CHAPTER 6

Oral texts

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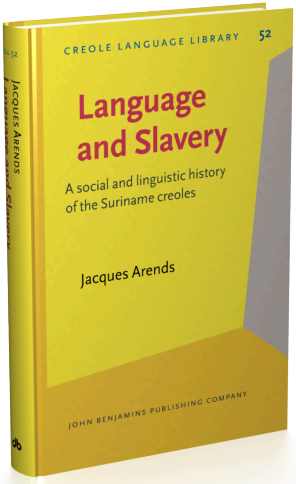

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CHAPTER 6

Oral texts

While many of the Africans who were brought to Suriname came from oral cultures, this orality was continued in their new environment since literacy was strictly withheld from them. As a result, an extremely rich culture of oral literature developed both on the plantations and in the Maroon communities. While this literature is so encompassing as to deserve a book of its own, I have selected a number of texts to give the reader an impression of the importance of this part of Surinamese culture.[1] Since folk-tales are well covered in the literature mentioned in note 1, I have included only two of those here, focussing instead on songs and *odos* (proverbs). The songs, *odos*, and stories are presented here without extensive introductions but clarifying notes are included where necessary. From the point of view of their linguistic use it is important to remember that oral texts, especially the more fixed genres such as songs and proverbs, often preserve features of earlier stages which have disappeared in the modern language. This makes them especially useful for purposes of linguistic reconstruction.

6.1 Songs

Most of the songs included here derive from the work of two authors, H. C. Focke (1858) and Th. A. C. Comvalius (1922, 1938, 1948–1949). Both were well-educated colored men. Focke, the author of the 1855 Sranan dictionary discussed elsewhere in this book, was a doctor of Law and President of the Court in Paramaribo; Comvalius was a teacher and a well-known folklorist. In all likelihood, they were both native speakers of Sranan. For a discussion of the different types of Surinamese songs, see Lichtveld & Voorhoeve (1975: 15–75), which also contains many examples. While many songs are very short, containing only a few lines of text, it should be remembered that repetition is a crucial element in Surinamese creole singing.

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1. In fact, several books have been devoted to Surinamese oral literature, especially folk-tales: Herskovits & Herskovits (1936), Voorhoeve & Lichtveld (1975), and Price & Price (1990).

1. A FAREWELL SONG[2] (c1775[3]) (Stedman 1988 [1790]: 516)

The very first song recorded in print is found in Stedman's (1790) *Narrative*. The text of the song is preceded by the following comment:

'Their Vocal Musick is like that of some birds, melodious but without Time; in Other respects it is not unlike that of some Clarks reading to the Congregation, One Person Pronouncing a Sentence Extemporary, which he next hums or Whistles, when all the others Repeat the Same in Chorus, another sentence is then Spoke and the Chorus is Renew'd a Second time & So ad perpetuum.[4] as a Specimen of it I will Try to Put the following Not[e]s to Musick Supposing a Soldier going to battle taking leave of his Mistress'.[5] (Stedman 1988 [1790]: 516)

One bus adiosi-o[6]
daso adiosso me dego
me loby fo fighty me man o
na inny da bossy amimba o
daso adiosso me dego

One kiss, farewell, oh,
So it is, farewell, I'm leaving.
I love to fight, I can hold my own, oh,
In the forest, Amimba,[7] oh!
So it is, farewell, I'm leaving.

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2. The songs are presented in a tentative chronological order, i.e. according to the date of their origin as far as that could be established. In cases where more than one source is given, it is always the one mentioned first which is the source of the transcription presented here.

3. This is the approximate date of 'recording' (as opposed to the date of publication), based on what we know about the dates of Stedman's stay in Suriname (1773–1777). Approximate dates of recording are also given in some of the other songs included here.

4. This refers unambiguously to the call-and-response structure of oral genres such as songs, which can be found all over Afro-America (as well as Africa, of course).

5. Note that Stedman, a soldier himself, had a black mistress, the 'beautiful Johanna'.

6. The – apparently meaningless – element *o* is sometimes added at the end of a word or a line in Surinamese songs (*cf.* songs nos. 3, 10, 16, 26, 33). A striking parallel can be found in some American folk-songs, such as 'Pretty Peggy-o'. Whether there is any connection in this respect between the black and white traditions, remains obscure.

7. The day-name of a female born on a Saturday.

2. Celebrating the Ndyuka Peace Treaty (c1760) (Focke 1858: 102; song no. 1[8])

This song expresses the relief that the hostilities between the Maroons and the Whites had come to an end. The treaty with the Ndyuka Maroons was the first to be made (1760), being followed by treaties with the Saramaka and the Matawai a few years later (1762 and 1767, respectively). Although Sranan and Ndyuka were still very similar at this early stage, the content of the song makes it more likely to have been sung by Sranan speakers than by Ndyuka speakers.

Arabi na Pambo ben senni njoesoe,
Arabi na Pambo ben senni njoesoe.
Soesoetei! No broko hatti o:
alla joe kondre de na reti kabá.

Arabi and Pambo[9] sent the news,
Arabi and Pambo sent the news.
Society![10] Don't worry:
Your entire country is back in order.

3. A black Odysseus (c1800) (Focke 1858: 103; song no. 2)

This song is the lament of a slave who, having been forced to leave his woman for some time, upon his return finds his house intruded by others. As in so many of these songs, the force of the metaphor is striking.

Mienéri senni mi na koemando,
mi libi mi hoso gi oeman.
Mienéri senni mi na koemando,
mi libi mi hoso gi oeman.
Sikápoe de njaḿ na ini,
krabita de njaḿ na ini, kè!
Soema froedien da hoso,
meki a holi o!
da hoso, do hoso,
Soema froedien da hoso,
meki a holi o!

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8. The songs from Focke (1858) are transcribed according to the text as it appears in the appendix to the article, where the texts are presented together with their musical notations. In some cases, these versions differ slightly from those given in the main text.

9. Arabi and Pambo were the main leaders of the Ndyuka Maroons.

10. *Soesoetei* 'Society' refers to the *Societeit van Suriname* 'Society of Suriname', the governing body of the colony at the time.

Master sent me on 'commando'[11]
I left my house to my woman.
Master sent me on 'commando',
I left my house to my woman.
Sheep are eating[12] in there,
Goats are eating in in there, ah!
Whoever deserves the house,
Let him have it!
The house, the house,
Whoever deserves the house,
Let him have it!

4. A CHILDREN'S SONG (c1800?) (Comvalius 1938: 293; also in Comvalius 1948–9: 16–17 and Voorhoeve & Lichtveld 1975: 65–66)

Although this song is known today as a children's song, sung in a particular game, it has been interpreted to refer to a specific historical event, in both cases concerning the arrival of an English fleet at the mouth of the Suriname River, either in 1667 (Ferrier 2001: 135) or in 1799 (Comvalius 1938: 293; Noordwijk 1991: 38). For the time being, however, these interpretations present too many problems of linguistic analysis for them to be accepted. Due to the many incertainties presented by the text, the translation is rather tentative.

Sien, san de na mofo, sien de kom.
Peroen, Peroen, mi patron,
San wani kom, mek'a kom,
Ingrisiman sa tjari pranga go na jobo-pan.
Bakoeba, Bakoeba,
Kaseeri, kaseeri,
Nimo, nimo, Jaâsabo,
Bosro mapinka
Bosro maabo.
Alla dem griekie-bie din sab' na fien fien wroko,
O Codjo, Codjo fai dom,
joe dom so kita kita kai koi.
Basi doorsi, joe mofo langa toemoesi: poer' wan!

11. 'Commando' refers to certain tasks, such as maintaining fortifications and digging canals, which slaves were sometimes forced to do for the colonial authorities.

12. Note that *njam/nyan* has a much wider range of meanings than 'eat', including 'enjoy, celebrate' etc.

The sign,[13] which is there at the mouth of the river, the sign is coming.
Peroen, Peroen, my master,
What may come, let it come.
The Englishmen will carry the wood to the Whites, all of it.[14]
Bakuba, bakuba,[15]
Kaseri, kaseri,
Nimo, nimo, Jaâsabo,
Bosro mapinka
Bosro maabo.
All the *grikibis*[16] know the very fine work.
Oh Codjo, Codjo, how dumb you are,
You're so dumb, la la la.
Boss Doorsi,[17] your mouth is so long: pull one[18]!

5. Praise for Governor Friderici (c1800) (Comvalius 1938: 292; also in Comvalius 1922: 41 and Comvalius 1948–9: 15–16)

This song was sung by former Black Rangers – slave soldiers who were made free after completing their service – in praise of François de Friderici (Governor from 1790 until 1802), who had been their commanding officer during the Maroon campaigns.[19] The black army corps was established in 1772 to fight the (unpacified) Boni Maroons. After the termination of their duty, Friderici had provided them with land on the outskirts of Paramaribo. This area, which has become part of modern Paramaribo, is still known today by its original name: *Frimangron* 'free

13. The arrival of a new ship would be signaled by a particular sign. The word *sien* is interpreted here as a creolization of Dutch *sein* 'sign', the word used in Suriname in this context (*cf.* Chapter 7, text no. 17).

14. *Pan* is an ideophone indicating fullness (Focke 1855, s.v. *pań*).

