

***NAMAKEDI:  
Una Canción de Hamaca***



***Poetisa/Cantora: Griselda María López  
Traductora/Sociolingüista: Luz Graciela Joly Adames***

## INTRODUCCIÓN DE LA TRADUCTORA/SOCIOLINGÜISTA

La etnia Guna de la Comarca Guna Yala, Archipiélago de San Blas, República de Panamá, tiene un género de hablar denominado *namakedi*. Éste ha sido traducido al español como “canto” o “canción” (1). Las actuaciones de *namakedi* varían de acuerdo con la escena y de acuerdo con el sexo del o la cantante. En el recinto doméstico, las mujeres interpretan *namakedi* con sus “cantos de hamaca,” por decir “canción de cuna” o “nana”. Al cantar, las mujeres improvisan las palabras de tal manera que se apliquen a una situación inmediata en la cual las o los infantes quienes escuchan están siendo socializada/os y endoculturada/os por medio del evento *namakedi*. La canción de hamaca refuerza las normas del comportamiento social guna, enseñándoles a las niñas y los niños la división sexual en los deberes cotidianos y sus relaciones con los demás miembros de la familia.

A continuación, proporcionaré los detalles sociolingüísticos que describen una canción de hamaca dentro del marco social en el cual se desarrolló el evento. Esto es para permitir una mejor apreciación de la habilidad de la poetisa/cantora de improvisar versos con el fin de socializar y endoculturar a quienes la canción iba dirigida.

La canción de hamaca que aquí se traduce fue grabada en isla Tigre, Comarca Guna Yala, Archipiélago de San Blas, en agosto de 1977 (2). Entonces, Griselda María López tenía diez años de edad. A esta edad, ya Griselda conocía los deberes sociales de miembros de su familia y podía improvisar cantos de hamaca. El evento grabado ocurrió un sábado en la mañana, cuando Griselda estaba libre de la escuela primaria donde ella cursaba el cuarto grado en el programa de educación pública bilingüe en guna y español.

La canción de hamaca fue cantada en guna. Fue dirigida a un niño de dos meses y a una niña de dos años de edad. El niño es hijo de un herma-

no menor de la madre de Griselda. La niña es la hermana menor de Griselda. La canción se dirige al niño con la frase que la etnia Guna tradicionalmente emplea para con infantes de ambos sexos: *goe bibi*. La palabra *goe* es homófona y homógrafa, ya que significa tanto “venado” como “bebé” o “nene”. En sentido figurado, se relaciona a un bebé con un venadito porque para la etnia guna quien trae a bebés al mundo no es la cigüeña sino tanto el venado como el delfín (3). La palabra *bibi* es un adjetivo diminutivo que significa “chiquito” o “pequeño”. Esta canción es dirigida a la niña por su sobrenombre *Sipu* que significa “Blanca”. Ella es de un color de piel más claro que el de Griselda, pero no es albina (4).



Molas Cigüeñas con bebés.

Las características melódicas de esta canción de hamaca siguen las normas que han sido descritas como de estilo común en todas las canciones de hamaca en guna. Éstas son: llevar un ritmo doble o triple con una maraca de calabazo, cantar con un tono de voz normal (no más de un intervalo de una sexta), cantar frases completas textuales y musicales con cada respiración, y terminar estas frases con la nota melódica más baja (5). Zumbar es parte del estilo melódico de esta canción. La duración del canto es de un minuto y cuarenta segundos, menos del promedio de cuatro minutos que ha sido descrito por McCosker (*ibid.*) sin embargo, Griselda había estado cantando antes de que yo la descubriera en este acto. Ella cantó estos versos a petición mía para grabarlos.



Mola maraca.

