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San Jose State University, 1994

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KWANZAA IN THE INTERCULTURAL
PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

A Thesis

Presented to

The Office of Graduate Studies
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Gary Lee Montrezza

August, 1994

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ABSTRACT

KWANZAA IN THE INTERCULTURAL PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

by Gary Lee Montrezza

This thesis considers issues surrounding intercultural performances that fall between ritual and theatre. It offers a rationale for research and provides a framework of interpretation for the outsider of such events thus allowing the researcher a means of understanding the efficacy of intercultural performances. The concepts of level of removal and performance physicality are explored in reference to syncretic celebrations.

The research examines the African-American celebration of Kwanzaa. Extensive fieldwork was conducted within the African-American community of San Jose, California. As a result, two performances are explored for their efficacy utilizing methods posited by the author.

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Preface

The genesis of this research resides in a fundamental question. Namely, how can performances, celebrations, and ceremonies, which are not a part of one's initial cultural indoctrination, be important to an individual or community? The question seems harmless enough. However, it is laden with thick, convoluted, recursive, and paradoxical categories and conclusions, particularly for the researcher attempting to find answers.

I became interested in the above question through observing the multitude of syncretic celebrations and performance events that are an integral part of American life. One such event is the African-American celebration of Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa is a unique celebration because of the juxtaposition of many distinct African and African-American cultural elements and beliefs. Kwanzaa is different from many "ethnic" observances and celebrations because it was not transculturated from another country nor did it accompany a group of immigrants. Rather, Kwanzaa was created at the height of American racial tensions in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, founder of the US organization.

Karenga crafted Kwanzaa to address the absence of non-heroic celebrations in the African-American community. He assembled his ideology out of what he considers to be uniquely African attributes and beliefs and synthesized them with African-American values. In fact, Afrocentric themes are the center piece of Kwanzaa.

Thus, the questions for me center on how a celebration such as Kwanzaa provides efficacy for a community when the community, and individuals within the community, are so far removed from African culture, society, and ideology. Further, I wondered how the teachings of Kwanzaa were conveyed to the community and how such actions defined the participants and observers of the celebration. To this end, I decided to focus on the role of performance in Kwanzaa, which creates a complex research problem: Kwanzaa as a holistic event is a performance, yet there are performance events found within the larger performance of Kwanzaa. Thus, there is a relationship between the two that, as we will see, sometimes obscures one's attempt at understanding or interpreting one performance separate from another. Also, because it is a uniquely American celebration, I became intrigued with how Kwanzaa defines the racial outsider.

The problem then became one of determining how Kwanzaa

is defined by Karenga and how it is observed by the community. Past literature concerning Kwanzaa is modest, with each author sticking closely to Karenga's ideological constructs. However, there are books for children, families, cookbooks, descriptive works offering ideas for celebration, etc. Yet, all of these books are written for the racial insider. Therefore, I felt it necessary to explore Kwanzaa and provide descriptions from a decidedly outside perspective. To accomplish this, I read Karenga's work on Kwanzaa as well as works by other authors. And, I also decided to attend an actual week long Kwanzaa celebration.

The celebration I observed, and indeed participated in, was vastly different in character from Karenga's Kwanzaa. In fact, it exuded a communal warmth through the various themes represented, and activities presented, during the seven days of celebration. This warmth was due in part to the "intimate" size of the celebration. The event provided the San Jose, California African-American community a focal point for addressing triumphs and problems within the community. For many of the participants, Kwanzaa provided a means of empowerment, enlightenment, and enrichment for themselves as well as the community. It also fostered a cathartic renewal for some individuals. However, the most

effective aspect of Kwanzaa was not that African themes and ideologies were touted and upheld. On the contrary, Kwanzaa was effective because people assembled for the sole purpose of improving their community, themselves, and the world in which they live. Such an endeavor requires the individual and community to bond in a symbiotic relationship that strengthens the whole as a result of healthy parts.

Approaching the question of efficacy for a performance such as Kwanzaa is somewhat tenuous. Nevertheless, in understanding why some performances are more efficacious than others, it becomes necessary to adopt, posit, construct, and utilize myriad methods and theories that draw one closer to the essence of Kwanzaa's power.

The most salient concept that lends understanding to the problems before us resides in the cultural pathways and imprintings of an individual or community. Next, a term I call "level of removal" also plays a primary role in whether or not a performance is efficacious. Further, the actual "physicality" of the performance, or textual elements associated with the performance, also have a profound effect on the observers and participants of performances. And, many times contextual elements, such as the framing of a performance event, have components which define the event,

participant, and observer while simultaneously creating a tension between the participant, observer, and performance narrative.

The intent then is to provide a rationale for such study, and explore Kwanzaa in relation to the aforementioned categories. This I hope will facilitate understanding of Kwanzaa while also enriching my own views of performance, culture, and my own "community."

Chapter I

The Outsider Perspective: A Rationale

Although frequently maligned, the purpose of the outsider's perspective in today's climate of interculturalism and cultural pluralism is more important than ever in providing some modicum of cross-cultural understanding. In fact, the totality of my research with Kwanzaa is an attempt to foster the understanding these labels portend.

Lucy Lippard, in *Mixed Blessings*, alluded to the intricacies of cultural studies and naming by stating that, "the intercultural enterprise is riddled with sociological complexities that must be dealt with before esthetic issues are even broached" (15). Lippard's sentiments exhibit a puzzling perspective because her discussion on various types of artists, art, and artifact indeed addresses and arrives at conclusions about these categories--and the cultures and ethnicities within them--without fully understanding the "sociological complexities" of each category. Obviously, Lippard herself is an "outsider" in relation to the groups she discusses. In effect, Lippard argues that a person outside a culture or sociological context is somehow impaired by his or her own experiences and thus cannot possibly understand the complexities of another's group.

Her myopic view, paradoxically, will not tolerate a cross-cultural inquiry by one outside of a specific group.

When this attitude is taken to its most extreme, we find instances where one should not discuss Kwanzaa, or African-American culture, if that person is not an African-American. In holding to this model, then, we must also not allow any speculation on the meaning of Shakespeare unless the person speculating is of English descent.

Instead, the question in intercultural inquiries should address the extent authority is assumed or owned by any given individual or group in the definition of self or culture. In reference to Kwanzaa, one discovers a community constructing and assuming its own definitions of African and African-American culture.

A sole function of interculturalism is similar to ritual in that interculturalism has an inhibiting effect cross-culturally. It tries to identify and define salient cultural or societal characteristics of people in order to avoid conflict and misunderstanding, by those outside a specific culture or society, through reconciliation of common and disparate beliefs. Kwanzaa synthesizes African characteristics with American in an attempt to reconcile, according to Karenga, the African-American community's lack of identity.

However, conflict is not resolved simply by cultural insiders defining themselves. Rather, conflict is averted by an outsider's and insider's understanding of each other's culture through a combination of identification and assimilation of beliefs and practices. Often such beliefs and practices are understood through a group's use of naming.

Naming is a powerful cultural, societal, or individual assertion that serves to reinforce specific characteristics groups or individuals declare significant for themselves. It is fundamental to the unification of community or culture as it delineates the essential, necessary components and cultural codes for a group. Often, naming involves the verbal affirmation of desirable cultural traits. Lippard states that we name in three ways:

Three kinds of naming operate culturally through both word and image. The first is self naming, the definition one gives oneself and one's community, reflected in the arts by autobiography and statements of racial pride. The second is the supposedly neutral label imposed from the outside, which may include implicitly negative stereotyping and is often inseparable from the third--explicit racist namecalling (20).

In the above statement, Lippard is implicating the outsider perspective as one in which "supposedly neutral

labels" are imposed. The attempt within this research is not to neutrally label anything or anyone. My intent is to simply look at performance and cultural issues, and Kwanzaa in particular, as an outsider. One must embrace "outsideness" and react to events in terms of one's own cultural paradigms.

Susanne Langer states that, "every society meets a new idea with its own concepts, its own tacit, fundamental way of seeing things; that is to say, with its own questions, its peculiar curiosity" (6). Schechner observes that anthropology requires one to "see with the native eye" or "feel with the native heart." He further states, "I acknowledge that I am seeing with my own eyes. I also invite others to see me and my culture with their eyes. We are then in a position to exchange our views." Both Langer and Schechner suggest that we all view life in our own particular way which is manifested by the way one acts and names one's self.

Thus, the true fundamental basis of interculturalism lies within a cross-pollination of cultural values and practices: "a true intercultural perspective is actually a multiplicity of perspectives." It is not an insider's naming himself; it is an outsider's exploring, probing, and relating to a group other than his own--not simple defining or naming. Thus, by coming to Kwanzaa, I am indeed naming;

however, not in the role of racist naming calling. Rather, my naming is a direct result of a synthesis of my cultural background infused with that of the African-American community's.

The Outsider

The notion of my outsideness to Kwanzaa is really a question of context. This context may be cultural, geographical, spiritual, societal, sexual, economic, or in my case, primarily racial. Whatever the context, the outsider is one whose own cultural background is sufficiently removed from another's that reconciliation of the two is not possible without considerable interest and intent to overcome, or at least understand, the differences. Therefore, the outsider often operates in a world of transgression.

As an outsider to the African-American community and Kwanzaa, I am constantly in the flux of my own beliefs and culture while simultaneously interacting with the beliefs and culture of the African-American community. Thus, when one embarks upon an endeavor outside familiar realms, transgression occurs on two major fronts. The first transgression is against the cultural realities one is familiar and comfortable with; the second concerns one's relation to cultures one is not familiar with and the

potential wrongs one may commit against that culture. It is important to realize that the idea of the outsider involves --not assimilation of "sociological complexities"--but a transgression against one's own beliefs in pursuit of understanding the beliefs of another culture.

