

# ORATORY AND THE POLITICS OF METAPHOR IN THE NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS\*

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The highlanders of Papua New Guinea were one of the last large, long isolated populations to be thrust into the mainstream of recent world history. This happened in the early 1930's, when the gold started to pan out in the eastern foothills and Australian prospectors ventured upstream in search of more. They expected eventually to reach a central cordillera of uninhabited mountains. What they found instead were broad, mile-high valleys with three feet of topsoil and upwards of a million people, whose ancestors — we now know — had been cultivating it intensively for at least six thousand years.

After the anthropologists got there and their ethnographic reports began coming in from various parts of the highlands, it became clear that there were considerable differences among various highland societies, and some broad similarities. Among the latter, it was commonly observed that highlanders had segmentary social categories of a somewhat similar kind to the African lineages which had been described by such influential structural functionalists as Evans-Pritchard and Meyer Fortes (Fortes 1953). The parallels between these highland systems and the African ones were at first over-played, especially with respect to the role of patrilineal descent vs. other principles of group identity and recruitment, such as filiation, residence, sibship, and exchange (Barnes 1962, de Lepervanche

1967). But certain other, distinctively Melanesian features were correctly discerned from the outset. Among the features common across the highlands were the following: 1) political leadership is understood by highlanders to be an achieved status rather than an ascribed one. Instead of hereditary chieftainships or chiefly lineages, in the highlands there is public competition for “big man” status. 2) Big men are understood to achieve their renown partly by demonstrating skill in oratory, the use of which is an important feature of many kinds of public occasions.<sup>1</sup>

The highland people whose oratory I will be discussing here live in the Nebilyer Valley, which lies some ten kilometres west and southwest of the town of Mt. Hagen, in the Western Highlands Province. In this valley live approximately 40,000 people, who speak dialects of a single language. Culturally and linguistically, they are fairly closely related to the Melpa people, who are well known through the work of Andrew and Marilyn Strathern, Georg Vicedom, and Hermann Strauss. For sixteen months during 1981-3, Francesca Merlan and I lived at Kalyke, on the western edge of the valley, studying the language and trying to understand its various social contexts and functions.

We found that Nebilyer people do indeed place a high value on oratorical skills as a credential for political leadership (and, for that matter, a high value on talk in general). At public occasions of almost every kind, men stand up, one after another,<sup>2</sup> and attempt to address everyone present, on various themes. Men of the greatest influence and highest prestige are those who, on occasions of certain kinds, make effective use of speech which is characterised as *el ung* ‘arrow talk’ or ‘war talk’ and *ung eke* ‘bent speech’. ‘War talk’ is distinguished from everyday talk or casual conversation (*ung urip*), and ‘bent speech’ is opposed to ‘straight’ speech (*ung kuni*). These two distinctions cross-cut each other, and refer mainly to different aspects of linguistic organisation: ‘war talk’ is characterisable mainly on phonological grounds, and ‘bent speech’ mainly on semantic ones. *El ung* occurs only in men’s public speeches, whereas *ung eke* also occurs in a wide variety of other contexts.<sup>3</sup>

Text A is an example of *el ung* ‘war talk’. It was spoken at a gathering of people from three groups who had been involved as allies in a war ten months before (Sept., 1982). The relations among the groups are shown in fig. 1. When this war broke out, between group X and another group (not shown in fig. 1), group X recruited group Y as allies, and group Y then recruited group Z. In such cases, the standard practice is for compensation to be paid, in a sequence of transactions which reverses the original order of recruitment: group Y first compensates group Z, and then group X compensates group Y.

Text A was spoken on the occasion of group Y's payment of compensation to group Z. After about an hour of speeches, the payment had been handed over, and then there had been somewhat of a free-for-all (i.e. multiple overlapping speech exchanges with no centralized attention focus) as the men of group Z decided how to divide the money up among themselves. One of the leading big men of Y, Numa, then delivered a short speech, the entirety of which is given in text A. As he spoke, he twirled his axe and strode back and forth over a distance of about 10 metres, as men typically do while intoning in this way.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout this short text, Numa's prosody is such as to mark his speech as *el ung*. Stretches of up to 16 syllables are enunciated on a single, nearly level pitch contour, which terminates with an abrupt fall to an over-long ooooo which makes no lexico-grammatical contribution to the line, but serves only to mark it as *el ung*. Sometimes sections of *el ung* are marked off by other, more elaborate supra-segmental patterns, and/or by aaaaa instead of ooooo at the end of the line (as illustrated by lines 6-11 of text C). The point to note here is simply that *el ung* is always clearly discernible as such by its intonational features — features which, as this example suggests, are especially suited to gaining and holding the 'floor' in situations where the crowd has been disinclined to focus its attention on a single speaker.

