which aggrandize or deprecate in other ways. Explicitly or implicitly, there are further distinctions made in the playing of the clean dozens: to devices which are *lies* about oneself (whether they are aggrandizing of self doesn't seem to matter – if they are exaggerations they may be termed *bragging*, even if the content is about how poor or hungry or thin you are); to devices which wittily discuss the shortcomings of others, sometimes referred to as *mounting*; and simply witty remarks which build upon the word-play of others, *capping*. (Abrahams 1970d; Eddington 1967:198; Claerbaut 1972:60; Mezzrow & Wolfe 1969:304 define it as 'having the last word, go one better, outdo,' but their use of the term indicates a speaking frame of reference primarily.)

Boasting seems to mean intensive talk about oneself in a contest situation, whether one is emphasizing one's strengths or shortcomings. Thus, there may be exchanges based on how quick one is, how strong, or how hungry, lazy, tired, or whatever. (The same witticisms may be used to discuss someone else, in which case they are noncompetitive devices simply used to flavor conversational discussions.) These self-aggrandizing devices are also called *lies*, though that term is generally used for stories, jokes, and tall tales.

Dick Gregory, in his book *Nigger*, shows how important it was in learning how to cope with the realities of street life (and how he developed his comic sense) to learn a repertoire of these self-degrading *boasts*, by which he could capitalize on an underclassed position, building it into a strength (Gregory 1964:40–2). The technique emerges in many other works by Black authors.

More commonly, such *hoorawing* takes the form of *mounting*, attacking the other(s) by denigrating them. This may be done either by boasting at the same time or just *putting* the other *down*.[4]

12

NAMAKKE, SUNMAKKE, KORMAKKE: THREE TYPES OF CUNA SPEECH EVENT

JOEL SHERZER

Cuna society (in both San Blas and the interior Darien Jungle) is striking for vitality and richness in speech usage.[1] From a formal or ceremonial point of view, there are many genres of speaking – chiefs' chants which deal with history, politics, and religion; formal speeches which are uttered by official and non-official individuals; long *ikar* which are used to cure diseases, hunt animals, make fermented drinks, and direct girls' puberty rites; and secret charms which enable an individual to have power over another individual or an object in nature. There is also a rich variety of non-ceremonial or colloquial genres – animal and plant stories, comical songs, lullabies, riddles, and linguistic games. Speaking ability at any level (from colloquial and conversational to formal and ceremonial) is highly valued and is a source of personal prestige among the Cuna.

It is not the purpose of this paper to deal in detail with all Cuna genres of speaking but rather to describe three basic patterns found in Cuna speech events and to discuss the constellations in speech usage that are associated with each of them. The three patterns are expressed most clearly in

1. the chanting and talking that occurs in the centrally located village congress house;
2. curing and related *ikar*;
3. *kantur ikar* which occurs during girls' puberty rites.

The three patterns will be investigated by means of descriptions of the events, focusing especially on the addressor, addressee, and the linguistic variety. It will be shown that the most important distinction between congress events on the one hand and curing and girls' puberty rites events on the other involves the role of individual creativity and flexibility in speech usage. In congress events, chanters and speakers creatively adapt their speech to fit particular situations. This individual flexibility does not exist in curing and related *ikar* or in *kantur ikar*; performances of each of these are fixed and predetermined.

From the Cuna point of view, in their ceremonial performances, a chief in the congress *namakke* 'chants,' a person who knows curing texts

sunmakke 'speaks,' and a *kantule* (the central figure at girls' puberty rites) *kormakke* 'shouts.' The Cuna word which refers to a particular text (conceived as known but not as written) in any of these three basic genres is *ikar*. *Ikar* means 'path' or 'road' in both the concrete sense of a path in the jungle or village and the figurative sense of a way of life. But it also refers to particular texts and to verses of these texts. Thus congress chants about God are called *pap ikar* 'god's way'; about the Cuna ancestors, *tatkan ikar* 'the ancestors' way'; etc. Similarly, there are curing *ikar*, such as *kapur ikar* or *kurkin ikar*. Finally, in girls' puberty rites, there is *kantur ikar*.

Since the Cuna themselves use *ikar* to refer to particular texts, I will also use this term here. It avoids the confusing use of English terms such as chant, which from the Cuna point of view is a mode of channel use or a means of performing, or text, which tends to imply something written, either by natives or by outside investigators.

Congress events

The speech event characterized by the chanting of chiefs in the central congress house is called by the Cuna *konkreso* 'congress,' *namakke* 'chanting,' *onmakke* 'performing or publicly gathering,' *sakla namakke* 'chief chanting,' or *omekan pela* 'the women and everybody,' each term referring to a different aspect of the event. It occurs about every other evening; it may, however, occur with greater or lesser frequency, according to circumstances which will be discussed below.

Towards sundown, the men and women of the village begin to gather in the congress house. After the handling of such village business as communal work tasks, public discussion of some wrongdoing, and advice (*uanaet*) to a wrongdoer, the central or major event of the evening – the chanting by a particular chief – begins. This chanting, together with an interpretation by a chief's spokesman (*arkar*), lasts several hours.

The seating arrangements for such evening *konkresos* is significant. There are two chiefs who sit in hammocks, their feet hanging on either side of the hammock and barely touching the ground. In Cuna, this position is called *nai* 'hanging.' One of the chiefs chants (*namakke*) and the other responds (*apinsue*). There must be at least two chiefs present in order for the event to occur at all. A chief cannot chant without an *apinsuet* 'responder.' And the *apinsuet* must be another chief. One or several other chiefs generally *mai* 'lie' in other hammocks strung parallel to those of the chanter and the responder. But the non-participating chiefs might also be seated, along with the *arkars* on the *arkar* benches on either side of the chiefs' hammocks. The *arkars* sit on the *arkar* benches. A few other village officials

sit here too. These include the first chief's secretary, policemen, and especially respected medicine men. The women and their young children sit on benches around the central hammocks and *arkar* benches. Very young children soon go to sleep on blankets or mats, which are stretched on the ground in front of the women. If babies cry during the congress proceedings, they are carried outside by their mothers or older female relatives. The men of the village sit on the very outer rows of benches surrounding the women. The individual seating arrangement is not random; everyone always sits in the same place. These seats are not formally assigned by anyone, but have developed over the years.

