MARUBO DISCOURSE GENRES AND DOMAINS OF INFLUENCE: LANGUAGE AND POLITICS IN AN INDIGENOUS AMAZONIAN VILLAGE

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1. Introduction. In nonstate societies, linguistic practice has a privileged role in the constitution of political influence. Absent the structures of the state, power cannot be enacted through armed forces, bureaucratic apparatus, or state media. Influence must instead be secured through face-to-face encounters with those to be influenced. In such contexts, relations of domination and power are constituted through linguistic practice.

In native South America, the relationship between political position and linguistic performance is a well-studied phenomenon. The association of political leadership with speaking ability was noted by early ethnologists (Lowie 1948). Speaking ability came to be considered a common feature of native South American leaders and a part of anthropologists' interpretive frameworks for understanding indigenous politics (Clastres 1947). Considerable attention has since been focused on South American ceremonial dialogues (Urban 1986) which are performed by politically prominent men, both hosts and guests, during visits among villages. The rich and impressive variety of discourse genres practiced by native South Americans is a distinctive feature of these societies (Sherzer and Urban 1986).

The discourse genres practiced by native South Americans include expressions of mythological (Basso 1985 and Hill 1993), cosmological (Graham 1995), shamanic (Townsley 1993), and historical (Hill 1988) knowledge. Although these genres and their performances play important roles in political organization, symbolization of status, and communication of selected social norms, their overt purpose is nonpolitical. We must distinguish the analysis of the political function of nonpolitical speech from the analysis of specifically political oratory (Hendricks 1988). Both modes of analysis, however, are essential to a complete understanding of indigenous South American politics.

Because discourse plays a key role in indigenous South American political processes, discourse analysis is a highly productive method for gaining an understanding of those processes. Hendricks (1988), studying the Ecuadorean Shuar, compared the political oratory of tradition-oriented leaders

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with that of younger Federación-linked leaders as a means of studying political continuity and change.[1] She showed that the continuity between new and old modes of political organization is in the link leaders establish between themselves and specialized knowledge which only they have access to, a link established through the practice of political discourse.

This paper explores the distinction between youth-linked and elder-linked discourse genres among the Marubo, a Panoan-speaking indigenous group living in the Javari River Valley of northwestern Brazil. Marubo youth and elders have mastery over different domains of restricted information, expressed in different discourse genres. I compare performances of youth-linked and elder-linked discourse genres in order to understand how mastery over restricted domains of information confers influence on those able to communicate that information. The elder-specific genres confer status and authority upon their practitioners, but this status converts directly to influence only within the realm of social action to which the information at the speakers' disposal pertains. Hence, the elders' speech genre concerning propriety in social relations (*ese*[2]) translates to influence in the fields of marriage and relations among kin. However, the realms of discourse concerning relations with nonindigenous people are youth-linked: political meetings and radio communications. This confers on the youth a great deal of influence in those fields of relations.

Whereas previous studies have focused mainly on the form and content of discourse, here I focus instead on its social context. To understand how mastery of different discourse genres translates into different domains of political influence, I analyze the social context of three speech events: a political meeting, a healing ritual, and a lecture on social relations. I look at (1) the social position of participants, their relations to one another, and how this affects their performance; (2) the relationship of the speech event to other temporally adjacent and thematically related speech events; and (3) the consequences of the speech event in terms of subsequent social

[1] The Federación de Centros Shuar is a relatively successful political organization formed by the Shuar (formerly known as the Jívaro) of Ecuador and Peru (Hendricks 1988). Its formal structure and pan-ethnic nature contrast sharply with the local autonomy and atomization characteristic of pre-Federación Shuar politics (Harner 1972).

[2] Marubo words in the text are replicated using orthography proposed by native speakers at Aldeia Maronal. This orthography is based on a system of writing developed by MNTB missionaries and follows common Amerindianist usage, with a few exceptions. The vowel *e* is the high central unrounded vowel [ɨ] in the IPA, while *ê* is the mid front unrounded vowel [ɛ]. The sound represented as *tx* in the text is the voiceless palato-alveolar stop [tʃ]; *x* is the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ]; and *sh* is a retroflex voiceless palato-alveolar fricative.

action, to show how domains of influence are constituted through the performance of the discourse genres appropriate to them.

2. Ethnographic background. The Marubo are a society of approximately 900 people living in the upper reaches of the Curuçá and Ituí rivers in northwestern Brazil. The waters of both these rivers flow into the Javari River, an affluent of the Amazon that forms some 900 kilometers of border between Peru and Brazil. The Área Indígena (A.I.) do Javari was formally signed into existence on December 11, 1998. The Marubo are one of four indigenous groups in the Javari Basin in regular contact with nonindigenous peoples. There are at least five, and perhaps as many as seven, uncontacted groups in the area. The subsistence base is uniformly one of swidden agriculture and hunting supplemented by fishing and small-scale animal domestication. Indigenous people of the Javari Basin participate in the money economy on only a limited scale.

The relative isolation of the Marubo territory is the most probable reason for the dearth of ethnohistoric data on the Marubo. Downstream to the north, the nearest market town is Atalaia do Norte, typically a ten- to fifteen-day journey by boat from the Marubo villages on the Curuçá River. To the south, the town of Cruzeiro do Sul may be reached by walking overland for five days. Penetration of the area by nonindigenous people did not occur until the end of the nineteenth century (Coutinho 1993). The rubber boom forced the Marubo to leave the vicinities of navigable rivers and flee to a remote and inaccessible area in the uplands between the Curuçá and Ituí rivers. During the boom, at its height in the Javari Basin from 1890 to 1910, violence, slave raids, and kidnapping of women reduced the Marubo population to a dangerous low, probably under 200 people. After the fall of rubber prices and the withdrawal of the bulk of the rubber labor force, the Marubo remained in isolation where they had fled until the 1950s.

Beginning in the 1950s, the Marubo were contacted by missionaries of the New Tribes Mission. Missionary presence was sporadic at first. In the 1960s a group of Marubo left the remote area where they had all lived since the 1920s and repopulated the Ituí River. New Tribes established a permanent mission on the Ituí River and it has been there ever since. The missionaries carry out some health and education work and proselytize the Christian religion. They operate a small store that sells clothes, percussion caps, soap, beads, and other goods the Marubo can purchase with money earned working for the missionaries or elsewhere.

In the 1970s, the Brazilian petroleum corporation Petrobras conducted a major oil and gas exploration project in the Javari Basin. This provided the incentive for the Fundação Nacional do Indio (FUNAI), Brazil's Indian

protection agency, to move into the area. FUNAI officials contacted the Marubo from 1973 onward, establishing the first posts on the Curuçá and Ituí rivers in 1974. Marubo moved away from the remote uplands to the main course of the navigable Curuçá River in 1977–78. FUNAI's original intentions seem to have been to protect indigenous land and provide health and education assistance. However, budgetary limitations in the 1990s have curtailed FUNAI's range of action. FUNAI posts in the Javari Basin are occupied only sporadically. FUNAI does continue to provide emergency removal of critically ill or injured patients, treatment at downriver facilities, and repatriation. When posts are occupied, they are sources of health assistance and communications. Because the FUNAI budget is theoretically geared toward assistance to indigenous peoples, the Marubo maintain a healthy interest in FUNAI politics, particularly at the regional level.

The indigenous peoples of the Javari began to organize politically in the 1980s. Young Marubo who had spent some time in the city became aware of indigenous land issues, of FUNAI's exact mission, and of the experiences of other indigenous peoples. They began organizing meetings within and among Marubo villages, arguing for political action to resolve flaws in FUNAI's performance and to secure land rights. In 1991, with the support of Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI), a Catholic indigenous-support group, the first multi-ethnic political meeting in the Javari Basin was held, bringing together Marubo from both rivers with Maryoruna, their traditional enemies. This meeting resulted in the establishment of an Indigenous Commission of the Javari Valley, which prepared the 1992 General Assembly of the Indigenous Peoples of the Javari.

The 1992 General Assembly brought together Mayoruna, Matís, and Kanamari Indians with the Marubo organizers. The Assembly established the Conselho Indígena do Vale do Javari (CIVAJA), with a Marubo coordinator, Mayoruna vice-coordinator, and Kanamari and Matís counselors, as well as a Marubo secretary-treasurer. CIVAJA currently has its headquarters in Atalaia do Norte. They pressure FUNAI for adequate services, agitate for land rights, seek to secure adequate education and health care for the indigenous people of the Javari, and represent indigenous interests to nonindigenous organizations. CIVAJA's crowning achievement was the signing into existence, after 15 years of political action and pressure, of the A.I. do Javari, the second largest indigenous area in Brazil (only the Yanomami area is larger).

In 1994, CIVAJA invited Doctors Without Borders (Portuguese acronym MSF) to the Javari Basin to combat a cholera epidemic. MSF was then called on to combat the malaria epidemics that, according to CIVAJA, killed 25–30 people per year in the mid-1990s. A long-term program was established by MSF to create a sustainable malaria control framework for the

Javari Basin's indigenous peoples. MSF has trained indigenous people in use of microscopes to diagnose malaria correctly and apply treatment. Several Marubo villages now have microscopes and microscopists, providing an effective first line of defense against malaria. MSF left in 2000, when they felt that the training of indigenous health assistants (AIS—Agente Indígena de Saúde) was complete, and when a system for continued health care had been agreed on by CIVAJA and the federal government of Brazil.

CIVAJA participated in a program, run by a Swiss NGO, funding radio communications for remote Amazonian communities. CIVAJA secured 15 radios along with funding for licenses, setup, and maintenance. There were six radio communications sets in Marubo villages, two on the Curuçá and four on the Ituí River. The Mayoruna and Kanamari have three radios apiece; the Matís have one. There are also radio sets at CIVAJA headquarters in Atalaia and at the home of a Marubo who lives in Cruzeiro do Sul. These radios were installed in 1996 and 1997. As a result, communication among Marubo living in different villages has vastly improved. Radio sets are an important part of the lives of those Marubo villages that have them.