Griselda y su hermanita *Sipu* viven con su madre y padre en el domicilio de sus abuelos maternos. Su primito *goe bibi*—el nenito—reside con su madre en el domicilio de sus abuelos maternos. Esto es conforme al patrón residencial post-marital uxolocal de la etnia Guna en Guna Yala, Archipiélago de San Blas, en que el hombre va a vivir con la familia de su esposa. El padre del bebé, o sea, el tío materno de Griselda, estaba trabajando en ese entonces en la ciudad de Panamá, y visitó la isla sólo una vez durante las tres semanas que yo permanecí en ella.

La mañana en la cual fue grabada la canción de hamaca, la madre del niño había abandonado la isla para ir al río a lavar ropa. Ella le pidió a la abuela paterna del niño que lo cuidara mientras ella se ausentaba. Ya que la abuela se encontraba ocupada en la cocina, ella puso al niño al cuidado de su nieta, la poetisa/cantora. Griselda tomó al niño y a su hermanita y los llevó a la casa dormitorio. Allí se sentó en una hamaca con *goe bibi* y *Sipu*, uno a cada lado de ella, mientras les mecía, agitando la maraca en una mano y cantándoles canciones.



Mola maraca

Quiero señalar algunos detalles no-melódicos de estos versos para proporcionar “algunas de las particularidades del significado de lo que se presume decir...para aquellas personas que se familiarizan por vez primera con la literatura oral de otra sociocultura”(6). La poetisa/cantora se autoincorporó y también a quienes estaban a su cuidado, en el texto de la canción, improvisando de esta manera para la situación inmediata en la cual ellos eran los personajes. En el primer verso, ella anima al pequeño bebé a que crezca, expresándolo como un deseo, una voluntad del niño. El crecimiento y el desarrollo los describe con movimientos físicos del cuerpo, tales como correr, con actividades tales como la pesca y lavar ropa, y con la voluntad necesaria para aprender los estados y roles sociales dentro de la familia, tales como el deseo de visitar a la abuela. Los futuros derechos, deberes y obligaciones del ser adulto son el tema principal del texto. El último verso, sin embargo, retorna a los niños al mundo de la infancia. Ser infantes se convierte en un estado social, sancionado por la autoridad paterna.

Como punto final, deseo explicar los métodos usados en la traducción del guna al español. La misma mañana en que grabé la canción, fui a la cocina y permití que la madre y la abuela de Griselda escucharan la grabación. Con la ayuda de ellas, transcribí la canción palabra por palabra. Pude identificar de inmediato el significado de algunas palabras y frases con mi escaso conocimiento del lenguaje guna. Para aquellas palabras y frases con las cuales no estaba tan familiarizada, obtuve el significado en español de una prima y de un tío de la poetisa/cantora. Estos significados en español los revisé con significados en inglés dados por Holmer (1), en su diccionario etnolingüístico en guna.

Las líneas de los versos han sido escritas de tal manera que expresan las frases melódicas y textuales cantadas con cada respiración. Este arre-

glo no es para que se cante con una melodía. Sería imposible expresar en español exactamente el arreglo melódico en guna, ya que la estructura morfológica del español no corresponde al sistema de sufijos o sílabas del guna que permiten la creación de una nota melódica por cada sufijo o sílaba. En la traducción, un descenso en la línea refleja un ligero descanso en el tono melódico; sin embargo, se debe tener en mente que Griselda estaba cantando casi en el mismo tono de voz usado al hablar, con apenas una pequeña variación tonal. Los espacios separados de las palabras reflejan la mayor cantidad de tiempo que se le asignan a las frases finales en guna. También, presento la musicalización (7) para aquellas personas interesadas en interpretar este *namakedi*, tal como lo cantó la poetisa/cantora en guna.