15. Since the words in the next few lines seem to be either nonsense words or words not used in their literal meaning they are left untranslated here. According to Noordwijk (1991: 38), the lines in italics refer to the negotiations between the colonial government and the English invaders. For the sake of completeness: *bakuba* means 'banana'; *kaseri* means 'ritually clean'; *jâasabo*, when analyzed as *ja, a sa bon*, means 'yes, it will be good'; *bosro* literally means 'brush'; the first word in *bosro mapinka*, when analyzed as *bosroma pinka*, mean 'someone who brushes, brusher'; the meaning of *pinka* is unclear; *bosro maabo*, when analyzed as *bosroma a bo*, means 'brusher, it is good'.

16. A bird species.

17. *Basi Dorisi* also figures in song no. 20 below.

18. This refers to the part of the game where one of the players has to withdraw a leg.

19. According to Wolbers (1861: 432note§), several songs concerning Friderici's role as commander were still known among former Black Rangers around 1860.

men's land' (*cf.* the use of the word *friman* to refer to a former Black Ranger in song no. 35 below).

Di mi teki mi howroe,
Di mi teki mi haksi,
Mi kotti da taja;
A ben langa a langa siksi foetoe,
Howroe srefi no man kap in;
A ben langa, a langa siksi foetoe,
Granman Fredrici wan boen Granman.

When I took my machete,
When I took my axe,
I cut the *taja*.[20]
It was long, six foot long,
Even the machete could not cut it.
It was long, six foot long,
Governor Friderici is a good Governor.

6. Mocking a corrupt public servant (c1815[21]) (Comvalius 1948–9: 22) (also in Comvalius 1922: 47)

This song makes fun of a Mr Van Cogh, who was arrested on his wedding-day by order of the Attorney-General, Mr Gefken, on the accusation of malversation. The use of songs to mock fellow-citizens was a frequent phenomenon in Suriname.

Djin djin dee bari na pokoe dee preê,
Tide n'a dei die moi Jeanne go trow.
Djin djin dee bari na pokoe dee preê,
Dan Jeanne dee begi pardon gi van Cogh.
Jeanne dee begi pardon gi van Cogh,
Muller dee begi pardon gi van Cogh,
Papa dee begi pardon gi van Cogh,
Ma Gefken dee bari dim 'anga van Cogh.

The bells are ringing, the music is playing,
Today is the day pretty Jeanne is getting married.
The bells are ringing, the music is playing,
Jeanne asks forgiveness for Van Cogh,
Muller asks forgiveness for Van Cogh,
Papa asks forgiveness for Van Cogh,
But Gefken ignores them with regard to Van Cogh.

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20. A tuber species.

21. Although the version in Comvalius (1922) is dated c1870, the contextual information presented in Comvalius (1948) suggests that the c1815 dating is probably more correct.

7. Making fun of the Governor's eating habits (c1825) (Comvalius 1948–9: 18)

Before he came to Suriname, Governor De Veer, who relished pumpkin, had lived on Curaçao where this is a favorite food; Mr Lisman was his secretary (Comvalius 1948–9: 18–19). Below is one stanza from the song.

Lishman taki: na pampoen!
Granman tak': a no pampoen!
Fai kan stree nanga mi Granman?
Pampoen na kroesow njanjan!

Lisman says: 'It's a pumpkin!'
The Governor says: 'It's not a pumpkin!'
How can you disagree with me, Governor?
Pumpkin is a Curaçaoan food!

8. Prince Hendrik visits Suriname (1835) (Comvalius 1922: 25)

This song was addressed to Governor Van Heeckeren, who chose to show only the bright side of Suriname to Prince Hendrik, a son of King William II, when he visited the colony (Comvalius 1922: 25).

Joe sorie hem da boen,
Joe moe sorie hem da orgie toe!

You show him the good things,
Show him the bad things too!

9. A sceptic view of love (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 103; song no. 3)

Tarawan sa de, opete bari, tarawan sa de !
Alla man da man, opete bari o, alla man da man. San mi ke?

There will be others, the vulture cries, there will be others!
All men are men, the vulture cries, all men are men. What do I care?

10. Love is war (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 103; song no. 4)

O! m' no frede, Sa Akoeba e! m'no frede, Ba,
alwassi j'de lai toemofo-gon srefi o, m'no frede.

Ah! I'm not afraid, Sister Akoeba, hey! I'm not afraid, my friend.
Even if you'll load a two-barrel gun, ah, I'm not afraid!

11. Putting a curse on someone (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 104; song no. 5)

M'de gowe ti de, m'de gowe ti de
Gado Massra sa d'na joe bakka wan de, wan de

I'm leaving today; I'm leaving today.
The Lord God will pay you back one day, one day!

12. Teasing a girl who's in love (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 104; song no. 6[22])

O a de na mongo, blakka wentje o, a de na mongo,
O a de na mongo tjari-o, ho jo, a de na mongo

Oh, he's in the mountains, black girl, oh, he's in the mountains.
Oh, he's off in the mountains, ho jo, he's in the mountains

13. The end of a love affair (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 105; song no. 8)

Di Awai de passà, Sa Affì lob' no de
di Awai de passà, Sa Affì lob' no de
di Awai de passà, sa Affì lob' no de
tan, joe srefi sa si, 'sa Affì, lob' no de.

When Awai passes by, Sister Affiba's[23] love is not there;
When Awai passes by, Sister Affiba's love is not there;
When Awai passes by, Sister Affiba's love is not there;
Wait, you will see for yourself, Sister Affiba's love is not there.

14. Changing lovers (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 105; song no. 10)

Jo jo jo jo jo jo jo Ba,
mi libi trawan, mi teki trawan
jo, jo, jo Ba
mi libi trawan, mi teki trawan
jo, jo, jo

Jo, jo, jo, jo, jo, jo, my friend!
I left one, I took another.
Jo, jo, jo, my friend!
I left one, I took another.
Jo, jo, jo!

15. A rowing song (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 104; song no. 7)

Focke (1858) contains two *boto singi* 'lit.: boat songs', i.e. rowing songs, both of which are reproduced below. The singing was accompanied by a movement known as to *fumm watra* 'lit.: beat the water', a custom already observed by Stedman (1790: 463): '…my Negroes had made Extraordinary Dispatch *Fumming Watra* all the time to Encourage each Other'. In a footnote, he adds: 'That is, one of the Rowers Beating the Watter with his Oar at every Stroke in Such a Manner, that it

22. Erroneously listed as no. 5 in Focke (1858: 104).

23. *Affi* is short for *Affiba*, the day-name of a female born on a Friday.

Sounds Different from the Rest to Which the Others sing a Chorus'. As in song no. 1, Stedman obviously refers here to the call-and-response structure of these songs. While a major function of these *boto singi* – and of work songs in general – may have been to synchronize the movements of the work at hand, another function, as described by Van Breugel (1842: 90), was for the rowers of one boat to be able to communicate with those of others : 'When one is traveling by boat, it is curious to hear how the Negroes understand each other; in song they tell the Negroes of another boat, at quite a distance, who they have on board, frequently by using nicknames known among them'. The reference to nicknames is, of course, another example of how the language used by blacks often contained two layers of meaning, one of which was only accessible to other blacks (*cf.* the use of *Kaperka* in song no. 37).

O Dada, mi de go na Masari nomo,
watra de dangra mi,
O Jaja O Jaja ba, watra de dangra mi.

Oh Dada, I'm only going as far as Marshall's Creek.
The tide is against me.[24]
Oh Jaja, Oh Jaja, my friend, the tide is against me

16. Another rowing song (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 105; song no. 9)

Grewa, grewa de grewa, grewa de
Kwami (mati[25]) mi de go na mi dotti (kondre-, liba)-o,
grewa, grewa de
mi de go na mi dotti (kondre-, liba)
grewa, grewa de

Grewa, grewa de![26]
Kwami[27] (friend), I'm going to my piece of land (village, river).
Grewa, grewa de!
I'm going to my piece of land (village, river).
Grewa, grewa de!

24. In Suriname, the effect of the tides extends many miles upriver.

25. As noted by Focke (1858: 105), the words in parentheses are sometimes used for the sake of variation.

26. The meaning of the word *grewa* is unclear.

27. Day-name for a male born on a Saturday.

17. A susa song (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 106; soesà song no. 1)

These songs were sung as part of a *susa* play, 'a play for adult men in which the players face each other. One person has to imitate the steps of the other…The songs often treat relations between men and women, just as in the *banya*, but from the male point of view' (Voorhoeve & Lichtveld 1975: 54).

Fransiman dede tide
Sabana weri njâ.[28]
Fransiman dede tide
Sabana weri njâ.

The Frenchman died today;
Sabana is wearing bright colored clothes.
The Frenchman died today;
Sabana is wearing bright colored clothes.

18. Another susa song (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 106; soesà song no. 2)

O soesa, majombe, nakki da boi,
joe go, trawande (= trawan de).
O soesa, majombe, nakki da boi,
joe go, trawande.

Oh play *susa*, Mayombe,[29] leave the boy.
Go, there are others.
Oh play *susa*, Mayombe, leave the boy.
Go, there are others.

19. Love and money (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 106; street song no. 1)

This is one of the two 'street songs'[30] included in Focke (1858); unfortunately, he does not provide any relevant information about these songs.

Alwassi da man no moi,
kaba a tjari moni kom, tek' heḿ,
a tjari moni koḿ, tek' heḿ.

Even if the man is not handsome,
If he brings in money, take him,
If he brings in money, take him.

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28. *njâ* is an ideophone expressing brightness of color (Focke 1858: 106).

