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Enactive Aesthetics: The Poetics of Hup Incantation

This paper explores the genre of incantation as it is practiced by the Hup (Makú) people of the northwest Amazon, and considers the challenges it brings to our conceptions of verbal art and its documentation. Hup incantation is fundamentally multifaceted, bringing to bear multiple performative events, voices, and audiences across ritual and social contexts. It is also both highly artistic and maximally enactive, such that its aesthetic and utilitarian features not only coexist, but also co-engage, each promoting the elaboration of the other. As we argue here, the incantation invites us to reexamine our understanding of poetics, and epitomizes the paradox of commensurability that challenges any documentation of language and culture. [verbal art, shamanic language, incantation, Amazonia, Hup]

Our little group set out in single file along one of the many paths leading out of the village, threading its way through the surrounding manioc plots and overgrown fallows. We were heading to one of the giant inselbergs that thrust themselves out of the forested plain between the Tiquié and Vaupés Rivers of northwest Brazil, retracing the steps of countless Hup ancestors who visited this sacred landmark. As the forest began to deepen, our group paused for a rest in a small clearing, sprawling on the ground with our rucksacks and baskets, laughing and drinking water mixed with manioc meal from a battered aluminum pot. Ponciano, the leader of our expedition, drew out a clump of strong tobacco rolled in a scrap of notebook paper, lit it, and took a deep pull. Holding the smoke in his mouth, he blew it over his legs and body, then passed the cigarette to the young man beside him, who followed suit and passed it to the next Hup youth. The cigarette passed from hand to hand until everyone present had blown the smoke over themselves, conveying the protection of the Path-Traveling incantation to their bodies.

Our first experiences with Hup incantation came in contexts such as these—with no indication of the process required of the shaman or what the text might consist of. Ponciano's preparation of the protective Path-Traveling incantation had been carried out a day or two earlier, as he sat alone in a quiet corner of his house, head lowered over the roll of tobacco cupped in his hands, whispering the words of the incantation over and into it as his 'breath-person' traveled among cosmic planes and engaged with the spirit entities concerned. With the burning of the cigarette on the trail, the shamanic act was complete. It is only at sundown in a Hup community, when the evening calm is punctuated by the rhythmic pounding of coca in wooden mortars and the older men of the community gather in small groups to ingest the powder and converse, that shamanic discourse finds a more public forum, and incantations are discussed and rehearsed in exegetic form.

Over the course of Ramos's participation in these nightly gatherings, he learned that Ponciano and other Hup elders were concerned that the young men of their community were not mastering the incantations as the older generation felt they should, putting the future health and safety of the village at risk. Recent decades have brought major changes for the Hupd'äh—less mobility and reliance on hunting, more frequent interaction with the national society, and the introduction of village primary schools.¹ In the context of contemporary scholarly emphasis on the documentation of endangered languages, such breaks in transmission are familiar stories. While attention is focused primarily on cases of total shift of a language to a politically and economically dominant variety, these processes are almost invariably preceded and accompanied by 'stylistic shrinkage' involving particular genres, registers, and styles (Campbell and Muntzel 1989). Such domains often hold special value for communities, representing elaborated forms of artistic and intellectual expression, deeply rooted in local spiritual and ecological contexts (Woodbury 1993; Harrison 2007; Evans 2010). This is certainly true for Hup incantations, which provide an encyclopedic ontology of social, cosmological, and ecological knowledge, and there is likely a two-way relationship between the compromised transmission of incantation and a waning familiarity with traditional territory and activities (cf. Sugiyama 2001). Yet, for the Hup elders, these changes also suggested new solutions. They turned to us, as an anthropologist and a linguist whom they knew well and who had experience in recording and writing their language, to help them document the incantations in the exegetic format of the coca circles, and to prepare materials to aid with their transmission (see Ramos 2018).

As our work with the Hupd'äh has demonstrated, the documentation of the intricate world of incantation comes with significant responsibilities and significant challenges. Incantation represents a focal point for some of the most critical questions associated with the collaborative documentation of verbal art, and pushes us to rethink our assumptions, methods, and analytical approaches on many levels. Our work comes with a deep obligation to the Hup community, who have entrusted us with material that to them holds immense cultural value; at the same time, with the community's endorsement, it invites us to call attention to the artistic and intellectual achievement that is represented here, in the face of the social and economic forces that threaten to irrevocably alter it.² We strongly agree with McDowell's (2000, 212) assertion that "working with indigenous verbal performances holds special promise to conserve and publicize instances of endangered oral traditions."

Yet this enterprise is maximally challenged by a genre like incantation (and indeed by forms of religious discourse more generally), which cannot be adequately understood in decontextualized form, like an object on a museum shelf. The very act of making a text accessible to other audiences through the act of documentation is an attempt to bridge cultural and discursive differences; however, this process may also obscure, in that it invites uncritical interpretation according to the guidelines of alternative cultural perspectives (Hanks and Severi 2014). In the case of Hup incantation, as illustrated by the Path-Traveling text that we provide below, a characterization of the genre as a form of verbal art seems incontestable—it leverages extensive parallelism, metaphor, and other tropes; it exhibits obvious distinctions from everyday speech; and specialists are respected for their abilities. Yet, at the same time, Hup incantation challenges basic formulations of the 'essence' of verbal art, which emphasize the role of performance (Bauman 1975) and the appreciation of the message form "for its own sake" in light of its aesthetic value (Jakobson 1960, 356; cf. Leavitt 1999). In Hup incantation, how are we to understand performance when it is fractured among multiple voices, arenas, and audiences, who may in turn be listening, or acted directly upon, or both? And how are we to interpret the aesthetic qualities of the text, to understand what motivates the leveraging of parallelism, metaphor, and other devices, and to consider how these relate to and even instantiate the shamanic action?

As Cesarino (2008, 6; 2011) observes in his study of Marubo shamanic discourse, "translation in this context is not only a task of creative transposition . . . in written

form, but also an ethnographic problem" (see also Metcalf 1989; Hanks and Severi 2014; Vilaça 2016; Mihas 2019). As a form of verbal art, Hup incantation comes into sharper focus via an ethnopoetic lens, which provides a framework for exploring and representing the artistry in grammatical and discursive structure (Jakobson 1960; Friedrich 1979; Hymes 1981, 2003; Tedlock 1983; Sherzer and Woodbury 1987). We gain further ground through an ethnography of communication approach, attending to the essential relevance of cultural and social context in understanding discursive practice (Hymes 1962; Epps, Webster, and Woodbury). But the study of incantation pushes us into complex and underexplored territory, marked by practical and ethical challenges as well as analytical and interpretative ones: As esoteric knowledge, incantation is likely to be well understood only by specialists, and may be particularly challenging to transcribe and translate; it may be subject to special restrictions or secrecy, whether in response to the negative perceptions of outsiders or in light of concerns about potential for misuse or mishap; and it may be of limited accessibility according to parameters such as gender, as in the case of the men's coca circles in the Vaupés region, as well as modes of 'performance' (cf. Buchillet 1983). The study of incantation thus calls for a deeply collaborative framework, leveraging diverse forms of experience, expertise, and access to knowledge, according to domains associated with linguistic and ethnographic investigation, community membership, social status, gender, etc. It likewise underscores the importance of long-term participant observation in the study of verbal art and in language documentation more generally (McDowell 2000; Dobrin and Schwartz 2016; Beier and Epps 2018).

In what follows, we present a view of Hup incantation, rooted as deeply as possible within the cultural practices, perspectives, and scripts that make it meaningful for the Hupd'äh, and illustrated via a detailed exploration of the Path-Traveling text. Through the lens of this text, we view the poetics of Hup incantation as kaleidoscopic and inherently multi-layered: interactions and goals are fractured across different performative moments, audiences span a range of people and entities across multiple cosmic planes, and the voice of the shaman itself becomes polyphonous as he draws on different identities to carry out his task (cf. Geertz 1973; Cesarino 2011). In the context of other forms of discourse, Hup incantation is at once maximally artistic and maximally enactive, such that its utilitarian function is in fact instantiated and enabled via the aesthetic. As we argue here, the genre of incantation invites us to re-examine our conception of ethnopoetics and verbal art, and epitomizes the paradox of commensurability that challenges any documentation of language and culture.

The World of Hup Incantation

The Hupd'äh are an interfluvial 'forest people' of the Vaupés region of the northwest Amazon (also known generically by the derogatory term 'Makú'; see, e.g., Silverwood-Cope 1990; Reid 1979; Pozzobon 1991); see Map 1. Their language, Hup, is one of four members of the Naduhup family (Ramirez 2006; Epps 2008a; Epps and Bolaños 2017). Despite the changes experienced over recent decades, many of which are implicated in language shift among other groups in the region, Portuguese competence is still generally quite low among the approximately 2,500 speakers of the language, and Hup is still the principal language of virtually all Hup children.³ The Hupd'äh, like other forest peoples of the region, interact frequently with their riverine neighbors, speakers of Tukanoan and Arawakan languages; and although they do not engage in the linguistic exogamy that is a well-known practice among many of these peoples, a history of intensive multilingualism has left its traces in their language (Epps 2007, 2008b).

The Hupd'äh are full participants in the widespread sharing of discursive, ritual, and other cultural practices within the Vaupés region and beyond. Among the many regional parallels evident in Hup cosmology and shamanic tradition, we mention an emphasis on coca and tobacco; beliefs in a layered cosmos, with forest 'houses' in



Figure 1. Hup within the Upper Rio Negro region

which game are presided over by spirit ‘masters’; a mythic complex involving a ‘trickster-creator’ known as ‘Bone-Son’ (or ‘Made from Bone’) and associated with the use of sacred trumpets forbidden to women; and an origin story involving the travels of ancestors from a primordial ‘Milk Lake’ throughout a vast river system in a snake-canoe (see, e.g., Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976, 1986, 1996; Buchillet 1983, 1992; Hill 1993, 2011; Wright 1993; Hugh-Jones, 1979b; 1995; Lolli 2010; Epps and Stenzel 2013). Many features of Vaupés discursive and shamanic practice are also reflected much more widely in Amazonia (e.g., Chaumeil 1983; Townsley 1993; Whitehead and Wright 1994; Beier, Michael, and Sherzer 2002).