#### N O T A S

- 1 Nils M. Holmer. 1952. Ethnolinguistic Guna Dictionary. Etnologiska Studier 19:86 Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet.
- 2 De junio a septiembre de 1977, estuve becada por el Programa para América del Sur Tropical, de la Universidad de La Florida, dirigido por el antropólogo Charles Wagley. El propósito de la beca era hacer reconocimientos de varias áreas en Panamá, para una futura investigación antropológica a más largo plazo. La grabación ha sido depositada en el Museo del Hombre Panameño, ciudad de Panamá, y en el Laboratorio de Lingüística, Departamento de Antropología, Universidad de La Florida, Gainesville, Florida, Estados Unidos de América.
- 3 Agradesco esta observación y otras sugerencias en este artículo, al insigne poeta guna Aristides Turpana, quien en ese entonces laboraba en la Extensión Cultural del Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INAC).
- 4 La etnia Guna de Guna Yala, Archipiélago de San Blas, tiene una alta incidencia de albinismo.

- 5 Sandra Smith McCosker. 1974. The Lullabies of the San Blas Cuna Indians of Panama. *Etnologiska Studier* 33. Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet. 1976. San Blas Cuna Indian Lullabies: A Means of Informal Learning. *En Enculturation in Latin America*. Johannes Wilbert, ed. pp. 29-66. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications.
- 6 Una súplica del antropólogo Allan F. Burns, citada en “Comentarios”, *ALCHERINGA: Ethnopoetics*, 3/2/77. pp. 146-148. Por este medio expreso mi gratitud al Dr. Allan Burns, quien me animó a que tradujera esta canción de hamaca y por sus sugerencias.
- 7 También agradezco al antropólogo Anthony Stocks, su etnomusicalización de esta canción.
- 8 Blanquita o *Sipu* estaba inquietándose, queriendo bajarse de la hamaca. La poetisa/cantora interrumpió entonces su frase inicial para dirigirse a la niña e incorporarla de esta manera en el acto. La niña se quietó, consciente de las palabras de la canción. Dos días después de la grabación, su abuela me llamó para que oyera a *Sipu* cantando para sí misma *Tata ua soe* - “abuelo está pescando”. ¡A los dos años de edad, ya ella está improvisando versitos por su propia cuenta!

LUZ GRACIELA JOLY ADAMES, nació en Colón, República de Panamá, donde recibió una educación formal bilingüe en español e inglés, y también adquirió algunos conocimientos de los lenguajes guna y francés. En 1977 obtuvo su grado de Maestría en Antropología Sociocultural de La Universidad de la Florida, Gainesville, Florida, EUA; y en 1981 obtuvo su Doctorado en Filosofía con especialización en Antropología, en la misma universidad. La investigación para el doctorado la realizó como investigadora asociada de la Dirección de Patrimonio Histórico, Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INAC), realizando un estudio de antropología económica-ecológica y sociolingüística en la Costa Abajo, en la vertiente del Caribe central de Panamá. Este estudio fue financiado por la Fundación Interamericana de los Estados Unidos de América, y con patrocinio de la Universidad Católica Santa María La Antigua en Panamá y el Vicariato del Darién, de la Iglesia Católica en Colón, República de Panamá.

*NAMAKEDI: Una Canción de Hamaca*

Um hum humm.

Venadito,  
Mi nene, querrás cre - cer,  
to - da - vía chi - qui - to.

Tu papá,  
¿Qué te para ti,  
com - pra - rá si e m p r e? Um hum hum.

Nenito,  
Irás a pes - car por allí,  
junto con tu a - bue - lo. Um hum.

Venadito,  
desearás venir a la casa  
de tu a - buela si e m p r e. Um hum.

¡Que bueno!

¡Querrás cre - cer!  
Vas a  
Correr también

detrás de tus tías  
s i e m p r e. Um hum hum

Venadito,  
Vendrás corriendo rápido  
también  
donde mí s i e m p r e. Um hum.

Nenito Blanquita (8)  
sobrino y también,  
les van a comprar  
mucho ropa  
s i e m p r e. Um hum.

Blanquita,  
de seguro  
que lavará  
la ropa  
para Papá  
s i e m p r e. Um hum.

Papá te dirá  
que debes estar  
junto con  
tus hermanitos.



Blusa de mola de niña.

