



Analysis of *Upamā Alaṅkāra* as seen in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with respect to *Gīta Govinda*

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Abstract

The paper is presented with a view to understand the figure of speech, simile or *upamā*. The simile is the most widespread embellishment that has been used across all ages of poetry. As Dr. V. Raghavan specifies in his book, "Studies on some concepts of the Alaṅkāra Śāstra", for an *alaṅkāra* to be effective its sole purpose must be to contribute to the enhancement of the *rasa*. To achieve this, the poetry must be soaked in the *rasa* and the poet must possess infinite creative genius, or, *pratibhā*, which cannot be engineered¹.

Śṛṅgāra, being the King of *rasa*-s, provides maximum spectrum for depiction for various emotions and their exposition through different figures of speech. The work of Jayadeva, *Gīta Govinda*, is a universally acclaimed masterpiece where the lyrical beauty adds to the *rasa* itself. For this reason, this work has been chosen for the analysis of the simile.

Only the variants of the simile from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* have been chosen for this paper as the simile is one figure of speech where the count has multiplied with every small variation in representation. Due to the word limit criteria and the vast number of texts which talk of several variants of *upamā*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was chosen as only five variants have been specified in the same.

The presence of various classifications of the *upamā alaṅkāra* are aimed to be analysed through the work, *Gīta Govinda*. This would aid in understanding the importance of the role played by the similes in the enhancement of the *rasa*.

The paper opens avenues to study this work for more figures of speech although it is seen to abound in similes.

Keywords

The following keywords form an important part of the content of this paper.

Alamkāra, upamā, rūpaka, Gīta Govinda, simile, simile of praise, simile of censure, simile of conceit, simile of uniqueness, simile of partial likeness, *Nāṭyaśāstra, lakṣaṇa, śabdā.lamkāra, arthālamkāra*

Introduction

Abhinaya is classified into four types with respect to dance - *aṅgikā, vācika, āhārya* and *sātvika* with them respectively representing the following. Chapter seventeen of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* which forms a part of the *vācika abhinaya*, deals with characteristics and embellishments, respectively referred to as *lakṣaṇa-s* and *alamkāra-s*.

Aim of study

This paper aims to analyse the *upamā alamkāra* with the mentioned classifications as seen in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with specific reference to *Gīta Govinda* by Jayadeva.

Research Methodology

A qualitative analysis has been employed in this paper. Secondary texts have been analysed to understand the existence and the varying representations of the *upamā alamkāra*, and its varieties as seen in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in the *Gīta Govinda*.

Scope of work

The work deals specifically with chapter seventeen of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and with the verses of the *Gīta Govinda* purely from a lyrical perspective. The verses of the *Gīta Govinda* have been studied using their English translation with a basic understanding of the Sanskrit structure of the same.

Limitations of the work

This paper deals only with the *upamā alamkāra*, though other figures of speech are also prevalently seen in the *Aṣṭapadī*. The paper limits itself to identifying the instances of these *alamkāra-s* in the work. The paper relies largely on the English translation and notes provided for the verses during the analysis.

Alamkāra-s in *Nāṭyaśāstra*

Poetics has the ability to present several layers of meanings for a particular *sāhitya* and this is achieved through the creative genius of the poet. *Alamkāra-s*, or, figures of speech aid in the exposition of this creativity. *Alamkāra-s* were broadly classified into three categories - *śabda, artha* and *ubhaya* - respectively referring to those that embellished the word structures, those that embellished the meaning and those that embellished both the word and meaning.

Nāṭyaśāstra talks of four *alaṃkāra-s* - *upamā* (simile), *rūpaka* (metaphor), *dīpaka* (illuminator) and *yamaka* (alliteration). Though the *Nāṭyaśāstra* does not classify the above as *śabda* and *artha*, later aestheticians talk of the first three to belong to the *artha* category and *yamaka* to be a *śabda alaṃkāra*.

Upamā alaṃkāra

Upamā is referred to in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as an object being compared to another based on the similarity of quality and shape with respect to a poetic composition. This is said to be of four kinds - one to one, one to many, many to one and many to many.²

A very commonly adapted figure of speech with respect to dance; this *alaṃkāra* finds placement in the works of all rhetoricians. The number and classifications have varied greatly between each of them. Initiated with just five classifications in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, we find thirty two classifications of this *alaṃkāra* in the *Kuvalayānanda*.

Upamā is classified based on the components into *pūrṇōpamā* and *luptōpamā*. In the former, the four components required are completely present, namely, the *upamēya* (the subject of comparison), *upamāna* (the object compared with), *sādhāraṇa dharma* (the quality which is being compared) and the *vācaka śabda* (words suggestive of similarity). In the latter, one or more of the above components are not stated.

