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ṚGVEDIC SIMILES:

A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF THEIR FORMS AND FUNCTIONS

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## List of abbreviations

### Glosses

ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ADP	adposition
AOR	aorist
ART	article
CDG	comparative degree
CONN	connective
CONJ	conjunction
DAT	dative
DEIC	deictic
DEM	demonstrative
DES	desiderative
DU	dual
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GNDV	gerundive
IMPV	imperative
IMPF	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective
INDF	indefinite
INJ	injunctive
INST	instrumental
INT	interrogative
INTENS	intensive
LOC	locative
MID	middle
N	noun
N	neuter
NEG	negation
NOM	nominative

NP	noun phrase
O	object
OPT	optative
PASS	passive
PF	perfect
PPF	pluperfect
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PREP	prepositional case
PST	past
PTC	particle
PTCP	participle
REL	relative
SDG	superlative degree
SUBJ	subjunctive
SG	singular
TR	transitive
V	verb
VOC	vocative
VP	verb phrase
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person

In glosses, the nominal number is specified only if it is plural or dual (singular is not indicated); similarly, gender is specified only if it is feminine or neuter (masculine is not indicated). Among verbal categories, indicative mood and active voice are likewise not indicated.

### **Indic texts**

AB	<i>Aitareyabrāhmaṇa</i>
AV	<i>Atharvaveda</i> , with two recensions:
AVP	<i>Paippalādasamhitā</i>
AVŚ	<i>Śaunakasamhitā</i>
BĀU	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad</i>

Ch.U	<i>Chāndogyopaniṣad</i>
GGŚ	<i>Gobhilaḡrhyasūtra</i>
GB	<i>Gopathabrāhmaṇa</i>
KauśS	<i>Kauśikasūtra</i>
MBh.	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
ṚV	<i>Ṛgveda</i>
SM	<i>Sāmaveda</i>
ŚāṅkhĀ	<i>Śāṅkhāyanāranya</i>
ŚB	<i>Śatpathabrāhmaṇa</i>
<i>Rām</i>	<i>Rāmāyaṇa</i>
VārGS	<i>Vārāhagṛhyasūtra</i>
YV	<i>Yajurveda</i>

#### **Other authors and texts**

Arist. <i>Metaph.</i>	Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i>
Bacch. <i>Pae.</i>	Bacchylides' <i>Paeans</i>
Cic.	<i>Cicero</i>
<i>ad Q. fr.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem</i>
<i>Att.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Atticum</i>
<i>de Orat</i>	<i>De Oratore</i>
<i>epist.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Familiares</i>
<i>off.</i>	<i>De Officiis</i>
Hdt. <i>Hist.</i>	Herodotus' <i>Historiae</i>
Hes. <i>Op.</i>	Hesiod's <i>Work and Days</i>
Hom.	Homer
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>
Hor. <i>carm.</i>	Horace' <i>Carmina</i>
<i>Mk</i>	<i>Mark's Gospel</i>
<i>Mt</i>	<i>Matthew's Gospel</i>
Ov. <i>Ars</i>	Ovid's <i>Ars Amatoria</i>
Pind.	Pindar
<i>O.</i>	<i>Olympians</i>
<i>Pyth.</i>	<i>Pythians</i>



Plaut.	Plautus
<i>As.</i>	<i>Asinaria</i>
<i>Capt.</i>	<i>Captivi</i>
<i>Rud.</i>	<i>Rudens</i>
Vd.	<i>Vīdēvdād</i>
Virg. <i>Aen.</i>	Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>
Xen. <i>Ec.</i>	Xenophon's <i>Economics</i>
Yt.	<i>Yašt</i>

## 1. Introduction

*upamâikā śailuṣi samprāptā citrabhūmikā-bhedān |  
rañjayati kāvya-raṅge nṛtyantī tad-vidāṃ cetaḥ ||*

‘Simile is the sole actress on the stage of poetry,  
and yet she performs a vast variety of roles.

When she dances she captivates the hearts  
of those who know her secret.’

(*Citramīmāṃsā*, 33)<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Motivations behind the present study

This work investigates a class of comparative constructions attested in the *Ṛgveda* (ṚV), a collection of religious hymns that represents the most ancient variety of Old Indo-Aryan and the main sacred text of Hinduism. The constructions under research are introduced by one of the three comparative particles *ná* ‘like’, *iva* ‘id.’, and *yáthā* (with its unaccented variant *yathā*) ‘id.’ and are characterized by the presence of one single predicate, be it verbal or nominal. They are exemplified in (1), (2), and (3), each containing a different particle:

(1) <i>citró</i>	<i>yád</i>	<i>ábhṛāṭ</i>	<i>śvetó</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>vikṣú</i>
glittering.NOM	when	flash.AOR.3SG	white.NOM	like	clan(F).LOC.PL
<i>rátho</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>rukṃí</i>	<i>tveṣáh</i>		<i>samátsu</i>
chariot.NOM	like	brilliant.NOM	dazzling.NOM		combat(F).LOC.PL

‘When, glittering, he has flashed like a white (horse) among the clans, like a brilliant chariot (he is) dazzling in combats.’<sup>2</sup>

(ṚV 1.66.6b)

(2) <i>sóma</i>	<i>rājan</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>ṇa</i>	<i>áyūṃṣi</i>	<i>tārīr</i>
Soma.VOC	king.VOC	LP	1PL.GEN	lifetime(N).ACC.PL	lengthen.INJ.AOR.2SG
<i>áhānī</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>sūriyo</i>	<i>vāsarāṇi</i>		
day(N).ACC.PL	like	sun.NOM.PL	dawning.ACC.PL.N		

‘King Soma, lengthen our lifetimes, like the sun the dawning days.’

