

selections from

*The Treatise on Theater (Nāṭyaśāstram)*

ascribed to

BHARATA

with

*The Exposition of Theatrical Lore (Nāṭyavēdaviṅṛtiḥ)*

of

ABHINAVAGUPTA

also known as

*The New Dramatic Art (Abhinavabhāratī)*

translated by ANDREW OLLETT

CHAPTER 16

❧ DRAFT ❧

❧ DO NOT CITE ❧

The text of the *Treatise on Theater* is indented and in a larger typeface.

The rest of the text is Abhinavagupta's commentary.

- 40 Comparison (*upamā*), illumination (*dīpakam*), identification (*rūpakam*), and twinning (*yamakam*): these are known as the four ornaments of the text (*kāvya-*).

Thus ends the discussion of characteristics (*lakṣana-*), which is the complex of meanings that differs from everyday nature owing to the poet's activity. Now, conceiving of it as a body, what will be discussed are its ornaments. With "comparison" and so on he outlines them in order to describe each of them in turn. With regard to the text, the characteristics are the body, and the first three—comparison, illumination, and identification—belong to the category of "meaning."

For just as a beautiful woman is ornamented by a necklace that exists apart from her, in the same way, the primary thing under description, such as a woman's face, is rendered beautiful, by something separate from it—either by the standard of comparison, the moon, or by its similarity to it—which is separate precisely because it has an evanescent existence in the poet's mind. That is why they are called "ornaments."

Moreover, this "ornament" has three conditions.

1. When there is a collocation of subject, standard, indicator, and common property, [we speak of "comparison,"] owing to the fact that the relationship between standard and subject of comparison is complete and clear.
2. Sometimes the subject and standard are comparison are unified by their inherence in the same thing, and in such cases we speak of "identification." For the principle there is that language which is used in reference to a thing encompasses the meaning of the word "like" within it.
3. Finally, sometimes the comparison takes its course from the structure of a single construction, as in "illumination."

And this is an indirect indication of its many varieties.

My teacher's opinion [i.e., that of Bhaṭṭa Tauta], however, is as follows.

We arrive at the variety of ornaments from the characteristics. That is to say, through the application of the characteristic called "repetition of a quality" we arrive at the ornament called "eulogistic comparison," through the characteristic called "excess" we arrive at the ornament called "exaggeration," through the characteristic called "desire" we arrive at the ornament called "introduction of what is not under discussion," through the characteristic of "false determination" we arrive at the ornament called "denial," through the characteristic of "success" we arrive at the ornament called "combination of the similar," and so on. And because the characteristics are all distinct from each other, the variety [of

figures] is infinite, hence by the combination of the characteristics of “negation” and “desire” we arrive at the ornament of “disavowal.” **Indeed, scholars have accepted that every figure is an elaboration of comparison.**



- 41 When something is compared by reason of its similarity in poetic texts, that is known as “comparison,” depending on either properties or appearance.

“When something” defines comparison, the first of these ornaments.

He says “in poetic texts” to show that comparison is only an ornament when the characteristics of poetry are present, and hence “a gayal is like a cow” is not an ornament.

For the words “text” (*bandha-*), “book” (*gumpha-*), “saying” (*bhaṇiti-*), “indirect speech” (*vakrōkti-*), and “poetic function” (*kāvīvyāpāra-*) are all synonyms.

NOTE: Abhinava includes this list of synonyms in order to support his interpretation that “in poetic texts” means “when the characteristics of poetry are present,” referring to an earlier discussion in which he identified the “characteristics of poetry” with what Bhāmaha calls “indirect speech” and what Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka calls the “poetic function.”

Now a characteristic is not necessarily useless without ornaments. I have shown this at length in the course of my examples [to the preceding section]. Without qualities, however, there is no poetry at all. The great person is an example of this.

NOTE: The “great person” possesses bodily marks (*lakṣaṇa-*), qualities of personality (*guṇa-*), and external ornaments (*alaṅkāra-*), just as a poem possesses characteristics (*lakṣaṇa-*), poetic qualities (*guṇa-*), and ornaments (*alaṅkāra-*).

For we speak of “grace” and so on under the rubric of qualities in order to show that they cannot be avoided, since without them, the form of poetry itself would be missing, whereas the characteristics are the body itself, which provide an attractive basis [for the qualities]. However, it would still be poetry, even without comparison and so on. Hence we speak of comparison and so on as “ornaments” in order to make this clear.

In this case, however, their separate existence is not quite as clear as it is in the world. In fact, according to some people, Daṇḍin has said that any property which enhances the beauty of a poem is an ornament.

NOTE: It's clear that a necklace exists separately from the woman who wears it, but it's not quite as clear that a comparison exists separately from the poetic language that constitutes it.