It is interesting that the congresses in which chanting occurs are thought of as being especially for the women. Women do not attend other congresses. In the chanting congresses they literally surround the chanting and in turn are surrounded and seemingly protected by the men. The arrangement is as in Fig. 14.

The chanting portion of the congress is as follows. When all other business is done, the chanting chief and the responder sit up in the required position. The chanter very softly begins to chant. At the end of each verse (*ikar*) the responder chants a stretched-out *teki* 'thus, it is so.' As the chanting begins, several 'policemen' call out *kapita marye* 'don't sleep,' *nue ittomarye* 'listen well.' These policemen's calls are repeated periodically throughout the chanting, but not during the subsequent *arkar* interpretation. As the chanting continues it becomes progressively louder and ideally the chief is literally booming out his verses once the chant gets into full swing. The chant lasts between one and a half and two hours and termin-

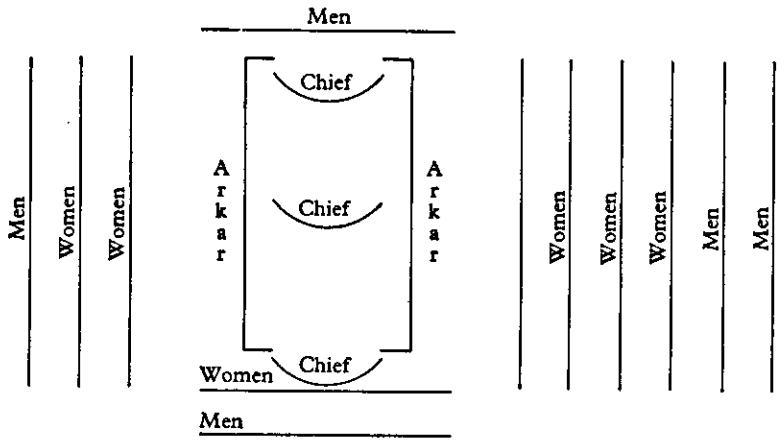

Fig. 14

ates with the chanting chief suddenly lowering his voice. When the chanting is over, the chanting chief and the responder lie back in their hammocks in the *mai* position. Then one *arkar* stands up to interpret the chant that has just been performed. His interpretation lasts about one hour. When he finishes he says *itto markua* 'you have heard,' marking the ending of a formal speech.

The subject matter of the chant and its interpretation is historical, political, and religious – the three woven together to varying degrees. The degree to which history, politics, or religion is stressed depends on the region (section of San Blas or of the interior jungle), the 'intellectual' tradition the chanter belongs to (who his teachers are), and the personal choice of the chanter himself. Thus a chant might deal with the great Cuna seers (*neles*) – their lives and their relationship to Cuna history; or it might recount the history of Bolivar and Columbus in the new world; or again it might discuss something that happened on another island several days before and how it can be interpreted as a signal of events to come.[2] A major function of all of these chants is social control – individuals are encouraged to behave properly and according to Cuna traditions. The chants remind them at length of these traditions. Ancient traditions and history, religion (both Cuna and Christian), recent local events, etc. are all transformed and suitably related to particular immediate social problems and concerns. This feature of congress chanting – the transformation and adaptation of material to fit particular situations – is the defining characteristic of congress speech events in general and will be discussed at greater length below.

The linguistic variety employed in congress chants is called *sakla kaya* 'chief's language' or *konkreso kaya* 'congress language.' It is distinct phonologically, morpho-syntactically, and lexically from colloquial Cuna (*tule kaya* 'the people's language'), from the variety used in curing and related *ikar* (*suar mimmi kaya* '*suar mimmi* language'), and from that used by the ceremonial leader of girls' puberty rites (*kantur kaya* '*kantule* language').

Phonologically, there is a tendency for vowels to occur which are usually elided in colloquial speech. This tendency is carried even further in the two speech situations to be described below – curing rites and girls' puberty rites.[3] In colloquial speech, the vowel elisions bring together consonants which undergo further, sometimes rather complicated changes. Thus forms in the colloquial variety and in the variety used in the congress chants, which derive from the same underlying source, at times appear phonetically quite distinct.

Morphologically, there is first a rich set of 'linking' or 'framing' morphemes which formally mark clause openings and closings. All Cuna ceremonial genres have an elaborate set of such morphemes; there is some overlap

across genres but for the most part each genre has its own set. Second, there are a large number of nominal and verbal prefixes and suffixes which are used only in congress chanting or, if they do occur in colloquial speech, have much more limited distribution than in congress chanting. Once again, each genre has its own set of such affixes, with some overlap among genres. These affixes will not be discussed here; to do so would require the presentation of a rather involved analysis of the Cuna linguistic system.