Incantation, or *bi'id id* (literally ‘blessing/enchanting language’), is a central component of Hup shamanic practice, and is deeply embedded in myth and cosmology (see Ramos 2018; Ramos and Epps 2018; Epps and Ramos 2019).⁴ Hup incantations are of three principal types: *ta' bi'id* ‘surround incantation’, for protection; *pë' bi'id* ‘sickness incantation’, for healing; and *döh* ‘curses’, for causing harm; our Hup collaborators have chosen to focus on only the first two types for documentation (cf. Whitehead and Wright 2004). As is true of most Vaupés groups, only a small number of Hup ritual specialists attain the status of the full-fledged shaman, referred to as *pajé* in the regional Portuguese (a term borrowed from the Tupi-Guaraní language Nheengatú) and *sáw* in Hup (compare the ‘jaguar-shamans’ of the Baniwa; Wright 2013). Lower-level shamans, or incantation specialists, are referred to regionally as *benzadores* (*käd-ih* or *käd-hup-ih* in Hup).⁵ Most older men have some shamanic capability and possess repertoires of incantations (to our knowledge, incantations for the Hupd’äh are an exclusively male domain). Some individuals are known for having particularly extensive repertoires and/or special competence in certain domains, such as curing snakebite (compare Buchillet 1983, 1992 on incantation specialists among the Desana). In our discussion, we use the term ‘shaman’ generically to refer to any individual with shamanic knowledge, including the *käd-hup-ih* or *benzador*.

Incantations of all kinds are anchored in Hup theories of disease and healing, which emphasize the need to cultivate an appropriate balance between the *hãwig* (translated here as ‘breath-person’; also associated with the heart) and the *b'atib'* (‘shadow-person’ or ‘shade’) (Reid 1979; Silverwood-Cope 1990; Athias 2015; Ramos 2018; see also, e.g., Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976; Buchillet 1983; Hill 1993; and Wright 1993 for Desana and Arawakan perspectives).⁶ The *hãwig* or breath-person, a person’s positive or socially aware metaphysical component, is understood to be small at birth and to grow as a child ages, fed by the strengthening effects of incantation and by

participation in rituals. The breath-person is also the element that the shaman sends out of his own body to undertake his spiritual voyages, and is implicated in the shamanic act of blowing. The *b'atib'* or shadow-person is effectively the negative, asocial counterpart; it grows smaller during a person's lifetime, ceding to the breath-person through ritual intervention, and when a person dies it is the shadow-person that remains behind to terrorize the living. Ritual and shamanic action are closely focused on these processes of nurturing the breath-person and protecting it from the effects of shadow-people and other malignant entities who might intervene. In so doing, these activities make crucial reference to particular foods and substances, of which 'cool' elements such as coca, tobacco, maternal milk, and fruit support the breath-person and foster serenity, while 'hot' elements—meat and anything with blood, metal, arrow poison, etc.—are potentially dangerous. For the Hupd'äh, much as Harvey (2013) describes for the Maya, the understanding of health and illness merges subjective awareness with that of alterity or otherness, and is thus a fundamentally social concern: illness and injury are viewed as the result of aggressions on the part of other human and spiritual agents, and/or as an outcome of errors or oversights on the part of a sick individual or their associates, including the shaman who is responsible for intervening with the spirit entities on the person's behalf (see also Buchillet 1983, 129; Ramos 2018).

As observed above, the Hup engagement with incantation takes place on three levels. The shaman's delivery or 'actuation' of the incantation, usually focused on a physical object (liquid, plant, cigar, etc.), can be seen as its principal instantiation—the 'ground zero' of the shamanic text. This act is necessarily carried out privately and inaudibly; much as Buchillet (1992) describes for the Desana, the shaman's interaction is focused only on the spiritual entities with whom he is engaged, and the session is not available to a human audience. The transfer or 'application' of the incantation to its recipient occurs some time later, via the object that has absorbed the shaman's words—for example, by drinking the liquid, burning the resin, or blowing tobacco smoke over the body—but involves no direct engagement with the text on the part of the recipient. The texts find a human audience only in the nightly gatherings where men come together to ingest coca and its 'brother' tobacco, and to converse and share stories, myths, and incantations (Ramos 2018).⁷ These gatherings are a serious affair, linking the men with the cosmos as a primordial Milk Lake opens in the middle of the circle while they talk. Men normally begin to participate in the coca circles when their children are close to adolescence, and begin to learn incantations some time later, principally from their fathers but also from other relatives and via dreams.

While the discussion of incantation texts within the coca circles presents them to a listening audience, their delivery in this context is always in exegetic form. Importantly, speakers report that they are always redacted; the text in its entirety is too powerful and too dangerous to be spoken aloud, and exactly what and how much is left out of a particular presentation is not specified. Brief asides to the listener are frequently inserted, relating to the purpose and progression of the incantation. In the context of the documentation initiative, speakers have also directed comparable exegetic presentations of the texts to us and a recording device outside the context of the coca circles, often (by their choice) in the privacy of a house with no one else present.

The incantation texts themselves are relatively dynamic, in that they are built creatively on a formulaic structure and theme (as is common in Native American ritual discourse; see Severi 2002, 24), rather than memorized word-for-word. They establish shamanic actions vis-à-vis particular entities and associated locations across various cosmic planes, with a heavy emphasis on flora and fauna, which are 'listed' according to taxonomically organized relational sets. A similar structure can be seen in incantations elsewhere in the region, in keeping with the parallels noted above; for example, Wakuenai *malikai* incantation (Hill 1993) likewise emphasizes the naming of flora and fauna in sets, and with reference to habitat, mythical relevance, and ecological importance, although there are also notable points of difference.

As can be seen in the Path-Traveling text below, the language of Hup incantation is not in itself particularly esoteric, although it makes use of certain marked lexical and grammatical features. Metaphor, while important, is not generally employed to replace everyday vocabulary within the texts, in contrast to its role in Wakuenai *malikai* and many other Amazonian shamanic traditions (see e.g. Townsley 1993; Magalhães and Garcia 2018). We note, however, that Hup shamanic discourse more generally does make occasional use of metaphorical *yàd id* ‘hiding speech’ to mask particular terms that are associated with spiritually powerful concepts and place names, in order to keep them from being overheard by children, women, or non-Hupd’äh, and to protect hunters during forest encounters; for example, *pũ’ük* ‘coca’ may be substituted by *mèt* ‘agouti’ via an association of the mixture of toasted coca leaves and imbaúba ash with parts of butchered agouti prey (Ramos 2018, 492; cf. Aikhenvald 2019 on Tariana toponyms). While we do not explore the prosody of Hup incantations here, we observe that they are not sung, in the sense that pitch, rhythm, and other attributes associated with musicality are less relevant to these texts than they are to other Hup discourse genres (including some shamanic songs) or to Wakuenai *malikai* (see Hill 1993). They are nonetheless delivered with a chant-like intonation that tends to descend across sets of associated lines that define an action and the entities involved (e.g., lines 5–9 in the text below).

It is in the coca circles that the incantations are evaluated by their human audiences. This evaluation is focused on the efficacy of the text, as enabled by its formulation. For example, Ramos (2018) recounts an event involving the incessant crying of a sick newborn, attributed to the failure of the vital incantation cycle in which the shaman guides the child’s breath-spirit into being and from the Milk Lake into the human sphere, protecting it from the myriad perils along the way. Over several nights, the men discussed and debated the details of the incantation cycle, working together to determine which of the key components might have been skipped or not fully captured in the original application for the child, as reviewed in exegesis, and what should be altered for a new application to ‘take hold’ (*hisú’*). Thus, for the Hupd’äh, aesthetic judgments are crucially linked to questions of completeness, the exhaustive ‘listing’ of the full set of entities and contexts that are relevant for the shamanic action, as carried forward within the framework of the genre. From the perspective of entities in other cosmological planes, it is not the aesthetic *perception* of the text that is seen as relevant, but rather the efficacy of the encounter itself.

The Path-Traveling Incantation: Artistry in Action

We turn now to the text of the Path-Traveling Incantation, as presented in exegesis by Sr. Ponciano Salustiano Ramos in the Hup community of Tat Dëh (Taracua Igarapé) on the middle Tiquié River (Amazonas, Brazil). This is an example of a *ta’ bi’id* or ‘surround incantation’, for the protection of travelers on a forest trail, and was selected by Ponciano for documentation following a tumultuous few days in which his son Samuel was himself bitten by a venomous snake and subsequently recovered. The version presented here was recorded on July 8, 2011, with Danilo Paiva Ramos, with a first pass of transcription and translation carried out by Ramos and Hup community members Angélico Brasil Monteiro and Evaldo Monteiro Pires some months later, informed by consultation with Ponciano and other elders in the coca circle. The transcription and translation were further refined by Ramos and Epps, working together with Samuel Brasil Monteiro (Ponciano’s son) in Tat Dëh in 2016.⁸

Our ethnopoetic presentation of the text follows Woodbury’s (1985, 1987) approach to ‘rhetorical structure’, building on the work of Hymes (1981, 2003) and Tedlock (1983). The analysis below is based on syntactic and thematic parallelism in the text as well as breath and pause units in the oral delivery. In the transcription, light gray shading indicates the exegetic frame (introducing and concluding the text), while the darker gray highlights the openings of major ‘movements’ or sections, as discussed in more detail below. We encourage readers to listen to the audio excerpt of

lines 1–63, available in the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America (<https://ailla.utexas.org/islandora/object/ailla:271567>).