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Bronner (2007: 93).

<sup>2</sup> Unless stated otherwise, all translations of Ṛgvedic passages are from Jamison and Brereton (2014).

(ṚV 8.48.7cd)

(3) <i>mātā́</i>		<i>putráṃ</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>sicá</i>
mother(F).NOM		son.ACC	like	hem(F).INST
<i>abhy</i>	<i>enam</i>		<i>bhūma</i>	<i>ūrṇuhi</i>
LP	DEM.ACC	Earth.VOC		cover.IMPV.2SG
‘Like a mother her son with her hem, cover him, Earth.’				

(ṚV 10.18.11cd)

In Vedic studies, there is some terminological variation in the definition of these constructions, which have been alternatively termed *comparisons* (Vine 1978), *intra-clausal similes* (Jamison 1982), or simply *similes* (Gonda 1949, 1960; Pinault 2004; Jamison and Brereton 2014, 2020, to mention but a few). In non-English literature, they have been called *comparaisons* (Bergaigne 1887; Pinault 1985, 1989, 1997), *Gleichnisse* (Hirzel 1890) or *Vergleichungen* (Weller 1927), or *equativi* (Viti 2002). Since they encode figurative comparison of equality, in this work I will alternatively refer to such constructions a) as equative and similitive constructions or b) as similes.

Anyone familiar with Ṛgvedic hymns knows how pervasive similes are in these texts. Sometimes, similes constitute a hymn’s main structuring device (e.g., ṚV 2.39 and 10.106 to the Aśvins), other times they cluster in sections of a hymn, or are simply scattered throughout the composition. Table 1 reports the number of similes introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* in each of the ten books that make up the ṚV and in relation with the number of hymns contained in each book.

**Table 1.** Distribution of similes introduced by *ná*, *iva* (Pinault 1997: 312), *yáthā*, and *yathā* over book I to X.

Book	N. hymns	<i>ná</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>yathā</i>
I	191	327	215	6	6
II	43	50	82	–	1
III	62	35	48	3	1
IV	58	93	57	–	–
V	87	78	80	4	6
VI	75	111	55	–	–
VII	104	94	52	3	–
VIII	103	123	137	11	10
IX	114	193	82	7	3
X	191	226	215	11	4
Total:	1028	1330	1023	45	31
				Total: 76	

As is clear already from examples (1) to (3), the presence of one single predicate makes Ṛgvedic similes formally very concise, to the extent that they rarely exceed the limits of a single verse line (*pāda*) or hemistich. In this, they are very different from the so-called “Homeric similes” of Ancient Greek epic that, spanning over several verses, often constitute a narration within the narration. The formal brevity of Ṛgvedic similes is mirrored by their content, most often representing vivid and immediate images of the quality or action under discussion, but sometimes resulting in obscure and enigmatic comparisons whose interpretation constitutes a challenge for the modern reader.

The form of Ṛgvedic similes constitutes no under-researched topic. Indeed, we find contributions on their syntax (Bergaigne 1887, Jamison 1982), on the distribution of the two most frequent comparative particles *ná* and *iva* (Pinault 1997a, 1997b, Viti 2002), as well as on metrical (Vine 1978; Pinault 1997b) and formulaic patterns found within similes (Pinault 1997b). Furthermore, Vine (1978) and Pinault (1985, 1997b, 2004) presented different hypotheses for the origin of similes introduced by *ná* and *iva*. Despite the wealth of literature on this subject, there are still open questions especially about the syntax, origin, and subsequent developments of the three constructions and of the particles that introduce them. Furthermore, with the partial exception of Viti (2002) who adopts the terminology proposed by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) for the analysis of equative constructions, none of the above studies analyze Ṛgvedic similes in the light of typological studies on comparison and gradation. Filling this gap has a great potential for our understanding of Ṛgvedic similes; indeed, analyzing constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* in relation to other strategies employed in the ṚV for the encoding of comparison of equality can help us detecting any semantic and pragmatic specialization of such constructions.