29. *Mayombe* is the name of 'a district in the old kingdom of Kongo' (Turner 1949: 130). Alternatively, it could be a misspelling for Wayombe, a place name in Suriname (check!!). I have interpreted it here as being a personal name.

30. This is the English equivalent of the term *straatliedjes* used by Focke.

20. Love and colour (pre-1850) (Focke 1858: 106; street song no. 2)

This is another 'street song':

Basi Dorisi, kitiko! Basi Dorisi, kitiko
joe libi joe ningroeman (= ningre oeman), kitiko,
joe teki wan bakroeman (= bakra oeman), kitiko!

Boss Dorisi, *kitiko*! Boss Dorisi, *kitiko*![31]
You left your black woman, *kitiko*!
You took a white woman, *kitiko*!

21. A songe dance song (Ndyuka) (Anonymous c1850, in Focke 1858: 107, 111)

While all of the songs above are in Sranan, the following, apparently sung during a *songe* dance, is in Ndyuka. It was recorded by Focke himself in Kriki, a Ndyuka village at Sara Creek Although the *je je je je je je* sequence could be a repetition of the word *jeje* 'spirit', it is more probably simply a rhythmic 'lalala'-like sound. The same sound sequence is also found in another Ndyuka song (see song no. 30 below).

Je je je je je je
Da so wi de peré.
Je je je je je je
O sonjé.
Je je je je je je
O! Wi da wi.
Je je je je je je.

Je je je je je je
That's how we 'play'.[32]
Je je je je je je
Oh *songe*.[33]
Je je je je je je
Oh, we are we.
Je je je je je je.

31. According to Focke, *kitiko* means something like 'lalala'.

32. The word *peré/pee* 'play' has a much wider meaning than just 'play': it refers to all kinds of celebrating through song, dance, music making etc.

33. *Sonjé/songe* is the name of a Ndyuka song-*cum*-dance.

22. 'Basya, lash out!' (1854) (Van Hoëvell 1854, Pt 2: 54–58; also in Bonaparte 1884: 187–90, and Lichtveld & Voorhoeve 1980: 304–7)

Although this song only became widely known after it had been published in Van Hoëvell's (1854) abolitionist book, it is included here in the section on oral literature since it clearly belongs to that tradition. It was sent from Suriname to Van Hoëvell, who claims it is based on an actual occurrence. Whether or not that is true, this heart-breaking song, simple as it may be, shows the consequences of slavery at their very worst. According to Van Hoëvell (1854, Pt 2: 54), it had 'become generally known among the slaves. It is a folk-song, which can be heard almost daily in Paramaribo'. According to Lichtveld & Voorhoeve (1980: 302), the song is still known by some people in Suriname today. Although these authors present the song under the title *Bastian fon!* 'Basya, lash out!', it is untitled in Van Hoëvell's original rendition.

Meneri, meneri, da piekien, pardon,
Membrie wan tem, membri wan tron,
Fa yoe ben lobie mie so té,
En fa mie lobie yoe jette.
Bastian fon ! bastian fon !
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron !

Sir, Sir, the child, please,
Remember how one time
You loved me so much
And how I love you still.
Basya, lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

Té na condré yoe kon fo srifiman,[34]
Mie no ben sabie san na wan man ;
Fa yoe ben lobie mie so té…
En fa mie lobie yoe jette.
Bastian fon ! bastian fon !
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron !

When you came to this country as an overseer
I had never known a man.
You loved me so much
And how I love you still.

34. A typo for *scrifiman/skrifiman* 'lit. writer'; it was the usual designation for a white overseer-*cum*-clerk-*cum*-bookkeeper.

Basya,[35] lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

Mie ben dékalli (= de kalli) yoe mooi scrifiman,
Yoe poeloe mie na mie nenne anan;[36]
Fa yoe ben lobie mie so té,
En fa mie lobie yoe jette.
Bastian fon ! bastian fon !
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron !

I called you 'handsome overseer',
You took me away from my mama, didn't you?
You loved me so much
And how I love you still.
Basya, lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

Te yoe ben bossi joe Jaba
Mie ben takki: kaba! kaba!
Da falsie lobie, yoe no ké,
Ho fassi yoe doe so to dé.
Bastian fon ! bastian fon !
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron !

When you kissed your Jaba[37]
I said: 'Stop! Stop!'
It was a false love, you didn't care,
What are you doing now?
Basya, lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

Pardon meneri! Pardon! pardon!
Yo ben lobi da skien wan tron;
Mie beggie yoe! mie beggi ké!
Meneri a no noffo jette?
Bastian fon ! bastian fon !
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron !

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35. A *basya* is a black overseer; *basyas* were charged with executing punishments on fellow-slaves.

36. *Anan/ana* is a now archaic, sentence-final question particle (*cf.* Focke 1855, s.v. *anáä*).

37. *Jaba* is the name of the first-person narrator; it is the day-name for a female born on a Thursday.

Forgiveness, Sir! Forgiveness! Forgiveness!
Once you loved this body.
I'm begging you, I'm begging, ah,
Sir, is it still not enough?
Basya, lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

Meneri, meneri, membrie da piekien
Da sorri yoe me lobie krien
Mie beggi yoe, mie beggi ké!
Bastian a no noffo jette?
Bastian fon ! bastian fon!
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron!

Sir, Sir, think of the child,
It shows you my love clearly.
I'm begging you, I'm begging, ah,
Sir, is it still not enough?
Basya, lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

Hoe fassi? mie takki fon!
Da oeman meekie mie hatie bon![38]
Mie takki fon! fon hin so té,
Al wassi a fal don deddé.
Bastian fon ! bastian fon!
Da oeman mekie mie hatie bron!

What? I said 'Lash out!'
The woman has made me furious!
I said 'Lash out! Lash her as much as you can,
Even if she drops down dead'.
Basya, lash out! Basya lash out!
The woman has made me furious!

22a. Wishing the master a Happy New Year (Bray c1860: 13)

In Suriname, as in other plantation societies (*cf.* e.g. Abrahams 1992; Genovese 1976), the Christmas season – when slaves received their annual 'gifts' of cloth, dried cod etc. – would be celebrated exuberantly, with song, dance and other festivities. On the morning of January 1, the slaves would greet the master, occasionally lifting him up in his chair and carrying him around. According to the Belgian artist Théodore Bray (1818–1887), who worked as a white overseer and

38. A typo for *bron*.

plantation owner in Suriname from 1841 until 1868 and who made numerous drawings of plantation life including the New Year tradition, the slaves would cry out loud while doing this:[39]

Niov iari mastra eh
Niov iari mastra oh
Wi wens' wi mastra niov jar' oh (source: Bray c1860: 13)

In order to make the text more accessible, I have transposed Bray's French-influenced orthography into normal modern Sranan spelling.

nyu yari masra eh
nyu yari masra oh
wi wens' wi masra nyu yari oh

Happy New Year, master, eh!
Happy New Year, master, oh!
We wish our master a Happy New Year, oh!

22b. A WORK SONG (Bray c1860: 314)

Apart from rowing songs (see nos 15 and 16 above), worksongs (*wrokomansingi*) are very scarce in earlier sources. One of the few references is found in Bartelink (1916: 28), quoted in Van Kempen (2003: 166–167), who says that he heard songs being sung during the 'breaking' of the coffee beans, however without providing any text. The only text of song that was sung during the pounding of coffee I have found is given in a piece written by Théodore Bray, which contains several drawings of the scene. Since descriptions of work songs are so rare, it may be good to quote the entire passage describing the process of coffee pounding:

> While the *kwa kwa man* pounds a rhythm on his stool,[40] represented by the following words:
> *Koua katakoua katakoua katakoua katakoua,* half of those who are pounding mutter:
> *Maka fissi boun maka fissi boun, etc*, while the other half sings the octave, the fifth and the third on a single note. This orchestra, in which the pestles beat the rhythm, serves to accompany the women who sing while moving the part of the body on which one sits:
> *Mia ouan toutou na mi hoso* (I have a trumpet in my house)
> *Di mi no bolio, pan* (When I don't cook, pan!)

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39. A photocopy of Bray's pieces in *L'Illustration*, containing nos 22a and 22b, was graciously made available to me by the late Monsieur Marcel Chatillon, for which I am very grateful.

40. This refers to the so-called *kwa kwa bangi*, a small wooden stool used as a drum; the *kwa kwa bangi* plays an important role in *du* and *banya* performances.

Ouan enklé néti mi no bolio (A single night I not cook)
Toutou hé bolo pan, pan, patapan, panpan (Trumpet cries pan)
Toutou hé bolo pan, pan, patapan, panpan (Trumpet cries pan)
(This last line is the only one which is sung while the pestles are pounding).

I wouldn't know how to express how tarantulizing (I don't know which stronger word to use) are this note held by voices, some low, some high, the sound of the sticks on the stool, the regular movement of the pestles, the raucous singing of the women. To make you understand the sensation which all this makes my nervous system undergo, I'll say that I've heard the *Juive*, the *Huguenots*, *Robert* and all the rest without giving the delicious music of these operas anything but my utmost attention. However, as soon as my working gang gets going a power which I cannot control carries me away in the coffee barn; as soon as I arrive, my feet begin to move, my fingers beat the rhythm, and after a few minutes I not only sing along softly but if it were not for the respect which I owe myself I would look for a sounding object to play my part in this orchestra to get rid by this means of the musical electricity with which this african melody has charged me. Five minutes are enough to strip the coffee of its pellicles. The negroes are so much used to this work that they know instinctively at which moment they should stop in order not to break the beans. One of them, usually the one at the front, cries: *Mahou!*, with a heavy and lengthy leaning on the last syllable of this word. As soon as he stops, everyone puts their pestles down'. (Bray c1860: 314)

As in my transcription of the previous text, I have transposed Bray's orthography into modern Sranan spelling. The first line, which is a purely sound symbolic representation on the part of Bray, is not included here. The second line is treated separately from the main text since it does not seem to be part of that.