The Marubo residential unit is the *shovo*. At the time of my fieldwork, there were 38 *shovo* in 11 villages, housing 821 people, an average of 3.5 *shovo* per village and 21.6 persons per *shovo*. The range of *shovo* population is 9 to 59. Each *shovo* has an authority, the *shovo ivo*, which I translate as "household-owner." The *shovo ivo* is the ultimate authority over his own *shovo*, determining labor and residential patterns. The *shovo ivo* is considered the moral and ethical guardian of the *shovo*.

Political organization beyond the level of the *shovo* is uncommon but does occur. The great leader of the post-rubber-boom era, João Tuxaua, is said to have had authority over five *shovo*. His son Alfredo is the current headman of Aldeia Maronal, with considerable authority over a dozen *shovo*. The name of this role in Marubo society is *kakáya*. Alfredo is the only Marubo everyone could agree to call *kakáya*. It is not a closed position, however: several others lay claim to the title, and normatively there is no limit on the number of *kakáya*. Practically, however, it is very difficult to establish and retain any degree of authority over another *shovo ivo*.

An important aspect of the Marubo historical experience has been the development of clearly discernible generations; this generational structure has a great impact on political affairs. In defining generation, I follow Fowler (1987:141): "People born within a particular time span, whose shared experience significantly distinguishes them from contemporaries in other age groups." Essential to this definition is the notion of a shared experience of particular historical contexts. The baseline I use for counting Marubo generations is the end of the rubber boom. The rubber boom saw the destruction of a Javari Basin Panoan social system. A small group of

people fled to a remote area of the basin, where they formed a single village. Oral histories state that there were five *shovo ivorasi* in that village: João Tuxáua, Domingos, Ernesto, Julio, and Dionísio. According to census data gathered by Julio Cezar Melatti and by me, these individuals were born between 1880 and 1900. This is what I call the first generation of Marubo. Their shared historical experience was surviving the rubber boom and creating an isolated village deep in the forest. They then concentrated on recovering from the rubber boom's demographic impact by having large families and teaching their children crucial forms of indigenous knowledge.

The generation which I call "elders" in this paper are the children of the first generation. The elders constituted the political leadership of the Marubo in 1997–98. For example, at Aldeia Maronal, the main leaders were all children of either Domingos or of João Tuxáua; the sons of João Tuxáua by one of his wives, Maya, were politically very important. These were Zacarias (b. 1921), Alfredo (b. 1937), whose political leadership I discuss below, José (b. 1942), and Pedro (b. 1950). Their shared historical experience involves growing up in total isolation in the rainforest. There was no regular contact with nonindigenous people until the 1950s: no commercial relations, no missionaries, and no government presence. The elders learned healing practices, mythology, and cosmology from their parents, especially from João Tuxáua.

The generation which I call "youth" consists of the children of the elders. I focus on Alfredo's most politically active son, Txanõpa. Txanõpa frequently engages in joint activities, political and otherwise, with his brothers and cousins. Txanõpa was born in 1977 and has full siblings born in 1969, 1975, 1978, 1979, 1990, 1992, and 1997. The shared historical experience of the youth involves increasing levels of interaction with nonindigenous people. The FUNAI presence began in the mid-1970s, along with the final abandonment of the remote headwaters area where the elders had grown up, in favor of villages along navigable rivers. Since then it has been increasingly important to pursue a Brazilian education, to seek land rights, and to work for Marubo access to education, health care, and money. Interactions between generations are a major part of this analysis. In this, I follow the lead of Hendricks (1988), who linked discourse practices and generation in structuring her analysis of Shuar discourse and politics.

3. Theory and method.

3.1. An approach to discourse and politics in indigenous Amazonia.

The objective of my fieldwork among the Marubo was to understand their political organization. This topic interested me because of the debate over egalitarianism in the Amazon Basin. Initial efforts to organize knowledge of

indigenous South Americans into a culture-area framework were strongly influenced by neoevolutionism (Steward 1946–59 and Steward and Faron 1959). In the evolutionist framework, societies that operated on a large scale, such as the Chavín, were thought to have evolved from smaller-scale societies. Then-extant small-scale societies, such as those observed in the Amazon Basin in the early twentieth century, were thus believed to reflect a stage of evolution prior to the development of the state. They were tribes, rather than chiefdoms or states (Oberg 1955). As such, their leaders lacked power: they were egalitarian societies.

The notion that lowland South American societies were essentially egalitarian found its maximal expression in the work of Clastres (1974). Clastres argued that lowland societies consciously and actively rejected power through ideologies that equated power and nature. Since nature was ideologically opposed to culture, and culture was superior to nature (Lévi-Strauss 1964), the presence of political power was rejected in favor of an egalitarian ethos.

What was most suspicious in this framework was the notion that Amazonian societies had always been totally egalitarian. This was the old evolutionist view of simple societies: that they had remained unchanged since the Stone Age, that they had always been the way they were now. This notion is suspicious because of the massive population loss that occurred following the arrival of Europeans (Denevan 1976). It is implausible to simply assume, without evidence, that a society's political organization will be the same after a 90% population loss. The concept of ontological-essential egalitarianism in the Amazon was rendered more suspect by the work of archaeologists like Roosevelt (1980; 1991), who demonstrated that, prior to the European conquest, there existed Amazonian cultures of considerable complexity and population size, with large nucleated settlements. Finally, in reviewing the literature, I concluded that anthropologists who claimed that indigenous Amazonians were egalitarian had used poor research methods, or no methods at all (Ruedas 2001).

I set out in 1997 to research the dynamics of political power in Marubo society. I wanted to know if Marubo political organization was egalitarian (I would come to conclude that it was not). In order to investigate this topic, I utilized research methods that would reveal whether power existed in Marubo society, the distribution of that power, and the extent to which political power influenced individual and group decision making. It is in this context that discourse became an object of my anthropological gaze.

In studying discourse as a method for investigating political power, I was inspired by Hendricks's article on Shuar discourse (Hendricks 1988). Hendricks showed how indigenous Amazonian political rhetoric can be analyzed to reveal an ideology of power that belies the allegedly egalitarian

nature of Amazonian societies. However, I differ from Hendricks in the methods I used to orient the gathering and organization of data. While Hendricks was influenced by critical linguistics (Fowler et al. 1979, Fowler 1985, and Kress 1985), focusing on the ideological content of discourse, I was influenced by action theory in political anthropology (Vincent 1978), focusing on the social organization of speech events.

Action theory is a set of methods rather than an explanatory theory. It involves studying the goal-oriented actions of individuals within the framework of a structured social system. The approach I took is best exemplified in the work of certain mid-twentieth-century Africanists (Turner 1957, Middleton 1960, and Van Velsen 1964). In this method, the first step is to understand the social structure and organization within which individuals act. Hence, in 1997 and 1998 I visited each Marubo village to gather census and genealogical data (one village could not be reached, but data was obtained by interviewing its traveling residents). Supplementing these data with genealogies gathered 20 years earlier by Julio Cezar Melatti, I was able to understand how each Marubo was related to every other Marubo by their kinship system, as well as what other social roles were filled by individuals. Thus, when I observed groups of people interacting, I was able to understand exactly how their interrelations were affected by the structures of kinship relations and relative social roles.

Once the social structure is known, action theory focuses on the way individuals operate within it, and indeed manipulate it, in pursuit of particular goals. This reveals the dynamics of political relations. There are a variety of methods for observing individuals in order to understand their system of political relations. Many of these involve observing the way individuals come together as groups, in key social gatherings and rituals, and the way these gatherings are the scenes of political contention. An excellent example is Middleton's study of Lugbara religion (1960). Middleton studied ritual activities over time, showing how the individuals who organized rituals were political rivals, and how the organization of these rituals was affected by their political goals. Thus, by studying the way rituals are performed, after first understanding how all the participants are interrelated, it is possible to discern the distribution of influence and the actions involved in competition for power within the social system.

To apply these methods among the Marubo, I paid close attention to the way individuals came together as groups for ritual, communicative, or other purposes. I noted that certain types of gatherings and speech events recurred. Some of these recurring speech event types, which I call genres (I justify this terminology below), had been noted by previous researchers (Melatti 1983 and Montagner 1985); others had not. Among the most important (from my perspective) were healing rituals, political meetings, and lectures on social relations. These three genres are the focus of this paper.

Other important types of gathering, such as feasts, work parties, and oral history performances, are analyzed elsewhere (Ruedas 2001).

When these important events (i.e., healing rituals, political meetings, and lectures on social relations) occurred, I first made sure to write down the names of all the participants and what role they played in the event. I then worked to understand, either directly or through interpreters, what was being said. However, the analytic power of these methods—their ability to reveal hidden power relations—was predicated on analyzing the social organization of the speech events, not the ideological content of the discourses. In action theory, what is important is to study the way individuals act, not once but repeatedly during the course of fieldwork. By connecting the behavior of individuals at one event with their behavior at other events over a period of time, one may understand how their actions reflect long-term strategies of seeking goals in life, how the strategies of multiple individuals and groups involve them in patterns of conflict and cooperation, and how these strategically oriented actions constitute a system of political interactions.

My approach to discourse was thoroughly conditioned by my research objectives and the methods by which I chose to pursue these objectives. Within critical linguistics, two approaches to the relationship of language to power may be distinguished. The branch of critical linguistics that focuses on ways of exposing the ideological content of discourse argues that language constitutes consciousness. Language carries ideology, defined as "a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view" (Kress and Hodge 1993:6). By carrying ideologies, language serves as an instrument of control whereby the worldviews of listeners are manipulated in the interests of dominant economic classes. This perspective begins by noting an entrenched locus of political power and showing how this power molds the content of discourse and thus the behavior of listeners. It follows a line from power to language. My interest, however, was in following links from language to power.