The figurative meaning of comparative constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* has been repeatedly pointed out in the literature. For instance, Jamison (1982) contraposes them to clausal comparisons introduced by the subordinator *yáthā* ‘as, like’, that encode literal comparison; similarly, Pinault (1985a) points out that, while constructions marked by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* express “comparaison exemplaire”, adverbs in *-vát* of the type *manu-vát* ‘like Manu’ express comparisons with actions performed in the (mythic) past. However, no study analyzes Ṛgvedic similes in the light of cognitive linguistic literature on figurative language (see Dancygier and Sweetser 2014 for an overview). Recent studies carried out on other ancient languages such as Ancient Greek, Latin, or Ancient Egyptian, have shown that, if employed in tandem with traditional philological practice, tools taken from cognitive linguistics can help us deepening our knowledge of ancient texts, as well as of the language and culture that they represent (see, e.g., the contributions collected in Di Biase-Dyson and Egg 2020). In the case of Ṛgvedic similes, analyzing the cognitive

mechanisms that underlie this kind of comparisons would allow investigating the relationship holding between their form, meaning, and the cultural milieu from which they arose.

Finally, little attention has been paid also to the discursive function that Ṛgvedic similes take within the hymns. In the first season of Vedic studies, Hirzel (1890) arranged Ṛgvedic similes according to the domain to which their standards of comparison belong, and Oldenberg (1894 [1977]) analyzed the function taken by similes in spells and magic formulas from the *Atharvaveda*. Later, Gonda (1949) investigated the function of similes taking texts from the whole of Sanskrit literature into consideration and only marginally touching Ṛgvedic similes. As a result, the most informative analyses of the different functions taken by similes are those contained in commentaries on individual hymns. For example, Oldenberg himself (1907), but also Geldner (1951) and Renou (1955) are very attentive to this figure of speech in their commentaries, and the same is certainly true for Jamison's (2021) recent commentary on Jamison and Brereton's (2014) translation. However, observations found in commentaries have not yet converged in any monograph or dedicated article and a systematic study on the discursive function of Ṛgvedic similes is lacking altogether.

## **1.2 Aims and structure of the study**

The main objective of this study is to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge of Ṛgvedic similes presented above. Although those of the form, origin, and subsequent developments of similes, of the cognitive mechanisms underlying them, and finally of their discursive function are quite different issues, my aim is to treat them from a point of view that is as uniform as possible. This approach is that of cognitive linguistics and, more specifically, of Construction Grammar (Fillmore and Kay 1993; Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988; Lakoff 1987; Goldberg 1995, 2006) according to which the analysis of the form of an expression is inseparable from the one of its meaning and pragmatic function. Adopting a unitary approach to the study of different aspects of Ṛgvedic similes has the intention of putting an end to the sparseness that has characterized studies on these constructions so far.

Studying Ṛgvedic similes implies engaging in the study of two thriving topics in contemporary linguistic debate: the one of comparison and gradation, and the one of figurative language. Therefore, in order to bring Ṛgvedic similes into the debate, I will discuss and analyze each of the issues under investigation through the categories and tools of language typology and cognitive linguistics. While the latter will prove crucial in solving some of the pending questions, Vedic evidence resulting from this study may itself constitute a contribution to the two disciplines: in fact, both often run into the problem of using examples derived from grammars in the case of language

typology, and researcher-generated examples in the case of studies on figurative language, which risk distorting and simplifying actual linguistic reality.<sup>3</sup>

The study is organized as follows. This introduction continues with a brief description of the ṚV and of the corpus employed for the present study. Other chapters can be divided into three parts: Part 1 (Chapters 2 to 4) introduces the theoretical background on which the current investigation relies, Part 2 (Chapters 5 to 8) deals with the form, syntax, origin, and successive developments of Ṛgvedic similes, and finally Part 3 (Chapters 9 and 10) analyzes similes as figurative expressions and investigates their discursive function in the text. Thus, Part 3 constitutes an analysis of the meaning and function of Ṛgvedic similes on the light of our knowledge of their form, which is the focus of Part 2.

In order to prepare the ground for the analysis of Ṛgvedic similes as equative and similitive constructions, in Chapter 2 I review the literature on comparison and gradation. While comparison of inequality has been extensively studied in the past decades, the expression of equality and similarity has until recently attracted little attention, the only notable exception being Haspelmath and Buchholz's (1998) study on equative and similitive constructions in European languages. In the past few years, this trend has changed, and several studies have been carried out on comparison of equality cross-linguistically and within single languages. Among these, two contributions are particularly relevant for the present investigation. Building on Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), Haspelmath et al. (2017) set a taxonomy of strategies employed for the expression of comparison of equality cross-linguistically: their taxonomy will serve as a basis for the description of Ṛgvedic comparative strategies presented in Chapter 6. Most recently, Keydana et al. (2021) provided an extensive overview of comparison constructions in ancient Indo-European (IE) which will help us to understand some aspects of Ṛgvedic similes. Furthermore, in the volume edited by Keydana et al., Kulikov (2021) deals with comparison and gradation in Old Indo-Aryan, covering a period ranging from the ṚV to Classical Sanskrit; this can be seen as a starting point for analyzing in more detail the situation attested in the ṚV. Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the main assumptions on which Cognitive Linguistics relies. More in detail, it presents concepts and tools taken from Construction Grammar, Frame Semantics, and Blending Theory which I will employ in the analysis of Ṛgvedic similes presented in Chapters 9 and 10. The chapter ends with an overview of the main literature on figurative language. Chapter 4 focusses on similes, presenting the main features that distinguish them from

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<sup>3</sup> On possible drawbacks of relying exclusively on grammars in language typology, see e.g. Newmeyer's (1998: 329 f.) discussion of Stassen's (1985) typology of comparative constructions. On the need of naturally occurring data for the study of figurative language, see Israel et al. (2004), Moder (2008, 2010), Sullivan (2013), among many others.

metaphors, the kind of mapping that they trigger, and presenting some caveats relating to the study of figurative expressions in ancient texts.