NAMAKEDI: Una Canción de Hamaca

Música y versos: Griselda María I  
Transcripción : Luz Graciela Jol  
Musicalización : Anthony Stocks

$\text{♩} = 188$

ua hum hum. Go-e bi-bi pa-so tun-gu-bi so-guelet. A-ni go-e-gua yoe bi-bi. Be-ba-

ba-di be-ga-la i-bua ba-ke-di ku-to-he-ye um hum hum. Go-e-gua pu-ke-pu-ke ta-ta

pe-di ku-tii u-a so-e um hum. Go-e-bi na-ga ni-ku-de so-gue-let mu ne-ga

ba na e-bi-e ku-to-he-ye um hum. Na-a tun-gu-bi so-gue-let. Am-ma-ma-la ba na-a

a-bar-ma-ke-bi ku-o- mo-to-he-ye um hum hum. Go-e bi-bi-gua na a-bi-ni a-bar-ma-ke

kuis-ku-e mo-to-he-ye um hum. Go-e bi-bi niga Si-pu pe-gua be-ga mo-la-ma-la ba-ke-di

ku- o-ta-ko-he-ye um hum. Si-pu di-na-ye be-ga i-bu mo-la ba-ba-gala mo-la e-nu-

ke-di ku-to-he-ye um hum hum. Ba-ba be-ga so-gue-ta-goe su-su-ma-la ba-to a-ba-

la-gue-bi na-gu mo-go-he-ye.

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## CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

- A "Musical View of the Universe": Kalapalo Myth and Ritual as Religious Performance* ELLEN B. BASSO 273
- The Star Girls' Descent: A Myth about Men, Women, Matrilocality, and Singing* JAMES HOWE and LAWRENCE HIRSCHFELD 292
- Agent- and Patient-Centricity in Myth* GREG URBAN 323

### OBITUARY

- Vance Randolph (1892-1980)* HERBERT HALPERT 345

### NOTES

- Singing a Lullaby in Kuna: a Female Verbal Art* GRISELDA MARIA LOPEZ and LUZ GRACIELA JOLY 351
- Notes on Swanton Numbers 80 and 81* RICHARD DAUENHAUER 358
- An Early Version of the "Tar Baby" Story* CAMERON C. NICKELS 364

### STYLE GUIDE

370

### BOOK REVIEWS

- Built in Texas (Abernethy)* DIANE TEBBETTS 378
- Carved in Wood: Folk Sculpture in the Arkansas Ozarks (Van Horn)* ROGER L. WELSCH 380
- Early American Gravestone Art in Photographs (Duval and Rigby) and Puritan Gravestone Art II (Benes)* GERALD L. POCIUS 381

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## NOTES

### Singing a Lullaby in Kuna; a Female Verbal Art

The San Blas Kuna of the Republic of Panama have a cover term, *namakket* ("song" or "chant"), which includes a number of different kinds of speech, all characterized by a melodious rendition. Kuna songs vary according to the sex of the performer and the event in which they occur. Singing by Kuna men has been described and analyzed separately from singing by Kuna women.<sup>1</sup> Attempts to analyze the overall structure of Kuna arts have de-emphasized the women's verbal art, presenting a male-centered view of Kuna speech events.<sup>2</sup> Such structural analysis conveys the simplistic and erroneous impression that Kuna men chant and make speeches while women silently sew *molas*, the artistic cloth panels of reverse appliqué. Other analyses of women's roles in Kuna myths and society present women's singing as "domestic in focus, limited in application, and emotional rather than instrumental."<sup>3</sup> This view obscures the fact that the mythopoetical chanting by Kuna chiefs in congress, although it is performed in a highly restrained, unemotional manner and does not treat personal emotions as a topic, is nevertheless a metaphoric process that depends on an emotional core of metonyms by which the listeners can identify personally with the subject being narrated.<sup>4</sup>

It is important, therefore, to balance the male-centered view of Kuna expressive culture with documentation and analysis of women's verbal art. There are Kuna myths about female leaders

<sup>1</sup> On men's singing, see Joel Sherzer, "Namakke, Summakke, Kormakke: Three Types of Cuna Speech Events," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 263-282. On women's singing, see Sandra Smith McCosker, *The Lullabies of the San Blas Cuna Indians of Panama* (Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet, *Etnologiska Studier* 33, 1974).