Tìwít Hámáp Bì'íd: Path-Traveling Incantation, by Sr. Ponciano Salustiano Ramos⁹

1	Núp tìwít hitám d'áh.	These are (words) for helping on the paths.
2	A1. Dög m'èh nih hohtégét àh sum bí' bìh, Danilo.	I always begin with the canoe of the mussurana snake (<i>Clelia clelia</i>), Danilo.
3	Dög m'èh nih hohtégét.	With the canoe of the mussurana snake.
4	Yúp hohtég yí' àh yet ham d'áháh, tē! tìw m'é yí'.	I go laying down this canoe, as far as the path goes.
5	Hây, dög m'èh nih hohtég,	Um, the canoe of the mussurana snake, ¹⁰
6	sáwi hohtég, sáwi tég hohtég,	the yellowheart (<i>Euxylophora sp.</i>) canoe, the yellowheart-tree canoe,
7	hã k'èt w'át hohtég,	the long-leaf laurel (<i>Ocotea sp.</i>) canoe,
8	hoho hã' tég hohtég,	the toad laurel-tree canoe,
9	s'id tég hohtég.	the jacajaca tree canoe.
10	Dög m'èh nih hohtégét	With the canoe of the mussurana snake,
11	àh hohtég níy,	I possess (this) canoe,
12	hup s'íbip b'ók ni hámawáh.	with the bark for the people's feet (I) go on.
13	Yinihiy mah yúp dahá inàn bahad níhih.	It is thus, they say, that the <i>daha</i> snake doesn't appear to us.
14	Yúp hohtég k'òdan mah yúp...	So it's said, inside this canoe...
15	in s'ib b'ob'ok ni ham yí'ih,	we go with our feet bark-wrapped,
16	yúp hohtég k'òdan.	inside this canoe.
17	Noh k'èt ham yí'ih, tē sãp hayàman.	We go stepping within it to the next village.
18	B2. Yí no yó', yúwàn yí no yó' b'ay,	Having said thus, having said that part,
19	nì ib' b'è'èt àh hitā' yet ham d'áhāb'ay, tìhíy n'àn.	I lay down my fish-weir of life to surround the snakes. ¹¹
20	Nì ib' b'è'èt hidàn hitā' yó',	Having surrounded them with my fish-weir of life,
21	wèd, hidàn, àh wèd nó'ayáh.	food, I offer food to them (the snakes).
22	Pũ'úk,	(I offer them) coca,
23	tàk pũ'úk b'ò',	the gourd of latex-coca,
24	páhây tàk pũ'úk b'ò',	the gourd of sorva (<i>Couma guianensis</i>) latex-coca,
25	mòt tàk pũ'úk b'ò'.	the gourd of rubber-tree (<i>Hevea sp.</i>) latex-coca.
26	Yúuwút yúp tìhíy n'àn,	With this, to these biting snakes,
27	nid'áh b'áw n'an,	to the common lanceheads (<i>Bothrops atrox</i>),
28	b'áwàn,	to the common lancehead,
29	yây mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the small root-clump house, ¹²
30	dèh hātàn,	to the water lancehead (<i>Bothrops sp.</i>),
31	sá' mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the aerial root-clump house,
32	tòd mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the hollow tree house,
33	hm, mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the hm, house,
34	dèh hātàn	to the water lancehead,
35	àh nóop b'ay.	I speak (to them).
36	Dèh púpàn yít yí' píid,	Thus also to the water-duck lancehead (<i>Bothrops sp.</i>),
37	dèh púpàn	to the water-duck lancehead,
38	mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the house,
39	sà' mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the aerial root-clump house,
40	tòdan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the hollow trees,
41	àh nóop b'ay.	I speak (to them).
42	Hègàn yít yí' píid,	Thus also to the bushmaster (<i>Lachesis muta</i>),
43	hègàn,	the bushmaster,
44	tòd mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the hollow tree house,
45	m'áj' mòyan ùy ìhàn,	to him of the clay house,
46	sà'an ùy ìhàn,	to him of the aerial root-clump,
47	àh nóop b'ay.	I speak (to them).
48	Yíd'áhàn, hidnih, yíd'áhàn yúp,	To them, their-, to them,
49	tàk pũ'úk b'ò'ót,	with this latex sap coca gourd,
50	mòt tàk pũ'úk b'ò'ót,	with this rubber-tree (<i>Hevea sp.</i>) coca gourd,
51	hidàn wed nó' pem d'áh hi yí'ip b'ay.	I feed them as they all are seated there in a group/line.

- 52 Hídnìh mòy k'òdan d'ò' k'òd ni yě pem Inside their house, I make them enter inside and sit down.
yí'ih.
- 53 Yínìhìy, háwäg hù' sápat, In this way, with bodies full of introspection (quiet, reflective),
54 hídan sáp bí' pem yí'ib'ay. I make them sit with their bodies thus.
55 Háwäg hù' hùt tég, The cigar of introspection,
56 háwäg hù' pū'úk b'ò', the coca gourd of introspection,
57 àh wed nó' pem yí'ib'ay. these I feed them, seated.
58 Yup wed nó'op yúwúh, Feeding them thus,
59 pū'úk wed yó', having eaten coca,
60 hùt un' yó' mah, having smoked tobacco, it's said,
61 yín'ih no níh hid pem yí'ih. thus they sit saying nothing.
62 Hid tæg sá' kí' péméy, Seated with his jaws stuck together,
63 ínàn tìh k'ác d'ò' t'é'èp. so that he (snake) fails to bite us.
64 **B3.** Yí no yó', nid'ànhàn, bág n'àn nóop Having said that, to those, then to those black bees (I) speak.
b'ay.
65 Bág d'ành nìh, The black bees',
66 yid'ành nìh àg tég, their drinking gourd,
67 yid'ành nìh d'apb'ùy, their weapons,
68 àh ta' yí'ib'ay. I surround (all these).
69 Yúp bág d'ành ínàn hid àg tég k'op ùh níy It is said that bees may offer us their gourd (of ayahuasca, *Banisteriopsis*
mah, *caapi*),
70 tìwít in hám tèn, when we are going along the path,
71 mīg k'èt k'ò' yó' in noh wòb tubúduh. thus wandering crazed/dizzy we collapse on the ground.
72 Hídnìh hōp kāk súk, To their fishing rods,
73 hídnìh d'apb'ùy àh no yí'ib'ay, to their weapons I speak,
74 yid'ànhàn b'ay, yup bág n'àn b'ayáh. to them, to these black bees.
75 Nup wíwíh n'àn b'ay, To these *wíwíh* wasps,
76 yít yí' pid. (I speak) in the same way again.
77 B'áw n'àn, To the common lanceheads (*Bothrops atrox*),
78 b'ab'áw n'àn, to the worm lizards (*Amphisbaena* sp.),
79 hídnìh àg tég, their drinking gourds,
80 àh ta' yí'ib'ay, nóha', again I surround them, I say,
81 hídnìh d'apb'ùy. (I surround) their weapons.
82 Yín'ih d'ành ínàn àg tég k'ópóh, Those ones offer us drink,
83 Yúp in àg na' hámawit mah yúp, Thus while we are going on (as if) drunk, they say,
84 in sedew noh yet yó' we slip and fall flat, and
85 in noh wòbòh, nóha'. we lie there fallen, I say.
86 **B4.** Yí no yó', yid'ành tégd'ùh húp d'ànhàn Having said thus, I speak then to those tree-people.
nóop b'ayáh.
87 Tégd'ùh húp d'ànhàn, To the tree-people,
88 mùn mòyan ùy ìhàn, to him of the caatinga house,
89 s'ùg mòyan ùy ìhàn, to him of the forest house,
90 b'òk mòyan ùy ìhàn, to him of the swamp house,
91 pàç mòyan ùy ìhàn, to him of the stone/mountain house.
92 Tình d'apb'ùy, tình d'apb'ùy d'ò' ne yó' His weapons, having gathered together all his weapons,
93 píç, mòy k'òd s'ò' d'ò' k'òd ni yě k'et (I) make him enter the house and stand inside.
yí'ib'ay.
94 Yid'ành nìh, hídnìh, Those ones', their (things),
95 tình hùt sàg, his tobacco pieces,
96 tình d'apb'ùy, all of his weapons,
97 ni hù' d'ò' ne yó' having gathered (them) together,
98 in yàhá' yè k'et yí'ib'ay. we cast them down to enter and stand (inside the houses).
99 S'ùg mòyan ùy d'ànhàn b'ayáh, Then to those of the forest house,
100 mùn mòyan ùy ìhàn, to him of the caatinga house,
101 b'òk mòyan ùy ìhàn, to him of the swamp house,
102 éyét b'íyí' d'ò' ne yě k'et hù' yí'iy. (I) gather all of these together to enter and stand completely (within the houses).
103 Hùh mòy k'òd s'ò' píç hid n'àn d'ò' kòd ni I cause them all to enter and be seated inside the river-rapids house.
yě pem yí'ih.
104 Yúp páhap àh nó yí', Thus as I have just spoken,
105 pū'úk b'ò', the coca gourd,