Unlike *el ung* 'war talk', *ung eke* is not marked by any particular phonological features, but rather by its tropes<sup>5</sup>.

An example of *ung eke* 'bent speech' is text B. The occasion is the same one at which the *el ung* of text A was recorded. The speaker is the leading big man of group X, who is watching as group Y gives to group Z. There is a convention regarding chain payments of this kind, whereby whatever amount Y gives to Z, it should be doubled when X gives to Y. So although most of the people present at this occasion are of groups Y and Z, this man is present from X in order to find out how big a payment his own group is going to have to raise for the later payment.

After transcribing the whole of the speech from which B is taken, Francesca Merlan and I discussed its form and contents (and that of many other speeches as well) with about 20 people, of all social categories: male/female, young/old, high status/low status, etc. There is no restriction on who may listen to such speeches, and nearly all the people we interviewed had heard this one (as well as A and C) on the day it was delivered. There was general agreement that the part in text B about butchering a pig is *ung eke* 'bent speech'. But almost no two people agreed on what it meant. Here are a few examples of their various exegeses:

1). No one was killed in the war in which groups X, Y and Z fought as allies. Some people may think that means that compensation need not

be paid. But *all* warfare requires compensation, just as all pig butchering requires a bed of condiments underneath.

2). The speaker is likening himself to the greens and the giving of compensation to the butchering of a pig. He is saying that if he weren't present, group Y couldn't make a proper compensation payment.

3). The speaker is saying that it is not proper to give money alone as compensation, but that cooked pork should be given too.

4). What he means to say is "Let's not just stand here talking; let's give the money first and then talk."

The list goes on and on. Just about the only things all the glosses have in common are that: 1) the speaker's words cannot be taken at face value; 2) he is commenting on aspects of the present transaction between groups Y and Z.

I have given examples of *el ung* 'war talk', characterised on phonological grounds, and *ung eke* 'figurative speech'. The *el ung* example contained no *ung eke*, and vice versa. But although these two are potentially independent, they do often occur in conjunction. An example is text C. This example comes from the same occasion as the other two, at a point when the action has been interrupted for about ten minutes by a fight which has broken out between two young men from group Y over a matter unrelated to the main event of the day. The speaker is Unya, a rising big man of group Y, who holds the elected office of village magistrate. Here again *el ung* was effectively used to create a focused audience for itself, this time out of considerable chaos. The whole of text C was delivered in the *el ung* style (this time with some of the variant formal features previously mentioned). Within it, there is an example of *ung eke* as well, in line 3, where he talks about a grasshopper and a frog.

Again there was considerable disagreement about what the figure means in this context, and, indeed, about the meaning of his speech as a whole.<sup>6</sup> In general, people agreed that Unya was alluding to the fact that groups X and Y used to be major enemies, so that the present alliance is a precarious one. Figures such as 'a grasshopper and a frog' or 'a fish and a frog' are commonly used to mean 'kid stuff', 'something trivial or of no account'. But that doesn't take us very far towards understanding this passage, because in contexts such as this, such metaphors are sometimes also used to mean the opposite, i.e. something that you'd certainly better take notice of. Perhaps in this context, the figure is even to be taken both ways at once: insofar as it is 'addressed' to the immediate situation, where the proceedings have been disrupted by a fight, this is trivialized — the antagonists are 'rubbish men', of no more account than a frog and a grasshopper. But insofar as he is evoking the ancient enmity between groups X and Y — of which the present fight

may perhaps be taken as a reminder — he intends to represent it as a serious threat indeed. The reason it has again become a threat is something he refers to in line 10: a member of group Y has recently been seriously injured while riding on the back of a ‘car’ (i.e. small truck) driven by a man from group X. The injured man was in a coma for several weeks at the Mt. Hagen Hospital and has since regained consciousness and been smuggled back home under cover of darkness, in a ruse designed to extract the largest possible compensation payment from group X, in a separate transaction from the one arising from the war. Insofar as he is identified with group Y, Unya has an interest in concealing the extent of the accident victim’s recovery, to keep up the pressure for that payment.