Maka fisi bun maka fisi bun.
Makafisi[41] is good, *makafisi* is good.

Mi a wan tutu na mi oso.
Di mi no boli o, pan.
Wan enkri neti mi no boli o.
Tutu e bolo[42] *pan, pan, patapan, panpan,*
Tutu e bolo pan, pan, patapan, panpan.

41. *Maka fisi* is a fish species which has a lot of bones (*cf.maka* 'prickle, thorn').

42. Probably a variant of *blo/bro*, which means 'to blow', as in *bro toetóe* 'to blow the horn' (Focke 1855, s.v. *bro*).

I have a horn at home.
If I don't cook, ah, *pan*,[43]
If I don't cook one single night, ah,
The horn blows *pan, pan, patapan, panpan*,[44]
The horn blows *pan, pan, patapan, panpan.*

Although Bray realized that these words have a hidden meaning (*cf.* his note 2), his laborious paraphrase does not get to the core of the song, which, in my opnion, is a complaint about a man who overasks his woman sexually (*cf.* e.g. the horn as a phallic symbol, the 'cooking' *at night*; the reference to the female sexual organ, and the fact that this part of the song is sung by women). This interpretation would fit in with the fact that there is a long tradition of hidden meaning, including sexual allusion, in African-American song, including, for example, the blues.[45]

23. 'Puttin' on ole massa' (1862) (Hoogbergen 1996: 84)

One of the uses to which songs were sometimes put was to make a fool of the master without him knowing it (a practice known in the American South as 'puttin' on ole massa'; *cf.* Abrahams 1992). For this effect to be obtained, the words used in the song had to be mysterious or ambiguous or in any other way not fully comprehensible to the white man. The song below is an example of that: it was sung during a party on the eve of a group escape from plantation Rac-à-Rac on September 14, 1862 (Hoogbergen 1996: 84). Although the text contains a clear allusion to the impending event ('tomorrow when you won't see me anymore'), apparently this was not enough for the master's to realize an esacape was about to

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43. *Pan* is an ideophone expressing fullness.

44. Apart from being a repetition of the word *pan*, *panpan* also occurs as an independent word, meaning 'cunt'.

45. In some other songs, however, reference to sex is entirely explicit, as shown, for example in the following *lobi singi*, collected by Herskovits & Herskovits (1936: 30), who say that this type of song – understandably – was only sung in private. In my translation I have tried to retain the flavor of the original, e.g. translating *bombina* by 'vagina-lips' (following Herskovits and Herskovits) rather than 'labia'.

Tu bombina na lontu
Tu stonsiri na kontu,
Ala feif' yuru mamantem
B skin de steifu.

Two vagina-lips around it,
Two balls against my ass,
Every morning at five o'clock
B's cock is hard.

happen. He was fooled by the greeting *kuneti* 'goodnight' into thinking they were merely wishing him a good night's rest.

Gransmasra kunet-iii,
Granmisi kunet-ooo,
Bika tamara te you no si mi moro miauw.
Mi koti,
Odi di masra!
Mi wai,
Odi di masra!
Gransmasra kunet-iii, Granmisi kunet-ooo,
Bika tamara te you no si mi moro miauw.

Granmasra,[46] goodnight,
Granmisi,[47] goodnight,
Because tomorrow when you won't see me anymore: 'meow'.
I cut,[48]
Howdy *Masra*!
I weeded,
Howdy *Masra*!
Granmasra, goodnight, *Granmisi*, goodnight,
Because tomorrow when you won't see me anymore: 'meow'.

24. Slaves get punished, freemen do not (pre-1863) (Comvalius 1948–9: 20; also in Comvalius 1922: 40)

This song was sung by free blacks and mulattoes, celebrating the fact that in contrast to slaves they did not run the risk of being punished, even if they were to do foolish things (Comvalius 1948–9: 18).

Stopoe dram na wan takroe dringie,
A mek' mi kos' mi granmama.
Stopoe dram na wan takroe dringie,
A mek mi kos' mi granmama.
Ef' na Jaw ef' na Kwasie
A ben sa go na Morgodam,
Ef' na Jaw ef' na Kwasie
A ben sa go na Morgodam.
Grantangi Masra, Grantangi misi,
Mi sa go na Morgodam!

46. *Granmasra* is the plantation owner.

47. *Granmisi* is the wife of the plantation owner.

48. This refers to the cutting of sugar-cane.

A bottle of dramis an evil drink,
It made me curse my grandmother.
A bottle of dramis an evil drink,
It made me curse my grandmother.
If Jaw or Kwasi[49] would do something like that,
They would go to Morgodam.[50]
If Jaw or Kwasi would do something like that,
They would go to Morgodam.
Thanks very much, Master! Thanks very much, Mistress[51]!
I will go to Morgodam!

25. Celebrating Emancipation (1863) (Bonaparte 1884: 190)

This song, of which only the first stanza is included here, was composed by the Moravian missionaries Bau and Van Calker (Klinkers 1997: 113). It belongs to the Moravian genre of *aria-singi* 'aria songs', usually set to well-known (often German) tunes, mostly with Sranan words. It is included here as a specimen of that genre, even though it is not as clearly part of the oral tradition as most other songs in this section are. *Aria singi* were published in many editions from 1853 onwards (Voorhoeve & Donicie 1963: 66–67). The song below was made to the occasion of the abolition of slavery on July 1, 1863. Ironically, it is set to the tune of 'Wien Neerlands Bloed', a national hymn of the time celebrating those 'through whose veins runs Dutch blood, free of foreign stains'.

Singi vo da 1. Juli 1863

Gi Konoe Willem bigi nem,
En tjari tangi kom!
Kom singi switi, prijzi hem,
A doe wan bigi boen;
A potti alla ningre fri,
A poeloe wi na sjem,
Da diri Konoe Willem dri,
O Gado, blessi hem.

Song for the First of July, 1863

Pay tribute to King William
And give him thanks.

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49. Names of slaves: *Jaw* and *Kwasi* are the day-names for males born on a Thursday and a Sunday, respectively.

50. A place where slaves would be brought to be punished.

51. This is an allusion to the custom that slaves had to thank their masters for being punished.

Come sing a sweet song and praise him,
He did a very good thing.
He made all blacks free,
He pulled us out of shame.
The beloved King Willem III,
Oh God, bless him.

26. Poking fun at the nouveaux riches (c1870) (Comvalius 1922: 26–7)

This song belongs to a genre called *banya*, a kind of 'musical comedy…based on a simple story with fixed characters' (Voorhoeve & Lichtveld 1975: 17). The song was meant to make fun of someone who rose to wealth after having come to Suriname from Curaçao, where he had been very poor. As happened more often with songs in which a white person was ridiculed, this song was composed and performed by a *banya* group on the order of another white. This tradition of whites' use of blacks to ridicule other whites is remarkable enough to receive more attention than it has thus far.

Wan Jobo, ee barie, oo,
Drie dee langa em no njam wan njanjam,
Wan kankie birie ben holie hem liebie.
A waka kom na Saranam,
Tidee a kom tron wan goedoeman:
Wakaliebie, na joe doe hem na boen!

A white man is crying out,
For three days he didn't have a thing to eat.
A little jug of beer kept him alive.
He came to Suriname.
Now he is well off:
Course of life, it's you who made him wealthy.

27. Mock-praise for Governor Van Sypesteyn (c1880) (Comvalius 1948–9: 19)

This song is clearly ironical: building a flower gardens for the ladies and benches for the gentlemen is not eactly what blacks would appreciate a Governor for. Irony was a widely used trope in (ex-)slave communities throughout Afro-America, where the ability to say one thing while intending another was an indispensable survival strategy (*cf.* Abrahams 1983, 1992; Gates 1988).

Graman Sypensteyn, mi teri joe, mi teri joe,
Graman Sypensteyn, mi teri joe vo troe.
Graman Sypensteyn, mi teri joe, mi teri joe,
Graman Sypensteyn, mi teer joe wan Graman.

Joe meki blomki-djari gi dem missie,
Joe meki langa bangi gi dem masra;
Graman Sypensteyn, mi teri joe, mi teri joe,
Graman Sypensteyn, mi teer joe wan Graman.

Governor Van Sypesteyn, I regard you highly, I regard you highly,
Governor Van Sypesteyn, I regard you highly for sure.
Governor Van Sypesteyn, I regard you highly, I regard you highly,
Governor Van Sypesteyn, I regard you highly as Governor.
You made flower gardens for the ladies,
You made long benches for the gents.
Governor Van Sypesteyn, I regard you highly, I regard you highly,
Governor Van Sypesteyn, I regard you highly as Governor.

28. A children's song (pre-1884) (Bonaparte 1884: 190)

The only information provided by Bonaparte (1884: 190) is that this is 'a tune sung by the black children passing through the streets of Paramaribo'.

Dat a no manirie
Fo so wan soerdatie
Fo libie da kartirie
Fo wakka na Combé.