Principles of Observation

The principles of observation fall into three basic categories. The researcher's own cultural and societal imprintings are the most significant of these, for they determine the researcher's own framework for interpretation. The last category is the resultant influence the event and culture of the observed group have in changing the initial conceptions of the outside observer. The outside observer is not objectively immune to the influence of a performance or culture. The observer or performance elements may be transformed to some extent during the research process which may in fact change the research process. Therefore, a significant amount of foundational change exists in the researcher's perceptions of an event.

Colin Turnbull, in his paper, "Liminality: a synthesis of subjective and objective experience," is correct when he offers the "subjective experience" as a valid and valuable method for research. Turnbull cautions against "over-rigorous planning and preparation, practical and

theoretical" (Schechner, Appel 51). He believes that a major weakness of anthropology, and performance studies, is the lack of full engagement in fieldwork. This contributes to the "superficiality of our understanding of other cultures... [which] is directly proportional to the superficiality of our participation in that culture"(51). Turnbull calls for describing events "at another level, using all our faculties, not merely our minds" (74). The codification of certain principles of analysis presupposes knowledge of an event or performance before it is actually observed. Thus, theorists tend to define performance in the light of pre-conceived technique and structure, based on one's imprintings, as opposed to the relation of spirit, subjectivity, soul, or emotions that the performance itself generates.

The most significant border that exists between myself and participants of Kwanzaa is racial. I am a white male. This fact identifies me as a member of the dominant culture, which has just as many stereotypes associated with it as the term African-American. A second border which presents itself is geographical. Many of the participants of Kwanzaa live in downtown San Jose, whereas I live in a suburb away from inner city life. This has both social and communal implications that must be acknowledged. Further, my educational background was significantly different from many

of the participants. Thus, in conversations with the participants of Kwanzaa, it was apparent that each of us communicated in an individual language due to our mutual and exclusive life experiences. Each of these borders has the potential to cloud and confuse issues and exchanged dialogue between myself and the members of the African-American community.

Nevertheless, in spite of the obvious differences that exist between African-American culture and myself, we still share the unique experience of American culture, such as a common government, economic system, and "pop" cultural icons concerning sports, music, etc. And, it is exactly the mutually shared experience of American culture that creates an intellectual ambivalence in me towards a notion that simply accepting attributes of another's culture somehow translates into understanding.

Maulana Karenga asserts that assimilating African attributes provides one aspect of Kwanzaa's efficacy for the community. I disagree with such thinking. However, this is not to assert that Kwanzaa is not efficacious for the community. Kwanzaa truly is efficacious for the community, yet not in the way that Karenga states it should be.

Karenga's Kwanzaa

Created by Maulana Karenga in 1966 and based on his philosophy of Kawaïda, Kwanzaa is considered to be the African-American holiday by many African-Americans. The Kwanzaa celebration takes place annually December 26 through January 1.

Karenga's main assertions center on the ambiguous concept of "authenticity." Authenticity for Karenga refers to cultural attributes born out of African cultural practices. From this point, he defines Kwanzaa as a mixture of "tradition" and "reason" (Karenga, Kwanzaa 15). The traditions he makes reference to are from the African diaspora. Karenga is drawing upon the acknowledged richness of African communal values and practices in an attempt to strengthen the African-American community. These, synthesized with cultural values of African-Americans, provide the foundations for Kwanzaa. The empowerment of the community, he believes, may be actualized by adopting a holiday which is based on African communal practices and values, as opposed to holidays which celebrate various heroes and heroines of African-American culture such as African-American History Month. Karenga's Kwanzaa, then, is a creation which provides a communal value system for African-Americans based on primarily African virtues.

The Problem

The initial problem with Kwanzaa resides not in the community's celebration and observance of its values. Rather, why does Karenga feel the African-American community is in need of a celebration which espouses "authentic" African heritage and values? The African-American community has a rich lineage and heritage all its own. However, the question results from the premise, by some within the community including Karenga, that the African-American experience is not as valid, because of past iniquities perpetrated by Euro-Americans, as the African experience--it is not as "authentic" and thus is not as real. The problem concerns the codification of ideological tenets that must be explained by some aspect of Kwanzaa. Karenga relies solely upon stating attributes he feels are important. But, the question is: why should any African-American accept his views at face value? What is in the African-American experience that draws people to Kwanzaa? And, once they observe it, what provides the means for efficacy? I believe the didactic function Karenga espouses through Kwanzaa must be conveyed via performance.

At the core of Kwanzaa lies the "philosophy" of Afrocentricity. Molefi Kete Asante states that "Afrocentricity is the belief in the centrality of Africans in post modern history. It is our history, our mythology,

our creative motif, and our ethos exemplifying our collective will" (Asante 6). Asante believes (and I feel Karenga does also) that the problems of the African-American community are supported by the acceptance of "false doctrines, false gods, mistaken notions of what is truly in our history, [which] assume an individualistic, antihumanistic, and autocratic posture" (6).

The philosophy of Afrocentricity, as well as Karenga, assert that African themes and cultural identities somehow have an essence outside of the culture from which they originate. I assert that cultural elements removed from their original context do not possess the same potential towards efficacy that they normally would have in their original context. This is due primarily to the level of removal of both participants and ideology from their original context.

Karenga asserts that simple knowledge of pan-African ideologies provides the necessary mechanism for change and enlightenment. He does not acknowledge the role performance and ritual serve in the acquisition of his ideology. For it is through performance, the vehicle which attaches meaning to a specific philosophy or set of religious beliefs, that assimilation and strength is obtained.

Because the role of performance is not acknowledged, the celebration of Kwanzaa does not have (within its

philosophy or theory) events, symbolic, ritual, or otherwise, that initiate or transform the individual or the group as a whole and are intrinsically representative of African-American culture.

Thus, the question arises: is Kwanzaa a socio-political ideology for blacks, a cultural affirmation of African values, or a combination of racial, African, and African-American cultural constructs? The juxtaposition of these possibilities, in relation to Kwanzaa, further constrains one's attempt at fully understanding the true nature and significance of Kwanzaa as an African-American celebration.

Chapter II

Performance Theory

Above all else performance is a psycho-physical experience, including in totality the sum of one's individual, societal, and communal experiences. We are all born and indoctrinated into a specific culture with a unique set of practices, beliefs, and values which forge pathways of conceptions about the world. When we fall out of our pathways, or stray too far from their boundaries, we, in an effort to maintain presence and purpose, relate events and actions to our previous experience and grounding.

For example, in the realm of second language acquisition, many student writers, whose L1 (native language) is different from the culture they are in, report that when they read or write they are constantly translating what they read in L2 (second language) into their native language. Similarly, they interpret what they read in the framework of their own cultural experience. Years later, through intense immersion in their second culture, they began to think in their second language. And once they begin to think in terms of their second culture, they can start to understand intrinsically some of the cultural codes and signifying practices their second culture observes.

Thus, in many ways one's pathways are fixed. However, there is a dynamism within this framework which has "its own currents, resistances, subversions, enablings, pathways, blockages" (Hayles 5).

Because language and human actions possess a large degree of specialization, cultural or societal events outside one's initial grounding experiences are never quite understood as well as if these events were part of one's original cultural pathways. Similarly, one's notions of performance are also groomed by the same cultural pathways.

In speaking of myth, Joseph Campbell maintains that the human mind's "action-releasing mechanisms" of the central nervous system are not "stereo-typed" but they are "open" (Campbell, *Myths* 43,44). Because this system is "open," Campbell concludes that individuals are, "susceptible. . .to the influence of imprintings from the society in which the individual grows up" (44). Moreover, we acquire our human characteristics as a result of these societal imprintings:

Our human species. . .acquires its human character, upright stature, ability to speak, and the vocabulary of its thinking under the influence of a specific culture, the features of which are engraved...upon its nerves; so that the constitutional patternings which in the animal world are biologically inherited are in the human species matched largely by socially transmitted forms. . .(Campbell, *Myths* 44).

Jan Vansina's *Art History in Africa*, while speaking of culture and art, expresses a viewpoint similar to Campbell's:

Babies not only acquire language but grammar and world views as well. They not only learn to see, but they learn to see what is significant and to see in patterned ways. They not only learn to remember, but to remember by a master code common to the community (121).

The message here speaks to an underlying cultural fabric one has as a result of one's cultural and societal placement and experiences. Consequently, what one understands in the realm of performance is also socio-culturally influenced by one's previous "imprintings" and cultural pathways.

Part of what one understands of performance is realized through specific symbols. Symbol here should not be confused with "sign." A sign, in some ways, provokes a conditioned reflex such as "Pavlov's bell" awakening a dog's digestive process through salivation. A symbol refers to something beyond the essential nature of an act or a thing. Symbols are used in the process of "thinking of" or "referring to" (Langer 30-31). Symbols are an amalgamation of signs which come to significance by having specific biological, cultural, societal essences. These essences are not proxy to specific objects, but "are vehicles for the

conception of objects" (61). Langer states that, "symbolization is the essential act of the mind" and is an "instrument of thought" (41,63). Taken one step further: performance is also an essential act of the mind conveyed through actions to the society or community. There is a subtle point to be realized from this "essential act of the mind." And it addresses the idea that one's conceptions of performance, for both insider and outsider, are dependent upon categories of significance.

Categories of Significance

The most salient categories of significance involve the symbiotic relationship between one's level of removal and the physicality of a performance. Level of removal may be characterized as the extent one is removed from an essential cultural pathway. Removals may be collective, such as leaving one's country for another; or contextual and partial, whereby one leaves economic, political, or social realms of familiarity--in essence, crosses borders.

The concept of level of removal is dependant upon one's early cultural imprintings and pathways. We are all indoctrinated into cultures with specific substrates that are with us throughout our lives. Even though the ornamentation found upon such foundations may vary and change throughout one's life, one's imprintings and pathways

have "polarities" to them. These polarities are the cognitive predispositions we all have. Therefore, the concept of level of removal is important because it dictates, to a fair degree, how an individual interprets the world.