<sup>2</sup> L. A. Hirschfeld, "A Structural Analysis of the Cuna Arts," in *Ritual and Symbol in Native Central America*, ed. Philip Young and James Howe (University of Oregon Anthropological Papers No. 9, 1976), pp. 43-56.

<sup>3</sup> James Howe and Lawrence Hirschfeld, "The Star Girls' Descent: A Cuna Myth about Women, Separation, and Mourning," Paper presented at the 75th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., 21 November 1976, p. 12. In the revised version of this paper (see this issue), the authors have balanced more appropriately the roles of the sexes and how these have changed historically. They have also acknowledged that, to be effective, singing by either of the sexes depends on both emotional and cognitive bases.

<sup>4</sup> Robert J. Smith, *The Art of the Festival* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, 6), pp. 97-100.

who are described as public speakers and serve as role models for Kuna women. The myth of Nankitiar describes her as a female *sakla* ("chief" or "leader") who had advisers who were, also female leaders. One day Nankitiar said to the great chiefs in the beautiful place of Pasur-tiwar ("Pasur River") where she lived,<sup>5</sup> that she, too, needed to give advice to the women so that they would have good morale. The great chiefs said, "Yes, you can give advice to the women." The congress was full of women and Nankitiar told them how to make things like *molas* and how to behave.

The myth of Nankitiar was appropriately chanted by the male chief of the island of Tigre in San Blas one night in August 1977,<sup>6</sup> after a woman rose up to speak in the evening congress. The woman was the wife of the leader of the Society of Hunters.<sup>7</sup> She publicly stated that night at the congress that only the wives of the hunters had cooked during a recent puberty ceremony for a daughter of a hunter. She reminded all present that their tradition calls for all women in a community to assist in the cooking during the four days of a puberty ceremony. With his chant about Nankitiar the chief was backing this woman in her advisory capacity and validating her legitimate complaint.

With such living examples of public speakers, reinforced by mythological role models of female leaders,<sup>8</sup> it is therefore not surprising to find that in the island of Tigre, lullaby singing

<sup>5</sup> As this refers to a prior life on the mainland by the contemporary insular Kuna, it is highly plausible that Kuna women may have then had a much more prominent public role in the Kuna congress. This is suggested by participant observations made in July 1977 in the Kuna riverside settlement of Pucuru in Darien province, southeastern Panama. There contemporary Kuna women work much more actively than insular Kuna women in agriculture and fishing, and actively participate in family decisions about these production activities.

<sup>6</sup> This myth and the lullaby here presented were collected during a summer survey in 1977 sponsored by a grant from the Tropical South American Program of the University of Florida, under the direction of Dr. Charles Wagley. During the survey, guidance was generously given by Dr. Alexander Moore now of the University of Southern California but then on sabbatical from the University of Florida and doing research in Panama on the Kuna. A written translation of the myth and a cassette recording of the lullaby have been deposited in the Linguistic Laboratory of the Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, as well as in the Museo del Hombre Panameño, Republic of Panama.

<sup>7</sup> As a child, this woman had been entrusted by her parents to the custody of a prominent *latino* family in Panama City. There she was formally educated in primary and secondary schools. Upon reaching adulthood, she found herself in the not too uncommon position of Indian and peasant women in Panama of becoming the concubine of a son of the custodians or employers. She informed her parents of her situation and was returned to the island. Shortly afterwards she married a Kuna man and reverted to wearing the Kuna female attire which she had stopped wearing in the city. In many ways, this woman, for me, was a leading female in Tigre, as I observed how often she was informally consulted for her opinion on various matters.