To use the study of discourse as a method for discerning hidden power, I found Fairclough's approach more useful. Fairclough (1989:28–31) focuses attention on the concept of "orders of discourse," adapted from Foucault (1971): "actual discourse is determined by underlying conventions of discourse . . . [called] orders of discourse, . . . [which] embody particular ideologies" (Fairclough 1989:28). These conventions, which restrict the way individuals can act, are related to broader social orders. Thus, social institutions structure their constituent discourses and "society as a whole . . . structures the orders of discourse of the various social institutions in a particular way. How discourses are structured in a given order of discourse, and how structurings change over time, are determined by changing relationships of power at the level of the social institution or of the society"

(Fairclough 1989:30). Thus, by studying conventions of discourse, one may come to discern the loci of power in any given social system.

While the work of both Kress and Fairclough is useful to a political ethnographer, problems arise when using critical linguistics in the Amazonian context, problems addressed by Hendricks (1988:216), who noted that literature on ideology focuses almost exclusively on class societies: "There is still the problem, however, of applying the critical conception of ideology to traditional, 'egalitarian' societies" (Hendricks 1988:217). I see this problem differently from Hendricks, because I do not carry the a priori assumption that Amazonian societies are egalitarian. Yet I share her concerns about critical linguistics. In Fairclough's work on orders of discourse as well as in the literature on ideology, the existence of large-scale power inequality is a given. To me, this is problematic, not because of indigenous Amazonians' alleged egalitarianism, but simply because the issue of power in Amazonia is in dispute. It is not a given. Power must be considered instead a variable, which may or may not be present, and if it is, may be present in intensities and configurations that are quite different from those of Western societies.

The main problem, then, is how to approach a situation in which one does not know if power exists, where it is concentrated, or how it is applied. The procedures of critical linguistics must be modified, because these take as given a power structure described by previous scholars (e.g., Marx and Gramsci) and simply analyze how this power structures discourse. But to craft a political ethnography of indigenous Amazonians, one must first study the order of discourse and then deduce a configuration of power that is, at the start of research, unknown. My solution was (following Hendricks) to take up the basic concept of critical linguistics—that attention to discourse is an essential method for investigating power—but then to pursue this concept using the methodology of action theory. I was thus able to correlate individuals' actions in one speech event with their actions in dozens of others over 12 months of fieldwork, which allowed me to understand the political subtleties in speech events, and the unstated motivations of participants, far better than had I just focused on analyzing ideological messages in the discourse. Throughout this paper, I highlight the analytic power of this method, to encourage critical linguists and linguistic anthropologists to focus as much on the social context of speech events as on textual analysis. Linguistic anthropologists have written about language and politics in non-Western contexts (Bloch 1975, Brenneis and Myers 1984, and Briggs 1996; 1997), but most critical discourse analysis has dealt with situations where power is entrenched and unequal (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). I apply a critical approach to speech events in a context where power is a variable rather than a given.

My research among the Marubo was aimed at discerning and understanding the workings of power. However, this paper has more limited goals: to

investigate how, by mastering certain discourse genres, individuals gain influence in key areas of social activity. To demonstrate the existence of genuine power is a task that would require more space than a short paper affords. Hence, I limit myself to discussing influence, a less contested term in Amazonian ethnography. I do believe there is power in Marubo politics (for extensive evidence of this, see Ruedas 2001). However, by limiting the theoretical ambition of this paper, its main purposes are better served—to present important ethnographic data on the Marubo in an accessible format, to contribute to the literature on indigenous Amazonian discourse and on the links between language and politics, and to advocate a method for investigating power in apparently egalitarian contexts.

3.2. Marubo discourse genres. The concept of genre in this paper is influenced by folklore studies, where the concept can be traced back to the classifications of myths, folktales, and legends by the Brothers Grimm (Swales 1990). As anthropologists studied forms of verbal behavior that resembled the Western genres of myth and folktale, attention was increasingly paid to the way narrative and other genres are classified by the communities in which they are performed (e.g., Gossen 1971). Thus, a folklore genre is a classificatory type, often but not necessarily associated with a recurring form (Ben-Amos 1976). More important, however, one must understand the system of classification a community has, in order to understand why particular speech event types recur (Oring 1986).

Swales (1990:58) offers a useful definition of genre, unifying conceptions from folklore, literary studies, linguistics, and rhetoric:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community. The genre names inherited and produced by discourse communities and imported by others constitute valuable ethnographic communication, but typically need further validation.

Three elements are thus required for a recurring form of communication to be sensibly definable as a genre: a communicative purpose, a pattern of similarity in structure, style, content, and intended audience, and a genre name inherited and produced by the discourse community. However, this leaves the issue of distinguishing between the total context of speech and the mere content of speech. For example, one can distinguish between a

healing ritual, in which several types of speech occur, and a healing song, the performance of which is the main purpose of a healing ritual. Is a healing ritual a discourse genre?

I take the position that a genre is a type of event and therefore includes not just the words that are spoken but also the arrangement of participants and their physical environment. Hymes (1974), on the other hand, argues that a speech event type is different from a genre, taking the example of a church service (type) being distinct from a sermon (genre). My position is closer to Saville-Troike (1982), who argues that a genre is a type of communicative event and the distinction between event type and genre is misleading, because any genre can become an event type if one shifts the axis of comparison. (Swales also follows Saville-Troike.) Thus, speech event type and genre are equivalent. It is true that a genre/speech event such as a church service or healing ritual may consist of various subgenres which have differing formal features (e.g., hymn, prayer, and sermon), but the whole event is still an example of a dialogic and multivocal discourse genre, and the distinct structures of hymn, prayer, and sermon can be seen as constituents of a broader discourse structure encompassing them all.

The Marubo healing ritual is a discourse genre because its main purpose, the curing of illnesses, is achieved through speech, i.e., through the singing of certain songs called *shõki*. It is thus an event that is "directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (Hymes 1974:52). (See Montagner 1985 for details on style and content.) The ritual at which *shõki* are sung is called *shõkiya*. I argue that knowledge of *shõki* is required for participation in the frequent *shõkiya*. This, in turn, allows for participation in key conversations which take place in between *shõki*-performances, during which important decisions are made, which affords *shõki* experts influence over certain sets of social relations. Likewise, mastery over the genre of *ese vana*, discussed below, affords its practitioners considerable influence over other, associated realms of social activity.

The discourse genre I call "political meeting" was quite salient during my fieldwork (July 1997–July 1998). The purpose of this genre is to produce a unified opinion concerning a political issue, at a village or multivillage level, though I also observed multi-ethnic meetings. Particularities of structure, style, content, and audience are discussed below. The indigenous term for this genre is highly revealing. It is a Portuguese word, *reunião*, which points to the fact that Marubo political meetings are linked to their participation in pan-Amazonian indigenous organizational processes (explained below). Despite their apparently exogenous origin, political meetings played an essential role in the Marubo communities in 1997–98; they are, like healing rituals, fundamentally speech events and, thus, must be considered an emically recognized discourse genre along

with healing rituals, lectures on social relations, and all their constitutive subgenres.

4. Healing songs and political influence.

4.1. Healing ritual: description. At the Marubo village of Maronal, healing rituals for critical illnesses involve the gathering together of elders with healing skills from throughout the village. Such assemblies function as impromptu councils at which political issues can be discussed and decisions made. The healing songs (*shõki*) are a type of speech which only certain male elders know. At Aldeia Maronal, most household-owners (*shovo ivorasi*; sg. *shovo ivo*) are also healers who know the *shõki*. While minor ailments are treated by one or two healers, major problems occasion the gathering together of most or all *shõki*-knowledgeable elders, called *kẽxĩtxo* (plural, *kẽxĩtxorasi*). The ritual healing assemblies where *kẽxĩtxorasi* gather thus become at the same time councils of *shovo ivorasi*. Because of this, healing rituals can, and often do, double as political decision-making events.

The event I call "healing ritual" centers on the act of singing the special songs known as *shõki* (Montagner 1985). The patient lies in a hammock while the singer sits on a wood bench with his head above the patient's body so he can sing over the patient. By means of the song, the healer summons a healing spirit to his aid, washes the body of evil influences, and expels the disease's causative agent. There are many different songs for different ailments, each tailored to expel a particular causative agent. Thus, each *kẽxĩtxo* has an extensive repertoire of songs for different situations. If one song seems ineffective, another song, attacking a different causative agent, will be tried. Each *shõki* lasts approximately one hour. A patient may be sung over several times in one night; in critical situations patients are sung over around the clock, though always with breaks between songs. These breaks are also important, as they provide the context for numerous communicative interactions.

The fact that knowledge of *shõki* is restricted to certain elders must be emphasized. There were, in 1997–98, ten *kẽxĩtxorasi* at Aldeia Maronal, all of them either a *shovo ivo* or the brother of a *shovo ivo*. No members of the younger generation had learned *shõki*. The *shovo ivorasi* and their brothers constitute the political leadership of the village. Since an assembly of healing experts is also a gathering of the political leadership of the village, these are rituals of political organization and social solidarity as much as healing.

Healing rituals are generally initiated by the *shovo ivo* of the ill person. For example, José was a *shovo ivo* whose brother's wife was often ill. When she was very ill, José would consult his brother. If his brother agreed, José would send one or more of his children out to invite other *kẽxĩtxorasi* to

sing. In the case of the ritual described below, the *shovo ivo* was in Atalaia do Norte (receiving treatment for tuberculosis) when a young woman in his *shovo* fell ill, so the oldest man in the *shovo*, who was the *shovo ivo*'s brother's son, asked the *kẽxĩtxorasi* to come heal her.

