3-4: P and H perform BLESSING. #5-6: Dancers begin FORMAL OPENING. TG and WS run past each other, right shoulders passing.
Plan #7 - Dancers turn to face south as TG and US once more rush into opposite directions.

Plan #8 - TG walk to Patient, stamp the right foot as a signal for the singing to begin. Plan #9 - Dancers perform in place; TG sometimes followed by US skips around the dancers. Plan #10 - All walk toward hogan, return to original places to repeat the dance 3 times more.

Ground Plan 11: At the 4th SET ending dancers led by TG circle clockwise 180 degrees to face east and walk off into the dressing shelter but pause long enough to deposit gourd rattles and spruce twigs where they had initially picked them up.

This occurs after the singing had stopped and dancers had performed a half circle clockwise, briefly rattled a gourd tremolo, repeated the half circle and the gourd tremolo to end facing the Patient (see staff notation).
ENTRANCE

SIGNS:

= small basket of corn meal
= small pouch carried in right hand of TG and WS
= right front edge of small blanket wrapped about Patient
= small chair on which Patient sits, a few feet from the hogan.
= left hand carries sprigs of spruce
= right hand carries gourd rattle.

REMINDER:

TG
D1
D2
D3
D4
WS

4 DANCERS
H recites a long prayer, repeated line by line by P.

\( P \Rightarrow \text{approach Patient} \)
NOTE: m = corn meal carried in the patient's small basket. The meal is taken up a little at a time in the bunched finger tips to sprinkle on each man standing in the file. In performing this blessing, H precedes P by one man. H may possibly carry a little cornmeal in his hand or may only make the appropriate gestures. To simplify reading, blessing by H is repeated as Theme 1 and by P as Theme 2.
Reminder: TG and WS have been holding their pouches in the right hand.
FORMAL OPENING

- Hand does tremolo left, right.
- Each dancer turns independently.
- Right shoulders pass near each other.

NOTE: hand does tremolo left, right.
- each dancer turns independently.
- right shoulders pass near each other.

210
NOTE: 1ST four measures are done by Dancer #1 alone. The others stand quietly and join the stepping as indicated, when the singing begins. Steps in place continue until the music cue for the turning sequence.

\( L \) = see ground plan. WS sometimes follows TG around the file of dancers or makes comic approaches to the audience.

\( U \) = eyes look forward low

\( \) = repeat as many times as needed to the next music cue. In other contexts, the symbol indicates freedom to move ad lib within the style and form of the dance. It is used here to indicate retention of a position more or less, i.e., a little movement is allowed.
Note: see ethnographer's text for actions of WS and TG. Rattle rattle results from right-left shaking of hand holding the gourd rattle.
*The singing has ended; a brief rattle roll follows after which the dancers walk into their starting positions for the first repetition.
Note: In the 4th ending (after all 4 performances of the BASIC DANCE), DANCERS 1-4 place gourd rattles and spruce on the ground, where they were initially picked up, as they move into dressing room shelter at the east end of the field. Patient enters hogan at west end.
APPENDIX B

SIX-MAN NA'AKAI

SIX-MAN NA'AKAI DANCE

Note:
ENTRANCE, BLESSING and FORMAL OPENING are the same as in FIRST DANCERS.

DANCERS 1-6 MEN are led from the shelter by TG, on to the dance field. WS joins the end of the file formation (see below):

DIRECTIONS / FACING
- east end of field
- west end of field
- face PATIENT, west
- face east
- face north
- face south

SPACING OF DANCERS ON DANCE FIELD

The dimensions for the dance area are only general since the actual location was not measured. This diagram, however, offers the reader an approximation of the space occupied and traversed during the ceremony.
This sign written inside the staff indicates that the material immediately preceding it is to be repeated. Throughout the dances the steps are written out at the beginning followed by repeat signs.

When a long passage extending over one or more pages needs to be repeated the above slanted lines are used to enclose the material. Here the entire section is to be done four times, as for example the repetition of a SET. The repeat signs enclose the entire BASIC DANCE.

These repeat signs indicate that a brief passage is to be performed 4 times. At the beginning of the STATIONARY PART, when the singing begins, this devise is used to save re-writing of the same material as previously stated.