The category of physicality encompasses the textual ingredients of a performance which partly identifies the performance. Often, performance theorists focus too narrowly on performance narratives. They speak as though performance does not have a physical essence, identity, or "fingerprint" as a result of its context, that interacts with the participant's cultural imprintings and pathways. It should be understood that the physical components of a performance are often more apparent to the outsider and transparent to the insider when the level of removal of a performance is relatively slight. The following is an exploration of these two delicately related categories.

Some cultures such as the Dagara, Dogon, and Mossi of Africa exist in non-industrialized relationships with the environment (Some 66). In fact, many of their beliefs and practices are informed or dictated by the necessity to explain and control elements of the environment, such as drought or rainfall. This is accomplished via ceremonies and rituals that affirm and renew the community's ties with the omnipotent controlling forces of their world. The

social and cultural elements created by such beliefs are part of one's imprintings and pathways. Kwanzaa, in many ways that will be addressed later, is an attempt to control and explain both African and African-American culture.

However, tribal members who find themselves in a highly industrialized culture as a result of collective removal may have a difficult time assimilating to the practices and observances of that culture. They experience levels of removal that profoundly effect and influence the way in which they perceive new or different surroundings. Malidoma Some, in his book *Ritual*, speaks of a type of level of removal, not one of socio-cultural surroundings, but one of the spirit:

Western Machine technology is the spirit of death made to look like life. It makes life seem easier, comfortable, cozy, but the price we pay includes the dehumanization of the self (85).

Similarly, participants of Kwanzaa who do not possess the cultural experiences capable of assimilating an African ritual, for example, also experience a level of removal that profoundly affects their understanding of such an event.

As a category of significance, level of removal is germane to understanding relationships pertaining to phenomena outside of one's culturally paradigmatic experiences. The greater the level of removal, the more

challenging and sometimes misleading our conceptions are of cultures and experiences outside our own. Nowhere is this fact more apparent than in Kwanzaa.

In much of his writing, Karenga asserts that African culture is homogeneous. Yet, upon closer scrutiny, one finds that there is no "African" culture per se. However, there are diverse tribes and societies such as Zulu, Ashanti, Yoruba, etc., which exhibit tribal and societal characteristics specific to their cultural pathways and imprintings. Thus, if one were to ask a Zulu tribal member to describe him/herself, one would discover answers that involve "Zuluness"--or those practices which speak to being Zulu. It is unlikely this tribal member would speak of being "African." Consequently, level of removal is a relative concept which is dependant on perspectives, conceptions, cultural imprintings, and pathways of the individual or community.

The significance of level of removal is that it dictates, to a large degree, particular cultural symbols which are only understood in the context of a specific culture. Move away from one's pathway, the level of removal increases and cultural understanding, on a primary level, is limited. This is why it is futile to try, as referred to earlier, to "see with the native eye" or "feel with the native heart."

When considering Kwanzaa, one finds an entire ideology built upon an assumed and appropriated edifice of "African" cultural and societal practice with which many African-Americans are not familiar nor capable of assimilating fully due to their own cultural pathways and imprintings. The reason for this lies in the lack of proximity of African-Americans to the original physicality of African culture. Yet, what is meant by physicality?

Many community, group, and cultural performances have specific narratives germane to a particular lifestyle or ideology, yet these performances also possess a physical or contextual identity. This cognitive identity is comprised of smells, sounds, visual images, and visceral sensations which catalyze performance and crystallize necessary elements of the performance for an individual or group. Vansina speaks of a similar point: "For most of what is in people's minds is held in common by them; just as visual concepts are, and just as language is" (121).

The significance of an event's physicality may lie in the phenomenon of "phase entertainment." Phase entertainment is a term appropriated from Chaos theory, or non-linear physics. Biological researchers noticed that certain slime molds would change color and pulse sympathetically towards a certain "attractor," in this case color--thus, the term phase entertainment. This idea was

extrapolated into the theory that humans may exhibit the same behavior when homologous social, physical, cultural, etc., traits exist. I am using the term to describe the visceral and psychological resonance of collective beliefs. Schechner mentions a similar phenomenon by stating that performances have "intensities where a definite threshold is crossed" (Schechner, Appel 4).

Phase entertainment should not, however, be confused with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of "flow." Flow is a psychological focusing of attention on a "limited stimulus field" (Turner, Blazing 61). Phase entertainment is a visceral phenomenon which may contribute to flow.

For our purposes, an attractor centers on certain physical aspects of cultural behavior and beliefs. For example, Karenga cites that some African tribes have an ingrained sense of communitarianism. Such an attribute may be labeled an attractor. The significance of the attractor is that, within seemingly contradictory actions and beliefs, the collective whole of these random events produces a startling order over time. Often, such patterns are called cultural attributes.

Therefore, if the patterning and pathways of a group are relatively homogeneous, a bandwidth emerges in which events, actions, smells, etc., find a place of significance and purpose insofar as identifying and understanding a

performance. To illustrate this point, let us consider my perceptions of a specific physical stimulus.

As an North American, the smell of a Douglas Fir tree conjures up in me a plethora of emotions, images, and possibly even visceral reactions to the stimulus. Yet, if a Yoruba tribal member had access to the same smell, would he have the same vocabulary of interpretation I possess, in terms of emotions etc., for such a stimulus? I believe not. First of all, there are no Douglas Firs in Africa. Thus, the tribal member's experience with such a smell is new and different in comparison to my own. Because of his geographical sense foundations, he is incapable of assimilating the messages such a smell might convey to a resident of North America. Therefore, there is no pathway to interpret such a stimulus as indicative of the Christmas season, for example. Paul LaViolette posits a similar position.

Researcher Paul LaViolette believes that data we receive viscerally and "emotional nuances (feeling tones)," "physically manifest as neuroelectric waveforms"(Briggs 53). These waveforms circulate through the brain and create "themes" which are analogous to cultural pathways and imprintings. LaViolette's conclusions confirm that we are all conditioned into a certain cultural persuasion that

influences the way we view and even feel the world around us.

The importance of the above points becomes clear when one considers performance events which are transculturated, such as the Igbo drumming and dancing I observed at the Kwanzaa celebration.

The Igbo dance and drum performance possesses an essence and polarity all its own.¹ Integral with the performance are certain lessons, narratives, and visceral elements. When these elements are congruent with a community's, the result is a phase entertainment--a likeness of attributes which propels the performance and gives it life. The Nigerian libation ceremony also has a physical component which cannot be overlooked in the determination of the performance's efficacy. Traditionally, the performance is held out of doors in a market square. This setting has attached to it certain sounds, colors, and even smells (such as asphyxiating dust) that interact with the pathways of the participants and observers, thus identifying, strengthening, and codifying the significance of the event (Chike interview).

However, when such an event is transculturated, it experiences a rapid divergence of its cultural, societal, and contextual identity. This divergence occurs because the initial conditions, or context, of the performance event are

not capable of being understood by the beneficiaries of the exported performance (the African-American community) because they have no ideological, physical, or experiential basis of their own with which to understand the event in its original form. In short, the "attractors" of the event and culture are not congruent; thus, the opportunity of a "phase entertainment" occurring is not likely. This fact creates a tension between the event's essence and the experiences of the group or community participating in the performance, and it obscures the outsider's understanding of such an event. Within Kwanzaa, tension manifests as a result of Karenga's espousal of cultural attributes, yet the community, in some ways, embraces Kwanzaa as an acknowledgment of race.

To compensate for a high degree of level of removal and quell the tensions of transculturated performances, groups and communities manipulate performances to suit their interests and understanding. They accomplish this by adopting what I call a "surrogate ideology." A surrogate ideology is simply a collection of cultural attributes that the community embraces as its own. Within Kwanzaa, this ideology concerns Afrocentric themes such as ingathering and communitarianism.

By creating a surrogate ideology, performances undergo a transformation of sorts whereby the community infuses its own meanings into the performance. In this way, the

transculturated performance, such as the Igbo drumming and dance, enters a liminal area of elasticity. This elasticity allows the community to adjust performances to suit their needs. Once this is accomplished, the act of naming becomes imperative and necessary in delineating difference, establishing identity, and confirming ownership of the performance. Naming in a true sense codifies the transformed results of the performance by the adopting culture. And, its use is necessary in maintaining the identity of the performance.

Level of removal and physicality are especially important points because they may be used to intelligently discuss why performances removed from original contexts may possibly be ineffectual in other cultural contexts. At the very least, the performance undergoes a transformation in which the adopting culture injects its own beliefs and practices. However, if a culture adopts a transculturated event and "makes the performance their own," then the possibility of efficacious results are most certainly probable. The important point here is that efficacy resides in the commonality of beliefs and practices resultant from one's cultural pathways and imprintings.

Chapter III

Kwanzaa: Ideology and Practice.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the salient aspects of Kwanzaa's ideology, construction, and practice. Also discussed will be the intentions of its founder, Maulana Karenga, in relation to the community's intentions and practices. Much of the material presented is from Maulana Karenga's book, *The African American Holiday of Kwanzaa*. However, no cursory overview of a work can duplicate the nuance of the original author. Therefore, any questions or perceived ambiguities one might have should refer to Karenga's original work.

Kwanzaa was founded in 1966 by Maulana Karenga. The celebration occurs every year from December 26th to January 1st. The purpose behind Kwanzaa is quite specific; it is intended to provide the African American community social, political, spiritual, and creative points of contact through which the community can re-establish some semblance of "authentic" African identity. Karenga states that "tradition is our grounding. It is also cultural authority for any claims to cultural authenticity for anything we do or think as an African people" (15). Thus, Kwanzaa is considered to be an African-American celebration although,

in many celebrations, others outside the African-American community are often welcome to attend.

The actual word Kwanzaa is derived from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza." "Matunda" means "fruits," and "ya kwanza" means "first" (16). Karenga chose the Swahili language because it is "essentially non-ethnic and Pan-African" (110). The first fruit theme is the back drop through which, according to Karenga, African-Americans can affirm their uniquely African heritage and position, "for it is basic Kawaida [Karenga's philosophy] assumption that the confrontation with the oppressor necessitates confrontation with ourselves" (Karenga, Kawaida 127).