Syntactically, the congress chants make use of very few transformational operations which zero out noun phrases and verb phrases; in fact the verses consist of utterances which are kernel-like in structure.[4] There is considerable repetition of the same noun phrases and verb phrases and in general a system of striking grammatical parallelism operating throughout the chants.[5] One important result of this pattern of repetitions and parallelism is increased length of the chant as a whole. In fact, all of the phonological and morpho-syntactic devices discussed here – retention of underlying vowels, extended use of special affixes, proliferation of 'linking' morphemes, and grammatical parallelism – operate together in maximizing the length of the chant. It is noteworthy then that actual length of performance is one of the esthetic criteria by which the Cuna judge speaking ability in general and individual speakers or performers in particular.[6]

Lexically, there are certain words which are used in congress chants which do not occur in colloquial speech or which have different meanings in colloquial speech. Examples are *tuttu* which means 'flower' in colloquial speech and 'woman' or 'child' in congress chants, and *tulepiiti*, a word not found in colloquial speech and which refers to Panamanians and Colombians in congress chants.

The linguistic characteristics just described are exemplified in the following portion of a congress chant. The chant deals with the ancestors of the present inhabitants of the San Blas village of Mulatuppu and this particular section describes the plants and animals provided by God for these people. It is especially representative of the types of grammatical parallelism caused by the repetition of noun phrases and verb phrases. In the cited forms, vowels which are elided in colloquial speech are placed in parentheses, affixes which are used especially in congress chanting are placed in brackets, and 'linking' words and morphemes are underlined.[7]

Chanting chief:

we yal(a)se	*pap(a)*	*[l]*	*anparmial(i)mar[ye]*	*sokel ittole*	*eka*	*masmu[l]*
this world	God		that he sent us		for him	banana root

akk^{w}ekar[ye]	*oparye*
in order to care for	

'God sent us to this world in order to care for banana roots for him'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
eka[l] inso tarkʷamu[l] akkʷekar[ye] sokel ittolete sunna ipiti oparye
for him taro root in order to care for
'in order to care for taro roots for him'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
al inso eka [l] wakup tula[l] akkʷekar sokel ittole al ipiti oparye
for him yam living in order to care for
'in order to care for (living) yams for him'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
al inso eka[l] moe tula[l] akkʷekar sokel ittole al ipiti oparye
for him squash living in order to care for
'in order to care for (living) squash for him'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
al inso eka[l] osimu[l] akkʷekar soker ittole pap(a) [l]
for him pineapple root in order to care for God
anka[l] yal(a) [l] uksamar[ye]
to us world he gave us
'in order to care for pineapple roots for him God gave us this world'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
pap(a) yannu kalukan(a) urpis(a)[ye] an soke aal akkʷekan
God wild boar strongholds he left in order to care for
nonimar an soke
we came
'God left wild boar strongholds; we came in order to care for them'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
pap(a) moli kalukan(a) urpisa takle an soke ka[l] akkʷekan
God tapir strongholds he left for him in order to care for
nonimar[ye] an soke
we came
'God left tapir strongholds; we came in order to care for them for him'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
pap(a) wetar tula urpisa takleye an soke al
God wild boar living he left
akkʷeka nonimar[ye] an soke
in order to care for we came
'God left (living) wild boar; we came in order to care for them'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

Chanting chief:
pap(a) us(u) tula[kʷa] urpisa takle an soke al akkʷeka
God agouti living he left in order to care for
nonimar[ye] an soke
we came
'God left (living) agouti; we came in order to care for them'

Responding chief:
teki 'it is so'

I have described here some of the more salient features of the linguistic variety used in congress chanting. But the primary or defining characteristic of this genre is the development of metaphors – established themes which are repeated, built on, and elaborated in detail. It is especially this aspect of congress chanting which the audience does not understand and which must be interpreted for it afterward by the chief's spokesman (*arkar*). An example is the use of terms about weapons such as rifles to refer to natural elements such as thunder. Or the comparison of the architectural structure of a Cuna house with the political structure of Cuna society. More elaborate examples and particularly examples which demonstrate the way in which these metaphors are appropriately developed to fit particular situations will be given below as part of the comparison of the three basic types of Cuna speech event.

Congress chanting takes place in most villages every other evening. It also occurs when a chief from one island visits another island for one

or more days or when many chiefs from different islands gather together on a particular island for several days ('traditional congresses'). In both of these instances, the visiting chief or chiefs spend all of their time (except for eating, sleeping, and some visiting with friends) in the congress house. Present with the honored visitor(s) are one or more host chiefs, village officials, and other men. Upon the arrival of such a visiting chief the congress is opened and the visitor performs a long greeting – *arkan kae* – with one of the host chiefs. *Arkan kae* is chanted and makes use of the same linguistic variety used in congress chanting. It also resembles congress chanting in that while one of the two greeting chiefs *namakke* 'chants,' the other *apinsue* 'responds' – *teki* 'it is so.' However in *arkan kae* the two chiefs reverse this situation several times. Furthermore, there is no *arkar* interpretation and no fixed audience. People come and go during the chanting and often the women of the village bring in beverages which the chiefs and others present drink, briefly interrupting the ceremony in order to do so. During their stay on an island visiting chiefs usually chant every night and sometimes in the morning as well. In 'traditional congresses' each of the visiting chiefs has a turn to chant and there is chanting from early morning until noon and then again from early evening until late at night. Such chanting has the structure that has already been described above for ordinary congress chanting.

Another congress speech event, in some ways quite different from chiefs' chanting, is speech-making. Speech-making occurs either in the congresses described above with men and women present and before the chanting begins[8] or in congresses attended by men only and in which there is no chanting. Speeches, which are performed in colloquial Cuna but in a special speech-making style, deal with a range of topics: communal decisions about village political and economic matters; transgressions that have been committed – deciding who did them, what penalty to assign, etc.; advice to a wrongdoer (sometimes as his sole punishment); general advice to an entire village concerning proper behavior or to particular persons about the performance of their roles; and reports by individuals or groups concerning work or duties performed, trips made, or events witnessed. Individual and communal advice is given by chiefs. The advice is then usually interpreted and elaborated on by *arkars*. Interpretations often involve the creative and flexible adaptation of metaphors described above for congress chanting. Speeches by individuals other than congress officials are directed at the center of the congress, the place in which the chiefs lie and the *arkars* sit. The village officials are the immediate addressees and the other men and/or women present constitute the audience. All speech-making is characterized by length and individual development and creativity.