What a strange thing
to do for a soldier.
To leave the barracks
And walk to Combé.[52]

29. Pride in the face of oppression (19th century?)
(Voorhoeve & Lichtveld 1975: 34)

This song belongs to a genre called *laku*, which is similar to the *banya*, but probably of more recent origin 'The *laku* has essentially the same pattern as the *banya*, but the drama is more elaborate and executed by many costumed actors, both men and women' (Voorhoeve & Lichtveld 1975: 17). This song, with its repetition of the first line and its 'twelve beats to the bar' structure seems to foreshadow what at a later time – around the turn of the 20th century – and a different place – the Mississippi Delta – was to become 'the blues' (e.g. Lomax 1993). Although this is not meant to suggest any direct link between Surinamese song types and the American blues, it might be interesting to investigate the possible roots of the latter in similar types

52. At the time, a fairly new 'suburb' of Paramaribo.

of song that may have existed in the American South. The song below is certainly not the only one to display a blues-like structure: e.g. songs nos. 13 and 31. As in some other songs, the force of the metaphor is striking.

Mi na kakfowru, kron de a mi ede
Mi na kakfowru, mi kron de a mi ede
Kaba wansi nefi de a mi neki,
Mi kron de a mi ede

I am a rooster, a crown is on my head,
I am a rooster, my crown is on my head.
Although the axe is at my neck,
My crown is on my head.

30. Two Ndyuka dance songs (Van Panhuys 1912: 32)

Between 1893 and 1896, L.-C. Van Panhuys, Esq. recorded several songs sung by the Marowijne Ndyuka while dancing (Van Panhuys 1912: 32). Two of these are reproduced below. Although most of the words in these songs seem to have no clear meaning, they are still included here as there are only very few earlier texts in Ndyuka.

30a. A baboon song

Baboun[53] *yé yé yé*
Baboun yé yé yé
Baboun yé yé yé ye gongolo gongolo gongolo

Baboon *yé yé yé*
Baboon *yé yé yé*
Baboon *yé yé yé ye gongolo gongolo gongolo*[54]

30b. The white-toothed Black

Da ningre nanga witi tana gi you o-di
The negro with white teeth says hello to you
yé yé yé yé yé yé yé yé ayemba
yé yé yé yé yé yé yé yé ayemba

53. Note that the use of *ou* to represent /u/ in *baboun* and *you* is influenced by French spelling conventions.

54. For what it's worth: *Gongolo* 'lit. millipede' is a personal name in Kikongo; it is also the name of a Dahomeyan king (Turner 1949: 91).

31. A LOBI SINGI (c1900) (Comvalius 1922: 36; also in Comvalius 1939: 357 and Comvalius 1948–9: 12)

The *lobi singi* 'love song' is a female genre, which often – but not exclusively (*cf.* song no. 32) – deals with lesbian relationships, especially a former lover.[55] Although some *lobi singi*, just like some *banya* and *laku* songs, were used for public mockery, there are others which are entirely devoted to the celebration of love. For a brief introduction to the genre of *lobi singi*, see Voorhoeve & Lichtveld (1975: 18–20); for a more elaborate treatment, see Herskovits & Herskovits (1936: 23–32).

Efoe wan lobbie ben lobbie mi, a no lobbie mi moro,
Efoe wan lobbie ben lobbie mi a no lobbie mi moro,
Mi no kan kirie mi srefie vo datie hede

Although a lover loved me, she doesn't love me any more,
Although a lover loved me, she doesn't love me any more,
I can't kill myself because of that.

32. AN UNFAITHFUL HUSBAND (c1900) (Comvalius 1948–9: 14; also in Comvalius 1922: 39–40; Comvalius 1939: 360; Voorhoeve & Lichtveld 1975: 48)

This *lobi singi* is by Christiana Loloba, who accused her husband Sander publicly through song, after he had left her and her children for another woman. After some time, Sander started making inquiries to see whether he would go back to her; when he decided not to, Christiana added the last two *odo*-like lines (Comvalius 1922: 40). While Sander saw everybody gradually turn their backs on him, Christiana, turning necessity into virtue, managed to earn a living by singing these songs on Sunday afternoons in the streets of Paramaribo (Comvalius 1948–9: 13).

Wan lage karaktre meki onderzoekoe,
pee mi de, fa mi tan,
pee mi de, fa mi tan.
A no jere mi nem, a no de si mi persoon,
O fa mi tan.
Nanga mi broko kotto en mi doti jakie,
so mi de, so mi tan,
so mi dee, so mi tan.
Mi no kom moro hei, mi no kom moro lage.
So mi dee, so mi tan

Masra Sander kom tron bigie toddo,
A no man takie watra foero hem moffo!

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55. For more information on the phenomenon of so-called *mati werk* – the institutionalized system of lesbian relationships among black women in Suriname – see G. Wekker (1993).

A mean character is trying to find out
where I am, how I'm doing,
where I am, how I'm doing.
He hasn't heard my name, he doesn't see me in person,
How I'm doing.
With my torn skirt and my dirty coat,
that's how I am, that's how I'm doing,
that's how I am, that's how I'm doing!
I don't get up any higher, I don't go down any lower,
that's how I am, that's how I'm doing,

Mr Sander has turned into a big toad,
He cannot speak, his mouth is full of water!

33. Nobody knows you when you're down and out (c 1900)
(Comvalius 1922: 28–29)

This is a *banya* song about a man who squandered his fortune on his friends. When he is broke, he turns to one of them asking for charity. Presented below is the first stanza of one of 'the four long poems' of which this song consists (Comvalius 1922: 27).

Wakaliebie gi ondervinding

Wan Jobo ee barie, oo,[56]
Hem dee hopo na hem moni tapoe?
Na so em de waka na em goedoe tapoe.
Hem no ben denkie wan tem kan dee,
Vo so wan ogrie tesie kom nakie na hem doro.
Meebrie voe hoso 'em no habie moro,
Kontantie monie 'em no habie moro,
Na now' em go doe bezoekoe
Na wan njoen goedoeman hoso.
So 'em dee nakie na fesi doro,
Dan goedoeman dee loekoe, na abra vensree
Dan joe tan jéré na antoewoortoe,
Die a dee taigi em:
"No pottie joe foetoe na inie mi hoso,
Voe joe kom dottie mi hoso gi mie,
Tan na mi doromoffo,
Efi mi a wan monie, mie sa iet em gi joe!"
Nanga ala vâa dee taki so,
Va mi eê breetie na mi hatti inie!

56. Note that this line is identical to the first line of song no. 26.

Waka liebie, voe a iet a moni gi mi!
Dan mi poeloe mi hattie, danki Gado.
Ma die meê drai gwee,
San fadon na mi hatti?
Watra ben ron na mi ai:
Bika mi srefi ben dee wan goedoeman,
Loekoe woortoe, die wan trawan ee taigi mi!

Life[57] brings experience

A white man is crying out, oh,
His money has lifted him up??
Just so his good fortune lets him walk??
He didn't think there could be a time
That such a bitter ordeal would come knocking on his door.
House furniture he doesn't have anymore,
Cash money he doesn't have anymore.
Now he's going to visit
The house of a *nouveau riche*.
So he's knocking on the front door,
The wealthy man is looking over the shutters.
Then you hear the reply,
When he's telling him:
"Don't put your feet inside my house,
Coming to dirty my house like that,
Stay at my doorstep.
If I have any change, I'll throw it to you!"
Although he spoke like that,
How happy was I inside my heart,
Life, that he threw me the money!
Then I took off my hat and thanked God.
But as I turned around,
What fell into my heart?
Tears were running down from my eyes:
Because I had been a wealthy man myself;
Such terrible things they are saying to me!

57. Since the word *waka libi* does not occur in any of the older dictionaries, it is difficult to present the correct equivalent here. In view of the context of the song, perhaps it means something like 'squander'. According to a recently published dictionary of Modern Sranan, its present meaning is 'promiscuity, living like a whore' (Blanker & Dubbeldam 2005, s.v. *waka libi*).

34. A CHILDREN'S SONG (c1900) (Van Panhuys 1912: 34–35)

This song was obviously sung as part of a game; note the French-influenced spelling of *tou* (although *toe* occurs as well) for *tu* 'two'.

Wan tron draai
Nanga toe tron draai
Sinési sipi dé go wé
Nakki poti wan
Nakki poti tou
Nakki poti dri
Nakki poti fo
Tou tron draai
Nan drie tron draai
Sinési sipi dé go wé

Turn once
And turn twice
The Chinese boat[58] is going away
Strike one
Strike two
Strike three
Strike four
Turn twice
And turn three times
The Chinese boat is going away

35. A LULLABY (c1900) (Van Panhuys 1912: 35–36)

In this song, the word *friman* refers to a member of the black army corps. Slaves who joined this corps would become free upon their retirement (see notes to song no. 5). The song is categorised as a lullaby by Van Panhuys 1912: 35).

Friman Taria kon njam, Koprou[59] *Kanon man tan déeeee*
Free man, Taria, come eat; Copper Canon man, stay where you are

36. A COMICAL SONG (c1900) (Van Panhuys 1912: 38–39)

This is a bilingual (Sranan-Dutch) song; the Dutch is printed in bold. Although, unfortunately, Van Panhuys does not tell us what's so funny about this 'air railleur et comique' (p. 38), I suspect it has something to do with sex.

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58. This may refer to the boats that brought Chinese contract laborers to Suriname, the first of which arrived in 1853.

59. *Koprou Kanonman* is the name of a feared Maroon; <ou> represents /u/.