There are several informative factors related to Kwanzaa's development. However, in order to capture the "flavor" of Karenga's rhetoric and work, it is useful to observe examples of the language used by other Afrocentrists. The first two passages are from Molefi Kete Asante's book, *Afrocentricity*:

Afrocentricity is African genius and African values created, reconstructed, and derived from our history and experiences in our own best interests(viii). Afrocentricity is belief in the centrality of Africans in post modern history. It is our history, our mythology, our creative motif, and our ethos exemplifying our own collective will (6).

Further, Karenga states:

A people's choice to allow an oppressor to educate their children have [sic] also limited their possibilities. And people whose paradigms of thought are borrowed from its oppressor clearly have limited human possibilities (35).

Obviously, such language and its corresponding sentiments are directed at the cultural and racial insider. Throughout Karenga's work, he uses language that speaks specifically to the cultural or racial insider.

Through the constant barrage of Afrocentric rhetoric, Karenga mentions five common practices of the African diaspora which informed Kwanzaa. These include: 1. Ingathering; 2. Reverence; 3. Commemoration; 4. Recommitment; 5. Celebration (16).

Karenga presents these aspects as central to African first fruit celebrations. Ingathering is an important activity for renewing and strengthening the bonds between individuals and community. Reverence concerns the African respect for the environment and collective renewal. Commemoration is the veneration of the ancestors through the modelling of an ethical life consisting of service and social achievement. Recommitment involves the affirmation of certain African and African-American cultural ideals. Celebration is characterized as ritual and ceremony that includes drumming, poetry, singing, dancing, and music (17-25). These five practices are central to Kwanzaa, as many

of the activities reflect these "African" traits. However, the creation of Kwanzaa is two-fold, African and American; thus, Karenga refers to African-American origins.

The African-American origins of Kwanzaa reside in the Black Nationalist movement of the 1960's and Karenga's philosophy of Kawaïda. It has been praised by many African-American leaders as a "contemporary Black philosophy" (Baraka 10):

Kawaïda critically examines various contributions to Black and human history, and makes a selective analysis of what is real and relevant, extracts it, integrates it into a system and then, puts it in the service of Black liberation(Karenga Kawaïda:139).

It was in the early 60's that Karenga, acquiring significant cues from Malcolm X, started the US organization.² "The first act. . .US contended, is to redefine and reshape their world in their own image and interest" (30). It is in the Black Nationalist spirit that Kwanzaa finds its true essence. This essence resides in the tenets of Kwanzaa's codified principles.

The centerpiece of Kwanzaa is the Nguzo Saba, or the Seven Principles. According to Karenga, the Nguzo Saba are the "matrix and minimum set of values African-Americans need to rescue and reconstruct their lives in their own image and interest and build and sustain an Afrocentric family,

community and culture." Karenga contends that, as a community in struggle, the values of Kwanzaa should lend support to the struggle (43).

The Nguzo Saba, or Seven Principles, are as follows:

1. Umoja(Unity)

To Strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

2. Kujichagulia(Self-determination)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others.

3. Ujima(Collective Work and Responsibility)

To build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problems our problems and to solve them together.

4. Ujamaa(Cooperative Economics)

To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and profit from them together.

5. Nia(Purpose)

To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

6. Kuumba(Creativity)

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

7. Imani (Faith)

To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Maulana Karenga

In viewing the Nguzo Saba, one may interpret certain "religious" overtones in its language. However, Cedric McClester, in his book *Kwanzaa*, states that: "Kwanzaa is unique in that it is neither a religious, political, nor heroic [holiday] but rather a cultural one" (1). Any cursory review of the Nguzo Saba reveals its strong nationalist, separatist overtones. Imbedded in the Seven Principles are explosive political ramifications. Therefore, Kwanzaa is not simply a cultural affirmation for African-Americans.

The Nguzo Saba serves as the controlling doctrine of Kwanzaa on which all activities of the celebration are based. According to Karenga, each of the seven days of Kwanzaa should exhibit, uphold, teach, and reinforce the chosen principle for that day, and all the activities for each day should center on themes built around one of the seven principles. This involves the use of symbols significant to the community.

Kwanzaa has particular symbols that specifically speak to the struggle of African-Americans while concurrently acknowledging African practices and activities (McClester

5). The seven fundamental symbols of Kwanzaa are:
Mazao(crops or fruits and vegetables); Mekeka(mat);
Kinara(candleholder); Vibunzi(ears of corn); Zawadi(gifts);
Kikombe Cha Umoja(the communal unity cup); Mishumaa Saba(The
seven candles) (7,8).

The Mazao symbolizes the fruits of collective labor by the group and represents harvest celebrations of many African agrarian tribes. Mkeka is the symbolic foundation of the community which expresses reverence for tradition and history. The Kinara(similar to the Jewish Menorah) holds the seven candles that are symbolic of both continental Africans and the Nguzo Saba. The holder is used to represent a collective of ancestors for the participants of Kwanzaa. Vibunzi represents children and the potential of children themselves to become producers and thus perpetuate the "immortality of the people or nation" (7). Zawadi are gifts exchanged among the nuclear family, on the basis of merit and achievements, that reinforce the collective well-being of the family. They are not given automatically (7). According to Karenga, Kwanzaa gifts "must always include two items: a) a book, and b) a heritage symbol-regardless of what else is given" (Karenga 88). Kikombe Cha Umoja is the unity cup used during the libation statement of Kwanzaa. The unity cup is passed among members of the celebration to "honor the ancestors and promote the spirit of oneness"

(McClester 8). The last of the formal symbols, the Mishumaa Saba represents the seven candles symbolic of the Nguzo Saba. For each day of Kwanzaa, a candle is lit bearing the principle of the day starting with the black candle symbolic of Umoja. The candles reinforce the inherent emphasis on African communal values embraced by the Nguzo Saba. These symbols are integral with the daily activities of Kwanzaa.

Activities of Kwanzaa

Traditionally, the Kwanzaa celebration begins with the Tamshi La Tambiko, or The Libation Statement (Karenga 95). This begins with the pouring of the tambiko, which "is an ancient African teaching which is found in the book of Ani of ancient Egypt, to honor one's ancestors by pouring libation" (89). Karenga believes this is an important "ritual" to be conducted by a priest, or Mzee(elder)(94), by pouring wine into the kikombe and stating the tamshi. The following libation statement is from McClester's book on Kwanzaa, and is common in content yet shorter than Karenga's printed version.

Tamshi La Tambiko

For the Motherland cradle of civilization.
For the ancestors and their indomitable
spirit.
For the elders from whom we can learn
much.

For our youth who represent the promise
for tomorrow.
For our people the original people.
For our struggle and in remembrance of
those who have struggled on our behalf.
For Umoja the principle of unity which
should guide us in all that we do.
For the creator who provides all things
great and small (ix).

After the tamshi, the performer of the statement leads a call for unity in the form of the word "Harambee." Harambee is a call to unity, collective work, and struggle (96). After the harambee, the kikombe is passed to the elders of the ceremony. This gesture is then followed by a lighting of the mishumma in which the first black candle is lit. Subsequent to this gesture, the statement "Habari gani?" or "what news" (98) is asked by individuals in the group. The participants respond by stating the principle for the day. For example, on the first day of Kwanzaa, the response would be "Umoja." This narrative of events, aside from the libation statement, starts each day of Kwanzaa.

Karenga lists many other reinforcing gestures for Kwanzaa which he suggests may or may not be adopted for the celebration. He also provides extensive detail as to the meaning of each gesture.³

Understanding Kwanzaa

As mentioned earlier, the language of Karenga and Kwanzaa relies upon the use of verbal naming that draws

distinct borders between cultures. In fact, one may surmise that a great deal of Kwanzaa's efficacy for the African-American community is found in the necessity of naming.

The most prominent example of naming found in Kwanzaa involves Karenga's use of the word "African." He speaks of pan-Africanism as "a philosophy and practice which affirms the common history, culture, interests and struggles of African people" (Karenga, Kwanzaa 110). Typically, the use of the word "African," for some people, conjures up cultural visions of a country and people, rhythmic musics, and a generally aboriginal, tribal lifestyle. However, when Karenga speaks of Africa, or African traits, he is specifically referring to cultural codes and signifying practices which are especial to Africa and Africans.

For example, Karenga states that "in African philosophy, the true human person is never an isolated, unattached individual, but always a person-in-community." Karenga further cites Menkiti stating that "in the African view, it is the community which defines the person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will or memory" (Karenga, Kwanzaa 38). Both authors are speaking of the perceived inherent African cultural code of communitarianism. Karenga asserts that communitarianism is realized and manifested as an ingathering of the group. In this instance of naming, African or Africa not only

represents a people or geographic location, but for Karenga it represents a collective embodiment of values and practices.

Another example of naming used by Karenga is his use of "the oppressor." Karenga, in positive and certain terms, names in an attempt to draw a line, or border, between African culture and western European culture. By using the term "oppressor," Karenga asserts that those who have allowed themselves to be educated, or to borrow from a culture other than their own, are somehow equivocating and thus culturally non-determined in scope. Thus, African-Americans who do not embrace their "true" cultural roots are somehow not complete. One function of Kwanzaa, then, is to provide a means of cultural rapprochement.

Karenga's attempt at illuminating clear differences between African and European cultures through naming procedures is necessary. Such differences allow African-Americans a point of contact through which Karenga can infuse the community with his philosophical constructs via Kwanzaa. Thus, identifying "the oppressor" is essential to Kwanzaa. Naming in this instance is necessary in establishing clear cultural and racial values from which the African-American community, through Kwanzaa, can champion its own cultural values or codes instead of those of white European culture. In spite of the assertion that Kwanzaa is

solely a cultural celebration, one may discern intervening ideologies oblique to the overtly stated ones.

For example, Karenga often uses the name "Black" in his descriptions of Kwanzaa. The term "Black" in many ways is a socio-political label whereby African-American community leaders in the 60's called for political equality. Thus, the use of "black" may seem odd in juxtaposition to "African" when Karenga states that a major goal of the US organization was "the creation, recreation, and circulation of Black culture" (Karenga 27).