Chapter 5 introduces Part 2 reviewing the extant literature on the syntax of Ṛgvedic similes, on the distribution of the three comparative particles, as well as on metrical and formulaic patterns found within these constructions. Chapter 6 contains the analysis of Ṛgvedic similes as equative and similitive constructions. In order to fully understand the function of these constructions, these are framed within the rich system of constructions and strategies employed for the expression of comparison of equality in the ṚV. After illustrating the annotation scheme developed for Vedic similes within the Vedic Treebank, Chapter 7 presents a corpus-based analysis of the syntax of similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*; more in detail, the chapter provides first a synchronic description of the syntax of standards, and then focusses on word order patterns attested in similes. Finally, Chapter 8 takes a diachronic perspective on Ṛgvedic similes, asking whether and to which extent we can trace the development of these constructions as they are attested in the ṚV. This means first asking how particles with different origins ended up introducing the same type of constructions, and second whether the development of *iva* from a standard marker of similitive constructions to a marker of approximation, as attested in Vedic prose, can be envisaged already in the ṚV.

Part 3 starts with a second Introduction which makes the reader acquainted with the Vedic notions of poetic speech and sacred knowledge, with the types of hymns found in the collection, and with some compositional principles organizing them. This introduction serves to better understand the cultural context that produced the types of similes introduced in Chapter 9 and to place the similes in their textual and extra-textual context, in order to investigate their function in Chapter 10. Indeed, Chapter 9 focusses on the kind of similes attested in the ṚV, analyzing the kind of mappings that they trigger, their interaction with other figurative expressions, and their conventionality within the text. Finally, Chapter 10 investigates the discursive functions that similes take in the ṚV, distinguishing a descriptive, a pragmatic, and a meta-poetic function. Chapter 11 summarizes the main findings.

## 1.3 The corpus

### 1.3.1 The Ṛgveda

The *Ṛgveda* (lit. ‘knowledge consisting of verses’, from  $\sqrt{rc}$ - ‘praise, verse’ + *veda* ‘knowledge’) is a collection (*samhitā* ‘put together’) of hymns addressed to the gods of the Vedic pantheon and designed to be recited during ritual performance.<sup>4</sup> The ṚV belongs with the four canonical sacred

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<sup>4</sup> For a thorough introduction to the ṚV, see Witzel and Gotō (2007: 427-466), Jamison and Brereton (2014: 1-83), as well as Brereton and Jamison (2020).

texts of Hinduism, known as the Vedas, which also include the *Sāmaveda* (SV) ‘veda of chants’, the *Yajurveda* (YV) ‘veda of the sacrifices’, and the *Atharvaveda* (AV) ‘veda of the magic spells’. Together, they constitute the most ancient variety of Old Indo-Aryan, known as early Vedic or “mantra language”.

Besides the Vedas, the Vedic corpus also comprises later prose texts: the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas*, the *Upaniṣads*, and the *Vedāṅgas*. The *Brāhmaṇas* contain detailed explanations of the rituals during which the four Vedas are recited, while the *Upaniṣads* are theological and philosophical treatises; the *Āraṇyakas*, having a partly ritualistic and partly philosophical character, share characteristics of both the *Brāhmaṇas* and of the *Upaniṣads*. Finally, the *Vedāṅgas* (lit. ‘limbs of the Veda’) are six ancillary disciplines dealing with phonetics, prosody, grammar, etymology, ritual, and astronomy; the fifth *Vedāṅga* (*Kalpa*) is characterized by texts composed in an extremely condensed style, among which we find the *Gṛhyasūtras* (manuals of domestic rituals), *Śrautasūtras* (manuals of solemn rituals), and *Dharmasūtras* (compendiums of law and customs).<sup>5</sup> All these texts constitutes middle and late Vedic; the post-Vedic period covers younger *Upaniṣads* and *Sūtras*, as well as Epic and Classical Sanskrit (Kulikov 2017: 214-215).

The ṚV is the most ancient of the four *saṃhitās*: indeed, while it is mentioned in the SV, in the YV, and the AV, it contains no references to these three other Vedic collections. Philological and linguistic evidence suggests that the ṚV was composed in the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent, most likely between 1500 – 1200 BC, though a wider time frame of 1700 – 1100 BC has also been proposed (cf. Witzel 1995; Mallory and Douglas 1997; Kulikov 2017); this makes the ṚV one among the oldest extant texts in any IE language.