<sup>8</sup> It has not been my intention in this paper to overrate the role of Kuna women in public life. Neither have I tried to impose upon Kuna women my own sociocultural biases as a *latina* female born and raised in the trans-isthmian urban center of Panama and largely influenced during my formal education by sociocultural trends of the United States of America. Rather, this paper was meant to note a few discrepancies in male-centered descriptions and analyses of Kuna songs and singing. This paper was also an exercise in my own formal education as a graduate student in anthropology, in the same way that Howe and Hirschfeld in this issue acknowledge the contribution of their students in their analyses.

by women is very much alive and not declining in performance as has been claimed to be the case.<sup>9</sup> The lullaby here presented is analyzed within the social context in which the event occurred. This is to emphasize the fact that a female lullaby singer improvises words to fit a particular, immediate situation in which the addressees are socialized and enculturated through her singing. In this regard, the female lullaby singing at home and the male chief's chanting in the congress complement each other to reinforce the norms of Kuna social behavior. This complementarity maintains a balance between the ceremonial and the colloquial, the mythological and the everyday, the public and the private, the community and the household, the household and the individual, childhood and adulthood, manhood and womanhood.

Griselda Marfa López, the performer, was ten years of age when this lullaby was recorded in Tigre in August 1977. At this age, Griselda knew well the social roles of the members of her family and could improvise lullabies describing their duties and relations. Female singing at such a young age contrasts quite dramatically with male singing, which is performed at a much older age. While male singing requires many years of training and learning,<sup>10</sup> everyday life provides women with knowledge about family social roles, the topic of lullabies. Female improvisations of lullabies, therefore, center on a basic, direct theme of everyday living and do not require the metaphoric allusions of a chief's chanting and its subsequent interpretation by a chief's spokesman. The smooth conduct of everyday living according to traditional cultural values is a goal sought by the chief's chanting. Female lullaby singing is instrumental in ensuring the continuous transmission of this message transgenerationally to children in simple, direct terms.

The event here described occurred on a Saturday morning, when Griselda was free from school where she attended the fourth grade in a bilingual public education program in Kuna and Spanish. The lullaby was sung in Kuna. It was addressed to a two-month-old boy and a two-year-old girl. The boy is the son of Griselda's mother's brother. The girl is Griselda's younger sister. The baby boy did not necessarily understand the lullaby, of course. The two-year-old girl, however, was beginning to talk and understand speech. She was very much aware of the words in the lullaby. Two days after this recording, her grandmother called me to listen to this child singing by herself, *tata ua soe* ("Grandfather is fishing"). At age two, she was already singing her own lullaby phrases and knew that her grandfather had gone fishing.

The two-year-old girl is addressed in the lullaby by her nickname, Sippu ("White"). She is of a lighter skin color than her sister Griselda, but is not an albino.<sup>11</sup> The baby boy is addressed in the lullaby by the traditional endearment phrase *koe pippi* that the Kuna use for infants of either sex. For native speakers today, *koe pippi* means "baby," but the phrase literally translates as "little deer." In a euphemistic, metaphoric sense, a baby is associated with a little deer, as in Kuna folklore children are told that babies are brought into the world by a deer or a dolphin instead of the stork of European folklore.<sup>12</sup> A complementary interpretation of the symbolic meaning of *koe* is given by Howe and Hirschfeld in this issue.

<sup>9</sup> Hirschfeld, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Sherzer, pp. 280-282; James Howe, *Village Political Organization Among the San Blas Cuna*, Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, 1974, pp. 160-165.

<sup>11</sup> The San Blas Kuna have a high incidence of albinism.

<sup>12</sup> For this comment, and editing assistance, I am grateful to Aristeides Turpana, a Kuna poet with the Extensión Cultural del Instituto Nacional de Cultura, Panama.

Griselda and her sister Sippu live with their parents in their maternal grandparents' household. Their cousin, the baby boy, resides with his mother in his maternal grandparents' household. This conforms to the matrilineal postmarital residence pattern of the San Blas Kuna. The baby's father, Griselda's "uncle," was working at the time in Panama City and visited the island only once during the three weeks that I was there.