Black, as an example of naming, is important to the community, for it represents historical struggle as a people in America that in turn provides a point through which the community can convalesce from the inequities perpetrated against them by the "oppressor." Also, its use provides a second separate level of engagement for the community to Kwanzaa by allowing it to serve as an ethnic and racial cause as well as a socio-political acknowledgment of struggle. Naming such as this defines the outsider along specific racial, ethnic, ideological, and political lines, while simultaneously creating borders for the insider.

Karenga's use of this type of naming has implicit in it a certain amount of power. The underlying tenets of Kwanzaa have no efficacy if the cultures ascribed to them are not collectively recognized as powerful by the African-American

community. Therefore, Karenga's naming, in the spirit of pan-Africanism, provides authority and is viewed as valid by the African-American community.

In speaking about ritual and community, Malidoma Some states that naming,

has always been an interesting power, no matter what culture you look at. It can be used to denote ownership, or friendship, or love or bigotry. It can be used in common for the sake of instilling community, or used in disparity to instill separation or preparation for war (Some 66).

He further states that "people who regroup under a different banner to take care of themselves are attracted to indigenous culture" (Some 67). When we view naming in Kwanzaa, we find a group attracted to the mystique of a culture, or collection of cultures, from which "romantic" attributes are appropriated and upheld as traits to be assimilated. Kwanzaa, then, is an attempt to claim ownership and commodify for the sake of reclaiming, developing, and regrouping into a cohesive community. Some believe that when groups name and unite under the blanket of the community, "they are trying to fight the servitude in which corporate power holds them prisoner, they are redefining themselves" (Some 67). Therefore, surrounding Kwanzaa is Karenga's purpose to redefine and shape a community in an image different than its present one. Thus,

naming is used to "denote ownership" and instill community. It is also a way of promoting separation of the community from the corporate power of the "oppressor."

Significant occurrences of naming are found in Kwanzaa, therefore, revealing through language, the intentions of its author. Thus, naming is a necessary activity germane to the idea of the community within Kwanzaa. However, the type of naming found in Kwanzaa is inherently confusing in nature. Not only does naming identify and unify the community, it also draws very distinct and concrete borders. Through the process of naming, Karenga has created cultural, social, racial, economic, and political borders for African-Americans that exclude those outside the community.

Chapter IV

The Kwanzaa Experience

The intent of this chapter is to convey as accurately as possible my experiences while attending a Kwanzaa celebration. First, in a stream of consciousness fashion, my preparation and documentation of the Kwanzaa celebration will be presented. This will lead to a discussion of the activities observed at a Kwanzaa celebration. Finally, two specific performances within Kwanzaa will be analyzed for their efficacy and meaning to the African-American community and myself, as one outside of the community.

Concerning ethnographic inquiry, Colin Turnbull mentions that "We cannot dismiss the human element by claiming to be concerned only with social systems" (Schechner-Appel 51). For, if one does, one's fieldwork and subsequent publishing become "a mere exercise in ethnocentric intellectual gymnastics" (51). This human element involves a personal need to know at what level, and in what way, another culture is similar to one's own. On these grounds, the problem becomes one of discovering the construction of one's house built upon the similarities of the foundations. Thus, my intent within the documentation of Kwanzaa was to discover the aspects I felt were important

and identified either my commonality or outsideness with the African-American community.

Preparation For Kwanzaa

Preparation for Kwanzaa included first finding out exactly what Kwanzaa meant, so, I familiarized myself with Maulana Karenga's book, *The African American Celebration of Kwanzaa*. Contained within his book, one will find a detailed description of the categories and circumstances which informed Kwanzaa's creation. I also reviewed much of the information about Kwanzaa written within the African-American community. However, because I am not "formally"⁴ trained in conducting fieldwork, I had to rely on a "human" and "holistic" approach to my research.

In fact, "good-form" suggested that I should have conducted extensive interviews with members of the African-American community before attending Kwanzaa. Of course, I had a broad choice of candidates from which to choose and interview. Many were distinguished leaders and educators in the community. However, I overlooked these individuals in search of community members; I believed their interpretation of Kwanzaa would be personal, emotional, intuitive, and pragmatic. They would be able to offer the explanation of Kwanzaa I was searching for--namely, one devoid of unconsciously accepted political agendas and dogma.

My first "informant" was a friend who lives in San Francisco. Kwanzaa for her meant very little, and she characterized the celebration as commercialism. However, my second informant, Patricia, proved to be much more introspective on the topic of Kwanzaa. She conveyed that, throughout American history, some African-Americans have cultivated a deep and meaningful spiritual community centered on Christian beliefs and practice. And, under powerful leaders such as Martin Luther King, the community has risen against hegemonic attempts at suppressing African-American civil rights. Referring to Kwanzaa, she stated that it was originally constructed to be both a spiritual and cultural affirmation in which Christian ideology was to be excluded. However, upon the expressed ambivalence of African-American spiritual leaders and parishioners, Karenga in his formal writing of Kwanzaa in 1988, removed the religious stance and offered Kwanzaa up as a cultural alternative to European ideology. Thus, Kwanzaa in the mid-1980's started to become a powerful activity for the African-American community.

Patricia also referred to the familial celebration of Kwanzaa her family observes. More than just a cultural affirmation, she stated that Kwanzaa fulfilled a void for her children in the predominantly "white" neighborhood and culture in which she lives. She spoke to the power of the

celebration to reinforce values, but not necessarily African values.

With my preliminary research and interviews completed, the decision had to be made as to where to view Kwanzaa. Within the Bay Area, there were many cities to choose from. Among these were San Francisco, Oakland, Palo Alto, and San Jose. By far the most popular and commercial celebrations are held in San Francisco and Oakland. However, I reside in San Jose; therefore, the decision was made to involve myself with the San Jose Kwanzaa celebration.

In order to find out the necessary information about the celebration, I contacted the African-American Community Center of San Jose, located on 304 N. 6th Street.⁵ I briefly spoke with the director of the center, Aminah, about my intentions of attending and videotaping Kwanzaa. There was some reservation in her tone, even though I informed her of my Master's research. After a few calls, I decided the most expedient and clear method of communication would be in writing. I composed a letter which outlined my intentions and the methods I planned on using for the research. (A copy of the letter, and other artifacts from Kwanzaa, may be found in the appendix of this work.) After the letter was received and understood, my negotiations with the center became easier and more pleasant. However, there was one stipulation with which I had to comply. Because each day of

Kwanzaa was sponsored by separate community agencies, I had to obtain permission to tape from each day's coordinator of events. Some of the permission was granted through writing, but most of the permission was granted verbally after discussing my intentions with each coordinator.

Documenting Kwanzaa

Because Kwanzaa is a seven day event, the task of accurately documenting the celebration posed many potential problems. Recording written field notes of the various events would have proven cumbersome and incomplete. Therefore, I chose to videotape the celebration.

Videotaping allows the researcher a visual and, more importantly, an audio representation of holistic events. The problem I encountered, however, is that I could not be in every room of the celebration simultaneously. Thus, to circumvent this problem, it was necessary to utilize two cameras: one stationary in the main room of the celebration; the other mobile, capturing the events on the periphery of the main celebration. The stationary camera provided the necessary audio continuity of the celebration. The mobile camera, which I carried, documented specific interviews with participants while simultaneously allowing freedom of subject, which included extreme close-ups (ECU'S) of the artifacts and symbols of Kwanzaa. The intention with the

videotape was to capture as many material and performance attributes of Kwanzaa as possible. Each day's events lasted approximately three to four hours. Therefore, every minute of the celebration and preparation conducted by the participants was recorded as well as all of the performances of Kwanzaa itself. In this way, the tapes served as field notes while allowing me to interact with my surroundings. This proved invaluable to my experience with Kwanzaa.

The Kwanzaa Celebration

It is not within the scope of this research to discuss, critique and analyze the seven days of Kwanzaa. In fact, the Kwanzaa celebration I attended collectively observed only six of the seven days of Kwanzaa. However, in order to completely understand the richness Kwanzaa affords to the community, a short description of each days events will be provided.

Umoja, the first day of Kwanzaa, is one of the most significant day of celebration due to the collective communal call for unity. On this day, the community turned out in force complete with colorful Afrocentric fashions, caps, jewelry, etc. The main attraction of the evening(each day of Kwanzaa started at Approximately 3:00 p.m. and ended at 6:00 p.m.) was the performance by the Oriki Theatre group. The following analysis of performances is exclusive

to the first night's activities. Therefore, this discussion will be concerned with the subsequent days of the celebration.

The second day of Kwanzaa, Kujichagulia, involved the tireless work of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. The oldest black women's sorority in the United States, the "sisters" organized a day specifically aimed at children. Throughout the early part of the day, children and their parents painted, played games, and talked about themes specific to Africa. After these activities, the group congregated in the main room to sing songs set to drums and hear stories told by some of the elders.

Ujima, the third day of Kwanzaa, was hosted by the Ujima Black Social Workers group. The event concerned personal themes and issues. In the main room of the center, the members of Ujima and the participants of the day congregated into a large circular "encounter" group. The participant's spoke of problems within the community and how to resolve them. Also, some of the participants offered personal testimonies of how they overcame some of their own problems. The activities for the day concluded with a drum and poetry reading by one of the social workers and a "street" musician I am familiar with from downtown San Jose.

The festivities of Ujamaa were sponsored by the Black Student Unions and Community Youth. This was a particularly

fun day because it involved a competition of two girl's dance groups from rival schools. I exhausted a tremendous amount of tape observing each group prepare for the competition held in the main room. Before the performance, one group practiced outside, the other inside, which made taping somewhat difficult. The contest culminated with each group dancing a rap-"gumboot" style set only to the voices of the girls. After the competition, the remainder of the day was spent with an African-American entrepreneur explaining his business interests and how he started in business. The session followed a question/answer format in which members from the community were able to glean successful hints from an established business person.