I have thus described one type of Cuna speech event, which is most clearly and formally structured in ceremonial congress chanting but aspects of which are also present in congress speech-making. Basically it entails four participant units – addressor, addressee or responder, interpreter, and audience. There is first a performance by the addressor and then an interpretation by another individual. In congress chanting, the addressor and responder are both chiefs. Their roles are each named – *sakla* 'chief' and *apinsuet* 'responder'; as is that of the interpreter – *arkar* 'chief's spokesman.' In congress speech events – chanting and speech-making – texts are not fixed but rather there is a great deal of individual creativity and development, most notably in the form of the adaptation of metaphors to immediate situations and social problems. In a good performer, such as a well known chief, the metaphors are so intricate and involved that most members of the audience do not understand them. This focus on individual creativity in speech use contrasts sharply with the use of speech in the two other speech situations to be discussed – curing rites and girls' puberty rites.

Curing events

Cuna diseases are cured by means of both medicine (*ina*) and language, usually in combination. There is a rich medicinal tradition and in each village there are many specialists in pharmaceutical medicines (*inatulet*). In addition to medicine, curing *ikar* are used for a large variety of diseases and afflictions, such as difficulty in childbirth, madness, great fever, severe headache, shortage of natural ability (*nika*), and epidemics. All of these *ikar*, with the exception of *apsoket ikar* 'the way of the mass or epidemic curer' have the following speech event structure. The sick person lies in his hammock in his house. Under the hammock is a box of wooden dolls called *suar mimmi* 'stick babies' (also called *suar nuchu* 'stick dolls'). It is these dolls which carry out the actual business of the curing. But in order for them to do their work, they must first be told how to do it. This is achieved by means of the appropriate *ikar*, which is performed by an individual who is named for the *ikar* he knows – *muu ikar wisit* 'knower of *muu ikar*' or *muu ikar tule* 'muu ikar man' (named for *muu ikar*, which is used to aid women having difficulty in childbirth); *kurkin ikar wisit* 'knower of *kurkin ikar*' (used in curing severe headaches); etc. The *ikar* knower sits on a stool in front of the *suar mimmi*. The *ikar* is thus not aimed at the sick person but rather at the *suar mimmi*. In terms of the components of speech (see Hymes 1972), the addressor is the *ikar wisit* '*ikar* knower' and the addressees are the *suar mimmi*. The sick person is not an active participant in this event. He is usually asleep or lost in suf-

fering. It is even possible that he is not present.[9] In any case it is rare that the sick person understands the special linguistic variety which is used in these *ikar*.[10] Other individuals who are present in the house may listen but they generally go about their business and talk among themselves. Thus within the single setting, house, there are two speech events taking place – the curing *ikar* and ordinary conversation.

The *ikar* generally lasts about one and a half hours. It deals with the origin of the disease in question and the sorts of things that must be done in order to cure it. Depending on the type of disease and its course, the *ikar* is repeated several days in succession. Each time, the knower enters the house, sits down in front of the *suar mimmi*, performs the *ikar*, and then gets up and leaves.

It is important to point out the major characteristic which differentiates the curing *ikar* from the congress *ikar* which were described above. This is that in the congress, the *ikar* is followed by an interpretation for the audience of men and women. The interpretation stresses the fact that the audience is not a mere audience but the ultimate and crucial addressee of the message of the *ikar*. This audience must not only listen but understand the *ikar*. It is for this reason that the *arkar* explains what the chief has just chanted. In curing *ikar*, there is no audience – just addressor and addressee. The addressor is the knower of the *ikar* and the addressee, the *suar mimmi*. There is no interpretation and there is no need for one according to Cuna theory, since the *ikar* is performed in a linguistic variety which the *suar mimmi* understand – *suar mimmi kaya* '*suar mimmi* language.' It is interesting to note, however, that although most persons present during the performance of a curing *ikar* do not understand or even pay attention to the referential aspects of the *ikar*, they are no doubt aware of its social and stylistic properties. In this sense, in their status as 'non-knowing auditors,' they help to validate its medicinal efficacy and social importance.[11]

There are a number of Cuna speech events which, while they are not curing events *per se*, are quite similar to curing events in their structure. Furthermore, the linguistic variety employed in these events is identical to that of the curing *ikar* – that is, *suar mimmi kaya* (with the exception of certain *ikar*-specific lexical items which in fact can be noted for curing *ikar* as well). First there is *ina uanaet* 'advice to medicine,' which is performed by *inatuleti* 'pharmaceutical medicine specialists' to their medicine (the addressee) in order to give it life and to counsel it. *Ina uanaet* describes the origin of the medicine and its purpose. Although there are established objects of medicinal value – plants, tree bark, etc. – it is possible to *uanae* 'advise' any object and thereby give it the power of medicine. Then there is *apsoket ikar*, which is used in mass or epidemic curing and to exorcise unpleasant spirits. Since there is not in this case a single sick

person but rather many with more expected, i.e., the disease is all over the village and perhaps several villages, the *ikar* is not performed within a single house. Instead it is performed in the central congress house by one or several mass curers (*apsoketi*). But once again the *suar mimmi*, in this case very large ones, are the addressees. That is, as in the other curing *ikar*, the addressor is the *ikar* knower and the addressee, the *suar mimmi*.