- 106 hídàn háwäg hù' pū'úk b'ò',
 107 háwäg hù' wèd,
 108 tìhàn wed no' yē pem yí'iy pid.
 109 Yíníhíy ùh ìnàn kēy d'áh way nìh yisò',
 110 pū'úk b'íyí' wed yò' tìh pem yí't-ìh, nòhà'.
 111 B5. Yí no yò' b'ay, hidnìh kòtòw tēg b'ay.
 112 Hìdnìh kòtòw tēg,
 113 nid'áh tēgd'ùh húp d'áh nìh kòtòw
 114 tēg, b'atìb' d'áh nìh kòtòw tēg,
 115 yid'áh nìh yup kòtòw tēg àh ta' yí'ib'ay.
 116 Yíníhíy hidnìh kòtòw tēgèt,
 117 hid kòtòwöy mah yúp,
 118 yúp tìwít in ham ten, in kíkìniwìh.
 119 ìnàn hid siw'ípìp, ìnàn hid siw'ípìp ùh in
 kíkìni-ìh, nòhà'.
 120 Hìdnìh kòtòw tēgèt mah, ìnàn hid
 kòtòwòh,
 121 sây tēg kòtòw tēg,
 122 wag tēg kòtòw tēg àh nóop b'ay,
 123 núwàn hidàn àh ta' hù' yí'iy, nòhà'.
 124 Hìdnìh mòy sò' píd yāhā' yē k'èt yí'iy.
 125 C6. Yít àh nóot yí' àh hámap té!
 126 yít nóoy b'íyí' ham yò' té!
 127 mòy widham tēēway,
 128 sâp hayáman widham tēēway,
 129 hùt tòh meh n'àn àh nóop b'ayáh.
 130 Hùt tòh meh nìh,
 131 yúp tìnìh tìwít, àh yēay yúp,
 132 sâp hayámát àh yēēwayáh.
 133 Hùt tòh meh nìh,
 134 tìnìh tìwít yē yò' b'ay,
 135 hayám nomìh tēh nìh,
 136 yúwút tìnìh ìb' kád mì' sò'
 37 àh hup háwäg hup yād yē k'èt yí'ih,
 nòhà'.
 138 Hup hùt tēg ni yē k'ètēy,
 139 hup kád ni yē pem yí'ih, nòhà'.
 140 Yuwut yē pem yò' àh way yí'ib'ay hà'y'ah
 sò'.
 141 Yid'áh yòh sisid meh d'áh nìh,
 142 hidnìh sápat.
 143 Ów meh d'áh nìh,
 144 hidnìh sápat,
 145 hup sap ni yò', way k'ètēp b'ay, nòhà'.
 146 Ów d'áh nìh sápat,
 147 bó meh d'áh nìh sápat,
 148 síw d'áh nìh sápat,
 149 hup sápat ni way k'èt yí'ih.
 150 C7. Yúwút way k'èt yò' b'ay,
 151 nid'áh yòh sisid d'áh sò' d'òb d'òp b'ay.
 152 Yòh sisidit,
 153 yòh sisid nìh,
 154 yúwút tìnìh, tìnìh sápat,
 155 yúwút tìnìh hùt tēgèt,
 156 yúwút tìnìh d'apb'ùy,
 157 hup d'apb'ùy ni yò',
 158 yúwút tìnìh hùt tēgèt,
 159 hùt tēg ni yò',
 160 àh hup sap ni yē k'èt yí'ih,
- the coca gourd of their introspection,
 the food (coca) of their introspection,
 I feed (this) to them as they enter and are seated.
 With this may he not come out from there to watch us;
 having eaten only/all the coca he remains seated, I say.
 Having said thus, (I come to) their dance staffs.
 Their dance staffs,
 those tree-people's staffs,
 those (malignant) shadow-people's staffs,¹³
 I then surround their staffs.
 Like this, with their dance staffs,
 like this they pound (down on) us, they say,
 when we go along the path, we are in pain.
 By their whipping us, it must be by their whipping us that we are in
 pain, I say.
 With their staffs, it's said, they pound us,
 their sây imbaúba (*Cecropia sp.*) staffs,
 their wag imbaúba staffs (*Cecropia sciadophylla?*), I say (these),
 I completely surround this for them, I say.
 I cast down (their staffs, to cause the beings) to enter and stand inside
 their house.
 Thus saying I go on until!
 Thus saying all this, going on until!
 I arrive at a house,
 I arrive at another community,
 now I speak to the little tobacco caterpillars (*Manduca sp.*).
 The little caterpillars',
 by their path, I enter,
 I enter another community.
 The little caterpillars',
 by their path having entered,
 the little village chief's,
 with this under his stool of life,
 I enter and stand, hiding my breath-person, I say.
 Possessing a cigar, (I) enter and stand,
 possessing a stool, (I) enter and sit, I say.
 Having entered and been seated there, I go out, to the outside.
 The small *sisid* marbled swamp eels' (*Symbranchus marmoratus*),
 their bodies.
 The small lizards',
 with their bodies,
 after having embodied myself (in them) (I) go out and stand, I say.
 With the small lizards' bodies,
 with the little rufous-collared sparrows' (*Zonotrichia capensis*) bodies,
 with the chestnut-bellied seed-finches' (*Sporophila angolensis*) bodies,
 embodying myself (in them) (I) go out and stand.
 After having gone out and stood there,
 (I) then go down toward the water, to where those *sisid* marbled
 swamp eels are.
 With the *sisid* marbled swamp eel,
 the *sisid* marbled swamp eel's,
 with this, with his body,
 with this, with his cigar,
 with this, his weapons,
 having possessed the weapons,
 with this, with his cigar,
 having possessed the cigar,
 embodying myself (in him) I enter and stand.

- 161 Tinih moy k'òdót b'ay, yòh sisidít b'ay. Inside his house, with the *sisid* marbled swamp eel.
 162 Yòh sisidít yè yò' b'ay, yòhót b'ay. Having entered where the *sisid* marbled swamp eel is, with the marbled swamp eel.
 163 Yòhót yè k'èt yò' b'ay yúp, Having entered and stood with the *sisid* marbled swamp eel,
 164 hàyy'ah sò' àh way áyap b'ay, I go back out to the outside,
 165 s'ùg sò' b'ay. to the forest.
 166 C8. B'ib'ib' mehét b'ay. (Thus) again with the little gray squirrel.
 167 B'ib'ib' meh nih, The little gray squirrel's,
 168 yúwút tinih hùt tèg, with this, with his cigar,
 169 yúwút tinih mòy k'òd, with this, inside his house,
 170 mòy k'òd ni yè k'èt yí'ip b'ay. (I) enter and stand inside the house.
 171 Yí no yò', Having said that,
 172 b'ib'ib' mehàn no yò', having spoken to the little gray squirrel,
 173 wòmàn b'ay. I speak to the red squirrel.
 174 Wòmót, wòmàn no yò', With the red squirrel, having spoken to the red squirrel,
 175 yúwút tinih hùt tèg, with this, his cigar,
 176 yúwút tinih mòy k'òd, with this, inside his house,
 177 hup mòy k'òd ni yè k'èt yí'ip b'ay. to be inside the house (I) enter and stand.
 178 Yít in nóoy, Having said that,
 179 in nó tèn mah yúp inan pè', when we speak (thus), it's said, for us, pain/illness,
 180 sãp hayámát in ham k'ò' tèn, pè' in kay' when we go walking to another community, pain/illness does not
 yè nihih, nóha'. embrace us, I say.
 181 Sãp hayàm inàn këy hipäh nihäh tih-hã'. At another community, it (the pain/illness and/or beings that transmit it) does not recognize us.
 182 Yinih yò', yúp wòm d'áhát way k'èt yò', Thus, after having gone out and stood with the red squirrels,
 183 yúp wòm d'áhát yè k'èt yò', having entered and stood with the red squirrels,
 184 àh widyè d'ò' kädwayawáy, yikán. I arrive entering and cause them to go out quickly, (from?) there.
 185 S'ùg sò' àh hámayáh. I go on to the forest.
 186 Ya'am téh d'áhát, With the ocelots (*Leopardus sp.*),
 187 nid'áh, did ya'amát, with these, with the stump jaguar,
 188 àh ham d'ò' b'ayáh, nóha'. I go again to take (them), I say.
 189 D9. Yít ham d'ò' yò' b'ay, So, having gone taking (i.e. carried out) the spell's actions,
 190 yít ham yò', yid'áh wòm d'áhát, having gone, having gone with those red squirrels,
 191 ya'am d'áhát ham yò', té! with the jaguars, until!
 192 Yúwàn yúp háyát, kòg-pupú' yòh dèh. (I arrive) at this um, medicinal juice of the cebus-monkey passionflower (*Passiflora acuminata*).
 193 Kòg-pupú' yòh dèh yàgát, With the hammock of the cebus-monkey passionflower,
 194 hup yàg ni yè k'á'yáh, (I) possess the hammock and enter to hang (inside it),
 195 yúp kòg-pupú' s'ó k'òdan inside the flower of the passionflower,
 196 hup yàg ni yè k'á' yí'ayáh. (I) possess the hammock and enter to hang (inside it).
 197 Hup háwäg hup yäd yè k'á' yí'ayáh. Hiding my breath-person, (I) enter to hang (inside it).
 198 Yàg púp s'ó k'òdan, (As a) hammock-tick inside the flower,
 199 hup yàg, háwäg hup yäd yè k'á' yí'ih, the hammock, thus (my) breath-person hides itself, entering to hang (inside it),
 200 hup yàg ni yè k'á' yí' ayáh. (I) possess the hammock and enter to hang (inside it).
 201 Bahad nihíp, hùt tègèt, Invisible, with the cigar,
 202 bahad nihíp yàgát, with the hammock of invisibility,
 203 hup yàg ni yè k'á' yí' ayáh. (I) possess the hammock and enter to hang (inside it).
 204 Ya'àp tiwít ham k'ò'an ùy yúwúh. That is all for the path-going (incantation).
 205 Yít tih ham k'étéh, yít tih tohóóh. It goes on thus up to here, and thus it ends.
 206 Tiwít hám d'áh in hup bí'id n'ih, For us to bless ourselves when going along the path,
 207 sãp hayámát ham d'áh in hup bí'id n'ih. for us to bless ourselves when going to another community.
 208 Yít tih tohóóh. Thus it ends.