The morning the lullaby was recorded, the baby's mother had left the insular village to go to the mainland river to wash clothes. She requested her boy's paternal grandmother to care for him while she was gone. As the grandmother was busy cooking in the kitchen, she entrusted the baby to her granddaughter, the performer. Griselda then took the baby and her sister into the sleeping quarters. There she sat swinging in a hammock with the two children, while shaking a gourd rattle and singing lullabies for them.

The melodic features of this lullaby conform to the norms that have been specified for the common style of Kuna lullabies, namely, shaking a gourd rattle to establish either a duple or triple rhythm, singing in a normal speaking range (or, less frequently, in a high, soft voice), using a narrow tonal range (no wider than the interval of a sixth), singing complete textual and musical phrases with each breath, and ending those phrases on the lowest melodic pitch.<sup>13</sup> Humming in this lullaby is part of the melodic style. The duration of the lullaby is one minute forty seconds, less than the four minutes that has been described as the average time span. Griselda, however, had been singing prior to my discovering her in this act. Upon my request, she sang this set of verses for a tape-recording.

A few nonmelodic features of this text will be singled out to provide "some of the nuances of meaning, the assumed knowledge in what is being said . . . for people coming upon a culture's literature for the first time."<sup>14</sup> The performer incorporates herself and those entrusted to her within the text of the lullaby, thus improvising for the immediate situation. In the first stanza she encourages the baby to grow up, expressing it as a desire, a wish of the child. Growth and development are exemplified by physical body motions, activities, and strength, as well as by the mental activity and strength of learning social roles and statuses. The future rights, duties, and obligations of adulthood are the primary focus of the text. Particular reference is made to duties and obligations incurred by separation; for example, the father who will bring gifts of clothes to his children, bought with wages earned during his migrant labor, thus mitigating his absence with the gifts (see Howe and Hirschfeld in this issue for the theme of separation and mediation in Kuna lullaby singing). The last stanza returns the children to a child's world. To be a child becomes a social status, rightfully sanctioned by paternal authority.

A final note is in order, to explain the methods used in transcription and translation. The same morning after recording the lullaby, I went to the kitchen and played back the recording to Griselda's mother and grandmother. With their assistance, the lullaby was transcribed word

<sup>13</sup> Sandra McCosker, "San Blas Cuna Indian Lullabies: A Means of Informal Learning," in *Enculturation in Latin America*, ed. Johannes Wilbert (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1976), pp. 29-66.

<sup>14</sup> A plea by anthropologist Allan F. Burns quoted in "Comments," *Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics*, 3 (1977), pp. 146-148. I thank Dr. Burns, of the University of Florida, for his encouragement to translate this lullaby and his suggestions.

for word. The phonological rules proposed by Sherzer<sup>15</sup> were generally followed. Under this system, voiceless stops (pronounced: p, t, k, and k<sup>w</sup>) are treated as "double" consonants (written: pp, tt, kk, and kk<sup>w</sup>) and voiced stops (pronounced: b, d, g, and g<sup>w</sup>) are treated as "single" consonants (written: p, t, k, and k<sup>w</sup>).

From my rudimentary knowledge of Kuna, I knew the meaning of a few phrases in the lullaby. For those words with which I was not that familiar, however, I obtained glosses in Spanish from an older female cousin of the performer (a mother's brother's daughter) and from an uncle (a mother's older brother). These Spanish glosses were checked with the English meanings given by Holmer.<sup>16</sup> A year later, upon a return to Tigre in October 1978, a Spanish version of this translation and interpretation was shown to Griselda's relatives, who made final suggestions and agreed to its publication.