“Is compared” is construed with “something.” Its primary meaning is the action [i.e., comparison], and not the object [i.e., what is compared]. Since the prefix *upa* indicates proximity, it is possible [that one thing could be compared to another] for other reasons, and that is why he says “by similarity.”

NOTE: The text is probably corrupt here (*prākṣaṇa-?*).

Now since the subject of comparison is mentioned in “is compared,” what is mentioned in “by similarity” is the common property.

The phrase “depending on properties and appearance” is analyzed as follows.

The “property” is a connection, and that is “invoked,” that is to say, indicated; *guṇākṛti* thus means the “indication of a connection,” and refers to a word such as “like,” and the comparison is dependent on this.

The examples will be shown in order. These examples all involve the “characteristics” [of poetry], as shown by “your face is like the moon” and so on.



- 42 The comparison may be *one-to-one*, *one-to-many*, *many-to-one*, or *many-to-many*.
- 43 “Your face is like the moon” is *one-to-one*.  
“The stars shine like the moon” is a *many-to-one* comparison.
- 44 “Your eyes are similar to the appearance of hawks, peacocks, and vultures” is a *one-to-many* comparison.
- 45 “The elephants are like clouds” is *many-to-many*.



- 46 *Praise, blame, imagined, similar, and partly similar* are the five types of comparison.
- 47 *Praise* is as follows:

But when he saw that wide-eyed woman,  
the king was pleased: she was like success in human form,  
attained by sages after difficult penance.

48 *Blame* is as follows:

She wound herself around that rough-looking man,  
despite the fact that he had no good qualities,  
like a vine in the woods winds itself around a thorny tree  
that has been burned by a forest-fire.

49 *Imagined* is as follows:

As they exude ichor, and move with a steady grace,  
the elephants look like mobile mountains.

50 *Similar* is as follows:

What you have done today to satisfy another's desire befits you,  
with your superhuman deeds, and you alone.

[Translation from Ghosh.]

51 *Partly similar* is as follows:

My friend is here, with a face like the full moon,  
with eyes like the petals of a lotus,  
and with a gait like a rutting elephant.

Thus, after discussing the varieties of comparison according to the number of standards and subjects, he now discusses the varieties of the “body” according to the “body” that is contained in each, starting with “praise.”

[IMAGINED]

A “praise comparison” is so called because the standard of comparison is praiseworthy. The same applies to all of the rest.

[IMAGINED]

The “mobile mountains” that are taken as the standard of comparison are imagined, because of the lack of similarity with anything else. Thus, in this case, that is imagined because of something similar to it.

[SIMILAR]

Others read “dissimilar” (*asadyśī*) in the text and explain it. Here, what is said to be “similar” is the subject of comparison, and thus the derivation [of “similar” (*sadyśa-*)] is as follows: one who is seen to be similar, [or who] sees himself as similar to that [is “similar”]. When the subject of comparison is itself the standard of comparison, that is “similar,” [because no other] standard of comparison is possible.

[PARTLY SIMILAR]

When no word expressive of similarity is clearly present, and there is no total identification of two things as there is in “identification,” that is called “partly similar,” suggested by a compound. The verse “my friend is here” etc. (51) illustrates this. We understand that a standard of comparison is present by force of the compound, from the statement “[there is deletion of the final word] when the preceding word is a locative or a standard of comparison” [see *Mahābhāṣyaḥ* on 2.2.24]. For deletion of the final word in the phrase “her gait is like the gait of a rutting elephant” is due to the fact that [the word “gait”] is spoken in conjunction [with the deleted form “like”]. Alternatively, the deletion of the final word [may be analyzed as] “the gait of a rutting elephant” in the presence of an elided *Kyaṅ* suffix. The [effect] is the same.

NOTE: Abhinava appears to offer two grammatical explanations of compounds such as *mattamātaṅgamanā*.

1. *mattamātaṅgamanam iva gamanam asyā* (delete *uttarapadam* →) *mattamātaṅgā iva gamanam asyā* (*bahuvrīhiḥ* →) *mattamātaṅgamanā* (see *Mahābhāṣyaḥ* 2.2.24: *uṣṭramukham iva mukham asya* → *uṣṭramukhaḥ*); this seems to depend on the deletion of BOTH the first *gamana-* and *iva*, and when one of them is deleted, the other follows.
2. *mattamātaṅgamana-* + *Kyaṅ* (delete *Kyaṅ* →) *mattamātaṅgamanā*



52 These are, in brief, the varieties of comparison known to the wise. The others that are not defined here can be understood from the world and from poetry.

[Abhinavagupta must have read *lakṣaṇenōktās tē grāhyā lōkakāvyataḥ*.]