For those outside the Hup community, the transcription, translation, and visual organization of the Path-Traveling text are obviously essential steps toward accessibility. However, they fall far short of this goal. As McDowell observes:

We cannot, as has often happened in the past, claim authenticity to oral tradition while rewriting the speech of our subjects according to our own literary conventions, or to

conventions of rustic style. What is required is a process that preserves features of the originals while making possible an experience of verbal consumption roughly comparable to the experience of the native audience. (2000, 212)

As we note above, incantation pushes us to the limits of our capacity to meet this injunction (see also Metcalf 1989; Cesarino 2011). While the written presentation on a page directs our attention to its aesthetic and performative attributes, it gives us no guidelines about how these should be understood and interpreted. In taking up this challenge here, we explore the Path-Traveling text as verbal art, organizing our investigation around the three core attributes that Friedrich (1979, 472) identifies for poetic language: the use of figures and tropes such as parallelism, metaphor, and metonymy; the intensification of form through use of special expressive devices (formulaic structures, marked grammatical forms, etc.); and analogical associations among ideas and planes of reference (creating conceptual connections via metaphor and other devices). Yet incantation is not merely poetic; it is first and foremost a speech act—an utterance of which the principal function is to realize an action, rather than to convey information (Austin 1962; Tambiah 1968, 1973). As we argue here, the aesthetic qualities encountered in the Path-Traveling text are themselves crucially enactive, such that their selection and manipulation within the text are fundamentally linked to their role in instantiating the shamanic act.

We turn first to the higher-level organization of the text, as summarized in Table 1, bearing in mind that some part has presumably been redacted in the exegesis. A brief opening and closing statement at the beginning and end provide the exegetic frame (see lightly shaded text above). An introduction (A) and a conclusion (D) each summarize a major shamanic action (further explained below)—the initial step of laying down a protective ‘snake canoe’ along the trail to protect the travelers, and the concluding action in which the shaman hides himself within the passionflower. The two intermediate sections (B and C) are each more complex, and focus on subduing the malignant entities and embodying benign ones, respectively. We observe that this macrolevel structure, involving two major sections focused on neutralizing and appropriation, closely resembles that described by Buchillet (1992) for Desana incantation (see also Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976; Ramos 2019), although it does not seem to be uniform across all categories of Hup incantation; it also bears a certain similarity to Hill’s (1993) discussion of the two major sections of Wakuenai (Arawakan) shamanic chant, focused on ‘heaping up’ and ‘searching for’ the ‘names’, respectively.

Each of the two principal sections (B and C) are themselves composed of multiple subsections, which we term ‘movements’.¹⁴ Our choice of this term is not arbitrary: each subsection instantiates the shaman’s metaphysical travel to a different location or ‘cosmic house’ (see, e.g., Reid 1979; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1996) and engagement with the set of entities he encounters there, relevant to the condition being treated. Each ‘movement’ is described in terms of the shaman’s *ham-* ‘going’ via a cosmic dislocation or voyage akin to a flight (cf. Eliade 1974; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978; Chernela and Leed 1996; Langdon 2013). As described by Samuel Brasil Monteiro, these movements themselves are visualized as being linked together—both within the text and in space and time—in the form of a *hòp sèg* ‘fishnet’ or *suh yàg* ‘spider web’. The shamanic action of ‘stepping’ firmly on the ground in each location is understood to ‘tie’ up the thread of his movement and contribute to the ‘surrounding’ or protection of the recipient of the incantation, such as the travelers on the forest trail (see Ramos 2018, 41; Ramos and Epps 2018). The ‘surrounding’ function is itself carried out with the shamanic equivalent of a fish-weir, a flexible barrier of slats bound together with vines and placed in the water to channel fish into traps (see lines 19–20).

Each movement is in turn internally organized into sequences of lines (or ‘verses’, prosodically defined via descending intonation and pauses) through which each type of entity is engaged and the relevant action taken. For example, Movement 2 (Section B) begins by establishing the class of entities to be dealt with (venomous snakes), then summarizing the shamanic action to be taken (offering sticky coca). It

goes on to introduce each subtype of the entity class (common lanceheads, ‘water-duck’ lanceheads, bushmasters, etc.), and list the varieties associated with each subtype (which in this text are indicated primarily by locations in which they are encountered, but can also include other sorts of varietal subdivisions, and which may be ordered in an ecologically informed manner). This act of thorough naming or ‘listing’ according to taxonomic sets (indicated via the verb *do’-*, which is also associated with the meanings of ‘count’ and ‘read’ in contemporary Hup) establishes the shaman’s mastery over the entities, and is particularly relevant to Section B (compare Hill 1993). The belongings and weapons of these entities may also be indicated within each verse, such as the drinking gourds of the black bees and the dance-staffs of the tree-people in Movements 3 and 5. In the cosmology of the Hupd’äh and other Rio Negro groups, all entities are understood to have weapons, and a hunter must extract the weapons (as represented, e.g., in glands) from the bodies of his prey (see also Ramos 2018, 121; Arhem 1996; Lolli 2010); likewise the different human groups are understood to have each received a particular type of weapon (guns, bows and arrows, blowguns) at the margins of the Milk Lake. The movement concludes with an elaboration of the shamanic action involving this group of entities, and the result (which in Movement 2 relates to feeding the snakes sticky coca and tobacco, such that they sit quietly inside their house with their jaws stuck together, unable to bite the travelers). The movements in Sections B and C share a similar organization, but with certain differences, as can be seen in the comparison in Table 2.

As can be seen in the structure of the text, the trope of parallelism is richly evident across all levels (Jakobson 1966; Fox 1977), from the ‘macro’ to the ‘micro’ (Urban 1991). The role of parallelism on a ‘micro’ level—here, particularly within ‘verses’—is highly salient; as has been observed for Amerindian shamanic discourse more generally, this hinges on “the use of a limited number of repeated formulas, constantly modified with slight variations” (Severi 2002, 24), which “thread together

Table 1
Structure of the Path-Traveling Incantatio

Section	Movement	Entities elaborated
Opening		
A	Movement 1: Laying down the mussurana snake canoe	Types of canoes/trees they are made from
B	Movement 2: Engaging and subduing the venomous snakes	Common lanceheads, water lancehead, water-duck lancehead, bushmaster
	Movement 3: Engaging and subduing the stinging insects and other malignant creatures	Black bees, wasps, worm lizards
	Movement 4: Engaging and subduing the tree-people	Those of the major non-riverine ecotomes: caatinga, forest, swamp, hill
	Movement 5: Engaging and subduing the dance-staffs	Those of the tree-people, the shadow/spirit-people
C	Movement 6: Engaging and embodying the tobacco-caterpillars	Tobacco-caterpillars, also marbled swamp eels, lizards, sparrows, seed-finches
	Movement 7: Engaging and embodying the marbled swamp eels	Marbled swamp eels’ bodies, cigars, weapons
	Movement 8: Engaging and embodying the squirrels and ocelots	Gray squirrel, red squirrel, ocelot, stump jaguar
D	Movement 9: Shaman hides himself within the passionflower	
Closing		

Table 2
Organization of Movements B and C compared

Part B (Movements 2–5)	Part C (Movements 6–8)
Subduing malignant entities	Embodying/borrowing attributes of benign entities
Focus on listing of entities	Focus on shamanic actions
Entities organized in clear taxonomic sets	Less taxonomic grouping of entities; relevance of other principles (esp. liminality)
Shaman sends entities into their cosmic houses	Shaman enters the entities' houses to interact with them, may cause them to come out

verbal images" (Townsend 1993, 457). In so doing, as Sherzer (1990) explores for Guna, incantation manipulates the grammatical resources available in the language, such that the "grammar of poetry" enables a "poetry of magic" (see also Woodbury 1993). As in Guna, the complex verbal constructions available in Hup allow for subtle substitutions within a parallel framework, advancing the shamanic actions step by step, channeling the dynamism of the shifting 'focus'.¹⁵ In lines 138–139 (repeated here as example 1), we see a construction that can be analyzed on both phonological and morphosyntactic grounds as a single verbal word (see Epps 2008a): a noun ('tobacco', 'stool') is verbalized via the element *-ni-*, which with the reflexive prefix yields the reading 'possess [noun]'; this in turn combines with the compounded verb roots 'enter-stand' and 'enter-sit'.

- (1)
- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-------|-------------------|---|
| <i>hup- hùt</i> | =tëg | -ni- | yë- | <i>k'ët-ëy,</i> | 'Possessing a cigar, (I) enter and stand, |
| RFLX tobacco | =CL:stick | VRB | enter | stand-DYNM | |
| <i>hup- käd</i> | | -ni- | yë- | <i>pem-yi'-ih</i> | possessing a stool, (I) enter and sit... |
| RFLX stool | | VRB | enter | sit-TEL-DECL | (lines 138-139) |

Parallelism is also key in elaborating the types of entities encountered and manipulated by the shaman, where it builds principally on the syntactic resources associated with nominal compounding in Hup. Nominal modifiers can be layered onto a head noun, preceding the elements modified (as indicated here by brackets). In (2), for example, the type of food to be offered to the venomous snakes is set out (coca), elaborated (gourd of latex-coca), and elaborated still further (types of latex).

- (2)
- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|--|--|
| <i>pü'ük,</i> | | | | | '(I offer them) coca, |
| coca | | | | | |
| [<i>täk</i> | <i>pü'ük</i>] | <i>b'ò,</i> | | | the gourd of latex-coca, |
| latex | coca | gourd | | | |
| [[<i>pähäy</i> | <i>täk</i>] | <i>pü'ük</i>] | <i>b'ò,</i> | | the gourd of sorva (<i>Couma guianensis</i>) latex-coca, |
| sorva | latex | coca | gourd | | |
| [[<i>möt</i> | <i>täk</i>] | <i>pü'ük</i>] | <i>b'ò</i> | | the gourd of rubber-tree (<i>Hevea sp.</i>) latex-coca.' |
| hevea | latex | coca | gourd | | (lines 22–25) |

The extensive parallelism in the Path-Traveling incantation makes an obvious poetic contribution—it is clearly aesthetically relevant, and further aids the speaker in maintaining a flow of words (cf. Lord 1960); see line 33, for example, where Ponciano simply inserts 'hm' in the slot specifying the type of house in which a venomous snake spirit is encountered, following the structure established in the preceding two lines (*hm mòyan üy ihàn* 'to him of the, hm, house'). However, the use of parallelism is also fundamentally enactive and indeed transformative: as we note above, each 'movement' tracks the shaman's metaphysical dislocation, and each verse instantiates

his interaction with a relevant entity—functions similar to those observed by Cesarino (2011) for Marubo shamanic song.