Some people also took this text as alluding to a separate, even more serious threat which has arisen since the war for which compensation is here being paid. Another conflict has broken out, on a far larger scale, in which these three groups and many others have been pitted against groups in the other half of the valley, led by a high official in the Provincial Government, who as a result has now been removed from office and is under house arrest in the provincial capital pending his trial. According to this interpretation he (along with his allies) is the one referred to in lines 6-8.

Having briefly exemplified some of the distinctive features of *el ung* and *ung eke*, I now turn to a brief consideration of the social order in which they are constituted as culturally salient speech varieties. This will require some consideration of other aspects of Nebilyer social life as well.

In common with many other Highlands groups, the Nebilyer people place great importance on ceremonial exchange of pigs and other wealth objects (including nowadays, money). Insofar as these and other aspects of political life are conducted by, or on behalf of, segmentary groups of the kind mentioned at the outset, this is seen as a male domain, in which individual males and named groups compete to ‘raise up their names’. A man who succeeds at this is said to do so by virtue of his being of ‘one mind’ or ‘one will’ (*numan tilupuyl*). Women, especially as regards matters of intergroup politics and exchange, are said to be of ‘many minds’ (*numan ausiyil*), which is perhaps related to the fact that a woman’s loyalties are often seen to be divided between her husband’s group and that into which she was born. In some contexts, these imputed differences between men and women are likened to the differences between ‘big men’ and ‘rubbish men’, i.e. between those who are successful at ‘raising their names’ and those who are not successful, or do not even try. The latter, that is, are likened to women. And segmentary groups who succeed in building up their names by exchange, are said to have done so by acting as though

they were of a single mind, like a man.

Women are said to lack the competence for public speaking at events of the kind represented here, and are generally forbidden from doing so. The idea of a woman speaking *el ung* is all but unthinkable, and it is commonly said that women cannot understand the *ung eke* which is used in men's speeches. Not only men, but most women, assert this categorically. The following are typical of comments made by women to Francesca Merlan:

'Women do not properly understand it; it's a strong men's thing'.

'I do not understand'.

'Big men themselves understand and reply in kind'.

Yet in many cases, when actual passages of the men's *ung eke* were put to various women for their comments, they did offer particular interpretations of the meaning of those passages in context. Indeed, if unanimity of interpretation is to be taken as a guide, our interviews showed that women do not differ significantly from men in their average ability to 'understand' the tropes of men's *ung eke*: among men and women alike, there is a roughly equally low degree of agreement about what they mean. Age rather than sex or level of prestige actually turned out to be somewhat more significant in this respect, in that people in their teens and early twenties — regardless of sex — tended to come up with somewhat more wildly idiosyncratic exegeses than did older men and women.

The main difference that did show up between men and women was that men were always willing to offer an interpretation, whereas women were not. Indeed, women sometimes even went so far as to deny that some passages had a meaning, at least of the ideational, or 'experiential' kind. For instance, with respect to the figure in line 3 of text C, one woman said 'He wasn't likening the frog and grasshopper to people, he just said that for nothing. When their minds shine (*numanayl pa telym-kn*) they talk that way'. Another woman said of this same passage: 'He just said, "a grasshopper and a frog"', like men do when they talk *ung eke*'.

In a sense, these women's statements are in closer agreement with our own findings, than is any ideological premise to the effect that each situated trope has a meaning, which is hidden, but can be extracted if one could only dig deeply enough. (The latter premise perhaps plays more of a part in our own ideology than in that of the Nebilyer people, but among them the men perhaps come closer to embracing it than do the women). One might be tempted to say that, of course, the *real* meaning of the trope is simply 'the sense which the speaker *intended* it to have in this context'. This would allow for multiple senses, as more than one may have been intended. But our

interview results present problems for this approach. Often by the time we got around to interviewing the speakers, we had already recorded exegeses by several other people. We didn't discuss these with the speaker until we had gotten his own. But when we did confront him with alternative readings, he usually assented to them readily. For instance, with respect to text B, the speaker, K, was one of those who explained his metaphor by the proportion pig is to fight as greens are to compensation. But when presented with another reading, pig is to compensation as greens are to K, he smiled self-contentedly and said that, yes, that was yet another aspect to it, but that basically ('at the root') both meanings were the same.