Another *ikar* of this type is *masar ikar* 'the way of the *caña brava* (a type of bamboo)' which is performed after a person's death.[12] The *masar ikar* knower begins his performance in the house of the deceased and continues along with the corpse until it is placed in its mainland grave, all the time performing this extremely long *ikar*. The addressee of *masar ikar* is in this case the *masar 'caña brava.'* As in curing *ikar* there is no interpretation; the *masar* perfectly well understands the linguistic variety addressed to it.

A similar structure is found in *pisep ikar* 'the way of the *pisep* (a medicinal plant)' which is used to render someone an efficient hunter. A fragrant solution consisting of *pisep* and other ingredients is prepared; in this solution the prospective hunter will bathe. But first *pisep ikar* must be performed by its knower. It is the *pisep* plant which is the addressee; this *ikar*, like *ina uanaet* and *masar ikar*, is in a linguistic variety which is essentially that of the curing *ikar – suar mimmi kaya.*

There are other *ikar* which are performed in the *suar mimmi* variety and which have as addressees such objects as snakes, bees, etc. Finally, there is a series of *ikar* whose addressee is *inna* 'chicha' (the fermented drink consumed at girls' puberty rites). These *ikar* are used to make the drink stronger, to sober up the performer, etc. They are performed by the knower either in the presence of the *inna* or else in the knower's home. In either case, the *inna* listens and understands the *ikar*; there is no interpretation.

The curing and related *ikar* sound to my non-Cuna ear as if they are chanted. The Cuna, however, say that they are *sunmakke* 'spoken,' when they are performed for their primary and ceremonial purpose – advising medicine, curing a disease, aiding a deceased person on his path through the other world, rendering a person an effective hunter, etc. They may be performed for other purposes as well, however, in which case they are *namakke* 'chanted.' The principal difference between the *namakke* 'chanting' and *sunmakke* 'speaking' of these *ikar* is that in *namakke* the performer *wai sae*, i.e., tenses his voice by means of pharyngeal tightening. *Wai sae* is not done, however, in the *namakke* of congress *ikar*. (*Sunmakke* and *namakke* are modes of channel use in the Hymes 1972 framework.) The other purposes for which curing and related *ikar* might be performed (and in which they are *namakke*) are teaching (by a knower to a student), practicing (by a knower or a student), or personal pleasure (for example during the festivities associated with girls' puberty rites).[13]

Suar mimmi kaya carries the phonological tendency already noted for *konkreso kaya* to an even more conservative degree, i.e., underlying, abstract vowels are practically always retained in those linguistic environments in which such retention is possible.[14] Morphologically, there is a set of affixes characteristic of this variety, some but not all of which are also found in the *konkreso kaya*.

Syntactically, and similar to *konkreso kaya*, there are few transformational operations which zero out noun and verb phrases. Each 'verse' of an *ikar* is short and kernel-like in structure. As in *kongreso kaya*, repetition of noun phrases and verb phrases is used in systems of grammatical parallelism throughout each *ikar*.[15] It is in the lexical realm, however, that curing and related *ikar* are most distinctive. There are many lexical items that are used only in curing and related *ikar*; i.e., not in *konkreso ikar* or *kantur ikar* or in colloquial speech. These tend to fall into certain semantic fields – kin terms, body parts, celestial bodies, natural elements, animals and plants, disease terms, and movements of persons and things. There are also lexical items which are specific to individual *ikar* or even to a particular tradition (version) of a single *ikar*.

A portion of *kurkin ikar* (used in curing severe headaches and in improving brain power) illustrates the characteristics of *suar mimmi kaya*. This *ikar* calls on particular trees (by addressing itself to *suar mimmi* made of these trees) to use their strength to aid the ailing individual. The cited section describes the roots of these trees. Vowels which are elided in colloquial speech are placed in parentheses, affixes which are used especially in curing and related *ikar* are placed in brackets, and lexical items particular to *kurkin ikar* are underlined.

kurkin ipekan[ti][ye] *[olo]pillise* *pupawal(a)kan* *akku(e)k^{w}ic(i)[ye]*
trees to the level of gold roots reach
'trees, your roots reach the level of gold'

kurkin ipekan[ti][ye] *[olo]pillise* *pe* *maliwaskakan* *upo(e)k^{w}ic(i)[ye]*
trees to the level of gold your small roots are placed
'trees, your small roots are placed into the level of gold'

kurkin ipekan[ti][na][ye] *[olo]pillise* *pe* *maliwaskakan(a)*
trees to the level of gold your small roots
piokle[ke]k^{w}ic(i)[ye]
are nailed
'trees, your small roots are nailed into the level of gold'

kurkin ipekan[ti][na][ye] *[olo]pillipi[ye]* *ap(i)ka(e)k^{w}ic(i)[ye]*
trees the very level of gold are resisting
'trees, within the very level of gold you are resisting'

kurkin ipekan[ti][na][ye] *[olo]pilli* *aktikkimakk(e)k^{w}ici*
trees the level of gold weigh a lot
'trees, you weigh a lot in the level of gold'

kurkin ipekan[ti][na][ye] *[olo]pilli* *k^{w}amakk(e)k^{w}ici*
trees the level of gold are firmly placed
'trees, you are firmly placed in the level of gold'

kurkin ipekan[ti][na][ye] *[olo]pilli* *aktitimakk(e)[k^{w}a]k^{w}ic(i)[ye]*
trees the level of gold are moving
'trees, you are moving in the level of gold'

kurkin ipekan[ti][na][ye] *[olo]pillipi[ye]* *kin(a)ka(e)k^{w}ic(i)[ye]*
trees the very level of gold are accumulating
'trees, you are accumulating within the very level of gold'

As in the congress events described above, metaphors are also prominent in curing and related *ikar*. Thus in *kurkin ikar*, hat is used to represent the head or the brain; women's beads, a tree's fruit; and the level of gold, great depth in the ground. In *pisep ikar* the movement of the *pisep plant* in a box and its exit from the box symbolize the birth and thus the origin of this plant. However, in sharp contrast to congress events, the metaphors employed in curing and related *ikar* are not elaborated and developed by the *ikar* knower. Rather, they are fixed in each *ikar* and are repeated identically in each performance of the *ikar*. In fact, the entire *ikar* is fixed and predetermined.[16] In this respect, of course, curing *ikar* are strikingly different from congress chanting and speaking which are characterized by individual creativity and development. I will discuss this contrast in greater detail below after describing a third Cuna speech event type – that associated with girls' puberty rites.