The ṚV is organized in ten books (*maṇḍalas* lit. ‘circles’) of varying antiquity and length, for a total of 1028 hymns. The hymns (*sūktas*, lit. ‘well-spoken’) in turn consist of verses (*ṛcas* ‘praises’), ranging from 1 to 58, which can be further subdivided into metrical units (*pāda* ‘foot’). The division of the ṚV into ten books reflects the internal chronology of the collection. The core of the collection and its oldest part are books II to VII; these are known as the “Family Books” because the hymns in each *maṇḍala* are attributed to poets belonging to the same bardic family. Book VIII and IX are chronologically heterogeneous. Book VIII comprises the hymns of two poetic traditions, whereas Book IX differs from the other books in that it is organized thematically: it is a liturgical collection of hymns addressed the god Soma Pavamāna, the soma “purifying itself” as it runs through the sheep’s wool filter. Finally, Books I, X, and part of VIII (49-59, the so-called Vālakhilya) are the latest additions to the collection. Book I also consists of two collections, in turn divided into smaller

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed overview of texts making up the Vedic corpus, see Gonda 1975 and Gonda 1977. On the development of the Vedic canon and its schools, see Renou 1947 and Witzel 1997.



groups attributed to different poets; the first half of Book X consists of collections of hymns by individual poets, whereas the second half contains independent hymns.

The hymns of the ṚV were composed and transmitted orally for many centuries, even after writing had become widespread. However, the composition of Ṛgvedic hymns did not follow the principles of oral composition as we know them, e.g., from Homeric or Serbo-Croatian epic, which originally lacked a definitive text and were recomposed anew at every performance. Though orally composed and making use of traditional verbal material, each Ṛgvedic hymn was composed by a particular poet and fixed at the time of composition, being transmitted in the same form thereafter thanks to a rigorous mnemonic system which kept the error rate to an extremely low value (Jamison and Brereton 2014: 14).

### 1.3.2 The corpus employed for the present study

As shown in Table 1, the ṚV contains about 2400 similes introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*. For the purposes of this work, I have selected a sample of 900 similes collected according to varied criteria.

First, I have selected five families of similes taking the semantic domain of their standard as a sampling criterion; to the resulting 360 similes, I have added a random sample of 140 similes whose standards of comparison belong to different semantic domains. The resulting sample of 500 similes is reported in Table 2, divided into six families. The table also reports the number of similes contained in each family and the lexical items employed for retrieving them:

**Table 2.** Similes annotated with linguistic and metalinguistic information, organized by their standards.

FAMILY	N. SIMILES	LEXICAL ITEMS
‘cow’ ‘cow and calf’	115	<i>dhenú-</i> ‘milk cow’, <i>gó-</i> ‘cow’, <i>vāśrá-</i> ‘the bellowing one’, <i>mā́tṛ-</i> ‘mother’ <i>vatsá-</i> ‘calf’, <i>śísu-</i> ‘baby’, <i>pútra-</i> ‘son’
‘sun’	85	<i>sū́riya-</i> ; <i>svar-</i>
‘father’ ‘father and son’ ‘mother and son’	60	<i>pitṛ-</i> ‘father’ <i>putrá-</i> ‘son’, <i>sū́nú-</i> ‘id.’ <i>mā́tṛ-</i> ‘mother’
‘chariot’	60	<i>rátha-</i>
‘Mitra’, ‘ally’	40	<i>mitrá-</i>
Varied standards	140	–
Total:	500	

All selected similes have been annotated with linguistic metadata and other information. Among linguistic data, I have added information on a) referent(s) of the comparee, b) metaphoricity of the

parameter, and c) type of speech act in which the simile is found (among proper performative, directive, description). Other information involves a) meter of the verse in which the simile occurs, b) the addressed deity, and c) the poet to which the hymn is attributed. Such information served to investigate the types of mapping attested in Ṛgvedic similes, formulaic patterns occurring within and among groups of similes (Chapter 9), and the discursive functions that similes take within the hymns (Chapter 10).

All 500 similes have also been syntactically annotated according to the Universal Dependency scheme (Nivre et al. 2016). The annotation is contained in the Vedic Treebank (Hellwig et al. 2020; Biagetti et al. 2021), which contains selected passages from Vedic literature and is hosted by the Digital Corpus of Sanskrit.<sup>6</sup> Since similes introduced by *yáthā* and *yathā* amount to only 76 occurrences, I included the entire group in the treebank. Finally, in order to reach a sample that was large enough to conduct quantitative syntactic analysis, I annotated a second random sample of 325 similes. The annotation process resulted in a total of 900 Ṛgvedic similes contained in the VTB, to which I added all comparative clauses introduced by the subordinator *yáthā* (Table 3). The annotation scheme for Ṛgvedic similes is presented in Chapter 7.1. Syntactic information provided by the treebank served for the study of word order patterns attested in similes and allowed me to detect some of the diachronic trends presented in Chapter 8. The entire corpus employed for this work is summarized in Table 3 and made available for the reader in the following GitHub repository: [https://github.com/EricaBiagetti/VTB\\_Rigveda.git](https://github.com/EricaBiagetti/VTB_Rigveda.git).