Given cases like this, and, in general, the wide range of ideational meanings said to be conveyed by each situated instance of oratorical speech, what are we to conclude about its efficacy? In those instances where various parties to the discourse assign contrary ideational meanings, has meaning simply failed to be created or conveyed? I think not. Here again I think we can look for positive guidance to some of the women's exegetical remarks quoted above. At least one woman was willing to deny the appropriateness of trying to find any explicit gloss for a passage of *ung eke*, and several women focussed on the more general fact that *ung eke* (a 'strong, men's thing') was being spoken, and on such non-referential considerations as what this indicated about the speaker's state of 'mind' (*numan*). Correspondingly, I would argue that whatever ideational content it may convey, oratory always serves also to index something about its context of use, i.e. that the context is one in which segmentary groups are involved as significant interactional entities. In other words, a meta-message is conveyed, to the effect that lower-order messages are to be construed with due regard to their relevance for inter-group politics.

That this is so is indicated not only by explicit exegetic statements (which usually refer to such groups by name), but also by certain anomalies in the grammar of personal reference which are typical of oratorical speech, especially of the *el ung* variety. I have said that *el ung* is always phonologically marked, but in addition it typically includes certain kinds of phraseology, and the use of first, second, and third person singular categories to refer to certain kinds of notional pluralities, namely, segmentary groups. Thus for example in text C, line 12 the speaker uses *nu* (second person singular) to address all of those present from group X, *na* (first person singular) to mean 'I and all of my fellow members of group Y'. The reference of 'he' (or the subject of the verb) in lines 6-8 is indeterminate, but if the allusion is to fighting against the alliance led by a government official, then the referent is the entire alliance rather than its leader alone. There are

usages of the same kind in text A, lines 5-7, 9, 11, 12, and 17-20.

In such usages, formal categories which are normally used for a single person — I, you or he — are extended to cover social pluralities which I, you, or he are identified with. I say 'identified with' rather than 'included among' because what is sometimes being referred to are actions which took place well before he, I, or you were born. 'I fought with/against you' often means 'My ancestors fought with/against your ancestors'. This somewhat peculiar mode of reference is also exemplified in speeches which were recorded among the Melpa by Andrew Strathern (1975:199) and among the Huli by Goldman (1983:134, line 294).

The effect of these referential extensions is to create a context in which it is clear that individual speakers are representing themselves as speaking on behalf of groups, addressing each individual auditor in his capacity as a member of particular groups, and referring to other, non-addressed individuals in the same capacity. It also marks the context as one in which the events and actions referred to are to be understood with regard to their relevance for intergroup politics.

Although this meta-message places constraints on the range of possible interpretations of the lower-order messages, it certainly does not make them any easier to understand. Indeed, I would submit that it is just this interpretative constraint which makes it so difficult for people to agree on what the speeches mean. For the nature and degree of significance of actions for intergroup politics in this society is generally not a question which is settled enough to provide a stable background against which the oratorical performances can be played out. With respect to text C for example, no one knows to what extent a man whom groups X and Y have helped to elect to office will in the future concentrate his energy and resources in traditional segmentary group politics as opposed to province-level, party politics. Nor is it clear that group Y will succeed in turning an unfortunate road accident into a matter of intergroup compensation, or, in the attempt, avoid re-activating the previous hostility between the two groups.

In his account of oratory among the neighbouring Melpa people, Andrew Strathern has characterized their *el ik* (=Nebilyer *el ung*) as:

a ritualized crystallisation of the political situation between groups which has been brought into being by the cumulative processes of decision-making and transacting over periods of months before-hand...  
[which have] established a context of understanding between the leaders of the groups (Strathern 1975:203).



This claim is in fairly close accord with Nebilyer people's (especially men's) statements about men's speech-making (including both *ung eke* and *el ik*), but those statements do not accord with the results of our interviews concerning actual passages of situated speech.

This apparent disjunction between theory and practice leads to a question which I shall consider in conclusion, namely: what is the relation between the Nebilyer ideology of oratory and the larger social order of which it is a part? I mentioned that social order includes segmentary groups which are seen to act as units in ceremonial exchange (and in warfare). The pigs which are exchanged are produced, not by the segmentary groups, but by individual domestic units —largely by the women of those units, who generally are not full members of the groups by whom their pigs are said to be given in exchange.