Girls' puberty rites

When a Cuna girl reaches puberty, her hair is ceremonially cut. It is worn short for the rest of her life. If he chooses to and if he can afford to, the girl's father provides food for village-wide puberty rites.

The puberty rites are the only occasions during which Cuna individuals are permitted to drink alcoholic beverages. When it is announced that the time for these rites has arrived, the men of the village go to the mainland and gather sugar cane, each man being required to return with a required amount. Then the cane is squeezed into juice and, under the direction of an expert in such matters, the fermented drink *inna* 'chicha' is prepared. When it is decided that the *inna* is strong enough, the rites begin. They may last

one, two, or three days, according to the particular type of *inna* 'chicha festival' that is being held.[17] A special house (*surpa*) is built for the young girl in question and she is placed within this enclosure, only her head above ground. Her hair is cut according to prescribed techniques by the ceremonial cutter (*iet*), who is a woman, and her assistants, who are also women. The *surpa* is located outside the large chicha house (*inna neka*) in which the festivities occur. These festivities include various games and dances which are performed only on these occasions.[18]

Central to the whole affair is the performance of the *kantules* and their assistants, who alternate lying in a centrally placed hammock, two at a time, and shout (*kormakke*) the very long *kantur ikar* 'the way of the *kantule*,' which describes in detail the entire ceremonial proceeding – preparing *inna*, hair cutting, etc. While the *kantules* and their assistants shout, they shake rattles and play a long flute (*kammu*). (The *kantule*'s name derives from this flute – *kammu* 'flute' + *tule* 'man' > *kantule*.) The simultaneous shouting, rattle-shaking, and flute-playing; the required inebriated state of the performers; and the general noise level of the surrounding festivities within the *inna neka* render it extremely difficult to listen to and understand the words of the *kantur ikar*. But it turns out that no persons are trying to listen to this *ikar* nor is it intended for them. It is rather the *kammu* 'flute' which is the addressee of the messages 'shouted' by the *kantule* and his assistants. *Kantur kaya* '*kantule* language,' the linguistic variety used in this event, is shared by the *kantule* and the *kammu*. Apart from the *kantule* and his assistants (the addressors) and the *kammu* (the addressee), there are no other participants in this event. There is no audience (the persons present are involved in other activities) and there is no interpretation – none is needed for the sole addressee, the *kammu*. As in the curing *ikar* discussed above, however, the persons present can be viewed as 'non-knowing auditors,' aware of the social and stylistic significance of the *kantule*'s *ikar*, but not its referential details.

As stated above, the *kantur ikar* is *kormakke* 'shouted' during the chicha festival proceedings. Like the curing *ikar*, however, it is *namakke* 'chanted' during teaching and practicing sessions. In these sessions, the *kammu* 'flute' is not involved.

Phonologically, *kantur kaya* resembles *suar mimmi kaya* in the retention of underlying, abstract vowels. Morphologically, it makes use of a set of affixes, some but not all of which are also found in other varieties. Syntactically this variety resembles the other ceremonial varieties in its short, kernel-like sentences and overall grammatical parallelism. Once again, it is particularly in the area of lexicon that *kantur kaya* distinguishes itself from the other varieties. It contains a large number of lexical items which occur only in it, i.e. not in colloquial speech, congress *ikar*, or curing *ikar*. The lexical items specific to *kantur kaya* are for the most part related

to the puberty rites – participants, the drink, places, time of day, etc. Most important from the perspective of the theme which I am presenting in this paper, *kantur ikar*, like the curing *ikar* and distinct from congress events, involves an absolutely fixed text; there is no individual alteration or creative development of themes and metaphors. *Kantur ikar* is ideally performed identically each time.

I have discussed the general characteristics of three types of Cuna speech event:[19]

1. the chanting and speaking which occurs in the central *onmakket neka* 'congress house';
2. medicinal and related *ikar*;
3. kantur *ikar*, which occurs at girls' puberty rites.

The defining components of these events are outlined in Table 9.

From the Cuna point of view, congress chanting and speaking, curing *ikar*, and *kantur ikar* constitute three distinct ceremonial traditions. The linguistic varieties used in each share some characteristics, namely phonological conservatism (from the perspective of a set of ordered rules from underlying, abstract forms) and syntactic or grammatical parallelism caused by the retention and repetition of noun and verb phrases (rather than their disappearance through transformational operations).[20] The three varieties are distinguishable primarily on the basis of the lexical items which are specific to each. From the lexical point of view, it is also possible to subdivide each of these traditions or speech event types – according to both individual *ikar* and particular subtraditions (geographic and personal).