**Table 3.** Type and number of syntactically annotated constructions.

CONSTRUCTION TYPE	N.	TOTAL:
similes introduced by <i>ná</i> and <i>iva</i>	825	
similes introduced by <i>yáthā</i> and <i>yathā</i>	76	
		900
comparative clauses introduced by <i>yáthā</i>	87	
		987

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sanskrit-linguistics.org/dcs/index.php?contents=texte>.

**Part 1**

## 2. Comparison of equality

### 2.1 Comparison and gradation

Comparison is a cognitive faculty which involves examining two or more items in order to find similarities and differences between them. Comparison can be made in terms of the degree of some gradable property pertaining to two items, which are assigned a position on a scale. In language, this kind of comparison is encoded by comparative constructions for the expression of inequality or by equative constructions for the expression of equality (Treis 2018). For instance, the comparative construction in (1) assigns Peter a value on the scale of body size which is higher than the value assigned to Susan:

(1) *Peter is taller than Susan.*

According to Sapir (1944), everything that is quantifiable is gradable, ranging from entities (e.g. *house*), to events (e.g. *run*), to the quality of entities and events (e.g. *red* and *gracefully*). Thus, two houses can differ in size or in any other feature that can be predicated of them and can therefore be judged ‘more’ or ‘less house’ in terms of these features. In a similar way, different examples of ‘red’ may conform to different degrees of an accepted standard of redness (Sapir 1944: 94). This implies that gradation is possible with various word classes such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. However, since compared items are usually entities, gradation prototypically applies to adjectives predicating some features of these entities (Jensen 1934: 109, Cuzzolin 2011: 563, Dixon 2012: 343, Keydana et al. 2021).

Other types of comparison do not concern the gradation of a property, but a multifaceted notion of similarity and have their linguistic realization in similative constructions. Similatives are semantically different from comparative and equative constructions in that they express identity of manner, whereas comparatives and equatives express identity of degree or extent: in other words, similatives express qualitative comparison whereas equatives express quantitative comparison (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 313).

The constitutive elements of a prototypical comparative construction such as (1) are the following (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998; Treis 2018):

- a. COMPAREE:<sup>7</sup> what is being compared against a standard of comparison (*Peter*);
- b. STANDARD of comparison: what the comparee is being compared to (*Cecil*);
- c. STANDARD MARKER:<sup>8</sup> marker of the grammatical function of the standard (*than*);
- d. PARAMETER of comparison:<sup>9</sup> property of comparison (*tall*);
- e. PARAMETER MARKER (or DEGREE MARKER):<sup>10</sup> marks the degree of presence or absence of a property in the comparee (*-er*).

Of the five constituents, standard markers and parameter markers are often grammatical elements. Languages differ mainly in the kinds of markers they use and not all these elements occur in every language and in every type of sentence. For instance, some languages such as Italian lack a parameter marker in equative constructions (2) (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 279).

(2) <i>Marco</i>	<i>è</i>	<i>alto</i>	<i>come</i>	<i>Anna.</i>
Marco	be.3SG	tall	as	Anna
CPREE		PAR	STM	STAND
‘Marco is as tall as Anna.’				

Traditional grammars distinguish four degrees of comparison of the adjective and their labels also apply to the different constructions in which they occur (Treis 2018: ii-iii; see also Cuzzolin and Lehmann 2004, Ultan 1972, Andersen 1983: 100):

- a. POSITIVE DEGREE → POSITIVE CONSTRUCTION: in most languages the basic form of the adjective, e.g. *Susan is tall*;
- b. EQUATIVE DEGREE → EQUATIVE CONSTRUCTION: the parameter is ascribed to the comparee and to the standard to the same extent, e.g. *Susan is as tall as Peter*;
- c. COMPARATIVE DEGREE → COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTION: the parameter applies to the comparee to a higher extent than to the standard, e.g. *Susan is taller than Peter*;

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<sup>7</sup> Alternative terms used in the literature are ITEM COMPARED (Ultan 1972), TOPIC (Stolz and Stolz 2001, Gorshenin 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Alternative terms are MARK (Dixon 2012), MARKER (Greenberg 1966), TIE (Stolz 2013), PIVOT (Cuzzolin and Lehmann 2004), RELATOR (Gorshenin 2012, Stolz and Stolz 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Alternative terms are QUALITY or QUANTITY (Ultan 1972), QUALITY (Stolz 2013), COMMENT (Gorshenin 2012, Stolz and Stolz 2001), (COMPARATIVE) PREDICATE (Heine 1997, Stassen 1985, Stassen 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Alternative terms are INDEX (Dixon 2012), DEGREE (Stolz 2013, Gorshenin 2012, Stolz and Stolz 2001), COMPARATIVE CONCEPT (Heine 1994).