***Geloof mij vrij, geloof mij vrij**, trouw koukou da*[60] *bottrij.*
Mi taki you, trouw koukou dena bottrij.
Mi taki you, trouw koukou déna bottrij.
Kon bribi mi, trouw koukou déna bottrij.
***Geloof mij vrij, geloof mij vrij**, trouw koukou déna bottrij.*

Believe me truly, believe me truly, the wedding cake is in the pantry.
I'm telling you, the wedding cake is in the pantry.
I'm telling you, the wedding cake is in the pantry.
Come and believe me, the wedding cake is in the pantry.
Believe me truly, believe me truly, the wedding cake is in the pantry.

37. A satirical rowing song (1900) (Van Cappelle 1926: 224–225)

The *boto singi* reproduced below provides a nice example of the innuendo used by blacks in their songs, which often went unrecognized by its victim. In this case, the target of the satire was Mr Van Cappelle, the man who published the song, without realizing, however, that the joke was on him. The clue is that the word *Kaperka* (in *Kaperka kiri mi* 'Kaperka is killing me') not only refers to the hill of that name, as assumed by Van Cappelle, but also to Van Cappelle himself, who the rowers felt asked too much of their physical strengths (*cf.* the comment under song no. 15 regarding rowers' custom of using nicknames for the whites they had on board).

O, Nickérie! Mi lobi di,[61]
Ma dem bergi de hei so te.
Kaperka kiri mi,
tja' fracht na kilometer siksi.
Ma dem bergi de hei so te.
Wroko foe joe moni,
Wroko foe joe moni,
Te wi de na Fallawatra
da so wi de wroko wi moni.

Ah, Nickerie,[62] I love you,
But the hills are so very high.[63]
Kaperka is killing me,

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60. *dade na* 'is in'.

61. Typo for *ji/yi* 'you'?

62. Nickerie is the name of a river.

63. Due to the terraced structure of the Surinamese landscape, boats often had to be taken out of the water and carried overland past a *sula* 'waterfall', before a journey could be continued.

Carrying freight to 'kilometer six'.[64]
But the hills are so very high.
Working for your money,
Working for your money,
Till we get to Fallawatra,[65]
This is how we'll be working for our money.

38. The tongue of the gods (Franssen Herderschee 1905: 125)

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, certain relics of African languages may still be heard in Suriname today, but their use seems to be largely restricted to religious (*winti*) ceremonies. One of these languages, called Kromanti and probably based on Twi, has been documented fairly well by Herskovits & Herskovits, who included more than thirty Kromanti songs in their *Suriname Folklore* (1936: 531–55).[66] While these songs were collected among the Saramaka in 1929, I found a slightly older reference to Kromanti as used by a Ndyuka in an early-19th-century travel account (Franssen Herderschee 1905: 125). A Ndyuka member of the expedition, who is in lot of pain having been stung by a stingray, 'starts speaking in *gadoe tongo*[lit.: gods' language, JA] …or *Kromantie*' (p. 125). His words are presented as follows:

> *héi, héi, héi, tangka, tangka, pioka, pioka, plawa, plawa, plawa, plawa, tangka, koto, koto, héi, héi, plasji, plasji, plasji, plasji, plasji, tloki, tloki, tloki, tloki, tloki, kille, kille, kille, kille, kille, plawa, pioka*

Unfortunately, not enough is known about Kromanti at this moment for me to be able to provide a translation here.

39. The national anthem of suriname (1959)
(Encyclopedie 1977: inside front cover)

Although the Sranan stanza of the national anthem was not composed until 1959[67] and, therefore, strictly speaking falls outside the period covered here, it seems like the right text to conclude this section. While the original text of the anthem

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64. The name of a place along the river.

65. A tributary of the Nickerie River.

66. Additional songs in other secret languages can be found elsewhere in the book: *cf.* Herskovits & Herskovits (1936: 556–578, 629–685). This treasure of information on Suriname's secret languages, together with the sound recordings of these songs which are still available – be it in severely damaged form – is yet to be explored.

67. Suriname had become semi-autonomous in 1954.

(composed in 1893) was in Dutch, the poet Trefossa[68] was asked by the government to write an extra stanza in Sranan, the text of which is reproduced here.

Opo kondreman oen opo!
Sranan gron e kari oen.
Wans ope tata komopo,
Wi moe seti kondre boen.
Stré de f'stré wi no sa frede,
Gado de wi fesiman.
Eri libi te na dede,
Wi sa feti gi Sranan.

Up, fellowmen, get up!
The land of Suriname is calling you.
Wherever our ancestors came from,
We must build up this country well.
Struggles have to be fought, we will not be afraid,
God is our leader.
Our whole life until we die
We will fight for Suriname.

6.2 Odos[69]

This section is devoted to *odos*, the proverb-like sayings which play a prominent role in Surinamese creole culture. By way of introduction to this genre, let me quote Herskovits and Herskovits, who included well over 200 Sranan and Saramaccan *odos* in their (1936) *Suriname folk-lore*:

> Among the Suriname Negroes of both town and bush, proverbs are employed in every kind of situation as they are in Africa. They are a prime factor in the education of the young, in pointing a lesson to a fellow adult, in passing a judgment on someone newly met…In the bush, proverbial sayings are woven into all conversation, and it is characteristic of an elder of a village, or a man who has standing in his group, that he is an adept at introducing these pithy sayings…Indeed, in the bush it may well be said that the skillful use of these proverbs marks the man who in our own civilisation would be regarded as scholarly. In the town, also,

68. For more information on Trefossa, one of the most gifted poets in Sranan, see Voorhoeve & Lichtveld (1975: 195–215).

69. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any early examples of Saramaka *odos*; *cf.*, however, the two Djutongo proverbs disussed below. 20th-century examples of Saramaka *odos* can be found in Herskovits & Herskovits (1936: 473–81).

> it is the older people who introduce these proverbial asides and comments most frequently, but since…the culture is carried on chiefly by women, the proverbs in most frequent and most vigorous use are those that enter into disputes, either as threats, or with vituperative intent, or as expressions of indifference to threats… We find…that human ingratitude is remarked upon, and the faithlessness of women; that foolish show of courage is deplored, and boastfulness is ridiculed; that caution is recommended, and discretion, but not timidity; and the point is made that no one is so powerful or exalted that there is not someone to meet him on his own terms; greed is criticised, but reckless generosity is enjoined; the importance of wisdom is cited, and the role of necessity stated… Stylistically, the proverbs are given in a few instances as rhymed couplets, and all show a fixed rhythmic patterning. (Herskovits & Herskovits 1936: 135–136)

Since the purpose of this chapter is to present older texts, the *odos* in this section are all taken from 19th-century sources: Teenstra (1835), Focke (1855), and Wullschlägel (1856). These three works contain the by far largest collections of *odos* published before the 20th century: there are 300 of them in Teenstra (1835, vol 2: 211–242), between 100 and 200 scattered throughout Focke's dictionary (1855, passim), and no less than 707 in Wullschlägel (1856: 301–340). The examples presented below occur in all three collections, albeit in (slightly) different versions, including differences in spelling; they were selected specifically to enable comparison across the three sources. The *odos* taken from Teenstra and Wullschlägel are referred to by the numbers under which they appear in these works; those from Focke are identified by the dictionary entries under which they are quoted by him. Apart from the fourteen *odos* which occur in all three works, there are two, one of which is found only in Wullschlägel, the other in both Wullschlägel and Teenstra, which are in some form of Portuguese-based creole, possibly related to Djutongo.

Since proverbs are generally quite archaic both lexically and structurally, the *odos* presented here may well be representative of older stages in the development of Sranan (and, to a much lesser extent, Saramaccan). For the same reason, their modern equivalents are not very different from their 19th-century counterparts (apart from superficial aspects such as spelling). For a modern collection of some 1,000 (!) *odos*, see Schouten-Elsenhout (1974); for a brief introduction to the genre, see Herskovits & Herskovits (1936: 5–7, and, especially, 135–136).

40. Sranan odos

1. a. *Kakalakka no habi reti (of leiti) na fowlo moffo* (Teenstra 1835, no. 14[70])
   b. *Kakaráka no ha' réti na fówloe mófo* (Focke 1855, s.v. *mófo*)
   c. *Kakraka no ha reti na fouwloe mofo* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 318)
   Cockroach has no rights in the mouth of a bird.
2. a. *Saranam kondré na hasi terre, ti dé à waij so, tamárre á wai so* (Teenstra 1835, no. 24)
   b. Sranaḿ[71] *-kondre da hási-tére : tide a wai so, tamara a wai so* (Focke 1855, s.v. *Sranáḿ*)
   c. *Sranàm-kondre da hasi-tere: tidèi a wai so, Tamara a wai so* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 597)
   Suriname is a horse-tail: today it goes this way, tomorrow that way.
3. a. *Ala piri tifi, a no lafoe* (Teenstra 1835, no. 40)
   b. *Alla píri tífi a no láfoe* (Focke 1855, s.v. *tífi*)
   c. *Ala pili Tifi a no lafoe* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 625)
   Not all showing of teeth is laughing.
4. a. *Tangi foe Spansi boko, miki mi si beniforto* (Teenstra 1835, no. 67)
   b. *Tangì foe pansibóko, mi si Binnifóto* (Focke 1855, s.v. *tangi*)
   c. *Tangi vo spansi boko mi si binfoto (foto)* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 622)
   Thanks to the Spanish buck[72] I've seen the inside of the fort.[73]
5. a. *Boesssi-Nengre sabi, ho pranassi á dé Brokko* (Teenstra 1835, no. 91)
   b. *Bóesi-ningre sábi ho pranási a de bróko* (Focke 1855, s.v. *bróko*)
   c. *Boesi-mingre*[74] *sabi, hoe pranasi a de broko* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 107)
   The bush-negro know which plantations to plunder.