Healing rituals follow a fairly standard sequence of events. Those who are going to sing sit down on the benches at about 7 P.M., an hour after dark. Singers are often accompanied by elders who do not sing but are simply there to observe the proceedings and participate in conversation. Once the healing assembly has gathered on the *kenã* (guest benches), consumption of Banisteriopsis tea (*oni*) begins. This tea is referred to in Portuguese as *ayahuasca*, but it lacks the *Psychotria* admixture that would make it hallucinogenic. Marubo *oni* is not a hallucinogen but a mild mood alterer. One person holds the ceramic jug of *oni* between his feet and pours small gourd cups for all participants. In addition, all present consume native tobacco snuff (*romepoto*) in what appear, to the outsider, to be prodigious quantities. *Romepoto* is associated with a spirit that taught the Marubo to speak and still controls issues of talking. Marubo men take snuff to ensure they can speak eloquently.

Healing begins after three or four hours of conversation and consciousness alteration. One of the healers goes to the patient's side, asking questions about the location and nature of the problem, precisely analogous to the process of diagnosis in our own medical system. Once the information is procured, the diagnostician returns to the *kenã* to discuss the symptoms with his fellow healers. A discussion ensues during which they decide what causative agent—typically something we might call a "spirit"—is causing the problems. After a last round of *oni* and *romepoto*, the healers get up, move to the patient's side, and sing to expel the offending spirit.

In August 1997, a young woman's critical illness occasioned a gathering of eight *kẽxĩtxorasi*, including owners of five out of the nine *shovo* then in existence at Maronal. The healing assembly began at approximately 7 P.M. on August 14, 1997. The guest benches (*kenã*) on either side of the doorway filled with assembled healers and observers, as well as the *ayahuasca*-pourer. Information on the social relationships of participants and the spatial organization of the ritual is given in figures 1–4.

When I entered the *shovo*, the village headman, Alfredo, was speaking animatedly to those assembled. The initial topic of Alfredo's speech was the behavior of the current FUNAI administrator, Severo. Severo was a temporary administrator and his permanent replacement was a serious issue for the Maronal Marubo. After a time, Alfredo's son, Txanõpa, started speaking. Txanõpa added detailed information on two boating accidents, the consequences of which Severo had had to manage. Thus, when I arrived at this critical healing ritual, I noted (1) that a higher number of elders and *shovo*-owners were gathered together in one place than I had ever seen before, and

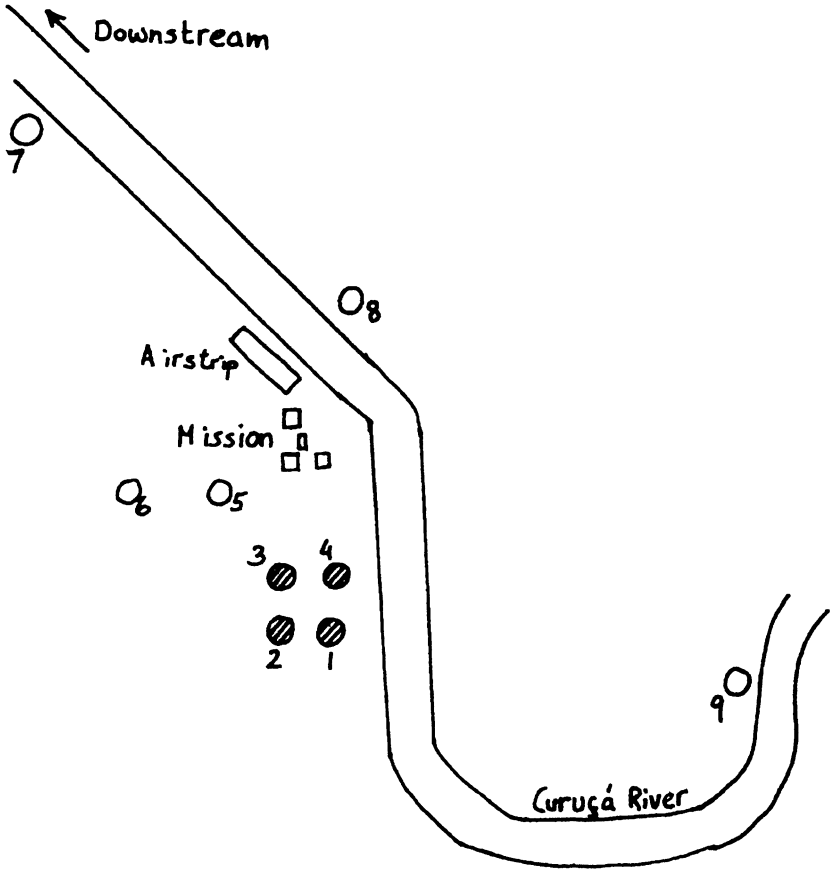

FIG. 1.—Spatial distribution of *shovo* at Aldeia Maronal, August 1997. Village core: the cross-hatched *shovo* are owned by the headman and his patrikin. They are close together, separated only by short, wide paths (no rainforest). The village radio set, television, and generator are all here. Key: **1** – Alfredo, headman, lives here; **2** – Vasho, headman's brother; **3** – José, headman's brother; **4** – Aurélio, headman's father's brother's son. For the village periphery: the *shovo* are owned by affines of the headman. They are separated from the core and from each other by stretches of rainforest. Key: **5** – Wanõpa, headman's father-in-law lives here; **6** – Pekõpa Wanõpa's son-in-law; **7** – Mashepa, headman's brother-in-law; **8** – Ivãpa, headman's brother's son-in-law; **9** – Sinãpa, headman's brother's brother-in-law.

(2) that the headman and his son were explicating facts and opinions about the FUNAI administrator to the assembled audience, who simply listened.

Following this exposition of FUNAI affairs, Alfredo expounded on relations with the mission. Alfredo explained precisely what Aldeia Maronal's relationship to the mission should be. This relationship had just recently

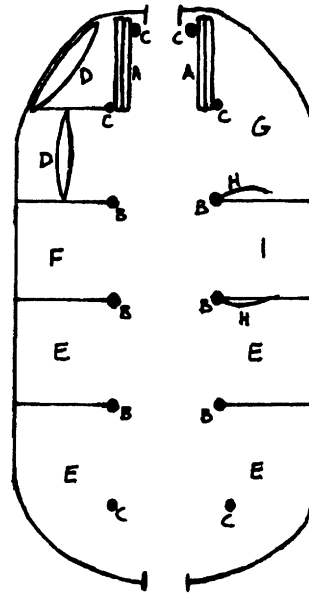

FIG. 2.—Spatial organization of the healing ritual. Key: **A** – *kenã* (guest benches); **B** – main structural posts; **C** – smaller posts; **D** – hammocks for elders visiting from village periphery; **E** – occupied domestic areas; **F** – unoccupied domestic area; **G** – storage area; **H** – reed-mat curtains; **I** – Xaponê's hammock—locus of singing.

been called into question by an anti-missionary faction, so Alfredo had to set the record straight. Alfredo told the assembled elders and young men that the mission could be beneficial, provided the village stood together. Dissenters should not take independent action. He was aware of problems with the mission, but any decision to expel it had to be taken by the village as a whole. His message was clear: ultimately, he set policy on the mission. If anyone disagreed, they should talk to him, but only he would tell the mission whether to stay or go.

As Alfredo spoke, there was frequent back-channeling, occasional brief commentary, and several questions from the assembled elders and young men. He accepted a cup of *Banisteriopsis* tea and frequently took native tobacco snuff. None of this interrupted the flow of his discourse, however; from beginning to end he expressed his opinion without any real interruption. What is interesting is that there was no disagreement from any of those assembled. There were no arguments or contrary opinions voiced: when Alfredo was done, everyone assented to his opinion. One of the assembled elders was the father of several members of the anti-mission faction, and a firm traditionalist; he, too, gave his assent to the content of Alfredo's discourse.

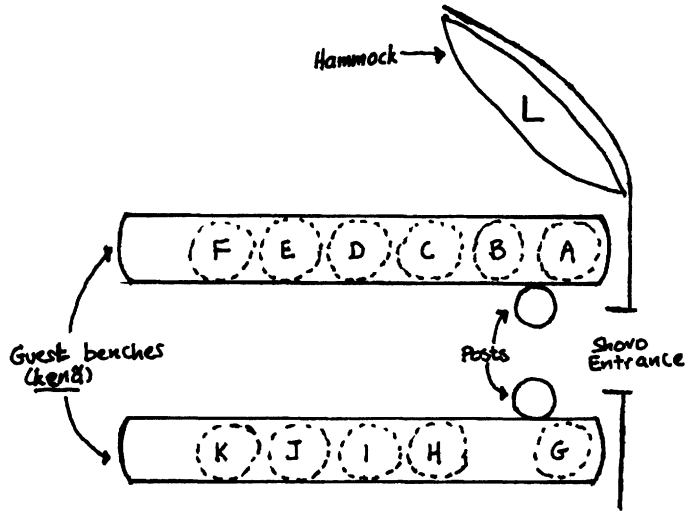

FIG. 3.—Arrangement of people on *kenã* (guest benches) on August 16, 1997. All those present are healers with knowledge of *shõki*, unless otherwise noted. Key: **A** – Topãpa, headman's brother's son (not a healer); **B** – Aurélio, *shovo*-owner from village core; **C** – Ivãpa *shovo*-owner from village periphery; **D** – João, Alfredo's brother; **E** – Pedro, Alfredo's brother; **F** – Alfredo, headman and core *shovo*-owner; **G** – Txanõpa, headman's son (not a healer); **H** – Wasináwa, Sinãpa's brother; **I** – José, *shovo*-owner from village core; **J** – Javier Ruedas, author (not a healer); **K** – Tsainamãpa, *ayahuasca*-pourer (not a healer); **L** – Sinãpa, *shovo*-owner from village periphery.

Upon concluding his discourse on the mission, Alfredo got up and walked to where the young woman, Xaponê, lay in her hammock. Alfredo sat on a low carved-wood stool and sang over Xaponê. He was joined by two women who engaged in a form of ritual lamentation. The singing lasted approximately one hour. Meanwhile, the elders remaining on the bench listened respectfully and were served more *oni* and *romepoto*. When Alfredo had finished singing, he returned to his spot on the bench. The women ceased their lamentation. All the other elders (except my friend Pedro) then got up, walked over to the suffering woman's side, sat down and began to sing, five people at once, each singing a different song. At that point, the person who had invited me got up to leave and I left with him.