- d. SUPERLATIVE DEGREE → SUPERLATIVE CONSTRUCTION: shows the highest degree of the parameter applied to the comparee, e.g. *Susan is the tallest of her family.*

Taking also qualitative comparison into account, Treis (2018) proposes the following classification of comparison constructions (see also Fuchs 2014):

1. Quantitative comparison

a. Superiority

- i. Relative Superiority → COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Susan is taller than Peter*

- ii. Absolute Superiority → SUPERLATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Susan is the tallest of her family*

b. Inferiority

- i. Relative Inferiority → COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Peter is less tall than Susan*

- ii. Absolute Inferiority → SUPERLATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Peter is the least tall of his family*

c. Equality → EQUATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Peter is as tall as Susan*

2. Qualitative comparison

- a. Real Similarity → SIMILATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Peter runs like a hare. / Peter is like Susan.*

- b. Unreal/Pretended Similarity → SIMULATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS:

e.g. *Peter behaves as if he were a child.*

Following Treis (2018) and Keydana et al. (2021), I use “absolute” for constructions in which the standards make up a class and the value attributed to the comparee exceeds the values scored by the comparative class. Other authors (cf. Ultan 1972: 125, Gorshenin 2012: 82, as well as Cuzzolin and Lehmann 2004: 1213) attribute this definition to “relative superlatives”, which they distinguish from “absolute superlatives” expressing an excessive degree (e.g. *a most interesting tale*). For “absolute superlatives” in the sense of Ultan (1972) and others I use the terms “relative” and “excessive”, which must therefore be added to the classification:

1. Quantitative comparison
  - a. Superiority
    - iii. ELATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS  
e.g. *Peter is very tall.*
    - iv. EXCESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS  
e.g. *Peter is too tall.*

In both quantitative and qualitative comparison, standards may be specific, i.e. referring to individual discourse referents (1), or generic, i.e. referring to a class that possesses the property in question to a highly salient degree. The latter are usually found in idiomatic expressions whose function is to intensify the main adjective, as in (3) (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 309-313; Gibbs 2007: 699; see Chapter 4.2.1 on similes as comparative constructions):

(3) *Peter is tall like a tower.*

This work is primarily devoted to the study of Ṛgvedic similes marked by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*, which can be defined as figurative equative and similitive constructions. In order to fully understand the function of these constructions, however, it will be useful to frame them within the system of constructions and strategies employed for the expression of comparison of equality in the ṚV. While comparison of inequality has been extensively studied in the past decades, the expression of equality and similarity has until recently attracted little attention in the typological literature, the only notable exception being Haspelmath and Buchholz's (1998) groundbreaking study on equative constructions in European language. In the past few years, this trend has changed, and several studies have been published on comparison of equality cross-linguistically and within a single language. In the following Section, I will summarize the main contributions to the field: more in detail, Section 2.2.1 focusses on quantitative comparison of equality while Section 2.2.2 is devoted to qualitative comparison of equality.

## 2.2 Comparison of equality

### 2.2.1. Quantitative comparison of equality

Quantitative comparison of equality is encoded by equative constructions. In equative constructions, the compared entities or sets of entities possess the parameter to an identical or near-identical degree on a given scale. Thus, on a scale of body size, John's height is identical to George's height in example (4):

(4) *John is as tall as George.*

(Keydana et al. 2021: 7)

Cross-linguistic studies on equative constructions are Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), based on a sample of European languages, Henkelmann (2006) on 25 languages worldwide, and Haspelmath et al. (2017) on 119 languages worldwide. Ultan (1972) discusses equatives in contrast to comparatives, while Cuzzolin and Lehmann (2004) and Dixon (2012: 361-363) briefly discuss equative degree marking.

Haspelmath et al. (2017) base their typology of equative constructions on the following criteria: a) presence/absence of equative degree marker, b) whether the notion of equality is expressed in a primary predicate or in a secondary predicate, and c) whether comparee and standard are encoded in separate phrases or in the same phrase. The morphological status of standard and degree markers is not taken into account in setting the typology. The result is a six-fold typology, including the following construction types:

1. Type 1: Only equative standard marker - “Kim is tall [**like** Pat].”

The equative construction consists of an ordinary predicative property-word (‘is tall’) as parameter, differentiated comparee (‘Kim’) and standard (‘Pat’), and an equative standard marker (‘like’); no equative degree marker is involved. This type is the most common in the language sample, and is instantiated by example (5) from Ingush (Nakh-Daghestanian):

(5) [ <i>Sim</i>	<i>sanna</i>	<i>q'ahwa</i>	<i>jar</i>	<i>yz.</i>
bile	like	bitter	be.PST	3SG
'It was as bitter as bile.'				