The English words are arranged to convey in a very general sense the melodic and textual phrase sets sung with each breath. This arrangement is not intended to be sung according to the melody. It is almost impossible to express in English an exact melodic arrangement, as the morphological structure of English does not correspond to the affixation or syllabic system of Kuna which allows the production of one note per affix or syllable. In the translation, a descent in line reflects a slight descent in melodic tone. One must bear in mind, however, that Griselda was singing in a normal speaking range using a narrow tonal variation. The spacing isolating words or breaking them apart is intended to reflect the greater length of time awarded to note-affixes in Kuna at the end of the phrase. The melodic transcription is here appended for those interested in the actual musical arrangement, as sung in Kuna by the performer.<sup>17</sup>

"Grow Up," a Kuna Lullaby<sup>18</sup>

um hum humm

Little baby,  
you will want to grow up.

My baby,  
still so small.

What will he,  
your father,

<sup>15</sup> Joel Sherzer, "A Problem in Cuna Phonology," *The Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest*, 1 (1975), 45-53.

<sup>16</sup> Nils M. Holmer, *Ethnolinguistic Cuna Dictionary* (Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet, Etnologiska Studier 19, 1952). I also appreciate comments and suggestions made by Drs. James Howe and Joel Sherzer on the transcription and translation.

<sup>17</sup> I thank anthropologist Anthony Stocks, of Idaho State University, for his ethnomusicological transcription of the melody.

<sup>18</sup> Kuna lullabies do not have titles, but this one has been added to convey in English a sense of the nature of the topic.

what will he

buy you always?

um hum humm

Baby,

you will go

together with your grand-  
a- bout fish- ing  
grand- fa- ther.

um hum

Little baby

when you learn to walk

you will

want to come  
to your grand- mother's house always.

um hum

You will

want to grow up.

You will

also run

after your aunts  
always.

um hum

Little baby,

you will also come

running  
to me always.

um hum

A KUNA LULLABY

Music and verses:  
Griselda María López

♩ = 198

um hum humm Ko-e pippi pa-so tun-ku-pi so-ke-let. A-ni ku-e-k<sup>w</sup>a yoo pippi. Pe pa-pa-ti pe-ka-la

i-pua pakke-ti ku-to-e-ye um hum hum. Ko-e-k<sup>w</sup>a pu-ke-pu-ke ta-ta pe-ti ku-tii u-a so-e um hum.

Ko-e-pi na-ka rikku-ze sike-let nu ne-ra pa na e-pi-e ku-to-e-ye um hum. Na-a tunku-pi so-ke-let.

Annamala pa na-a apar-makke-pi k<sup>w</sup>o-mo-to-e-ye um hum hum. Ko-e pippi-k<sup>w</sup>a na api-ni apar-makke k<sup>w</sup>isik<sup>w</sup>e-

mo-toe-ye um hum. Ko-e pippi nika Sippu pok<sup>w</sup>a peka mola-mala pakke-ti. K<sup>w</sup>otakweye um hum.

Sippu ti-na-ye pe-ka i-pu mola pa-pa-kala mola e-nukke-ti kuto-e-ye um hum hum. Pa-pa pe-ka soketa-koe

susu-ma-la patto appa. lakkepi na kumoko-e-ye.

Musicalization: Anthony Stocks

Transcription: Luz Graciela Joly

Figure 1. A Kuna Lullaby. Music and verses: Griselda María Lopez.

My baby nephew,  
and "White" also,  
many clothes  
will be bought for you always.  
um hum

White  
will surely  
wash clothes,  
for father always.  
um hum

Father  
will say:  
"You must be  
with  
your cousins and siblings."

*University of Florida  
Gainesville*

GRISBELDA MARIA LOPEZ, Performer  
LUZ GRACIELA JOLY, Interpreter

<sup>19</sup> Sippu ("White") was fidgeting about, wanting to get down from the hammock. The performer thus interrupted her initial phrase to address her sister and incorporate her into the act.



Mujer guna sentada en una hamaca cosiendo una mola.

Guna woman sitting in a hammock sewing a mola.



Cuando una niña comienza a coser molas, hace una figura sencilla, como un pollito.

When a girl begins to sew molas, she sews a simple image like a chick.