The ritual of healing Xaponê continued all night (the 14th) and all day and all night through to the morning of the 17th. Xaponê's condition, perhaps a gallstone, improved, and the healing ceased. The healers grew increasingly exhausted, as their sleep was reduced to catnaps between songs. The political conversation never resumed. As the ritual wore on, Alfredo lay down more often on the bench with his eyes closed, getting up only to sing. On the second night, Alfredo still made lengthy discourse, but by the third

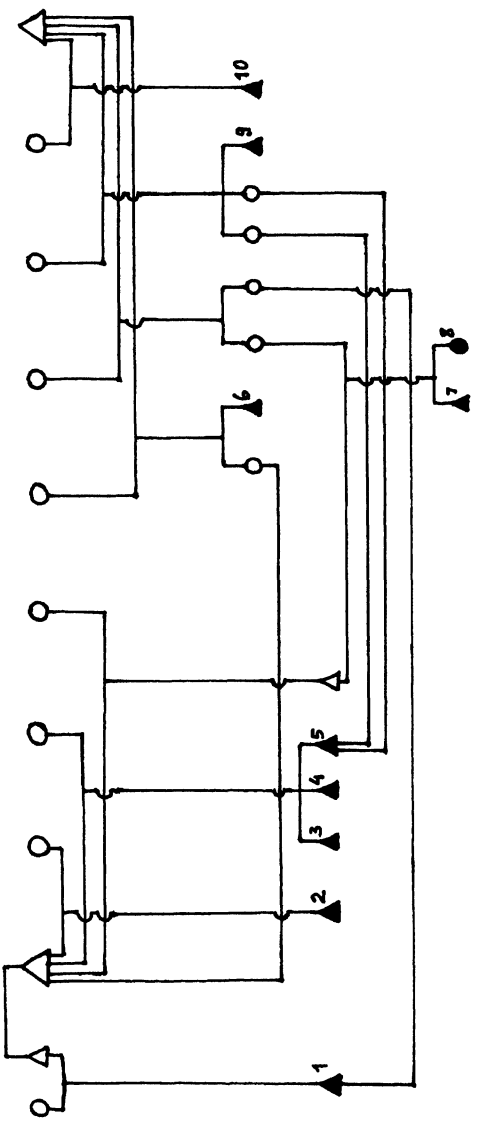

FIG. 4.—Partial representation of relationships among participants in healing ritual. Key: **1** – Aurélio; **2** – João; **3** – Alfredo; **4** – Pedro; **5** – José; **6** – Wasináwa; **7** – Tsainamãpa; **8** – Xaponê; **9** – Sinãpa; **10** – Ivãpa.

night he was much quieter and the conversation was evenly distributed. The intense political discussion of the first night was an exception. The main focus of those present was to cure Xaponê by singing the correct *shõki*.

4.2. Healing ritual: analysis.

4.2.1. Social and temporal context of healing ritual. The healing ritual resolves the contradiction between village core and village periphery. The spatial organization of Aldeia Maronal reflects the distinction between the two intermarried families that make up most of the population of Aldeia Maronal. The core of the village is made up of the four *shovo* belonging to the headman's patrikin—brothers and father's brother's son. The periphery is made up of five *shovo* belonging to affinal relations of the core *shovo*. This spatial distribution is depicted in figure 1. Figure 3 shows the individuals in attendance at the height of the healing ritual on August 16, 1997. There were eight healers. Five of these were elders from the village core—patrikin of the headman. Three were elders from the village periphery. Headman's kin and headman's affines came together under one roof for one purpose—to sing *shõki* for the healing of Xaponê.

The affliction of Xaponê coincided precisely with the denunciation of the mission by an anti-mission faction. In Turner's terms, there was a breach followed immediately by an opportunity for reintegration (Turner 1974). The headman took the opportunity to resolve the conflict in his own favor.

The Missão Novas Tribos Brasil (MNTB) had been invited to Aldeia Maronal by the headman, Alfredo, several years before these events. Alfredo first organized the construction of an airstrip with indigenous labor. Once the airstrip was built, missionaries began flying in supplies and established themselves permanently. Advantages provided by the mission include health assistance; the possibility of emergency evacuation via airplane summoned by radio; and a literacy program. The disadvantage is the conflict created by demonization of indigenous religious practices by the missionaries, who openly denounce indigenous religious beliefs as false and satanic. Some traditional-minded Marubo are unhappy with the missionaries' talk, despite the great advantages offered.

A few days before Xaponê's affliction, some discontented Marubo had gone to the mission headquarters in the city of Cruzeiro do Sul to denounce the mission's presence at Maronal. The FUNAI post chief, Luis Melo, told me that MNTB headquarters was threatening to remove the mission from Aldeia Maronal because they believed that the opinion of those who had denounced the mission reflected a general consensus among the Maronal Marubo. Had the denouncers spoken in the name of the entire village? Following this event, the missionaries wanted "the community" to clarify its position. The mission had to be reassured, or it would be removed.

Alfredo had invited the mission to Maronal and he was not prepared to have it leave due to the rebellious actions of a small group. I was never told explicitly who had denounced the mission, but as time went by it became easy to identify the individuals responsible as the sons of one of the other *shovo*-owners. It was therefore no coincidence that the father of these youths was invited to assist in the healing of Xaponê and was therefore present when Alfredo expressed his views on the issue.

The presence of the mission is an integral part of Alfredo's plan to create an attractive place to live. By bringing health care and education to his village, Alfredo has been able to convince several other elders to move there. He has thus increased the size of his village to the point where it is the largest Marubo village, comprising about one-fourth of the total population. This bolsters his claim to general leadership over the Marubo nation. As noted below, Alfredo has complex and ambiguous feelings regarding the mission, but he certainly wants it to remain.

Having secured the attendance of the rebellious youths' father, Alfredo took the opportunity to unify his village behind a single point of view—his own. During his discourse on the mission incident, Alfredo invoked a Marubo ethical code that all *shovo ivorasi* hold very dear, the code of social ethics called *ese*. According to *ese*, the *shovo ivo* is responsible for the actions of the people living with him. All important decisions must ultimately go through the *shovo ivo*. Alfredo was hinting that for the other man's sons to take unilateral action against the mission was an affront to the authority of all *shovo ivorasi*. The *shovo ivorasi*, gathered together as they were at that moment, should be making the decisions. Alfredo did not directly address the issue of whether or not the mission should be there. Instead, he spoke of the proper way to approach the mission issue. To this discourse, the dissenting youths' father agreed. Note that there were no accusations made against this man—no open conflict occurred. Alfredo simply stated his opinion, and the other man agreed. Everyone present knew the subtext. By the time Alfredo got up to sing the *shõki*, the conflict was over.

The result of this event was exactly as Alfredo intended. Alfredo's main message in his pre-*shõki* discourse was that decisions should be made by councils of *shovo ivorasi*, not by rebellious youths. In subsequent months, I came to befriend the family of the mission opponents. I noted that from the time of the ritual for Xaponê onward, the youths' father kept his sons in check. Although they continued to oppose the mission and speak out on its perceived dangers, they never again took any unilateral actions against it. One of the sons told me that he wanted to denounce the mission, but he was afraid of alienating Alfredo. The sphere of effective decision making on this issue became restricted to the village elders, where Alfredo could control

outcomes through his effective use of political rhetoric. Having secured the support of the other elders and *shovo ivorasi* for his point of view, Alfredo was able to tell the missionaries that the entire village stood united behind him and that the mission should stay.

4.2.2. *Shõki* performance: constituting a domain of influence. The performance of *shõki* provides the context wherein male elders can produce and reproduce their domain of influence. When multiple elders gather together to heal, an impromptu council of elders is formed. During the ritual of healing for Xaponê, this council functioned as a consensus-making body. Differences of opinion were resolved; the elders all agreed on Alfredo's policy toward the mission. Alfredo's arguments reinforced the solidarity of the council by conveying the message that decision making should be kept within their select ranks. The criterion for inclusion in this body is knowledge of the healing songs, *shõki*.

Note that there is no formal council of elders, only the informal councils that result when the elders gather at a feast or a healing ritual. Elders do not call meetings just to discuss events. In order to generate a discussion, the headman must either invite people to his hut to eat or drink, take advantage of a feast or healing ritual, or actually walk to each *shovo* to talk to the elders one by one.

In 1997–98, knowledge of *shõki* was not being passed on to the younger generation. The length and number of songs make this genre difficult to learn. Furthermore, the songs employ an archaic vocabulary, known as *Asankiki*, which is said to be the language spoken by a now-extinct ancestral subset of Marubo. Very little research has been done on this topic, but *Asankiki* certainly contains its own set of body-part nouns (Montagner 1985), which also makes it difficult to learn. The current generation of elders learned these songs as they grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, when no Brazilian educational, medical, or religious facilities were accessible. Today, most Marubo youth are concerned with getting an education, involving at least literacy, often more. Those who are interested in medical skills would rather take training courses in village medicine (in 1997–98 from a Doctors Without Borders mission, today from Brazilian government workers) than engage in the long and difficult pursuit of *shõki* skills.

Knowledge of *shõki* confers status and authority on the knower. The *shõki* itself is beneficial for its healing power. Singers with reputations for successful healing are respected just for the healing itself. But, in addition, knowledge of *shõki* allows one to participate in the informal decision-making processes of the Maronal elders. Those present at the healing ritual for Xaponê were consulted on a crucial issue and participated in the final decision; those not present were excluded from the process.

Alfredo's ability to influence the village on this occasion was predicated on his knowledge of *shõki*. This alone was insufficient, however. Once the individuals he wished to influence were gathered together to sing *shõki*, Alfredo had to display a second oratorical skill, namely, manipulation of the Marubo code of social ethics.