Nāṭyaśāstra classifies *upamā* into five types - simile and is described of five kinds - *Praśamsōpamā*, *Nindōpamā*, *Kalpitōpamā*, *Sadṛśōpamā* and *Kiñcitasadṛśōpamā*.

praśamsā caiva nindā ca kalpitā sadṛśī tathā |

kiñcitsa sadṛśī jñēyā hyupamā pañcadhā budhaiḥ ||³

Aṣṭapadī

Jayadeva, a twelfth century poet, is the author of the *Gīta Govinda*. The text is also widely known as *Aṣṭapadī*, as the twenty four songs contain approximately eight verses each. The poem has been divided into twelve *sarga-s* revolving around three characters - *Rādhā*, *Kṛṣṇa* and the *sakhi*. The poem is soaked in *śṛṅgāra* involving *Rādhā* and *Kṛṣṇa*. Various shades of emotion are the highlight of this poem and the lyrical content is well known for its innumerable instances of various embellishments.

Upamā alaṃkāra of Nāṭyaśāstra as seen in Aṣṭapadī

The classifications of the *upamā alaṃkāra* have been detailed below. They have been analysed from the perspective of their application in dance.

***Praśamsōpamā* or Simile of Praise**

The *praśamsōpamā*, or, simile of praise is that type of simile wherein the subject is compared to something of high value or something worthy of praise. We can find many instances of this simile in the *aṣṭapadī*. A few references are enumerated below.

In *sarga* one, *Sāmoda-Dāmodaraḥ*, song one, *daśāvatāra vandanā*, verse fourteen, *dhūma ketum iva kimapi karālam*⁴, the fury with which the impending tenth avatar of Lord *Viṣṇu* is expected to arrive is compared to a terrifying indescribable comet. A Here though the connotation might appear negative, the ferociousness has been compared to something equally inexplicably strong and destructive.

In song two, verse twenty-three, *abhinava jala dhara sundara dhṛta mandara e*⁵, the Lord's beauty and majesty is compared to that of a fresh, laden thundercloud which majestically spans the skies.

In song three, verse thirty, this simile is again found where the *pātala* flowers along with the bees seem like the arrows of Manmatha and the *nagakesara* flowers seem like ornamented royal staffs carried by Manmatha.

In *sarga* eight, *Vilakṣya-Lakṣmīpatiḥ*, song seventeen, verses four and five, we see the praise being offered by *Rādhā* even though she is angry with *Kṛṣṇa* where she compares the signs of his dalliance with another woman to the golden writing etched on sapphire and the marks of the other woman's foot on his chest to tender leaves sprouting⁶.

***Nindōpamā* or Simile of Censure**

Nindōpamā, or, simile of censure is that type of simile wherein the subject is compared to an object not very worthy. This simile is seen in *Kāvyaḍarsaḥ* where Daṇḍin interprets it as that kind of simile where the *upamāna* is said to contain flaws which are not seen in the subject, typically, then censuring the object and thus elevating the subject.

In *sarga* two, *Akleśa-Keśavaḥ*, song five, verse six, *jalada paṭala valad indu vinindaka candana tilaka lalāṭam*⁷, we find just one instance where we can see a shade of *Nindōpamā* and that too, more in the form as referred to by Daṇḍin. *Rādhā* reminisces her earlier times with *Kṛṣṇa* and claims that even the full moon surrounded by clouds is put to shame in front of the round tilaka mark of sandalpaste on the forehead of *Kṛṣṇa*⁸

***Kalpītōpamā* or Simile of Conceit**

The word conceit is defined by the Britannica as that form of simile or metaphor, that forms an extremely ingenious or fanciful parallel between apparently dissimilar or incongruous objects situations⁹.

In this kind of simile, the comparison is done between very dissimilar objects and they are not conjured together making this unique. Although many instances of this can be found in the *Gīta Govinda*, a few have been detailed for better understanding of this simile.

In *sarga* three, *Mugdha-Madhusūdanaḥ*, song seven, verse five, *śoṇa padmam iva upari bhrumatā ākulaṃ bhramareṇa*¹⁰, *Kṛṣṇa's* love for *Rādhā* is seen in this *sarga*. He feels bad that *Rādhā* has been disappointed because of his behaviour and in one such instance in this song he compares her angry face with eye brows knit in anger to a red lotus which has a bumble bee hovering around it and the lotus is angry and annoyed because of the same. The angry lotus is a fiction of imagination and the poet has used this very aptly to bring out the emotion.

In *sarga* four, *Snigdha-Madhusūdanaḥ*, song eight, verse five, *vidhum iva vikaṭa vidhuntuda danta dalana galita amṛta dhāram*¹¹, the *sakhi* is seen telling *Kṛṣṇa* how *Rādhā* has been waiting and pining for Him. She says that *Rādhā* is seen teary-eyed just like the moon which oozes nectar into the sky when *Rāhu* swallows the moon with his uneven and cutting teeth. The myth that the moon is temporarily swallowed by *Rāhu* during a lunar eclipse has been made use of here. Here again, several imaginative instances are witnessed - nectar oozing from the moon, moon having teeth and swallowing *rāhu*!