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70. The use of italics in Teenstra (used to distinguish nouns from other parts of speech) has been discarded here.

71. Focke's <m + circonflexe>, used to represent its word-final realization as /ŋ/, has been replaced by <ḿ> in my transcription.

72. The 'Spanish buck' was one of the most cruel ways of punishing slaves.

73. The 'fort' is Fort Zeelandia, the 17th-century fortification which formed the basis of the city of Paramaribo and where slaves were taken to be punished. The word 'fort' is the etymon of the Sranan word *foto* 'Paramaribo, town'.

74. A typo for ***n****ingre*.

6. a. *Al wassi (= alwassi) fa Ingi droengoe, to koe (= tokoe) a saféni (= sa feni) hem amaka* (Teenstra 1835, no. 101)
   b. *Alwássi fa Iéngi*[75] *droéngoe, tókoe a sa sabi heḿ hamáka* (Focke 1855, s.v. *alwássi*)
   c. *Alwasi fa Ingi droengoe, tokoe a sabi hem hámaka* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 299)
   No matter how drunk an Indian, he will still find his hammock.

7. a. *A no soléki arén blakka, a no so a dé fadon* (Teenstra 1835, no. 105)
   b. *A no so l'ki arén brákka, a no so a de fadón* (Focke 1855, s.v. *arén*)
   c. *A no so leki Arèen blaka, a no so a de fadóm* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 36)
   The rain does not fall as black as it looks.

8. a. *A no mi lafoe koni-koni meki a no habi terre* (Teenstra 1835, no. 110)
   b. *A no mi lafoe koni-kóni, di a no ha tére* (Focke 1855, s.v. *láfoe*)
   c. *A no mi lafoe koni koni, meki a no ha tere* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 385)
   It's not me who laughed at the rabbit for having no tail.

9. a. *A no ti dé a wiwiri fadon na watra, a no ti dé á pori* (Teenstra 1835, no. 149)
   b. *A no tid'ía wiwíri fadón na wátra, an tid'ía a póri* (Focke 1855 s.v. *ti*)
   c. *A no tidèi Wiwiri fadóm na watra, a no tidei a de pori* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 693)
   A leaf that falls into the water today is not going to rot today.

10. a. *Je sa kibri ouroe mama, ma joe no sa kibri hem frikou toe (= frikoutoe)* (Teenstra 1835, no. 157)
    b. *Joe kan kíbri óuroe-mamà ma joe no kan kíbri heḿ froekóutoe* (Focke 1855, s.v. *kíbri*)
    c. *Joe sa kibri ouroe mamà, ma joe no sa kibri hem verkoutoe* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 483)
    You can hide your grandma but you can't hide her coughing.

11. a. *Táki man, a no doe man* (Teenstra 1835, no. 161)
    b. *Tákiman a no dóeman* (Focke 1855, s.v. *táki*)
    c. *Takiman a no doeman* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 610)
    Talking is not the same as doing.

12. a. *A no foe hangri tem héde meki mi sa kali taya tatá* (Teenstra 1835, no. 176)
    b. *A no foe hángri-teḿ héde, méki mi sa kali Tája « Tata »* (Focke 1855, s.v. *tája*)
    c. *A no vo hángritem hede, meki mi sa kali Taja tatà* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 606)
    The fact that there's a famine is no reason for me to call *taya*[76] 'Father'.

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75. <I> corrected for <J>, according to the *Errata* to Focke (1855) (taken from Focke's unpublished notes), published in Moens (1858: 304).

76. A tuber species.

13. a. *Asau sabi fa hen lassi bradi, aswari (= a swari) kokronoto* (Teenstra 1835, no. 192)
    b. *Azáu sâbi fa heḿ lási brâdi, a swâri kokronoto* (Focke 1855, s.v. *swâri*)
    c. *Azáu sabi, fa hem lasi bradi, a swali kokronoto* (Wullschlägel 1856, no. 42)
    The elephant swallows the coconut because he knows he has a fat ass (i.e. he knows he will be able to get rid of it).

Two early Ndyuka odos:

14. *Te pikien boessi kiebrie joe boen, dan joe no moesoe falla biegie boessi te joe toeka naka*[77] *hen* (Coster 1866: 23)
    If a small bush covers you well, don't fell a big bush when you happen to come across it.

15. *Na srefie avie*[78] *die de falla pikien bon, de falla bigie wantoe* (Coster 1866: 23)
    The same ax that fells little trees fells big trees too.

16. a. *Moetoe*[79] *bira ji táki*[80] *pari poeloe pondo* (Teenstra 1835, no. 117)
    b. *Móendoe birà joe téki pári póeloe póndo* (Focke 1855, s.v. *pári*; s.v. *póeloe*)
    c. *Moendoe bira: joe teki pari, poeloe pondo*(Wullschlägel 1856, no. 440)
    It's a world gone wrong: you row the pontoon with a paddle[81] (i.e. you have to make do as best as you can).

17. a. [not found in Teenstra 1835]
    b. [not found in Focke 1855]
    c. *Praga beroegoe no mata caballo*(Wullschlägel 1856, no. 488)
    The curse of an ass does not kill a horse

Odo no. 16 is especially interesting as it appears to be a mixture of Saramaccan and Sranan: *moendoe* and *bira* are Saramaccan, *pari* and *pondo* are Sranan, while *ji*, *teki* and *poeloe* occur in both languages (*cf.* Schumann 1778 s.v. *mundu*, *bilà, i, teki, pulu*; Schumann 1783 s.v. *ju, teki, pali, pulu*; Focke 1855, s.v. *póndo*). While Focke (1855, s.v. *pári*; s.v. *póeloe*) states that the first two words are derived from Portuguese, Teenstra (1835: 223) adds the additional information that it is a *Jodenslavenspreuk*'proverb of the Jews' slaves'. This suggests that the language of the proverb is (related to) a form of Djutongo, the Portuguese-based creole once

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77. A typo for *nanga*?

78. A typo for *akisi*?

79. A typo for *moendoe.*

80. A typo for *teki.*

81. A *pondo* is a big boat used for transportation of large quantities of goods; a *pari* is a paddle only fit for rowing smaller boats.

spoken on Jewish plantations (*cf.* Chapter 4). However, the fact that it is included both in Wullschlägel and Focke without this additional information suggests that it was also used by Sranan-speaking blacks. The presence of the Sranan words may suggest that the proverb as it is presented here is a partly relexified version of an older Djutongo proverb in which the Portuguese- rather than the English-derived words for 'paddle' and 'pontoon' were used. The last *odo* (no. 17), tentatively identified as 'Negro-Portuguese' by Wullschlägel p. 328), consists almost entirely of unambiguously Portuguese-derived words (only the word *no*, which occurs both in Early Saramaccan and in Sranan, is derived from English). Somewhat surprisingly, however, most of these words (*praga, mata, caballo*) are not part of the Early Saramaccan lexicon, while another (*beroegoe*) differs somewhat from the form one would expect (*buruku*) (Smith 1987: 130). This means that this *odo* may not be taken to represent Early Saramaccan. With regard to Djutongo, however, the situation is a little different because we only have a very short list of Djutongo words at our disposal. The fact that these Portuguese-derived words are not in this list does not necessarily mean they were not part of the Djutongo lexicon. If the language represented is indeed Djutongo, it would be one of the very few attestations of this mysterious language. For the time being, however, it may be safest to follow Smith in identifying this proverb as 'Suriname Portuguese Creole' (without necessarily adopting the assumption that it was brought from Pernambuco; *cf.* Arends 1999; Smith 1999). As shown by Smith (1999: 138–139), the Suriname Portuguese Creole *odo* shows some striking parallels with proverbs in other creole (as well as certain European) languages. The first part of the *odo* is identical to, for example, the corresponding part of the Senegalese Portuguese Creole version: *Prága di búru kataçiga na séu* 'The curse of an ass does not reach heaven', while the second part is analogical to the Sranan version: *Bari vo ouroe-koekoe no de kili hasi* 'The screeching of an owl does not kill a horse' (Wullschlägel 1856: 328). This suggests that the Suriname Portuguese Creole version may be a composite of a number of lexcally different but functionally equivalent proverbs, which would make it very difficult to determine its source and linguistic affiliation.

6.3 Anansi stories

The term *Anansi tori* refers to all kinds of folk-tales, not just those featuring the trickster-spider of that name. Some of them, for example, belong to the category of etiological stories, stories that explain the origin of something, like 'How come the giraffe has such a long neck?' The two stories reproduced below fall in a kind of mixed category. In both, the origin of an animal's feature (the spider's eight legs, the cross on its back; the woodpecker's digging into trees) is 'explained', but Anansi appears in both stories too, albeit in a very minor role in the second one.