The right arm (hand holding the pouch) is raised and lowered in a direct path upward and downward in a salute. Indicates that a person's face addresses 01 or establishes visual contact.
NOTE: ENTRANCE, BLESSING, FORMAL OPENING, movement of TG and WS as well as STATIONARY PART of the dance are the same as in FIRST DANCERS. The new part "CIRCUIT" is shown on the next page.
END OF 1st-3rd SETS
NOTE: At the final ending (the 4th repeat) the patient rises from the chair and walks into the hogan. All Dancers, led by Talking God, curve 180 degrees to face east and, maintaining their file group arrangement, walk toward the dressing room shelter. Before entering the shelter they pause to return gourd rattles and spruce twigs to the place from which they originally acquired them.
STATIONARY PART OF DANCE - SINGING BEGINS

The other dancers join the rhythmic stepping

Lead dancer does this alone

* See ethnographic text for individual 'free style' variants.
* See ground plan #11 for spacing of D6 relative to D1 and salute of TG.
* See ground plan #12 for turning of B6 to face P and continue with forward steps around circuit.
CIRCUIT continued

225
At the end of this page, the STATIONARY PART and the CIRCUIT are performed 3 times more before the first endless loop ground plan #18. Note TG and US may perform either ground plan #9 or 17.
APPENDIX C

MALE/FEMALE NA'AKAI

NOTE:
ENTRANCE, BLESSING
and
FORMAL OPENING
are similar to those
of the SIN-MIN NA'AKAI
with TG & US. AFTER TG
stamps his foot and
calls in front of the
Patient, the singing and
the STATIONARY PART of
dance begin. This and
the following PROMENADE
are different from the
first two dances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TG</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>F1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>M3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>M4</td>
<td>F4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>M6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>WS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A female is
in back of each
male.
TG leads the file
doctors and US
is at the end.

brush shelter dressing room

227
GLOSSARY OF SIGNS AND SYMBOLS: MALE/FEMALE VERSION

ENTRANCE FORMATION

M = male dancer;  F = female dancer

= each male  = each female
= each female stands behind each male

shows a man carrying a gourd rattle in his right hand and a small bundle of spruce twigs in his left hand.

shows a female person carrying a bundle of spruce twigs in each hand.

a canon form for the male dancers

a canon form for the female dancers.

The canon, adapted by kinetographers from a musical form dating from as early as the 13th century, is a device for showing that a segment of dance is performed by each member of a group one after another. In this dance, the PROMENADE, each couple, in turn, imitates the entire canon passage then returns to the unison progression down the center line (see ground plans).

The canon sign is drawn as a vertical line with small extensions to the left (denoting entrance into the canon) and to the right (denoting completion of the segment to be repeated by each couple).

The complete sign is usually drawn to the right of the staff.

approaching the first couple

withdrawing or retreating from the first couple.

228
NOTE: TG leads file of 12 dancers entering from the brush shelter. WS joins at end.
Starting with ground plan #4 as each couple advances down the center isle, TG and WS
skip toward them, back away and salute (see staff notation).
dancers begin the singing. Male dancers continue stepping in place. Female dancers begin to step sideward (north) out of the male file to form a second line. All dancers continue the up-down "bounce". TG ground path as on page 1. WS does same movements as TG. TG and WS are still holding a small purse in their right hand.
At a definite music cue, the PROMENADE begins. Male and female dancers move toward the patient, then MI and FI move toward each other, link arms to form a couple and dance down the center aisle. Each couple in turn performs the same pattern as indicated at the "canon sign" (see ground plans).
Note: at the end of the above 180 degree circling M1 joins the end of the original file and follows Male dancer 6 toward the patient. Female dancer F1 joins the rank after F6 in the side-step facing male dancers (south). (see ground plan)
Note: The PROMENADE finishes when the 6th couple arrives at the east end of the dance area, dancers release arms and move into their respective lines. This is followed by the next STATIONARY PART and two repeats of the entire basic dance for a total of three performances. The repeat signs indicate that the arms and the up-down bounce continue throughout. The singing is also continuous.
In this formation, after the singing and rattling have stopped, all dancers retaining their rattles and/or spruce bundles make a small 180 degree circle to face the patient. The entire file of dancers (a female behind each male) is led by TG toward the patient (see next page).
At the end of the transition, the entire file of 12 dancers, led by TG and joined by WS, has circled to face the Patient (see ground plans). The entire dance is repeated beginning with the rattle shakes and start of the singing. Male dancers begin the STATIONARY PART as all females step sideward (north) to form their separate line. The 2nd and 3rd SETS proceed the same way as the first SET.
Similar to FIRST DANCERS, when the singing and dancing have ended, the dancers sound a brief rattle roll after which they walk to their starting positions to repeat the basic dance.
At the end of the 4th SET, the singing and gourd rattling have ended, female dancers have stepped into the male file. TG walks to the head of the file to lead the 12 dancers into the spruce shelter. En route, they return the gourd rattles and spruce twigs to the place where they had initially picked them up.

The patient turns and walks into the hogan.