It is significant that the political rhetoric that worked for Alfredo did not involve weighing the pros and cons of the mission or arguing that the mission's benefits outweighed its disadvantages. Instead, Alfredo invoked *ese*, which all elders hold dear since it supports their authority. Alfredo explained the implications of this code of ethics, as it affects how they as a village should interact with the mission. Alfredo's use of *ese* was effective; it created a commonality of interests between himself and the dissenters' father, thereby resolving the conflict: as a *shovo ivo*, the dissenter's father could see that his sons' actions undermined not just Alfredo's authority but also, potentially, his own.

The domain of influence constituted by the discourse genres performed by male elders at the ritual of healing for Xaponê covers the sphere of official relations with the mission at Maronal. An attempt was made by certain youths to take over this sphere of relations, but this attempt was headed off by Alfredo, who firmly re-established the domain of the elders.

The youths present during Alfredo's discourse on the mission were not an effective part of the domain of influence. It should be emphasized that these young men (**A**, **G**, and **K** in figure 3)—sons of Alfredo or Alfredo's brothers—were not involved in the anti-mission action. One of them did speak up on the issue of FUNAI activities but listened silently as Alfredo spoke of the mission. That was no coincidence: on the issue of the mission, the elders are firmly in control. Regarding FUNAI, however, the youths have developed their own domain of influence by engaging in the organization of political meetings.

4.2.3. *Shõki* performance and political influence: methodological implications. I have argued that in order to trace the links between language and politics, it is necessary to focus not only on the content but also the context of discourse. Too often, the ideological content of a text is analyzed, without showing how the order of discourse reveals the operation of a power structure. An analysis of the ideological content of *shõki* could produce interesting results, but it would not show how *shõki*-performance is connected to influence over Marubo–mission relations, nor how the village headman can succeed in influencing decisions made about these relations. To trace the links between language and politics, one must study the relative social position of participants, the relationship of the speech event to other speech events and ongoing political issues, and how the speech event affected the subsequent social actions of participants.

5. Political meetings and political influence.

5.1. Political meeting: description. On September 16, 1997, a meeting was held at Aldeia Maronal to discuss who was to be regional administrator of FUNAI. Unlike the ritual of healing, where political issues were discussed incidentally to the main purpose of the gathering, this meeting was held specifically to discuss a single political issue. The temporary FUNAI administrator in Atalaia was about to be replaced. There were two candidates, one supported by indigenous peoples, the other by nonindigenous business and political interests. The politicians' candidate was Edvaldo; the indigenous people supported Gilmar. To the indigenous peoples of the Javari, the possibility that Edvaldo could take over as regional FUNAI chief represented a serious crisis.

The meeting took place not on the guest benches of any *shovo* but rather in the smaller *tapo* (hut) where the CIVAJA radio was housed, a simple rectangular structure with two benches facing one another, one along each long wall. (The CIVAJA radio rested on a table in the far left corner from the door.)

The CIVAJA radio hut was built by and belonged to Txanõpa, the headman's son (the hut still belongs to him, but the radio has since been moved). When the CIVAJA radio was installed, this hut became the center of communications for Aldeia Maronal. Each morning at 7 A.M. and again at 5 P.M. people gathered there to listen to the radio conversations among the various villages of the Javari Basin. It was common to see the headman's son sitting by the radio at these times, accompanied by other young men—his brothers and cousins. (The public nature of this space was further cemented by the installation of a television. The television was turned on every time the generator was, and substantial crowds gathered to watch until 11 or 12 at night.)

The meeting was called by Txanõpa, who wanted to take advantage of a feast being held at Aldeia Maronal. Because of the feast, numerous guests from the middle Curuçá village of São Sebastião were present, and more guests from the Ituí River were expected in the coming days. Hence, Txanõpa had the opportunity to forge an agreement on policy toward FUNAI that would cover virtually all Marubo, not just his own village. A unified statement by the entire Marubo nation—the largest ethnicity in the Javari Basin—would be more powerful than separate statements from each village. Txanõpa discussed the issue with his father, who approved holding the meeting. Then, with the aid of some of his brothers and cousins, he notified all the important elders—locals and visitors alike—of the impending meeting. This was easily accomplished, since everybody was gathered in the village core for the feasting. Txanõpa took some diesel fuel from a 200-liter drum I had brought as a present for his father, then sent his brother

to turn on the generator. Light bulbs came on in the village core. This was very new: the generator had only been installed that August, and the electric lines reached only three core *shovo*.

The meeting to discuss FUNAI administration began at approximately 7 P.M. on September 16, 1997. People filtered into the hut, singly and in groups, until the headman's son called those in attendance to attention. He sat by the table in the corner, while the rest of the participants sat on the benches along the two long walls of the hut. He began the meeting by explaining why it had been called—that he had been informed over the CIVAJA radio that Edvaldo was about to be installed as head of the regional FUNAI administration in Atalaia and it was thus necessary to inform FUNAI of the opinion of the indigenous communities. He then asked the assembled individuals to discuss the issue so their opinions could be passed on to Atalaia over the radio.

Although there were over 20 people in attendance, only 6 spoke. All those who had been present at the ritual for Xaponê a month before were also present here, except for Aurélio. In addition, the headman and several elders from Aldeia São Sebastiào (downstream from Maronal) were present at this meeting, along with several young men, married and unmarried, who are not healers.

The dominant speakers were the headmen of the two villages represented at the meeting. After his son's introduction of the subject, Maronal headman Alfredo spoke for five minutes. There followed five minutes of animated conversation in which the headman of Aldeia São Sebastão, Shetãpa, and two Maronal elders, Zé and Alberto, expressed opinions and commented on one another's statements. Txanõpa then provided additional information. Conversation continued another two minutes until Shetãpa addressed his Maronal counterpart Alfredo directly. Alfredo replied with another five-minute speech, looking directly at the other headman as he spoke, which is rare in Marubo proxemics. Sebastião replied, and the meeting returned to the conversational mode noted earlier. Alfredo and Shetãpa (the two headmen) and Zé and Alberto (Maronal elders) spoke briefly several times, back-channeled one another's talk, and commented on one another's opinions. A third Maronal elder (Vicente), who had not yet spoken, then delivered a speech lasting 12 minutes.

Txanõpa explained the contents of the conversation to me while the others listened to Vicente's speech. He said that Edvaldo was being installed as FUNAI administrator for the Javari Basin, but the indigenous leaders would not accept this. Edvaldo was said to be linked to a politician with anti-indigenous views and had been accused of mismanaging pension funds he administered for the municipality, so there was concern about how he would

use FUNAI money. Txanõpa showed me a notebook in which he had begun to write a statement, in the name of the Marubo leaders, rejecting Edvaldo. This statement endorsed Gilmar for the position, saying the leaders would accept only Gilmar. Gilmar, Txanõpa explained, had some interesting projects to assist the indigenous peoples, and they wanted him to execute those plans. If Edvaldo took office, Gilmar's projects would never materialize. Clearly, Edvaldo was considered detrimental to the interests of the Marubo.

When Vicente had finished, Alfredo replied to him. A conversation lasting five minutes ensued, involving all those who had spoken previously but no one new. This time, Txanõpa participated in the conversation, whereas previously he had kept silent as the elders spoke. Finally, words of agreement were heard from the participants. Txanõpa concluded the meeting, summarizing what the elders had said and agreeing to make a written statement to send to Atalaia. All present agreed that Edvaldo was undesirable and Gilmar was preferable. All agreed to be signatories of whatever document might be produced expressing that opinion.

The meeting lasted just one hour. Only six people spoke. The meeting was framed by the introduction and conclusion delivered by the organizer, the headman's son. The meeting itself consisted of three speeches of 5, 5, and 12 minutes, several shorter statements, and three phases of conversation. There was a sort of rhythm of speech-statements alternating with conversation. The headman's son set the meeting in motion but interfered with it very rarely, making an isolated statement of fact and participating somewhat in conversation in the last five minutes. The result of the meeting was agreement of all present on a common course of action. Since those participating included the headmen and some elders from both villages on the Curuçá River, the result would be considered to reflect the opinion of the Curuçá Marubo.

5.2. Political meeting: analysis. The political meeting is a youth-linked discourse genre. Elders do not call meetings to discuss particular issues; instead, they take advantage of healing rituals and of feasts to discuss issues and it is there that the informal decision-making bodies of Maronal elders operate. However, the headman's son complained to me that elders were unaccustomed to political meetings and thus their attendance was difficult to secure.

According to my informants, in the past, decision making was conducted along the lines of the healing ritual of August 1997—in informal councils. The first people to hold political meetings were the founders of CIVAJA, Clovis Rufino and Darcy Comapa, currently in their mid-thirties. During my fieldwork, Clovis was the coordinator-in-chief of CIVAJA, while Darcy was

coordinator of the umbrella organization for indigenous groups of the Brazilian Amazon, COIAB, in Manaus (he lost his bid for re-election to that post in 1998). When they were organizing CIVAJA, Darcy and Clovis went to the various Marubo villages, holding meetings to explain the need for organized political action by the indigenous peoples of the Javari Basin. Most elders did not know quite what to make of this; but the young organizers received support from a key elder and were eventually successful in creating CIVAJA and securing participation from most Marubo villages. The crowning achievement of CIVAJA was the demarcation of the indigenous territory of the Javari on December 11, 1998.

The Marubo I consulted uniformly stated that specifically political meetings had not been held prior to those organized by Clovis and Darcy in the 1980s. In the process of organizing the Javari peoples politically, Clovis and Darcy worked with the Catholic missionary organization CIMI (Conselho Indigenista Missionário) and with a pro-indigenous organizer named Silvio Cavuscens, and they networked with other indigenous groups who were simultaneously creating other organizations. At this time (1980s–early 1990s) indigenous Amazonia was beginning to come together to agitate for land rights, under umbrella organizations such as COIAB and the pan-Amazonian organization COICA (Coordenación de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica). Attending meetings of indigenous people in Manaus and elsewhere, and observing nonindigenous forms of political action such as union meetings, Clovis and Darcy became familiar with the practice of calling a meeting to discuss a political issue, rather than simply waiting for a gathering and taking advantage of it.