In addition to lexical specialization, the major difference between congress events on the one hand and curing and puberty rites events on the other is the kind of linguistic ability and competence required. In curing and puberty rites events, no individual linguistic creativity is permitted. Each *ikar* is required to be performed identically each time.[21] Individuals who want to learn *ikar* study with knowers (*wisit*), the knower chanting a section and then the student repeating. This student–teacher relationship continues until the student is able to perform an exact replica of his teacher's *ikar*. At this point the teacher announces to an evening congress that his student has 'graduated', i.e., that he is now a knower of the particular *ikar*. Similarly with regard to *kantur ikar*. It must be learned exactly as performed by the *kantule*. And when the *kantule* feels that his student can perform the *ikar* word for word, exactly as he himself does, he announces this fact in an evening congress and declares that his student is now also a *kantule*. These 'graduations' are formal affairs; they involve a long speech in the congress describing the learning process and, often, a written letter of graduation, which is read and shown in the congress. Congress events

TABLE 9

	Setting	Linguistic variety	Modes of channel use	Addressor	Addressee
1. Congress events	Congress house				
a. chief chanting or speaking		*konkreso kaya*	*namakke, sunmakke*	Chief	Responding chief and audience
b. *arkar* interpreting		Colloquial (*arkar* speech-making style)	*sunmakke*	*arkar*	Audience
c. speech-making		Colloquial (speech-making style)	*sunmakke*	Speech-maker	Village officials and audience
2. Curing and related *ikar*	Private house	*suar mimmi kaya*	*sunmakke*/ceremonial performing; *namakke* (*wai sae*)/ teaching, learning, practicing, performing for pleasure	*ikar wisit*	*suar mimmi*, medicine, *caña brava*, snake, etc.
3. *kantur ikar*	*inna neka* 'chicha house'	*kantur kaya*	*kormakke*/ceremonial performing; *namakke*/teaching, learning	*kantule* and assistants	*kammu*

are quite different. Each *ikar* and each speech in the congress is new and different; it is not intended to be an exact replica of previous performances. In each performance the chief or speech-maker draws on established Cuna themes and metaphors and develops them to fit the particular situation at hand. For example a common theme in congress chants and speeches is the comparison of women and children with flowers. A chief who is a good speaker develops this theme in his performance. He may for example chant at length about all the different types of flowers in the Cuna environment, how they grow, how they smell, what they look like, how they are cared for, etc. In all of this he will never explicitly state that the flowers represent women and children. It is the task of the *arkar* who interprets the chief to explain to the audience the subtleties of the chant; for example, that each flower represents a type of woman or child and that the entire chant was about the details of women's duties and proper behavior in the raising of children. It is important to stress that such chants are aimed at the audience and intended to instruct them. Since the more involved the development of metaphors, the more difficult it is for the audience to follow, the *arkar*'s role of interpretation is a crucial one.

Another example of the development and especially of the creative adaptation of established themes and metaphors occurs in the advice (*uanaet*) given to a new chief. This is performed by an incumbent chief and is either spoken or chanted. Some of the metaphors which occur here are the representation of different individuals in Cuna political structure by the various poles in a Cuna house, of chiefs by powerful trees in the jungle, of criticism of chiefs by members of the community by the throwing of mud balls and darts, and of a chief's needed ability to hold his temper by a large trunk in which he can store things.[22] Each new performer of this *uanaet* then has a range of possibilities at his disposal; these involve which metaphors he selects, the order in which he develops them, and the detailed ways in which he develops them.

Especially characteristic of the individual creativity involved in congress events is not only the selection of appropriate metaphors and themes, but their adaptation to particular situations. This occurs in chiefs' chanting and speaking, in *uanaet*, and in arguments and speeches. My first example is from a speech given by a chief as an *uanaet* to a newly selected chief.[23] The context is as follows. It is the opening evening of a 'traditional congress' on the island of Tuppak. The island has chosen a new chief and it is the task of the chief who has been selected first chief of the 'traditional congress' to advise him. The newly selected chief had been a chief once before but was removed from office for misbehavior.[24] Thus he is being reinstated. The spoken *uanaet* is as follows. The chief discusses the building of a house. He says that sometimes, after you have built a house, the *puar* 'central post,'

although it appeared to be strong, turns out to be rotten and does not support the house. So it must be removed and not used for a while. The rotten part must be cut away and the pole must be watched to make sure that all of the rotten part has been eliminated. When it is certain that the pole is free from rot, it can once again be used as the central post of a house. This discussion of the central post of a house derives from the political structure metaphor mentioned above. But here it is creatively developed by the speaker in order to render it perfectly appropriate to the situation at hand – the reinstatement of a chief who is basically good (i.e., he knows the required Cuna traditions) but who had made some mistakes and therefore had to be removed from office for a while.

My next example involves a case of social control in the San Blas mainland village of Karetto.[25] During the day most of the men of the village had been off working in the jungle. One of the men who stayed behind took advantage of the situation and played around with a wife of one of the absent men. He was caught and, as is typical in such cases, the matter became the subject of a lengthy discussion in the evening's congress. The man in question defends himself as follows. He gives a long, involved, and expressive speech in which he says that he had been off in the jungle working as usual and became very hungry. He came across a ripe pineapple which belonged to another man. Since he was hungry and since the pineapple was ripe, he ate it. The speech, with its highly developed metaphor, suspensefully and expressively presented and elaborated, is greatly appreciated, and the man is pardoned.[26]

Speaking and Cuna roles

There are many Cuna roles which are specifically and explicitly defined with reference to speech. A chief (*sakla*) is a man who knows Cuna traditions well, can speak and chant them at great length, and can develop them appropriately to fit situations. A chief's spokesman (*arkar*) also knows traditions and furthermore is able to listen to a chant or speech and, without knowing its content in advance, interpret it on the spot for an audience. *Arkars* study with chiefs and good ones eventually become chiefs. The various curing and related *ikar* knowers achieve their role through the perfect memorization of a particular *ikar*. Similarly, the *kantule* knows perfectly the long *kantur ikar*. Each such role is conceived of as discrete. Thus a man may be a *sakla* and a *kapur ikar wisit* or an *arkar* and a *kantule*, etc.[27] A chief is not a better chief because he happens also to be a *kapur ikar wisit*. Rather he is a chief *and* a *kapur ikar wisit* – two distinct roles. This concept of discrete roles is made explicit in the Cuna notion of *kurkin*, which can be translated roughly as 'ability.'[28] Each ability is a separate

kurkin. Thus a man who is a chief and a *kapur ikar wisit* has two *kurkin*. A man who is an *arkar*, a *muu ikar wisit*, and a *kantule* has three *kurkin*. Of course it is prestigious to have many *kurkin* but it must be stressed that these *kurkin* do not accumulate into a single multifaceted role; they are always kept quite distinct.[29]