These structures are further enhanced by particular expressive devices, which leverage the lexical and grammatical resources of the language towards a poetically relevant “intensification of form” (Friedrich 1979), but also carry out the shamanic tasks that are ‘actuuated’ through the performance of the text. For example, a new movement is typically signaled via a discursive strategy known as tail-head linkage, which summarizes the preceding action by repeating a key verb in a dependent expression, usually marked with the ‘sequential’ suffix *-yö*.¹⁷ The ‘repetition’ enclitic =*b’ay* (‘again’) is also recurrent, indicating that the shaman has taken up the next phase of the action; see for example the opening lines to Movement 7 (example 3).

- (3) *yúw-út* *way-k’ët-yö=b’ay*,
 DEM.ITG-OBL go.out-stand-SEQ=AGAIN
ni-d’äh *yöh* *sisid=d’äh* *sö* *d’öb-d’ö-öp=b’ay*
 DEM.PRX-PL swamp.eel ?=PL LOC go.down-take-DEP=AGAIN
 ‘After having gone out and stood there, (I) then go down toward the water, to where the *sisid* marbled swamp eels are.’ (lines 150–151)

Hup’s rich repertoire of motion-path verbs and grammatical markers of direction and location are also brought to bear in tracking the shaman’s voyage to each new cosmic house. As can be seen in examples (3–5), for example, verbs such as *ham-* ‘go’, *widham-* ‘arrive’, *d’öb-* ‘go down toward water’, *way-* ‘exit’, *yë-* ‘enter’ are heavily used; as are the ‘locational’ postposition *sö*, the ‘directional’ suffix *-an*, and the adverbial particle *të* ‘until, up to’, which is frequently prosodically distinguished by sharp rise in pitch and intensity (here represented by an exclamation point), sometimes accompanied by an abrupt glottal closure.

- (4) *yit* *nó-oy* *b’iyi’* *ham-yö’* *të!* *mòy* *widham-të-ëw-ay...*
 thus say-DYNM all go-SEQ UNTIL house arrive.go-FUT-FLR-INCH
 ‘Thus saying all this, going on until! (I) arrive at a house...’ (lines 126–127)

Other resources associated both with shamanic action and an ‘intensification of form’ include marked types of complex verbal constructions that are rarely encountered in everyday Hup discourse. For example, the use of the verbalizing element *-ni-* appears much more productive in incantation than in standard speech, in that it combines with a wider variety of nouns; moreover, these verbalized forms tend to co-occur with the reflexive prefix *hup-* to generate the expression ‘possess something’—also hardly attested in any other discourse form in our corpus, and distinct from the more everyday strategies for indicating possession in Hup. This expression can be seen in example (1) above, as well as in the (even more esoteric) expression *hup-sap-ni-* (REFLX-body-VRB) ‘possess the body/bodily attributes of’, i.e., ‘embody myself’; see for example line 145. The grammar of incantation also takes a highly productive approach to complex causation: While Hup’s basic causative strategy involves the combination of a transitive verb (whose subject is the causer) pre-posed to an intransitive verb stem (whose undervived subject would be the causee) in a compound construction, the transitive element is normally drawn from a limited repertoire of three verb roots (*d’ö-*, *d’äh-*, and *k’ët-*, literally ‘take’, ‘order/send’ and ‘stand’, which in causative contexts indicate a range of lesser to greater control on the part of the causee). In incantation, however, we find a much wider range of transitive verbs serving a causative function, as seen in example (5).¹⁸

- (5) *hid-nih* *mòy* *sö* *pid* *yähã-’-yë-k’ët-yi-’iy*
 3PL-POSS house LOC DIST cast.down-enter-stand-TEL-DYNM
 ‘(I) cast down (their staffs, to cause the beings) to enter and stand inside their house.’ (line 124)

The illocutionary character of the Path-Traveling text can be clearly seen in the use of overt performatives (cf. Austin 1962; Silverstein 1976). While subjects are frequently dropped in Hup (as in the examples above), first person singular reference is maintained throughout the text and marked overtly at intervals by the pronoun *āh*. The shaman's epistemic authority is also regularly confirmed by the interjection *nóha'* 'I say', which derives from the verb *no-* 'say', probably fused with the interactive tag *ha'* (example 6).

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| (6) | <i>āh</i> | <i>ta'-yi'-ib'ay,</i> | <i>nóha'</i> , | <i>hid-nih</i> | <i>d'apb'uy</i> |
| | 1SG | surround-TEL-AGAIN | I.say | 3PL-POSS | weapon |
| | 'Again I surround them, I say, (I surround) their weapons.' (lines 80–81) | | | | |

This emphasis on the shaman's own voice is a highly salient feature of Hup incantation. The frequency of the *nóha'* interjection coincides with the notably infrequent occurrence of evidentials marking indirectly acquired information (*ní* 'assumption' and *mah* 'reported'), which are for the most part reserved for relating what particular entities are known to be likely to do (e.g., line 69: 'It is said that bees may offer us their gourd [of ayahuasca]'). The use of these resources in incantation contrasts notably with traditional narrative, in which evidentials of indirect experience are ubiquitous—despite the fact that both myth and incantation engage with many of the same themes and topics (see Déléage 2010; Epps and Ramos 2019). Another notable contrast relates to the absence of ideophones and quoted dialogue in Hup incantation. While these resources are heavily used in storytelling—where, much as Nuckolls (2000, 239) observes for Quechua, they provide multiple interactive voices that foreground a "cultural aesthetic of interconnectedness" with natural, human, and spiritual social spheres (see also Basso 1985)—their marked absence in incantation draws attention to the shaman's own authoritative voice, and to his singular position of power even within a framework of interaction.

Metaphor and 'analogical association' represent perhaps the most pivotal point at which the aesthetic and the utilitarian may be indistinguishable in incantation. While these are unquestionably core features of poetic language, as Friedrich (1979) observes, they are also of key relevance to shamanic and sacred discourse across many cultural traditions. In Tambiah's (1968) classic exploration of sacred language, he points out the role of metaphor in manipulating "similarity and contiguity" to empower action (cf. Frazer 1922), while Severi (2002, 29) stresses incantation's reliance on analogical associations to bring about a "transformation of the world, formulated in ritual terms" (see also Cesarino 2011; Oakdale 2018). As these and other scholars observe, metaphor also relates to the parameters of intelligibility and illocutionary force that distinguish sacred from ordinary speech, functioning to veil potentially dangerous information (see above) and/or contribute to the clarity of the visionary experience (Townsend 1993). All of these are functions that clearly go beyond the "emotive" or aesthetic.

Hup incantation itself draws on a broader worldview, apparently embedded at all levels of cosmological and shamanic understanding, which sees experience as situated within and across multiple coexisting 'worlds' that are mapped onto one another in analogical fashion. This view is associated with the 'perspectivist' observation that for many Amerindian peoples a whole range of animal and other entities are understood to experience the world in ways that are fundamentally comparable to human experience (Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2002). Such parallels are widely evident in Hup discourse and practice; for example, chigoe fleas are said to be engaging in a coca circle within a person's toe, and the circular distribution of coca plants in a garden enables them to converse with each other (Ramos 2018). According to this analogical mapping of 'worlds' onto one another, we find associations among a system of forest paths (for people and animals), a network of waterways (for people

and fish), and the branches of a tree or plant (for tobacco caterpillars, squirrels, etc.); similarly, the rocky hills that jut out of the Amazonian plain are houses of game with spirit masters, just as longhouses contain socially delimited groups of people with human leaders, and the entities in the Path-Traveling text are each associated with their own locations and cosmic 'houses'; the bodies of animals contain weapons parallel to those used by humans and by spirits; and the components of a longhouse are associated with parts of the cosmos, as well as with male and female bodies. (For similar perspectives among other peoples of the region, see, for example, Reichel-Dolmatoff 1986, 1996; Hugh-Jones, 1979b).

It is the shaman who can navigate these various worlds, traveling between them and engaging their inhabitants, with the power to manage the dangers associated with the disconnects among these parallel realities. Thus the metaphorical associations throughout the incantation bring about the shaman's neutralization of harmful entities and their weapons, and his appropriation or embodiment of the beneficial qualities of the helpful ones, providing him with his tools of engagement. For the Hup shaman, metaphor is itself an act of mimesis (Taussig 1993), such that power and control over an entity is enabled through its copying. Below, we examine some of the principal metaphors within the Path-Traveling text and their roles in the shamanic action.

In Part A (Movement 1), the shaman undertakes a fundamental act of appropriation that frames the incantation as a whole: he encloses the length of the path within a canoe that is simultaneously a mussurana snake (*Clelia clelia*). This snake, a constrictor that preys on other snakes and is immune to their venom, offers a protective shell for the travelers. As is true for the other forms of shamanic appropriation that emerge later in the text, this snake-canoe covering should be considered in the context of the widespread Amazonian concept of cosmic 'clothing', the shamanic capacity for metamorphosis via bodily change—or in Ponciano's words, *hup-sap-ni-* (RFLX-body-VRB-) 'embodying'. As Viveiros de Castro (1998, 482) observes, "the animal clothes that shamans use to travel the cosmos are not fantasies but instruments: they are akin to diving equipment, or space suits, and not to carnival masks." In the case of the mussurana snake canoe, rather than modifying himself, the shaman is appropriating the relevant properties of both snake and canoe to create a protective covering for the travelers. The same theme appears in the subsequent mention of the flexible bark foot-wrappings that are used as a (more mundane) form of protection against snakes on the trail; compare too the action of conveying the incantation to one's person by 'wrapping' oneself in the tobacco smoke from the shamanically prepared cigarette.¹⁹

A further significant aspect of the mussurana snake canoe metaphor is the parallel it draws between the networks of waterways and forest trails that extend throughout the region, and its association with the mythical snake canoe in which the ancestors traveled when people were first distributed throughout the region—a pan-Vaupés origin story that is associated primarily with Tukanoan peoples but is shared by the Hupd'äh and has parallels among neighboring Arawakan groups as well. For the Tukanoans, the river system provides not only the principal means of travel, but also represents a hydrocentric system of shamanic geographies that connect locations of mythical, historical, and contemporary relevance (Vidal 2000; Hill 2011; Cayón and Chacon 2014); whereas for the Hupd'äh the system of forest trails is a focus of both functions (see Ramos 2018).²⁰ The canoe theme is further elaborated in the listing of the different types of trees that are used for canoe-making in the region (lines 6–9).