Txanõpa learned to conduct political meetings through his association with CIVAJA while he was a student in Atalaia. He had organized meetings before this one, and would organize meetings repeatedly during my fieldwork. On this occasion, he took advantage of the presence of visiting elders to hold a meeting encompassing leaders from the whole Curuçá Marubo population. Exactly one week after this meeting, he took advantage of a visit by elders from the Ituí River to hold another meeting, yielding another statement bearing signatures of other Marubo.

Txanõpa was in charge of the CIVAJA radio at Maronal (which, as already mentioned, was in his hut), so he could exchange information with Atalaia, Cruzeiro, and the Marubo villages of the Curuçá and Ituí. Because he speaks excellent Portuguese, he is able to converse with people from FUNAI and MSF (though the latter have since left the area), as well as from other indigenous groups with radios—Matís, Mayoruna, and Kanamari. Controlling the CIVAJA radio allowed Txanõpa to be the first to receive information on events affecting the Maronal Marubo. In a process that occurred several times during my fieldwork, Txanõpa would then call meetings and

present information to the male elders of the village. Once the elders came to a decision, Txanopa would write statements expressing their opinions.

The interest shown by the Marubo present at the meeting about positions of authority at FUNAI is part of a pattern of interest in this topic.[3] However, the Edvaldo issue was not resolved in a single meeting. The meeting of September 16th resulted in a radiogram asserting refusal to accept Edvaldo and insistence on the nomination of Gilmar, signed by ten men from the two villages. Numerous further meetings would be held on this topic over the next few months, and several other radiograms were sent. Edvaldo, presumably thanks to his political connections, was installed officially but never became acting administrator of FUNAI in Atalaia. Gilmar became acting administrator and policy setter, affording the Marubo another victory.

Txanõpa is able to translate his mastery of radio communications and political meetings as repeatable linguistic performance genres into influence over certain domains of action, specifically, relations with FUNAI. His essential position as receiver, holder, and transmitter of information about FUNAI, along with his unique (at Maronal) ability to hold political meetings, allows him to set the agenda and influence decision making with regard to FUNAI. Thus, relations with FUNAI are one set of social relations in which Marubo youths have considerable influence, although formal decision-making authority continues to rest with the elders.

I observed five political meetings at Aldeia Maronal, between August 1997 and May 1998, along with several others elsewhere, and I received reports on several meetings that I did not attend (see Ruedas 2001:660–88). The meetings were always preceded by the receipt of information from Atalaia, over the CIVAJA radio. CIVAJA would ask the radio operator to call a meeting so that the village could produce a statement of opinion. If the issue involved all Marubo, then meetings would be held in multiple villages simultaneously. (In September 1998 this was not necessary since everybody was at Maronal for the feast.) Once the statements were written up, they were passed back to CIVAJA, and CIVAJA informed FUNAI.

The meetings themselves opened with the organizers stating why they were being held. Then, the prominent political leaders stated their opinions.

[3] Several individuals related to me with great pride the story of how some Marubo had once physically removed an undesirable administrator from office. The Marubo were pressuring this man to resign, but he would not. Some Marubo entered his office at FUNAI in Atalaia suddenly; the man became alarmed and went for a revolver in his desk drawer. The Marubo seized him and the revolver and proceeded to physically expel the fellow from FUNAI headquarters and to take over the building. The building was soon surrounded by police and press. The protesters refused to come out unless a new administrator was put in place of the one just expelled. FUNAI agreed to this. It was a great victory for the Marubo: they realized they could, after all, have people they did not like removed from office.

When a consensus was reached among these participants, the organizer closed the meeting. Although many people might attend a meeting, including youths, women, and adult men who were not part of the village political leadership, it was only the organizer and the political leaders (*shovo ivorasi* and their brothers) who spoke. Either right there, or the following day, a written statement was produced. At Maronal, the statements were typically signed "We the leaders of Aldeia Maronal," with a list of the main leaders (almost exclusively *shovo ivorasi* and their brothers) who had been present.

Txanõpa told me that he was attempting to get the elders to see beyond their traditional political goals. The traditional political system (i.e., that of the elders) involved the construction of kin networks and alliances, producing large families, attending to food production, strategic organization of labor, and displaying one's skill in labor organization, food production, and kin-network accumulation, through the organization of large feasts. The generation of young political organizers (like Clovis and Txanõpa) had different goals—land rights, access to the money economy, education, health care. Because they had traveled more than the elders, they had more information about the outside world, and often superior Portuguese skills as well. Yet they respected the fact that the elders make decisions and thus their political organization efforts worked through the traditional political structure. But although the elders made the decisions, the younger people mobilized them to make those decisions, and controlled the agenda at the meetings.

The influence of the younger generation where relations between Marubo and the outside world are concerned seems to be quite acceptable to the Maronal elders. I think that Marubo generations are not locked into permanently oppositional roles, as seems the case in Fowler (1987), but rather play complementary roles. Alfredo told me that when he was young, he traveled extensively, both south to Acre and northeast to Manaus. When FUNAI agent Sebastião Amanso visited the Marubo in the 1970s, the main leader of the group that would later settle at Maronal was João Tuxáua, Alfredo's father. Alfredo was the main intermediary in conversations between FUNAI and the Marubo on that occasion. This affected João Tuxáua's decision to select Alfredo as his successor, instead of Alfredo's older brother, Zacarias. Other elders recounted similar stories of youthful travels followed by marriage and settling down. Thus, it seems that young Marubo men can begin an ascent to political leadership by traveling. Through their travels, they gather information, so when decisions have to be made concerning the outside world, these well-informed youths play an essential role. These same youths may eventually replace their parents as political leaders, and no doubt their sons will replace them as young agitators. Thus, youthful influence over relations with the outside world is a normal part of Curuçá Marubo politics.

6. *Ese vana* and political influence.

6.1. Lecture on social relations: description. On February 24, 1998, a healing ritual commenced for the oldest man at Maronal, Carlos Vargas. Carlos is a living legend. His father was killed and his mother kidnapped by Peruvian rubber tappers, so he was raised as a Peruvian. Eventually Carlos's adoptive father was killed in revenge by Carlos's true father's kin. Although his age is listed as 75, he may be older. As my fieldwork progressed, Carlos's mental condition deteriorated. A doctor to whom I described the symptoms told me she suspected it was one of the neurological disorders associated with aging, perhaps Parkinson's disease. Carlos began to suffer from periods of dissociation, losing all sense of self-identity and talking to himself.

On February 24, 1998, Alfredo, his brother, and a brother-in-law passed by the *shovo* where I was eating, explaining that Carlos's condition had worsened. They gathered a fourth healer and, all together, went to the hut Carlos was in. (I could not attend this ritual because I had other commitments.) Shortly thereafter, *shõki*-singing was heard from Carlos's hut. The singing continued all day, all night, and into the morning of the 25th when Carlos's condition improved.

On the 25th, the headman's sons, some of his nephews, and I went upriver to another *shovo* to assist in planting manioc at a new swidden. We returned in the afternoon. After washing up, I headed to the CIVAJA radio hut. There sat Txanõpa (the headman's son), listening to the conversations taking place among the Marubo villages.

Txanõpa told me that there had been a conflict at the ritual healing for Carlos. There were two women in the household where Carlos was staying who considered themselves *crentes* (Brazilian for 'believers', referring to evangelical Christians) and accepted the missionaries' condemnation of *shõki*. When the healers arrived to sing over Carlos, they were confronted by the *crentes*, who told them that *shõki* were ineffectual and could never cure Carlos; but the healers proceeded to sing anyway.

The healers diagnosed Carlos as being possessed by certain bird-spirits. Marubo traditionally do not eat birds, believing that they make one weak. This ban is not so strict anymore, but continues to be a strong preference. Old people are the exception: bird meat is considered fine for the elderly. Hence Carlos was in the habit of eating bird meat, and the spirits of these birds had entered his body. Once the offending spirits were identified, the singers proceeded to clean them out of Carlos's body one by one with the appropriate *shõki*. After more than 24 hours of singing, Carlos' self-identity returned. Alfredo confronted the *crentes* with this result.

His confrontation with the *crentes* caused Alfredo to become very excited. By the time I arrived at the CIVAJA radio hut, Alfredo had returned

to his own *shovo*, bathed, and eaten. Alfredo's son told me his father was going to tell his children about the events of the previous 36 hours. "My father is going to give us *ese vana*," his son said. *Vana* means 'words', but I did not understand *ese*, so I asked him to translate it for me. He replied that it means *lei*, Portuguese for 'law'. I later asked another native speaker, who told me that *ese* means *costume*, Portuguese for 'custom'. I translate *ese vana* loosely as 'lecture on social relations'.

By the time the radio was turned off at 6 P.M., Alfredo had begun to talk. As I headed for his *shovo*, his words could be heard across the patio. I entered and sat on a *kenã*. Alfredo's *shovo* is the largest of all the Marubo *shovo*, having ten main posts. After dark, the interior is illuminated by only a few kerosene lamps. Alfredo was lying in a hammock in an unlit corner. He could not be seen at all, but his voice could be heard everywhere within the dwelling. On the *kenã* with me were Alfredo's sons, brothers, and brothers' sons. The women were in the interior reaches of the *shovo*, carrying out various tasks by lamplight, occasionally whispering to one another but mostly listening too.

Alfredo spoke in the familiar rhythms of the elder lecturing in his *shovo*. I had heard this type of speech many times before.[4] However, I had never heard this type of speech given a distinct name. This was the first time I became aware of the explicitly recognized emic category of knowledge *ese*, expressed in its own discourse genre, *ese vana*. Alfredo was applying his knowledge of *ese* to interpret the lessons of the previous days' events for his sons and nephews.