The fifth day of Kwanzaa, Nia, showcased a dynamic performance by the San Jose Minority Actor's Guild. The company was comprised of eight members, each with a specific talent. The group presented a historical narrative of black accomplishments. Set to drums, the members danced and sang their way through specific points in history. For example, one performer acted out the story of Briar Rabbit. The activities following the performance concerned a discussion group speaking on issues of purpose, or Nia.

The last observed day of Kwanzaa, Kuumba, again featured a group discussion in which members of the community shared aspects of their lives and experiences that

exemplified the principle of the day, creativity. This particular day closed out the celebration.

Obviously, this cursory overview of the Kwanzaa celebration is not complete enough to feature the interactions and nuances of both participants and performers. Nevertheless, the above descriptions of each days events hopefully provides a glimpse of the wealth and multi-dimensional purpose that Kwanzaa affords the African-American community. Also, it should be noted that the Kwanzaa celebration I observed started with intense emotion and pride. However, as the days passed, the number of participants grew smaller and more intimate. Also, out of the total number of people that attended Kwanzaa, I was but of a small minority that attended each day. Therefore, given this scenario, it seemed most appropriated to analyze performances on the strongest of the days, Umoja.

The Performance Space

The community center, at one time, served as a fire station. It contained several capacious, fluorescent-lit rooms.⁶ The room which served as the main performance space is approximately 100 feet square, enough room for two large fire trucks and corresponding equipment. Contributing to the celebratory feeling of the room, various African motifs were used as decoration. For example, on the walls adjacent

to the performance space, large rhythmized linen cloths spanned the entire length of the walls. The outer edges of the textiles were adorned with palm tree flonds. The centerpiece of the performance space contained the symbols of Kwanzaa referred to earlier: the Mkeka; simulated and real Mazao; Kinara; Vibunzi; Mishumaa Saba; and the Kikombe Cha Umoja. These elements were on top of covered risers which elevated the collective centerpiece of symbols two and one half feet above the ground. On the back wall, printed literature about the symbols, principles, and meanings of Kwanzaa were placed in mosaic like patterns. Above these were miniature motifs of gathered fabric and small brooms made of plant material.

While I observed the main room decor, the members of the Oriki Theatre group were beginning to assemble their performance paraphernalia. Their equipment consisted of: standard conga drums, both a quinto and segunda⁷, various rattles and bells which were similar to Ewe gankogui bells⁸, and a batch of preassembled white PVC pipe. The pipe was utilized to construct a hut approximately 12 feet square. Over the plastic frame, bamboo sunning mats were attached to form walls. This gave the appearance of a "tribal hut." The performers were dressed in typical street clothes, but they stored their performance regalia in the hut.

At this time, I spoke with the founder and leader of Oriki, Chike Nmoiffiah, a member of an Igbo tribe in Nigeria. Through discussion and an informal contract, I obtained limited rights to videotape the performance for the evening.⁹ Once this was secured, I proceeded to set up my video equipment.

The events for the day were scheduled to start at 3:00 p.m. At approximately 2:30 p.m., the main room of the community center became crowded with community members in colorful Afrocentric fashions. Many of the people were conversing and establishing friendship ties. Some participants were found in the banquet room, outside, and throughout the center. On the outer edges of the room, local merchants set up their merchandise. The merchandise ranged from hats and clothes fabricated out of African Kente cloth, and other unidentified rhythmized textiles, to African-American books, records, calendars, etc. One particular merchant was selling small porcelain African-American figurines which portrayed various culturally specific themes. It was obvious that the merchants collective presence reinforced the principle of Ujamaa.

Performance Events and Analysis

Performance Event: Nigerian Dance and Drumming.

As the event was about to start, drumming by the master drummer summoned participants into the performance space. Families, individuals, and others began to sit in chairs arranged in a semi-circle facing the assembled Kwanzaa symbols and the Oriki hut.¹⁰

As the performer's congregated in the transition area outside the performance space, I began to hear chanting and recitation of Nigeria phrases. The master drummer composed calls to the dancers. Chike, the lead dancer, played a small reed flute with which he answered the master drummer. This continued for about fives minutes with alternating calls from the master drummer and responses from Chike.¹¹ Meanwhile, the audience members were settling in. At one point, the calls stopped, and a measured, repetitive drum rhythm began. From outside the main performance space, two dancers, outfitted in heavy muted beige wraps with maroon rectilinear, geometric designs, entered with an entourage of four "elders" in tow. In this instance, the elders were the committee members of the Kwanzaa celebration. Each was dressed in cloth wraps of tertiary colors with organic designs. The processional marked the beginning of the tamshi la tambiko.

At the center of the performance area Chike, the lead dancer, continued boisterously reciting Nigerian phrases, while urgently circling in front of the stoic elders and entranced, sweating drummer. The master drummer responded to each call Chike made. As Chike circled, he carried a globose libation cup which he then place on the ground. After several cycles of alternating call and response between Chike and the drums, the second dancer began simultaneously, and sporadically, playing metal flange-welded bells with the master drummer. At this point, the master drummer began a repetitive motif with even, walking speed meter. Chike strode around the performance circle reciting and appearing as if he were on a journey. He was calling out to an unknown entity. As this "search" continued, the urgency of his recitations and the drumming increased in loudness, reaching a threshold of intensities.

As Chike appeared to reach his destination, both the drumming and recitation softened and subsided. Chike carefully placed a large black feather (possibly that of an ostrich) on the floor near the libation cup. He contemplatively circled while opening an etched gourd container he had in his hands. He respectfully removed his woven maroon cap, placing it near the other artifacts arranged on the floor. Slowly, with measured visible reverence, he reached inside the gourd container. Standing

up and cradling a chalk-like substance (similar to diatomaceous earth) in his hands, Chike began to recite more phrases in a quiet, solemn, contemplative tone--as though he were asking the ancestors to join or bless his actions, an observation later confirmed by Chike.

He then knelt near the artifacts and began to break up and draw on the ground with the chalk like substance. The drumming and verbal phrasing were growing in intensity, enroute to a higher level. Upon reaching a tumult of tempo and volume, Chike signalled, with the wave of a hand, to stop. With verbal staccato blasts and sharp "slap" drum tones, Chike and the drummer conversed while the ground drawing took place. Chike mentioned each of his ancestors by name. This was acknowledged by the drums barking out a responsive rhythm. Waving his hand and arm in broad, slow, sweeping motions, Chike released some of the dust in several directions, thus inviting his ancestors into the performance space. He then anointed his fellow dancer, who recoiled at first (possibly his eyes were closed), with the powdered substance. Chike then rose and preceded to anoint the foreheads of all four of the elders. He then circled around the assembled artifacts on the floor. And, again, the intensity of rhythm, volume, and verbal recitation increased. At this time, Chike, with extended arms and an

upward gaze, showed the community the powdered substance. The audience did not respond in any overt fashion.¹²

The drum rhythm used in the invocation then started with renewed urgency. Chike picked up the *kikombe cha umoja* (the vessel containing the libation) and began to undulate his body. With confidence and verve, Chike then decanted some of the libation liquid into a smaller phallic shaped vessel from which he subsequently poured the libation liquid on the ground along with the powder. Then, in a paroxysm of command, Chike recited another statement, and the drums and voice conversed again in a call and response fashion. While this occurred, the second dancer drank the libation.

At this point, dance gestures conveying a light upward motion occurred, and the drummer played a conga pattern called Guanguanco.¹³ It appeared as if the ancestors had arrived through the efforts of the libation statement. After the dancing, the elders then left the performance arena. The master drummer and Chike adjourned into the hut while the second dancer played the drums. The audience looked bewildered, as they tried to determine whether or not the performance was over. Indeed, the performance of the libation statement was over. At this point, the participants received welcoming statements from one of the elders, one of whom paraphrased the beginning pages from

McClester's book concerning the purpose and symbols of Kwanzaa.

Performance Analysis: Nigerian Dance and drumming.

There are many questions one could ask in an analysis of the Oriki performance. However, the present intent is to identify the salient questions germane to an understanding of the efficacy of the performance. The analysis offered here contains no hierarchical order in the presentation of the various points and issues.

One important question about the dance and drum performance is: What were the intentions of the performance, from the performer's, the audience's, and the outsider's perspectives? To a great degree, the outsider's intentions are defined, in part, by this description and analysis. Therefore, a limited etic analysis will suffice.

In a pre-performance interview, Chike revealed that he, as well as other African-American performers, did not appreciate the way in which African dance was performed by many performers in the United States.

African dance is not just gyrations and somersaults. Every movement is speech... every speech is dictated by the voice of the drum. Therefore, there must be a meaning. . .there must be a reason. Every theme of life has a specific kind of dance, music, and song that is unique to that theme of life. Therefore, one cannot

mix the dance steps of life and death
(Montrezza, Video).

In our discussion, Chike emphasized accuracy of content and the need to perform "highly authenticated dance and theatre." Also, he stated, "If you do African theatre, you must be true to the Art." But, the question of whose aesthetic of art, or truth to art, must be addressed. In speaking of the Oriki performance group, Chike related that they perform full-scale performances representing womanhood and manhood including rites of passage and birth and death ceremonies. Oriki "customizes packages" for schools and community centers. Thus, Chike's intentions for the performance resided in his need to portray authentic representations of African dance while he was performing the libation statement. The question, however, is: authentic for whom?

The audience, through actions and mannerism, exhibited no interaction with the text, drumming, or gestures of the performers, prompting one to believe that the performance was not readily understood by the audience, although it may have been "authentic" for the performers. In fact, many of the audience members were deeply moved by the performance, but they did not know how to act, whether or not to applaud, dance, verbally respond etc. Thus, the audience did not understand the context nor the narrative of this particular

performance. The fact that there was a set apart "audience" itself suggests limited interaction within the event and defines them as non-participatory. The audience's role in relation to this performance was reduced to that of a voyeur. They were peering in on a transcultural facsimile of an African libation ceremony.