In Part B (Movements 2-5), the shaman begins with the recurrent metaphorical action of laying down his 'fish-weir of life' to 'surround' the dangerous entities encountered along the path. He then moves on to the shamanic work of neutralizing each of them in turn: the venomous snakes, the black bees and wasps, and the malignant tree- and shadow-people spirits (*b'atib'*, see above), elaborated according to the different locations in which they may be encountered. Both the dangers presented by these enemies, and the shaman's actions to control them, revolve around the theme of commensuality: for many Amazonian peoples, the sharing of

food, drink, or other substances is crucially implicated in the process of ‘familiarization’ and the creation of kin relations (Fausto 2002; Vilaça 2002; Costa 2017; Ramos 2018). Engaging in commensal relations with a malignant being is inherently dangerous, opening the recipient to its sphere of influence and to the negative effects of the substance offered. In lines 69–71 (“It is said that bees may offer us their gourd [of ayahuasca, *Banisteriopsis caapi*], when we are going along the path, thus wandering crazed/dizzy we collapse on the ground”), the bees’ sting is not merely metaphorically associated with the effects of ayahuasca; it *is* their own ayahuasca that they offer to the travelers—reflecting the parallel but disjunctive perspectives of humans and other beings noted above. The shaman counteracts their offering by feeding them his own substances, coca and tobacco, whose inherent ‘coolness’ neutralizes the ‘heat’ of theirs (see above). As the text elaborates, the snakes are gagged and subdued by feeding them coca made sticky by association with different kinds of latex sap; this causes them to enter their cosmic houses and sit in quiet introspection (*hāwīg hūĩ*, literally ‘breath-person finishes/runs out’, which can also mean ‘be sad’ or ‘experience longing’), unable to form their coca circles and collaboratively pursue their aggressive activities. The shaman’s ‘surrounding’ action also causes these entities to drop their weapons and other powerful tools—knives, poles, staffs, and tobacco pieces (potent tools of shamanic navigation)—which the shaman gathers together and casts away out of reach. Finally, another key action is that of standing: malignant beings stand to confront the shaman and are made to be seated; helpful beings stand in order to engage with him. The shaman himself enters each of the cosmic houses, stands within it, and then leaves—a principal motif in Hup incantation; compare Reichel-Dolmatoff’s observation (1986, 118) that the act of standing represents stabilization and equilibrium for the Desana shaman.

Part C (Movements 6–8) focuses on the shaman’s interaction with beneficial entities and his appropriation of their useful qualities. Crucially, all of these creatures are in some way transformative or liminal, particularly regarding their ability to move between ‘worlds’—sky, water, earth, and the underworld—giving them a particular affinity to shamans and spirits (Reid 1979, 257; Ramos 2018; for similar views elsewhere in the region, see Hill 1993; Goldman 1972). The transition from malignant to helpful beings begins with the tobacco caterpillars (*Manduca* sp.), key entities in light of the fact that they live on and eat the leaves of the tobacco plant, a ‘cool’ shamanic substance, and undergo a transformation from caterpillars (of the earth/plants) to moths (of the air). The plant provides the system of paths along which the caterpillars move, their food and simultaneously their tobacco, and the ‘village’ where they and their children are born and grow. Similarly, the tobacco moth travels among tobacco plants to ensure the well-being of his offspring, just as the shaman travels among cosmic and earthly houses to pacify enemies, mobilize auxiliary animals, and distribute tobacco and coca (Ramos 2018, 167). The shaman positions himself on the path of the tobacco caterpillars and enters their community, seated on his shamanic stool and holding his piece of tobacco. Here he assumes their transformative abilities, such that he can proceed to embody the small mobile creatures of the water and under the ground (the marbled swamp eel), land (the lizard), and air (the seed-finches). As he appropriates their qualities, he also appropriates their voices, acting and speaking through them as he continues his voyage.

The shaman goes on to engage with more liminal animals in the following two movements. The marbled swamp eel (*Symbranchus marmoratus*), the focus of Movement 7, is a remarkable creature that lives both in water and land (principally in underground burrows), for which it is equipped with two different breathing mechanisms, and individuals are sequential hermaphrodites that transition during their lifetime from female to male. Its importance in the Path-Traveling incantation is further evidenced by its resemblance to the mussurana snake—as indicated by the colloquial English and Portuguese name of this snake, from Tupi-Guarani *muçum-rana* ‘other/false marbled swamp eel’. The shaman then moves on to interact with the gray and red squirrels, which are likewise liminal in their capacity to inhabit both the ground and the treetops, as well as the inside and outside of the trunks of trees; they

also have the power to gnaw through the otherwise impermeable casings of nuts and other materials. Finally, he engages with the ocelots and other small jaguar-like creatures, which are significant in their capacity—like squirrels—to move about both on the ground and in trees, as well as in light of the shamanic association with jaguars.

The concluding section (Part D, Movement 9) likewise leverages key metaphorical associations to carry out shamanic work. The shaman enters the passionflower, a plant known for its ‘cool’ medicinal juice, often used with incantations as a curative substance. This action enables him to embody himself within the plant, while making himself invisible to the malignant spirit entities—but still retaining his control over them, equipped with his shamanic cigar. The shaman’s spirit-essence concealed in the passionflower is metaphorically linked to a tick hidden in a hammock, recalling in turn the web cocoon made by the tobacco caterpillar.

Poetic Paradoxes

From the vantage point offered by our exploration of the Path-Traveling text, we return now to consider the challenges that incantation offers our conceptions of verbal art and its documentation. For the Hupd’áh and indeed much more widely, incantation tends to be maximally distinguished from ‘everyday’ speech by its poetic attributes. But how are these to be understood, in light of the fact that incantation is also fundamentally utilitarian, and its illocutionary function is inextricably linked to the aesthetic? Jakobson (1960, 350) observed that the task of identifying the ‘poetic’ is concerned with the question, “What makes a verbal message a work of art?” However, this question only raises another: How should ‘art’ itself be identified; and, crucially for incantation, how does this characterization relate to questions of aesthetics and performance?

Formulations of the ‘essence’ of verbal art tend to privilege a “concern with the form of expression, over and above the needs of communication” (Bascom 1955, 247, cited in Bauman 1975; see also Jakobson 1960, 356; Stankiewicz 1960, 14–15; Mukarovsky 1970). Such conceptions of art echo Kant’s proposal (2000 [1790], 95) that taste in art is not practical but rather “merely contemplative”, and that “pure beauty” involves appreciating an object for its own sake, not as a means to a different end. Such prioritization of the aesthetic, evocative, and ‘disinterested’ qualities of art underlie Western distinctions between ‘fine’ or ‘high’ art and ‘folk’ or ‘primitive’ art, which is understood as essentially utilitarian (see, e.g., West 1996; Errington 1998). Thus Hanslick’s (1891 [1854], 20) characterization of music as ‘high’ art, for example, stressed the quality of “producing something *beautiful* which affects not our feelings, but the organ of pure contemplation, our *imagination*.”

The idea that art, verbal and otherwise, might be accessible to new audiences presupposes a degree of universality. While formulations like those of Bascom and Jakobson emphasize the form of the expression and its relevance to nonutilitarian enjoyment, Bourdieu (1984, 173) points out that the “aesthetic disposition” associated with ‘high’ art should be viewed as a product of learning, shaped by one’s position within a cultural and social framework (see also Dutton 2013, 274; Fisher 2013, 477). Moreover, as Taylor (1998) has argued, by transferring a privileging of the ‘pure’ aesthetic in considering the art of other cultures, Western audiences are likely to miss much of the meaning and richness that defines the art for those who create it—and even to be “deceived” into thinking they understand it. Approaches to the study of ethnopoetics, contextualized within an ethnography of communication, have aimed to strike a balance between such universalist and relativist perspectives (e.g., Hymes 1962, 1981; Tedlock 1983); as Hanks (1996, 187) observes, “we find in the study of style and aesthetically wrought language a way to better understand the intertextual and intercollective networks of a sociocultural world.” Yet incantation in particular, among culturally complex and esoteric forms of verbal art more generally, pushes these methods to their limits and require a rethinking of how the aesthetic should be understood and experienced. In the poetics of Hup incantation, as in Navajo ritual

song, “beauty is that which does something” (McAllester 1954, 72): the aesthetic and the utilitarian are brought together, each providing a foundation and an impetus for the other.²¹ Accordingly, Hup evaluations of particular texts, as Ramos (2018) describes in the case of the sick newborn, hinge crucially on the efficacy of the incantation as the measure of its aesthetic value.