It might therefore appear to be the case that the fruits of women's labour are appropriated by the segmentary groups for transactions among men alone. But the matter is actually much more complicated. For in ceremonial exchange, pigs are not simply appropriated en masse from the domestic units and given to an undifferentiated segmentary group. Rather, single domestic units and/or individual people within those units, give pigs to particular people within the segmentary group to whom the overall transaction is said to be made. The individuals to whom they give are, in the majority of cases, closely related to them by ties of kinship or affinity. One of the most common cases, for instance, is the one in which a man and his wife contribute pigs which end up in her natal domestic group or with one of her close kinsmen.

At a given *makayl* (=Melpa *moka*, 'ceremonial exchange') event, all of these individual transactions are, ideally, coordinated so as to allow them to be done in the name of particular segmentary groups and alliances among them. But in the practice of *makayl*, and other intergroup transactions of the kind exemplified above, this coordination does not proceed smoothly: individual groups are not *really* of one mind or will and alliances among them are far from stable.

Where these difficulties are overcome, the dominant view has it that this happens by the agency of big men, who themselves are of 'one mind' and by their speech coordinate the minds of others. To the extent that an aspiring big man succeeds in this, his name rises. Our interview results contradict this view insofar as acknowledged big men were, at least in private, receptive to the mind or will of other people (including some non-big men) concerning the import of their own oratory.

What this suggests, I think, is that oratory functions not so much as an expression of an already crystallised political situation (as per

Strathern 1975),<sup>7</sup> or as an instrument for crystallising it (as per the dominant indigenous view) but rather as a device for constituting particular speech situations as intergroup events and for testing what their significance for intergroup relationships might be. Metaphor is ideally suited to this probative function, because it powerfully suggests a wide range of possible meanings without committing its speaker to any of them.

But why should the probative functions of oratory be ideologically suppressed in favour of the dominant view, which takes the intergroup context for granted, and stresses the will-coordinating powers of single-minded big men?

My suspicion is that this is tied up with the fact that the system of segmentary groups — the sphere in which male domination is most complete — is the very aspect of Highlands social organisation which, when viewed historically, appears most ephemeral. All over New Guinea, including the Highlands, in pre-contact times at least, subsistence needs were met by small domestic productive units. Important aspects of social life were organised by laterally-extensive kin networks, usually without great generation depth. Reciprocity was a crucial organising principle, both within the kin network and without. But only in the Highlands was the kinship network overlain by a system of multi-level segmentary social categories, and only in restricted areas of the Highlands do these categories correspond at all closely to lines of hostility and alliance in warfare, and movement of wealth objects in large-scale ceremonial exchange.

And within those restricted areas of the Highlands, segmentary group composition is evidently the least stable aspect of social organisation. Exchange of the kind which is conducted in the name of segmentary groups is always liable to lose that aspect of its significance, and to be construed as patently or primarily a matter of exchange between individuals or individual households (as is true for example, among the Tombema Enga, and over much of the Southern Highlands).

Among the Nebilyer people (who are intermediate between the Hageners and the Southern Highlands in the above respect) aspects of the oratorical style figure importantly in defining or constituting exchange events as intergroup affairs. It may be that this function is ideologically suppressed just because the premise on which it rests is such a tenuous one. By focussing instead on competition among would-be big men within those groups, the ideology draws attention away from difficult questions about the nature of the common ground on which they compete.

## Appendix: Figure I and Texts

Figure 1

order of recruitment

X → Y

Y → Z

order of compensation

Y → Z

X → Y

## Text A

1. Ya kuyl 00000  
This money
2. Kuyl 00000  
The money
3. Ku ilyi el kupulanum ya lekm 00000  
This is fight-road money [i.e., warfare compensation]
4. Ku el kupulanum ya lekm 00000  
It's fight-road money
5. Na-nga pel 00000  
My cross cousin
6. Na-nga pel 00000  
My cross cousin
7. Na-nga apa 00000  
My maternal uncle
8. El kupulanum ya lekm 00000  
The fight-road is here
9. Kupulanum kil-nyiyi-na nu pirin-lum 00000  
You (sg.) lived near the road
10. Kanga tolkukaja 00000  
If a man had been struck down
11. I tep nyilkobola 00000  
We two would have spoken like this
12. I tep melkula 00000  
I would have gotten it together like this