Alfredo spoke for an hour, pausing only occasionally to inhale tobacco snuff. After this, there ensued a conversation including Alfredo, two of his sons, and one of his nephews. At 9 P.M., Alfredo commenced another monologue of *ese vana*. When I took my leave at 9:35 P.M., Alfredo was still speaking. Unfortunately, the following day I commenced a trip downstream to Atalaia, so I was never able to question others about the precise content of Alfredo's speech of February 25, 1998. However, I did receive summaries from Txanõpa. Alfredo's main points were that indigenous healing practices worked and were a fundamental basis of Marubo health and prosperity; that Marubo elders were much wiser than the missionaries, who were ignorant of *ese* and therefore ignorant of proper forms of social behavior; and that Marubo should take advantage of the missionaries' presence but should make sure that the missionaries do not gain political power within the village.

[4] The main practitioner of this form of speech at Maronal is Sinãpa. Sinãpa often entered the *shovo* I resided near, after some event had upset him, and engaged in a distinctly rhythmic monologue filled with reference to proper and improper modes of relationship among kin.

6.2. Lecture on social relations: analysis. The headman is able to translate his knowledge of *ese* and his skill in *ese vana* into influence over relations between Marubo and the mission at Aldeia Maronal. This application of *ese vana* is by no means self-evident. A comparison with another elder illustrates the exceptional nature of Alfredo's skill. Peripheral *shovo ivo* Sinãpa is a master of *ese vana* but applies these words strictly to relations among Marubo. Alfredo successfully extends the range of *ese vana* to relations between Marubo and the missionaries.

The headman must conduct a delicate juggling act with respect to the missionaries. On the one hand, he himself invited them to the village. Their presence, and especially the health care, educational, and emergency assistance they offer are a part of the headman's political capital. These benefits are part of what makes the village an attractive place to live, a part of the social glue that holds this large village together. On the other hand, if the headman is not careful, the missionaries will undermine his authority. The missionaries disapprove of indigenous religious practices, including *shõki*. Yet Marubo elders, including the headman, place the highest value on *shõki*-healing, which they believe has been bequeathed to them by highly beneficial spirit-beings whose purpose is to save lives and make people healthy. Aside from the spiritual/religious valuation and the perceived health benefits, the elders are conscious of the status and influence that knowledge of *shõki* provides. The headman thus has great interest in preserving *shõki* in spite of pressure from the missionaries. In the end he has to expend effort to secure the mission's presence in the face of opponents' efforts to remove it; then he has to expend even more energy to mitigate the impact of the mission on valued aspects of the indigenous culture.

Ese and *ese vana* are essential features in the distribution of authority among Maronal Marubo. Knowledge of *ese* is a normative aspect of the role of *shovo ivo*. The *shovo ivo* is the ethical guardian of the *shovo*. He must obtain proper behavior from all dwellers in his *shovo* to create the cooperation and absence of conflict that generate health and prosperity. The ideal *shovo ivo* is *eseya*, that is, *ese* is one of his qualities, he has *ese*; he not only has knowledge but proper behavior and ability to speak *ese vana*. One elder told me that the inhabitants of a *shovo* needed the *ese vana* of a *shovo ivo*; without it the prosperity of the *shovo* would deteriorate. Hence an effective *shovo ivo* must regularly dispense *ese vana*. In this way, the *shovo ivo* monopolizes the legitimacy of authoritative discourse in the field of social relations.

In communicating this ethical code, the *shovo ivorasi* reinforce their ability to influence the social order. The performance of *ese vana* displays the depth of one's knowledge of *ese*; this in turn gives the speaker the power to

define norms of social behavior. In cases of conflicts of opinion, the man with the reputation for profoundest knowledge is the final authority (at Maronal in 1997–98 this was a very old man who was not an active political force but was carefully listened to by the politically active elders). Individuals who cannot speak *ese vana* have little or no ability to shape the definition of normative Marubo behavior, and thus less influence over actual social behavior.

On February 25, 1998, Alfredo used his skill in *ese vana* to establish a normative pattern of relations between the Marubo and the mission at Maronal. On the one hand, he wanted to reinforce his authority over the missionaries. On the other hand, he wanted to impress upon the younger generation of his *shovo* the proper pattern of behavior in relations with the mission.

The maintenance of indigenous authority over the missionaries at Maronal is essential to the headman's vision of beneficial relations with the mission. Alfredo contrasts his own relation to the mission to that at Aldeia Vida Nova, on the Ituí River. At Vida Nova, the airstrip was built under the direction of the missionaries, who paid local Marubo for their labor. The Vida Nova airstrip is thus considered to belong to the mission. At Maronal, however, the airstrip was built under the direction of Alfredo, using indigenous forms of labor organization involving no money. Alfredo is quite clear about this: the airstrip at Maronal belongs to the Marubo, not to the mission. Thus, Alfredo refused to allow the mission to pay laborers to extend the airstrip, which he felt would undermine his authority by giving the mission part ownership of the airstrip. Alfredo uses this and other examples to reinforce the notion that the missionaries are here at his behest and can be removed by him also. He is always concerned about retaining the distribution of authority that places him quite clearly above the head missionary.

Alfredo seeks to convey his ambiguous view to the residents of the *shovo*. He favors the presence of the missionaries and free access to Christian religious ideas, but also wants to retain the strength and primacy of indigenous belief systems. Subsequent conversations suggest to me that his sons and nephews understand and share this point of view.

Through his performance of *ese vana*, his previously described speech at a *shõki* performance, and other speech acts, Alfredo used his consummate mastery of multiple discourse genres to establish his influence over how Marubo relate to the mission at Maronal.

7. Conclusions. Both Marubo young people and elders use their mastery of various discourse genres to establish domains of influence over significant fields of social relations. The elders monopolize certain "tradi-

tional" genres, such as *shõki* and *ese vana*, successfully translating performances of these genres into a dominating influence over relations between the Marubo and the missionaries. Shut out of the elders' genres, young people have instead seized on the relatively new genres of radio communications and political meetings to acquire a degree of influence over relations between the Marubo and FUNAI.

Two decision-making bodies have been examined: one, an informal gathering of elders for the purpose of healing which also rendered a decision on relations with the mission; the other, a formal assembly specifically aimed at rendering a political decision on relations with FUNAI. The first political meetings among the Marubo took place during the mid-1980s, while radio sets were not installed until 1996. For most of the twentieth century, Marubo social decision making was carried out in informal councils of elders gathered together for healing or feasting. This pattern can be called "traditional" because it is older than the youth-linked pattern, but use of this term should not imply an ahistorical eternity. What is today considered the traditional practice in Marubo society was probably established only after the end of the rubber boom, around 1920. During the rubber boom, relations among Marubo elders were affected by the violence, genocide, and forced migrations that characterized that epoch in the upper Amazon (see Taussig 1987:3–135). The "traditional" mode of political organization probably extends back only to the current elders' parents and grandparents, who took advantage of the peace and isolation of the mid-century to recreate Marubo society.

Knowledge of *shõki* allows the elders to establish domains of influence because it is a determining criterion of membership in decision-making bodies. Those who know and perform the songs attend the gatherings where decisions are made. They become a part of the informal processes whereby village policy is set.

Knowledge of *shõki* is related to knowledge of indigenous concepts, but this does not give *shõki*-singers domination in the field of health practices. Young people, male and female, have received training from MSF in the diagnosis and treatment of major diseases. These young AIS (Agente Indígena de Saúde/Indigenous Health Agents) have access to knowledge and skills their elders do not have. Thus influence over health practices is divided among elders, young people, and outsiders (such as the mission and MSF). The translation of knowledge of *shõki* into influence is thus an indirect one. Knowledge of *shõki* allows elders to control the context in which decisions are made and restrict to themselves the circle of decision-making influence. Once he is included in the inner circle, the *shõki*-performer may influence a variety of issues, including but not limited to health practices.

The ability of elders to influence patterns of social relations is bolstered by knowledge of *ese* and the ability to deliver *ese vana*. Recognized knowledge of *ese* gives the knower authority to communicate legitimate definitions of normative social behavior, which gives elders who are *eseya* considerable influence over patterns of social behavior. *Ese vana* convey ethical predispositions from the *shovo ivo* to his audience. When the headman conveyed his policy on the mission to a gathering of elders, he knew those elders were capable of influencing all those who lived with them. Some elders use *ese vana* only to influence relations among Marubo, but *ese vana* can also be applied to influence relations between Marubo and non-Marubo.

Despite the predominance of elders, young men have carved out their own domain of influence through control of radio communications and political meetings. Young men control access to information about and from the outside world and how this information is communicated to the village. This, combined with the ability to organize and direct political meetings, gives young people the ability to set the agenda and influence policy on issues related to the information that comes in over the radio, such as relations with FUNAI. Thus, Txanõpa told me that the elders need young people's guidance on these issues because young people understand them better, while the elders, according to this young man, are more concerned with traditional modes of political organization such as feasting.

This analysis of discourse genres and their performance reveals a generation gap in modes of political organization. Traditional forms of political organization among the Marubo involve performance of *shõki* and *ese vana*, both expressions of knowledge young people do not have. Newer forms of political organization, introduced by younger men, involve expressions of knowledge that elders do not possess. Young men are not learning *shõki*, so the healing ritual as informal council will probably decline in the next 40 years, while the political meetings will increase in importance. On the other hand, young men are learning *ese*, so the practice of conveying norms through *ese vana* is likely to continue.

What links traditional and new modes of political organization among the Maronal Marubo is that both depend, at least in part, on mastery of restricted information and performance of related discourse genres. The elders' modes depend on ethno-medical knowledge and knowledge of *ese*, expressed in *shõki* and *ese vana* respectively. The young peoples' mode depends on knowledge of outside affairs, the organization and conduct of political meetings, and the verbal retransmission of information received by radio. The main difference is that the political meeting is an open forum accessible to anyone with something to say, while the healing ritual is restricted to elders who know *shõki*. Elders and young people alike translate their information into influence through verbal performances.

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