An understanding of the role of the aesthetic in art also hinges on the notion of an audience, and for verbal art in particular, that of the performance—where the artistic experience is created, replicated, or otherwise produced for the benefit of others. As per Bauman’s (1975, 293) definition, performance is viewed as the “responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence” (see also Friedrich 1979). For Hup incantation, however, this definition only raises further questions regarding what should be understood as ‘audience’, ‘display’, and ‘communicative competence’, as well as the identity of the ‘performer’ himself. As we observe above, the ‘application’ of an incantation—when the recipient smokes the cigarette, drinks the liquid, etc.—is itself a performative act that transfers properties to a recipient (Tambiah 1973, 222; see also Buchillet 1992), yet the ‘audience’ experiences no engagement at all with the text. On the other hand, an exegetic presentation in a coca circle is very clearly a performance before a listening audience (Ramos 2018, 183—)but with a redacted text that is viewed as only a faded copy of the ‘real thing’. Characterizations of verbal art emphasize the moment of “breakthrough into performance” (Hymes 1975), a shift from simply recounting events to “actually stepping within the mythic world and speaking from it” (Hanks 1996, 109), but for Hup incantation the ‘actual’ step within the mythic world occurs precisely at the moment where there *is* no listening human audience poised to evaluate communicative competence: that of the incantation’s ‘delivery’, when the shaman embarks on his cosmic voyage, and the human world is extended into the vast relational networks that go far beyond it (Cesarino 2011). The shaman’s own voice becomes polyphonic: not only does his role as an elder in a coca circle diverge from that of his breath-person traveling the cosmos, but through his travels he takes on the qualities and voices of a range of beings. As Severi (2002, 37) reminds us, ritual enunciation “makes the enunciator a complex figure, made up by the condensation of contradictory identities”—that is, a “fractal person”, as explored in the work of Cesarino (2011, cf. Wagner 1991).

For Hup incantation, then, the performance is a multifaceted set of events, audiences and performers. While such fractured performativity is relevant to some degree in all verbal art, it is particularly so, we argue, in shamanic and religious discourse, and documentation must take this complexity into account. This point is evidenced, for example, by Sherzer’s discussion (1974; see also Bauman 1975) of Guna curing chants, performed not only in the context of a curing ceremony but also in a chicha festival for entertainment; yet, as Briggs (1996, 222) points out, “investigations of curing often construe performances as if they were analytic bubbles, focusing almost exclusively on what takes place between the beginning and end of the event.” Performances may also be understood to leverage different qualities of the text itself, which may function both as a symbolic process, focused on conveying referential meaning, and as a semiotic process, potentially independent of semantic content (Briggs 1996; Kristeva 1984 [1974]); indeed, unintelligibility in delivery is common to many traditions of religious discourse (Tambiah 1986; Keane 1997; Leavitt 1997). Semiotic and symbolic qualities of the text may apply differently across performative events and serve different purposes, including the creation and manipulation of power relationships, both ritual and social (Briggs 1996; Taussig 1987; see also Briggs and Bauman 1992; Foucault 1973 [1963]). Likewise, we are reminded of the multifaceted audience by Jakobson’s (1960, 355) observation that the ‘incantatory’ function of language tends to involve a conative message directed toward an absent/inanimate ‘third person’, and Bauman’s (2001) caution that assumptions of a “speaker-hearer dyad” may be particularly inappropriate for shamanic discourse. In incantation, perhaps more than any other genre, “words do not speak about the world; rather they speak to the world, and to the expressive presences that, with us, inhabit the world” (Abram 1996, 51); moreover, as the Hup case reminds us, audiences may not only be spoken *to*—whether in supplication, imperatively, or as a display of communicative competence—but also acted directly *upon*.

Conclusion

As Hanks and Severi (2014) observe, the documentation of language and culture is fundamentally challenged by the problem of translation, which extends far beyond lexicon and grammar to communicative contexts, cultural scripts, and evolving ontologies—yet this “constant confrontation of ‘incommensurable’ (yet translated) paradigms” (2014, 6) itself offers intriguing opportunities for ethnographic exploration. Shamanic language in particular brings such challenges sharply into focus. In Hup incantation, considered here through the lens of the Path-Traveling text, we gain a view of ‘performance’ that is refracted across multifaceted audiences, performative events, and performer’s voices. Poetic resources are leveraged across these contexts and become meaningful in a variety of ways: In exegesis, textual artistry helps listeners to map out and imaginatively re-create the shaman’s activities across possible worlds, while in the incantation’s ‘actuated’, non-redacted delivery the poetic qualities are the instrument of the shaman’s engagement with supernatural entities. As we have explored here, the aesthetic and utilitarian features of incantation not only coexist, but also co-engage, each creating possibilities for the other to be developed and elaborated. As a discourse form that is likely to be both critically endangered and artistically and intellectually significant, the documentation of incantation is meaningful on many levels. At the same time, it offers particular challenges of ‘translation’—carried through multiple layers of interpretation and exegesis—that invite us to rethink the methods and assumptions that we bring to the process of documenting and conceptualizing verbal art.

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Notes

1. The group ethnonym *Hupd’äh* is the plural form of the word *hup* ‘(Hup) person’. We follow speakers in using *hupd’äh* in a collective sense, and *hup* to refer to the language and identification with the group.

2. We undertake this discussion of Hup incantation, and the representation of the Path-Traveling text below, only with the express permission of Sr. Ponciano Salustiano Ramos and others in Tat Dëh and neighboring communities, informed by extensive discussion. As Ponciano has told us, the texts are understood to lose their dangerous and powerful qualities via exegesis, as well as through the replicating processes of recording and writing. Within the worldview of the *Hupd’äh* (and presumably, many of their Vaupés neighbors—but cf. Isaac 2011 on Zuni perspectives, for example), the incantation embodies the vital breath of the shaman himself, while replication in written or recorded form involves a displacement from the event and agency of the shamanic act; yielding a weaker copy, like a photograph. Thus while the aesthetic qualities of the incantation are enactive, as we argue here, their capacity for action is necessarily embodied within the shamanic performance.

3. Census conducted by the Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro and the Instituto Socioambiental in communities of the Indigenous Areas of the middle and upper Rio Negro, 2017.

4. The Hup verb *bi’id* ‘carry out shamanic work by means of incantation’ and its correlates in other regional indigenous languages are represented in the local Portuguese as *benzer*. In other varieties of Portuguese and in English, the verbs *benzer*, ‘bless’, and ‘enchant’ carry various cultural associations that are not relevant in this context, but we lack closer translational counterparts.

5. The Hup term is literally ‘stool-man’, in reference to the stool that represents a fundamental instrument of shamanic power (see below); compare the corresponding Tukano term *kumû*, which also means ‘stool, bench’.

6. It is possible to understand the ‘breath-person’ and ‘shadow-person’ as spiritual entities; however, we use ‘person’ here to avoid implying a sharp dichotomy between ‘spirit’ and ‘body’, which we do not see as part of the Hup perspective.

7. Women and children are often present in the environs, and elderly women sometimes join in the consumption of coca, but the circles are otherwise limited to men.

8. The transcription of the text follows the Hup practical orthography (see Ramirez 2006; Epps 2008a). Hup’s phonological inventory contains voiced, voiceless, and glottalized consonants (represented as <C’>); the glottal stop consonant is represented by <’> (without an adjacent consonant). Nasalization is a morpheme-level prosody in Hup, but in the practical orthography nasal and oral allophones of voiced obstruents (<m/b> and <n/d>) are distinguished according to whether the context is nasal or oral, respectively; otherwise, a tilde on the vowel indicates that the entire syllable (in most cases, morpheme) is nasalized. Hup has two contrastive tones, which occur only on stressed syllables; these are marked via a diacritic on the vowel of the relevant syllable (acute = high tone, circumflex = rising tone; some stressed syllables, also marked as acute, can be understood as toneless). The transcribed text follows the full set of conventions of word segmentation and phonemic representation current in the practical orthography. However, in the interlinearized examples that follow, the second transcription line deviates from these conventions by providing a morphological breakdown that includes morpheme/clitic boundaries (via - and =, respectively) within units that can be defined as words according to phonological and morphological criteria (see the analysis in Epps 2008a), including where these are represented by spaces between etyma in the practical orthography.

9. A Portuguese translation of this text, together with brief observations about its structure and content, can be found in Ramos (2018) and Ramos and Epps (2018).

10. In Hup, this is literally ‘iwapixuna snake’ (iwapixuna is a tree with edible black fruit; *Protium* sp.).

11. In other words, to contain the malignant entities; this ‘surrounding’ action is an important component in many Hup incantations.

12. That is, a clump of roots in which the snake may be encountered.

13. Malignant spirit entities, possibly associated with branches that whip back against travelers as they move along the path.

14. Buchillet (1992) refers to the macrolevel sections (equivalent to B and C in our text) as ‘movements’ and the subsections as ‘sequences’. We prefer ‘movement’ for the latter for the reasons discussed here.

15. We thank Tony Woodbury for suggesting this formulation.

16. Abbreviations: CL Classifier; DECL Declarative; DEM Demonstrative; DEP Dependent; DIST Distributive; DYNM Dynamic; FLR Filler; FUT Future; INCH Inchoative; ITG Intangible (demonstrative); LOC Locative; PL Plural; POSS Possessive; PRX Proximate; RFLX Reflexive; SEQ Sequential; SG Singular; TEL Telic; VRB Verbalizer.

17. Detailed discussion of all of the grammatical resources mentioned here can be found in Epps (2008a).

18. This example also exhibits the phenomenon of external possession or ‘possessor raising’, such that the possessor of the staffs is in fact the grammatical object of the transitive verb ‘cast down’.

19. The bark is that of the ‘tururi’ tree (*Sterculia* sp.), known in Hup as *b’öb*, which is also used for baby slings, traditional loincloths, etc. In recent years many Hupd’äh use rubber boots on the forest paths, for the same purpose.

20. It is worth noting that Tukano has a single word *âyâ* for both ‘stingray’ and ‘venomous snake’—comparable perils of waterway and trail, respectively.

21. See also Rumsey’s (1990) observation that the “Western ideological distinction between language and reality, talk and action” may be absent in other cultural settings, as evidenced in a range of discursive contexts; cf. Kang (2006).

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