The intentions of the audience resided in issues of empowerment through the viewing of performance actions that were representative of their historical cultural lineage. Many of the participants described the setting of the performance as more intimate than other metropolitan Kwanzaa celebrations. Thus, the audience's intentions portended a more holistic function for the performance. They were not concerned with actually understanding the Igbo phrases of the performance, nor for that matter, with understanding the prominent gestures of the performance itself. The particular gestures, language, ideology, and ethnology of the performance were lost on them.

The community's intentions versus my own further defined me as an outsider. While I searched for the meaning in and significance of certain gestures juxtaposed with specific drum rhythms, the members of the community seemed content to describe the performance as representative of a collective value system that they themselves wanted to reinforce. Conversely, I tried to imaginatively place each

gesture within a narrative based on my own experiences, whereas, the audience members spoke of the necessity to congregate as a community. For as one Kwanzaa participant stated: "...[in San Jose] we're all spread out. You can't point to any one 'black' neighborhood." So the collective intentions of the participants seemed to indicate that the performance was purposeful in that it bound the community together in a ethnic, communitarian way.

Through post-performance interviews, the participants frequently labelled the performance as a ritual. However, this is a misuse of the word. The Oriki performance was not a ritual because it was far removed from its original ritual context. In fact, the values and beliefs represented in the performance were not congruent with those of the community because of obvious cultural differences. In order to serve as ritual, the ideology and physicality of the performance must contain elements which are exclusive to the participant's experiences and imprintings.

The first order of removal consisted of Oriki's appropriation of Nigerian signifying practices which were not understood in the context of African-American cultural codes. This "authentic" performance underwent a divergence of its essence as a result of transculturation. The significance of this fact finds its purpose when we consider the framing and context of the event.

The participants of Kwanzaa are inexorably tied to their own cultural pathways and imprintings, namely those of being an American. As discussed earlier, many performance events hold significance for a community because of a congruence of the events physical nuances and the neuroanatomical matrixes(our early experiential imprintings) of the participants. In short, the physicality of the performance is often instrumental to an event's efficacy.

Yet, the context of the dance and drumming was entirely different than its "authentic" roots. It was removed from its original context along with the assumptions, beliefs or mythology, and actions that were part of this context. Thus, the true function ascribed to the event, that of maintaining spiritual balance in the community, was non-existent. Therefore, the reason for the performance becomes somewhat muddled. Consequently, the participants were not able to connect their experiences to facets of the performance.

Determining the efficacy of the performance, then, becomes a question of the proximity of represented performance practice (in this case Nigerian) to the cultural codes and practices of the African-American community. Yet, it is quite obvious that levels of removal for both performers and observers was rather substantial. In this particular performance, however, the participants viewed

ingathering of the community as essential and necessary, not the performance itself. Therefore, the dance and drum performance was simply part of the need to congregate under racial, cultural, and social banners separate from the dominant culture. The performance did not dictate the gathering, as other rituals might.

Thus, in order to establish significance for the performance, the community tried to adopt a surrogate ideology which spoke to their experiences as African-Americans. For example, during the invocation of the ancestors, many of the participants strongly identified this action with the principle of Umoja or unity. Because the performance was an approximation of the original and removed from its normal context, I believe the performance was purely entertainment. Possibly, in future Kwanzaa celebrations, this particular performance will be adopted at which time the community will infuse its own beliefs and transform the event. If such an occurrence takes place, the community will be responsible for naming and making the event their own.

The Nigerian Igbo dance and drum performance did, however, fulfill the expectations presented by Karenga's Kwanzaa in that the above performance represented Afrocentric themes and ideals. However, these themes were not readily understood by the Kwanzaa participants.

Performance Event: "Sister Tamoo"¹⁴

Part of the richness of Kwanzaa is found in performances contained within the main communal celebration of the holiday. In effect, Kwanzaa includes performances within a performance. This fact presents perplexing recursive problems to the researcher, for it is difficult to determine which events, the celebration or the performances within the celebration, influence the individual's or group's actions and thus can be identified as efficacious. Further, it is difficult to determine the elements that contribute to efficaciousness. Thus, in many significant ways, Kwanzaa truly is a holistic syncretic, as opposed to segmented, event in which internal performances affect the larger celebration.

After the Oriki performance, the participants of Kwanzaa were invited to share testimonies citing how the principle of Umoja enriched their lives. The testimonies began with "elders" and moved to children. One testimony of note involved that of "sister Tamoo." As an example of performance, we will explore how Tamoo's testimony possessed elements germane to the definition of efficacious performance. Specifically, Tamoo's speech exhibited transgressive language and concepts which informed and transformed the community in a more pragmatic way than was

possible with the Nigerian performance or any of Karenga's ideologies.

It is not practical to present the entire transcribed speech within this analytic section. However, extended excerpts from her speech will be used to illustrate the points relevant to subsequent analysis. Similarly, facts gleaned from her speech will be used in describing and constructing issues surrounding the quoted material.

Tamoo was an original member of Karenga's US organization, joining in the second year of its existence. Tamoo felt compelled to attend Kwanzaa due to the recent death of Imani Kuumba.¹⁵ Much of her speech was stream of consciousness association. She began with a recount of her experience with the US organization:

The US organization was traumatic for me. It was a time when black people killed black people...[when] black people were harder on themselves than white people could have ever been. People were killed, literally the Panthers and the US organization--we killed each other. And, if you didn't do what Ron Karenga said, you were beat up! There were so many traumas in my life that came from the US organization. I've never been able to come to a Kwanzaa because of the US organization...but, there's a beauty here we need to keep (Montrezza, Video).

However, because of Imani's death, Tamoo made a commitment to herself to "be with black people again." She further

emphasized the need for the community to work together and unite as one. She then referred back to her years with Karenga:

Those ideas Ron Karenga had...before he went to jail for torturing black women...for using black young people...we thought we were going to change the world...We lived in a community; we lived in an apartment building where we ran all the white people out--it was all black people.

Tamoo then referred to the movement's goal of raising children in an unprejudiced world. She also spoke of the social conditions and portrayal of the dominant culture, via television and media, faced by many African-Americans today:

...until your young children have a sense of spirituality--of right and wrong, a value system... Never before in the past have we killed our elders. Never did we steal their social security checks or rape old women. Never did we take the dead and put them in front of their own home¹⁶...black people are at war! Now, today we have incest and rape...whatever we do, we do better than they do.

So, you have to look at what they show on T.V. They show us doing very negative things...They have movies now...pushing homosexuality...which there's nothing wrong with, if that's where people are at...Anything they give us on T.V. is negative--or it wouldn't be on primetime...the only place they let us in is entertainment and sports--and that's today!

Within this diatribe against American dominant culture and the media representation of African-Americans, Tamoo called for the need of people in the community to involve their children in communal endeavors, such as Kwanzaa, that present positive African-American role models. She stated, "when a child grows up in the house of a brain surgeon, brain surgery is not a big thing." The point Tamoo was making involved the need of the community to identify itself and speak for itself--a point emphasized by Karenga and Kwanzaa.

When you have no direction, your people are lost. Hispanics can look to Mexico--Latin American. As African-Americans, we feel we can't look to Africa because Africa[n] is certainly not American...we can look where we decide. It's called Kujichagulia--self-determination. We decide who we are.

Tamoo then passionately mentioned the struggle that occurred in the early sixties and throughout black history in the United States. She spoke of the forefathers shedding blood in hopes of a better future for blacks. As an example, Tamoo related more of her own experience and struggle:

The hate that I have of the situation I grew up in in the 60's, with the US organization...Today I'm healing; today I'm better because you see the trauma I

went through. Now, a group of people can come out and not see it [Kwanzaa] as a trauma. You see what it took to get here. I literally had to go into therapy. There were women who were raped and put in polygamous situations...you need to know that Ron Karenga was a man that we put on a god level because he gave us something we needed in the sixties.

Again, Tamoo related her struggle to the current situations of African-Americans. She tied this into the problems with inner city gangs. She compared African-American and Hispanic gangs:

Traditionally, gangs are not the problem: That's the tribal situation. Hispanics-- the same thing in their culture. It's what you do with the gangs.

Upon concluding her speech, Tamoo referred to the need for something "greater than yourself." In this respect, Tamoo mentioned Christianity as one possible source of solace for the African-American community. As her speech came to an end, she rallied the participants to attend the remaining days of Kwanzaa with renewed commitment and vigor. She left the crowd with this last call to action:

We should be buying black food, going to haircuts at black places. Find out: How many blacks on the board? How many blacks on the staff? PG&E, and everybody else, should be held accountable for how many blacks...We've got to go back to the jungle!

Performance Analysis: "Sister Tamoo"

The speech of Tamoo was extremely powerful, as she is an impressively Afrocentric and charismatic speaker. Her testimony was not only a history lesson, but it sought to incite action within the community. She tried to accomplish this through overtly transgressive language and descriptions.

In fact, many of her statements were of such an inflammatory nature that the members of the Kwanzaa committee sought to have the videotaped version of her speech suppressed. After Tamoo's speech, I was besieged by the Kwanzaa committee leader Aminah and another unnamed member. Aminah asked if Tamoo's speech was taped. Not wanting to forfeit all ethnographic integrity, I told her that the performance was taped in its entirety. At this point, Aminah asked for the tape. After calm reassurances that the tape would only be used for my thesis, Aminah reluctantly allowed the tape to remain in my possession. Later, she came back and said, "this tape is to be shown to no one. I don't want another Kathy Cole¹⁷ controversy over this." Evidently, the speech and tape were for insiders only. Aminah also tried to confiscate tape an African-American participant was shooting. The actions by the Kwanzaa committee suggested that possibly Tamoo's speech was

efficacious in essence because it dealt with genuine feelings many in the community possess, yet the current climate of "political correctness" prohibits such discussions in public gatherings.