Some poets consider that in this kind of *upamā*, the object of comparison must be non-existent. Others have considered this as a separate figure of speech itself where the *upamāna* and the similarity are both not existent¹².

***Sadr̥śōpamā* or Simile of Uniqueness**

The example given for this simile in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is of one whose efforts cannot be compared with anyone but their own leading to a sense of commonality in the subject and the object. The *upameya* and *upamāna* are effectively the same.

In the *aṣṭapadī*, though the thought that *Kṛṣṇa* is the only one is all pervasive and there is no scope for any intervention of another, the expression in the form of simile for the same thought is not explicitly found.

***Kiñcitsadr̥śōpamā* or Simile of Partial likeness**

In this simile, different parts of the *upameya* are compared to different *upamāna*. The subject is the same but the objects are different. The greatness of different qualities or physical attributes is more elaborately evinced by comparing it to *upamāna-s* appropriately. This in-turn could mean that the *upameya* as a whole may not be comparable to any of the *upamāna-s* and it is only that particular aspect that they show similitude.

In *sarga* three, *Mugdha-Madhusūdanaḥ*, song seven, the final verse fifteen, *bhrū pallavaṃ dhanur apāṅga taraṅgitāni | bāṇā guṇaḥ śravaṇa pālir iti smareṇa* ¹³, a clear representation of this simile is seen where *Kṛṣṇa* reminisces about *Rādhika* and compares her arched eyebrows to Manmatha's bow, her quick glances to Cupid's arrows, and her earlobe to the bowstring of Manmatha. Here, although all the comparisons are made with respect to Manmatha's bow and arrow, there is not a wholesome comparison possible and they cannot be blanketed under one comparison.

In *sarga* seven, *Nāgara Nārāyaṇaḥ*, song fifteen, verse twenty five, *jita bisa śakale mṛdu bhujā yugale kara tala nalinī dale*¹⁴, *Rādhā's* arms are said to be as cooling as the snow and her palms like the delicate lotus petals.

Sarga ten, *Catura-Caturbhujāḥ*, song nineteen, verse two, has both *prasamsōpamā* and *kiñcitsadrśōpamā* where the brightness of *Rādhā's* teeth are akin to moonlight (*prasamsōpamā*), the face is compared to the moon and the eyes to the *cakora* bird.

Conclusion

The paper aimed to analyse the similes as described in *Nāṭyaśāstra* with respect to the lyrical content of Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda*. The *upama alamkāra* has a broad spectrum and it is manifests itself in many ways as seen in the *Aṣṭapadī*.

The five different types of simile as seen in chapter seventeen of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, have been defined in the text through examples only. The paper has aimed to arrive at a definition from the examples presented in the text and based on the derived definitions, instances of such similes have been presented as seen in the work of Jayadeva.

The *Aṣṭapadī*, abounds in similes in most *sarga-s*. The imagination of *Kṛṣṇa* by *Rādhā*, vice-versa and the depiction of the state of *Rādhā* by the *sakhi* are soaked in presentation by similes of varying types.

Every instance of the *upamā alamkāra* as seen through the above references have aided in the enhancement of the *rasa*. The *vibhāva-s* have been brought to life through the use of the similes in most cases. They form an important factor in highlighting the mood, be it, *sambhoga* or *viraha*. Appropriate and adequate use of similes bring to life the sentiments of the lyrics as seen in the reference where *Kṛṣṇa* first sees *Rādhā*, where his emotion is compared to the high tide of the ocean.

Several instances where there seems to be an overlap between the simile of praise and simile of conceit were encountered and only mutually exclusive ones have been highlighted under each of them. Only one instance of the simile of censure was sighted. This is probably because according to the example cited for this *upamā*, the object was also unworthy. In the *Aṣṭapadī*, a comparison of such kind is not witnessed, possibly due to the divine nature of the characters involved. The *sadrśōpamā*, where the *upameya* and *upamāna* are both supposed in effect the same was also not to be seen in this work. There are numerous comparisons to different objects but comparing the eyes only to her eyes or the face of the Lord only to his face with no scope for any other form of comparison was not seen in the format of a simile, with respect to the lyrics.

It can be safely concluded that the poet has used similes lavishly and judiciously at the same time to enhance the *rasotpattī* and the similes are of paramount importance in conveying the *rasa*.

The text is a repository of varying embellishments. Although outside the scope of this paper, for an interested *sahṛdaya* allowing, a huge potential for further exploration with respect to the same is available.

References

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