Although, unfortunately, I have not been able to find any early folk stories, I have still chosen to include two of them here, for the simple reason that a book about the creole languages of Suriname would not be complete if it does not contain at least one or two of these wonderful stories. The first one, in Sranan, was recorded in 1929 by Frances[82] Herskovits (1936); the second one, in Saramaccan, was recorded in the early 1970s by Naomi Glock (Rountree & Glock 1977). For a concise introduction to Sranan folk-tales, see Voorhoeve & Lichtveld (1975: 76–79) which also contains several lengthy specimens; for a somewhat more elaborate treatment, see Herskovits & Herskovits (1936: 138–146), which also contains some 150 stories; for an introduction to story-telling in Saramaka, see Price & Price (1991: 1–37), which also contains an integral transcription of two evenings of story-telling.

41. A folktale in Sranan (Herskovits & Herskovits 1936: 162–163;[83] told by Meli Abensitt in 1929)

This story was recorded by Frances and Melville Herskovits in Paramaribo. It is widely known throughout Afro-America, e.g. in the American South where it is known under the title 'Tar Baby'. The vitality and flexibility of these stories became clear to me when in a version I heard told to children a few years ago the tar had been replaced by chewing gum. The source from which this story was taken, Herskovits and Herskovits (1936), is a magnificent collection of Sranan folk-tales, riddles, proverbs (some of which are in Saramaccan), and dreams, told by native speakers in 1929 and recorded on phonocylinders.[84] Although I agree with Voorhoeve & Donicie (1963: 91) that these texts should be used critically for linguistic purposes, their value still remains immeasurable.

Tara Poptie

Konim habi wan gron, a habi furu nanyam. Dan Ba Anansi ben 'e fufuru nanyam di Konim ben prani. Dan Konim no ben sabi suma 'e fufuru nanyam. Di a wani sani sabi suma 'e fufuru nanyam, a poti wan tara-poptie tenapu na ini gron. Dan Ba Anansi go si na potpie, dan a denki na wan suma dape. A taki, "Yu boi, san yu de du dape?" Na poptie no piki hem. A taki, "Efi yu no wani piki, mi de skop yu!" Dan a skopu hem. Dan en futu fasi. A taki, "Lus' mi, no so, mi de naki yu!" Dan hem hanu fasi tu. En taki, "Mi de skopu nanga na' tra futu!" A fasi, tu. A naki na tra hanu. A fasi tu. Dan Konim kom feni suma de na fufuruman. Konim fom en te…a kisi aiti futu nanga wan krois na baka.

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82. See Price & Price (2003).

83. The transcription has been slightly adapted.

84. Transmitted on CD, these recordings – though severely deteriorated – are still being preserved at Indiana University's Folklore Institute.

Tar Baby

The King had a field, it held much food. Then Ba[85] Anansi was stealing the food the King had planted. Then the King didn't know who was stealing the food. When he wanted to find out who was stealing the food, he put a tar-doll in the field. Then Ba Anansi saw the doll, then he thought there was a person there. He said, "You boy, what are you doing there?" The doll didn't answer him. He said, "If you won't answer, I'm going to kick you!" Then he kicked him. Then his foot got stuck. He said, "Let me loose, or I'll hit you!" Then his hand got stuck too. He said, "I'm going to kick you with my other foot!" It got stuck too. He hit with the other hand. It got stuck too. Then the King came to see who was the thief. The King beat him until…he had eight feet and a cross on his back.

42. A FOLK-TALE IN SARAMACCAN (Rountree & Glock 1977: 177–81[86]; told by Tiini Amoida in the early 1970s)

Totomboti

We da Gaangadu bi mbei lio. Fa a teki di sitonu, –[87] *fa di lio de balala aki, so di sitonu tei go pii. I ta jei wata ta pasa a basu gililili. Sembe seei an de u bebe wata. De ta booko sitonu temmmmmmm sembe kaba. A ta kai dee peipei fou te dee fou kaba kiii. Dee woko, dee gbanini, fou seei an fika, dee tinde, – te a fika totomboti wanwan to fika. Hen totomboti taa we a o du luku tu. "Gaama, mi o go naki luku". Hen dee oto wan taki taa: "Ku un buka, i langa bakahedi ku di gaan taku fii de? Umfa a du ufo i sa booko en? U tuu we…luku di bigi de ku mi, woko". Gbanini taa: "We luku mi. Un totomboti?" Hen totomboti waka te ko dou. Hen a tjoko di sitonu kookookoo. Hen a waka go seeka taampu. Hen a tjoko: ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan. A puu wan sipandji go tuwe go a'. Ha! a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan. A hiti go ala. Hon, a ko fika gaama de ta luku en diin, teeee: a domdomdom ko a domdomdom, ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom, buka na mi panjan, na mi a toto e. Hon! Hen totomboti djombo vuu ko a'. Hen Gaama taa a boo. Hen a boo te a kaba. Dee oto fou taa: "Andiwe mii o!" Anasi ko dou vaa. A taa: "We mi o go tu". De taa: "Legede! U tuu bi du puu. Totomboti wanwan to fika. Be totomboti ta du feen te a kaba". Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom. Hen a ta naki teee eh-eh! De taa: "Huh, huh, di soni". A taa: "E a de tide seei fu tee-fu ndeti, Gaama, mi o si wan pisi feen". Gaama taa: "E aai". Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan na mi a toto e. A puu di mbalu de guu tuwe go te*

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85. *Ba* means 'brother, friend, pal'. *Cf.* e.g. '**Brer** Rabbit', whose role in Harris's Uncle Remus stories is similar to that of Anansi, i.e. that of a trickster.

86. The transcription has been slightly adapted.

87. ' – ' indicates a pause.

kuma ala. Domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom. A hopo wan mbalu tuwe go te a' gom. Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan. A fuleen de buluum. De ta si wata ta pasa a' gililili. Di sembe aki katjakatjakatjakatja. A nan go. Gaama taa: "Un tan. E wan sembe tuusi maun go peka de, i o-dede". Oohn! Totomboti seeka zaaa go taampu a wan feen moon. Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom. A ko fika a ta waka ta naki. A ta waka a di sitonu liba ta naki en ta lontu nan go ta ko. Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom. Dee sitonu saka holoo. A ta fika peipei sitonu de a kamiankamian. Di lio booko wajaa. Hen Gaama taa an saafa fa a du ku en. Hen a tei di be angisa, hen a tai hen hedi. Hen a fika a tja wata ko e. Hen a taa an sa disa soni u naki moon. Hen we a fika ta diki pau domdomdom. Ee saba seei a ta naki en pau. Di soni e, gaama taki deen tu taa, te mama feen dede, an musu bei en a goon. A musu bei en a liba. Hen we a ta diki pau. Fa a ta diki pau baaku de, noo baaku we a ta diki. Te hen mama dede, a tja ko ko bei. Totomboti. (Rountree & Glock 1977: 177–181)

Totomboti (Woodpecker)

Well, then, God had made the river. The way he took the rock, the way the river is flat here, that's how the rock went *pii*.[88] You would hear the water passing underneath *gililili*. Nobody could drink the water there. They were trying to break the rock for a long time until they stopped. He [*Gaama* 'the chief', JA] was calling the different birds until the birds stopped *kiii*. The *woko* birds, the *gbanini* birds, even those birds gave up, the *tinde* birds, until only Totomboti [Woodpecker, JA] was left. Then Totomboti said that, well, he was going to try too. "Gaama, I am going to try". Then the others said: "With what beak, you long head-back, you who are so ugly? How are you going to break it? We all, well…look how big I, the woko bird, am". Gbanini said: "Well, look at me. Which woodpecker?" Then Totomboti walked until he arrived. Then he pecked at the rock *kookookoo*. Then he walked and got himself ready. Then he pecked. *Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan*. He chipped off a piece of rock which went flying off. *Ha! A domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan.* He chipped off another piece. Oh my, even the Gaama could only look at him *diin*. Until: *a domdomdom ko a domdomdom, ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom, buka na mi panjan, na mi a toto e.* Oh my, then Totomboti jumped here *vuu*. Gaama said he should rest. Then he rested until he was ready. The other birds said: "Great, child!" All of a sudden Anansi appeared. He said: "Well, I'm going to try too". They said: "Lies! We all had to give up. Totomboti is the only one left. Let Totomboti go on until he's finished". *Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom.* Totomboti was pecking until *eh-eh*. They said: "Huh, huh, it's really something". He said: "Even if it is today until tonight, Gaama, I'm going to make some

88. Some of the ideophones in the story have been left untranslated.

headway". Gaama said: "Oh, yes". *Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan na mi a toto e*. He broke off a chip and tossed it away. *Domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom*. He broke off another chip and tossed it away. *Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom buka na mi panjan*. He split it there *bulum*! They saw the water passing there *gililili*. One person ran to it *katjakat-jakatjakatja*. He was going towards it. Gaama said: "Wait. If someone puts his hand in there and gets stuck, he will die!" Totomboti got himself ready on another part of it again. *Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom*. He kept walking around pecking. He walked around on top of the rock pecking, going back and forth. *Ko a domdomdom ko a domdomdom ma a moon fa a tjekede e ko a domdomdom*. The rocks dropped down *holoo*. Now there are several rocks in several places. The river broke free *wajaa*. Then Gaama said he didn't know what to do with him. He took his red *angisa* [kerchief, JA] and tied it around his head. That's how he brought the water. Then he said he couldn't stop pecking at things anymore. That's why he's digging into trees all the time. Even on Sunday he's pecking at his tree. Another thing: Gaama said to him that, when his mother dies, he shouldn't bury her in the ground. He should bury her up high. That's why he's digging into trees. The way he's digging a hole in a tree there, he's digging a hole. When his mother dies, he will bring her there to be buried. Totomboti.