Recall that the principle of Umoja centers on communal, familial, national, and racial unity. Yet, as we have seen, much of the content of Tamoo's speech dealt with communal infighting and distress. While other testimonies were of an uplifting and positive content, Tamoo's speech attacked the past transgressions of Maulana (Ron) Karenga, the founder of Kwanzaa. A sizable portion of her speech did not espouse unity, nor did it contain examples of unity; rather, it brutally presented the societal and communal ills members of the African-American community are currently experiencing. Obviously, a major transgression against the principle of Umoja occurred when Tamoo spoke of blacks killing blacks, rape, incest, and exhuming bodies as retribution against other African-Americans.

Recall that Kwanzaa is a celebration of all that is good within the African-American community. However, Tamoo spent a great deal of time outlining unpopular issues she felt the community needed to be cognizant of and deal with. While Kwanzaa concerns empowerment for the community, Tamoo lashed out at the media and television for propagating false African-American identities. In the spirit Karenga's use of

the "oppressor," Tamoo used the word "they" to rally around the idea that African-Americans are oppressed by the dominant culture, stating "They show us on T.V...They show us doing very negative things...They have movies now pushing homosexuality...Anything they give us on T.V. is negative." There is no question that Tamoo's rhetoric was an attempt to draw borders between white culture and black culture via naming. However, these borders placed responsibility outside the community. This fact undermines the concept of accountability and empowerment, two of Kwanzaa's controlling virtues. Also, Tamoo's ideas of unity transcended simple communal themes. She called for a racial, social, and political movement to rebuild the community's identity, similar to Karenga's goals.

It is at this point in her speech that she defined me as an outsider in blatant, draconian terms. It made me feel a bit uncomfortable and no longer part of a cross-cultural partnership in which understanding was the goal, not separation. However, this should not have been surprising, for much of Kwanzaa's ideology concerns separatist and nationalist constructs. Tamoo reinforced this when she spoke of having members of the community find out how many blacks were in influential decision making capacities.

Tamoo continued to thrust herself into a transgressive abyss by condemning homosexuality, stereotyping Hispanics as

a particular group that assembles gangs and looks to Mexico for identity, and labelling gangs as a "tribal situation."

Given the extra-linguistic response, or acknowledgment, of some of the audience members, Tamoo's speech was efficacious. Many did believe that such language was necessary and essential in uniting the community around central themes. However, others believed that her speech was bigoted and filled with hateful overtones which had no place in the Kwanzaa event. Herein lies the main reason her performance was efficacious: the participants of Kwanzaa were polarized, albeit in distinctly different ways, due to transgressive actions of the performer. Further, efficacy resulted from her speech because of the small level of removal of both Tamoo and the audience. There was no question that the themes and issues Tamoo discussed were important and critical to the community's well-being.

Thus, the questions emanating from Tamoo's speech do not reside in matters of reflexive preparation, such as Chike's need to reproduce "authentic" African theatre, nor do they concern the audience's intentions. Rather, within her extemporaneous speech, it was precisely clear what her intentions were. And, observing the participants, it was apparent that many of them understood accurately the overt, implicit meanings conveyed through her speech.

As a performance, Tamoo's speech revealed the weakness in Karenga's assertions that pan-African attributes and Afrocentric philosophy and thoughts provide empowerment for the community. On the contrary, Tamoo's speech proved that Kwanzaa performance must contain elements, themes, and narratives which are integral with the cultural pathways, practices, and societal imprintings of Kwanzaa's main audience--African-Americans. Tamoo's performance did, however, illustrate some of the goals of Kwanzaa, as she preached self-determination and separatism. This was accomplished through themes centered on African-American issues, not African ones. Therefore, the level of removal of the audience was small, and the efficacy of the performance was quite significant.

Chapter V

Future Scholarship

The cultural and aesthetic borders of our world are in continual flux. In effect, we are all outsiders, to varying degrees, in many contexts. This fact necessitates an approach to cross-cultural and performance studies which will accommodate the perspectives of the outsider within a systematic, flexible framework. The attempt here was to represent and explore a method of interpretation for performance events that lie outside a few traditional theories of performance. Yet, the model we explored is flawed, as with any theory, and limited in its applications.

Nevertheless, the previous research and exploration of performance and Kwanzaa is but a minute portion of the intrinsic wealth that Kwanzaa possesses. It is with this realization that further study should be undertaken on the celebration of Kwanzaa as a performance in its entirety along with performances within Kwanzaa. However, this type of extensive research was not within the scope of the above inquiry.

The wealth of material omitted from this research is staggering. For example: the high school dance groups that competed and presented their version of rap and

dance(similar to South African gumboot dancing); the San Jose Minority Artists' Guild with its presentation of African-American history through dynamic song, dance, and humor; the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sororities touching work with children on self-determination day(Kujichagulia); Ujima, The Black Social Worker's group, that spent time in a round table discussion on social responsibility. They also performed poetry set to improvised conga drumming. Each of these groups and individuals represent a performance story that has not been told. Their stories further define the community and the relationships of outsiders to the community.

Moreover, there are material manifestations and artifacts of Kwanzaa that need to be explored such as the origin of rhythmized textiles many of the participant's wore, the significance of hairstyles, the personal meaning attached to the Ansaté cross many were wearing, and the language associated with the celebration. All of these categories lend significance to the celebration as well as to the performances found in Kwanzaa.

It is hoped that future performance studies will thoughtfully consider the nuance and wealth syncretic celebrations represent in our ever changing-global theatre.

ENDNOTES

¹The Igbo dance and drum performance will be presented later in the research.

²The US organization, founded in 1965 by Maulana Ron Karenga, had goals and ideologies similar to other black nationalist groups of that era such as the Black Panthers. However, in spite of this, both of these groups were aggressive, and sometimes deadly, in their interactions.

³If one is interested in the exact statements of Karenga, it is recommended strongly that s/he refer to his definitive work on the subject.

⁴I am not trained in "classic" approaches to fieldwork, such as the training an anthropologist receives. My training is in part due to my own musical performance experience and some techniques presented by Bruce Jackson's book, *Fieldwork*.

⁵The area surrounding the community center is economically depressed and run-down with a higher crime rate than other areas of San Jose.

⁶The center itself would not be considered palatial by many people.

⁷The drums the performance group used were Afro-Cuban style conga drums used in Salsa music. The Quinto is the

smallest drum which is used for soloing, and the Segunda is a medium sized drum used for tumbao or ostinato patterns.

⁸Gankogui are ferrous metal, flange-welded bells that have a muted, warm tone.

⁹A copy of the handwritten contract obtaining limited rights to the Oriki performance is enclosed in the Appendix.

¹⁰Refer to floorplan in Appendix.

¹¹In a post performance interview, Chike stated that the singing and flute playing in the transition area was in fact a time for preparation before entering the ritual space of the main room.

¹²I found out after the performance that many of the participants were afraid of upsetting the event by dancing or clapping.

¹³Guaguanco is a "filtered" and syncretic Afro-Cuban style of dance and drumming. Arsenio Rodriguez has stated that it "originated in Havana in the slums called 'El Reverbero Caliente,' 'Los Carinosos,' and others, where groups of families and friends got together" (Gerard, Scheller 63). Thus, its use within the Nigeria dance and drumming is somewhat perplexing.

¹⁴"Sister Tamoo" is the name one of the elder's used in referring to Tamoo.

¹⁵Imani Kuumba was the founding member of the community center in San Jose. According to informants, he tirelessly

worked as a community leader and activist. He was deeply respected by the African-American community.

¹⁶Tamoo conveyed a grim story of the Crips in L.A killing a member of a rival gang. After the young man's funeral, the Crips dug up the body and placed it on the door step of the deceased boy's mother.

¹⁷Kathy Cole is an African-American supervisor from the San Jose Evergreen district. She has recently come under fire and recall efforts for alleged racist and bigoted remarks and gestures concerning Hispanics, Japanese-Americans, and Vietnamese-Americans. Her actions were videotaped at an African-American business owners luncheon.

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APPENDIX

To whom it may Concern

This certifies that ORIKI Theater has given Gary Montrezza the ^{limited} rights to video tape Orikiteater's presentation at the African American Community Services Agency's Kwanza Celebration held on Sunday, December 26, 1993.

This is a limited release, and use of this tape is allowed for the purpose of Gary Montrezza's Master's thesis at San Jose State University only.

Any other use of the aforementioned tape must be with ^{prior} the written permission of Orikiteater.

This agreement is based on ~~the~~ information provided to Orikiteater by Gary Montrezza.

Chike Nwofia
Chike Nwofia
12/26/93

Gary Montrezza
GARY L. MONTREZZA
26 Dec 93

Kwanzaa Calendar of Events

In 1966, Dr. Maulana Karenga re-established the celebration of the first fruits in the United States. He created Kwanzaa to introduce Afrikans born in America to values of our ancestors that institute priorities and commitments which enhance human possibilities and lead to their spiritual liberation. Kwanzaa is the reinstitution of traditional Afrikan agricultural celebrations that recognize the importance of working together and harvesting the first fruits. This holiday is from no particular geographical area on the continent of Afrika. However, it is the kind of celebration that is common to most Afrikan societies.

We welcome you to the Kwanzaa celebration at the African American Community Center. This seven day celebration, which begins on December 26 and ends on January 1, is not considered a religious holiday or an alternative to Christmas. Kwanzaa is the only non-heroic, non religious holiday for Afrikans in the United States, and is now being celebrated by Afrikans in other countries such as England, France and the Caribbean. Kwanzaa is a time when friends, and family members can make a cultural statement and exchange symbolic gifts.

Sunday

December 26th 3:00 - 6:00 pm
African American Community Service Agency

Monday

December 27th 2:00 - 7:00 pm
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Tuesday

December 28th 3:00 - 6:00 pm
Ujima-Black Social Workers

Wednesday

December 29th 6:00 - 9:00 pm
Black Student Unions & Community Youth

Thursday

December 30th 3:00 - 6:00 pm
African American Community Service Agency

Friday

December 31st 3:00 - 6:00 pm
San Jose Kwanzaa Committee

Saturday

January 1

You are encouraged to continue celebration at home