13. *Kuyl kanap-ooooo*  
Looking upon money [raised by selling coffee]
14. *Na gai konima nobu na naa kaniyl ooooo*  
I don't eat konima sweet potatoes.
15. *Kim kapis nobu na naa kaniyl ooooo*  
I don't eat cabbage [a higher-altitude cash-crop, less lucrative than coffee]
16. *Kaspis nobu na naa kaniyl ooooo*  
I don't eat Irish potatoes
17. *Mel-ma nu-ko nolyn-lum ooooo*  
These are things you (sg.) eat
18. *Moni wa tep nu-nga kangi-na nosinsikr ooooo*  
I'm giving you (sg.) lots of money [lit: putting money on your skin]
19. *Kopsikn mekn kuda puni-lum kuda pui ooooo*  
If you (sg.) want to 'carve it up' then go ahead
20. *Kanglku mekn kuda puni-lum kuda pui ooooo*  
If you (sg.) want to hold it yourself then go ahead.

Text B

1. *Kung Kopsini tekn-kn*  
When you are going to butcher a pig
2. *Manya mel-nomulu-kari-ko nosuk kopsilymeli*  
underneath you put down a bed of condiments (parsley, cress, etc.)
3. *Mai midi-na naa kopsilymeli*  
You don't just butcher it on the ground
4. *Ya ul ilyi ekapu tek tek pi ne na molkur-ko*  
Now as you conduct this affair I'm standing over there
5. *Nyik pilyik tekemil*  
That's what you're thinking

Text C

1. *Yi lupu ti oba naa tim ooooo*  
No stranger came and got involved
2. *Ui-nga ya kupulanum ilyi-nga ooooo*  
On this road before

3. Upiya-tok-sil ya pula tabulurum ilyi ooooo  
A frog and a grasshopper fought here
4. Ekapu-nga Sande-iyil-lumayl ooooo  
Perhaps today is Sunday
5. Na-ni kinya-nga de ilyi-nga  
Now, today, I say
6. Ekapu-nga yu-nga yi dukuna-mel-ir lyiba aaaaa  
Now he will recruit many allies
7. Turum adiyl aaaaa  
He struck once
8. Altepa toba kanupa kelipa aaaaa  
Now he wants to kill again
9. Ekapu ola mad pa aaaaa  
Now you're putting one thing on top of another
10. Kar-n topa aaaaa  
A car hitting him
11. Ul ilyi tek m nyiba pilyiba aaaaa  
'He is doing this' he will think
12. Nu na-nga yi tara-wawa-ti molayl ooooo  
'You are not my agnatic kinsman
13. Ya Kakuyl yi lupuyl ooooo  
The Kaugel [a regional designation which includes group Z, but none of the other parties on either side of the fight for which compensation is here being paid] people are different'.

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. Note that I have phrased (1) and (2) in terms of the highlanders' avowed understanding of their societies, rather than as descriptions of the outcome of Highland social practice. This stricture seems necessary for (1) at least, since, avowals notwithstanding, big man status tends to be achieved by the sons of big men.

2. There is no pre-determined order of speakers. As among the Huli (Goldman 1983), competition for the floor is fierce and peremptory, but once a man has the floor, he is almost always allowed to speak until he has indicated that he is finished, usually by sitting down again.
3. See Strathern 1975 for exemplification of the various uses of Melpa *ik ek*, which is very similar to Nebilyer *ung eke* in its range of tropes and contexts of use.
4. See Reay 1959: 118-9 for an account of the way this striding is integrated with the rhetorical parallelism of a comparable genre among the nearby Kuma people.
5. Our term 'trope', of course, draws Greek metaphor which was surprisingly similar to the Nebilyer figure upon a 'bent speech'.
6. Note that obscure metaphor is by no means the only feature of this text that makes it hard to follow. It is also highly "elliptical", especially with respect to personal reference, in lines 6-8 and 10-11.
7. Recently (in response to an earlier draft of this paper), Andrew Strathern (personal communication) has remarked that "Some *el ik* speeches may reflect a crystallization and others a less determinate situation... Even when the situation is the latter, the ritual of *el ik* gives an appearance that a state of affairs has been reached".

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