The ideal representative of a particular role is quite a different person depending on the type of speech event he is an expert at. A *kantule* or a knower of a curing *ikar* is an individual who has great powers of memorization. He is able to repeat word for word long *ikar* each time the *ikar* is performed. The Cuna recognize this ability and refer to such individuals as people with great memories. On the other hand, a chief is an individual who, although he must also have good memory in order to remember Cuna history and traditions, must be able especially to apply appropriately, creatively, and flexibly these traditions to particular social and political problems that arise in the village. Individuals who hold several roles may have both sets of abilities. Often, however, they are particularly good at one but only average at another. Thus a well known Mulatuppu ceremonialist knows more than ten different curing *ikar*; he is also a respected *inatulet* 'specialist in pharmaceutical medicine.' And he is an *arkar*, having been chosen for this role because of his knowledge of Cuna traditions. However, he is not a particularly effective *arkar*. He does not speak very loudly or forcefully, desired characteristics in congress events but not in curing and related *ikar*. Nor does he often stand up in the congress and make long speeches appropriate to particular situations, as do good chiefs and *arkars*. But he does have an extraordinarily good memory and has a busy schedule of cases in which he is called upon to perform for sick individuals.

In conclusion I have shown that speaking is central to the definition of the major roles in Cuna society – chief, chief's spokesman, various curing and related *ikar wisit*, and *kantule*. But the definition or conception of speaking is different for the different roles. There are basically two constellations:

1. Knowledge of Cuna traditions and ability to apply these traditions (as well as other material – experiences, anecdotes, stories, etc.) creatively to specific situations in appropriate ways. This constellation of speaking is associated with the two primary roles in the Cuna congress – *sakla* 'chief' and *arkar* 'chief's spokesman.' It is also associated with speeches by any individual in the congress.

2. Absolute, complete, perfect, word-for-word memorization of particular *ikar*. This constellation of speaking is associated with two different Cuna traditions – curing and related *ikar* and *kantur ikar* – and their respective specialists.[30]

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It is interesting to relate the two constellations of Cuna speaking and three speaking traditions to the three main aspects of Cuna social life.

1. Politics. For the Cuna, politics is an ever-changing dynamic area involving the complications of relations with a nearby government (Panama), economic relations with Panamanian and Colombian traders, comings and goings of Cuna men (to and from Panama City, the Canal Zone, and United Fruit plantations in the province of Bocas del Toro), intimate interisland relations, intraisland problems (cooperative economic ventures, stealing, etc.), and so forth. All of these political questions are handled in the evening congresses – spoken and chanted. They require individuals who are flexible and good at quickly maneuvering in order to meet new demands and situations. The creative flexibility–adaptation associated with the speaking constellation used in congresses thus matches Cuna political requirements.[31]

2. Curing and 3. Girls' puberty rites and consummation of chicha (*inna*). The interwoven medicinal and religious aspects of curing rites and the ancient ceremony of girls' puberty rites do not allow for any flexibility whatsoever but rather demand absolute adherence to fixed forms, which have been passed down through generations. In these events there is power in the word as long as it is in no way altered.

Thus, although it is correct to say that speaking is important to the Cuna and central to their social life, it is essential to point out that there are two basic and contrasting constellations of speaking, each associated with different types of speech event, with different ceremonial traditions, and with different roles in Cuna society. The Cuna themselves are aware of this richness and complexity of their speech usage and are extremely proud of it.[32]

13

THE CONCEPT AND VARIETIES OF NARRATIVE PERFORMANCE IN EAST EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURE

BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

Oyf a mayse fregt men kayn kashe nit
(Yiddish proverb)

Informants' statements, memoirs, previous studies, and collectors' comments in the introductions to their published materials show a remarkable consistency in their insistence that narration is a cultural focus in east European Jewish society (Gross 1955:10, 11; Olsvanger 1965:xxii–xxiii; B. Weinreich 1957:145, 151; Ravnitsky 1922:iii–iv; Schwarzbaum 1968:88; Holdes 1960:4–5; Bialostotski 1962:158). From the statements examined, the following emerges:

1. Stories are important and storytelling is frequent in this culture.
2. This has been the case from time immemorial. The Aggadah, the stories (and other non-legalistic materials) in the Talmudic-Midrashic literature, and the fame of ancient saints and sages as narrators are often cited as evidence of the antiquity of the Jewish penchant for narration.
3. Everyone can tell stories.
4. There are no professional storytellers who are hired for the sole purpose of telling stories.
5. Stories may be told at almost any time.
6. There are no 'public performances' for the sake of storytelling alone.
7. Jewish narrators are specialists in parables and jokes.

These notions are prevalent in both academic and non-academic circles and are accepted here as representing this society's own view of its narrational habits.

Yiddish terms are available for distinguishing types of storytelling acts (following Hymes' [1967] terminology): *dertseyln a mayse* (tell a story);[1] *zogn a vits* (say a joke); *gebn* or *brengen a moshl* (present a parable), and other formulations. But when talking about the larger unit of discourse of which the storytelling act is a part, one does not usually refer to stories or narration. Stories are told during *shmuesn* (conversing, chatting), *lernen* (teaching, studying), a *droshe* (sermon), *batkhones* (improvisation of the pro-