(Nichols 2011: 511, in Haspelmath et al. 2017: 18)

2. Type 2: Equative degree marker and standard marker – “Kim is [**equally** tall] [**as** Pat].”

Type 2 resembles Type 1 but features an equative degree marker (‘equally’) in addition to the standard marker. This is the type found in English (*as tall as*). In many European languages, the equative marker is a demonstrative adverb ‘so’ and the standard marker a relative/interrogative adverb meaning ‘how’. Consider for instance examples (6) and (7) respectively from Latin and Modern Greek:



(6) *Claudia*                      [***tam*** *docta*]                      *est*                      [***quam*** *Julius*].  
 Claudia(F).NOM                      so                      learned.NOM.F                      be.PRS.3SG                      how                      Julius.NOM  
 ‘Claudia is as learned as Julius.’

(7) *I*                      *aðelfi*                      *mu*                      *íne*                      [***tóso*** *ómorfi*]  
 DEF.NOM.F                      sister(F).NOM                      1SG.GEN                      be.PRS.3SG                      so                      pretty.NOM.F  
 [***óso***                      *kj*                      *esí.*]  
 how                      also                      2SG.NOM  
 ‘My sister is as pretty as you.’

(adapted from Haspelmath et al. 2017: 12)

Such constructions – also called correlative constructions – are characteristic of the European linguistic area (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998; Haspelmath 2001), particularly of Romance, Germanic, Slavic and Balkan languages. Exceptions are represented by Indo-Aryan languages such as Marathi and Kashmiri, which also display correlative patterns. Consider example (8) from Kashmiri:

(8) *mohnichu*                      ***t’u:t***                      *da:na:*                      ***yu:t***  
 Mohan                      be.3SG                      that\_much                      wise                      as\_much  
*təm’sund bo:y*                      (*chu*)  
 his                      brother                      (be.SG)  
 ‘Mohan is as wise as his brother (is).’

(Koul and Wali 2004: 167)

In Type 2, the degree marker is most commonly a particle or an adverb, but it may also be a prefix, as in example (9) from Hiligaynon (Philippinic), or a suffix, as in example (10) from East Greenlandic (Eskimo).

(9) *si*                      *Pedro* [***kasing-gwapo***]                      [*ni*                      *Juan*]  
 ART.HUM Pedro EQUA.DG-handsome                      GEN.HUM                      Juan  
 ‘Pedro is as handsome as Juan.’

(Wolfenden 1971: 103, in Haspelmath et al. 2017: 19)

(10) *taanna*                      *uat-tut*                      *at-tii-vu-q*  
 that.one                      1SG-EQUAT.ST                      be.tall-EQUAT.DG-IND-3SG  
 ‘He is as tall as me.’

(Menecier 1995: 460, in Haspelmath et al. 2017: 19)

With regard to Type 2, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 296) state the following typological generalization:

“If a language is head-final and therefore the standard precedes the parameter, then it will tend not to have a parameter marker.”<sup>11</sup>

The functional explanation for this generalization has to do with the meaning of adjectives within and outside of comparison construction. In a sentence like *San Marino’s government is powerful*, the meaning of the adjective *powerful* refers to the upper part of the scale and the sentence implies that San Marino’s government is powerful compared to any other government. On the other hand, an equative construction such as *San Marino’s government is as powerful as Monaco’s government* only states that the two governments are powerful to the same degree, without implying the positive degree of the adjective. In head-final languages, the standard precedes the parameter and provides the scale on which the adjective must be interpreted. In head-initial languages, on the contrary, it is the parameter marker that, preceding the parameter, allows the adjective to be interpreted correctly. This functional explanation is confirmed by the behavior of generic equatives (see Chapter 4 2.1; Chapter 6.1.1.4): since their standards always possess the parameter to a high degree, adjectives in generic equatives refer to the upper part of the scale and these constructions tend to lack a parameter marker (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 309-313).

### 3. Type 3: Equative degree marker unified - “[Kim and Pat] are [equally tall].”

This construction type contains an ordinary predicative parameter and an equative degree marker (‘equally’), but the comparee and standard are expressed in a single noun phrase (‘Kim and Pat’) and there is no standard marker. Haspelmath et al. provide example (11) from Canela-Krahô (Je):

- (11) [capi me kryt] [cati pipẽn]  
Capi and Kryt big equal  
‘Capi and Kryt are equally big.’

(Popjes and Popjes 1986: 144, in Haspelmath et al 2017: 20)

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<sup>11</sup> On the basis of a larger sample, Haspelmath et al. (2017: 26) observe that there are strong areal effects in the distribution of the various patterns: except for Europe and Southeast Asia, languages of Eurasia tend to have OV and standard-parameter order, while languages of Africa (except for Ethiopia) tend to have VO and parameter-standard order.

4. Type 4: Primary reach equative - “Kim [**reaches/equals** Pat] in height.”

In Type 4 the equative degree is expressed by a primary predicate meaning ‘reaching’ or ‘equaling’, with the comparee as subject and the standard as object. The parameter is expressed by an oblique constituent (‘in height’). This type is common in African languages; take for instance example (12) from Malgwa (Chadic):

- (12) *Manye*            [*ça-əp-çe*                      *ad-â-ne*]                      *án*    *wála*.  
 Manye            reach-3SG.PRF-RDP    father-GEN-3SG                      ADP    growth  
 ‘Manye is as big as his father.’ (‘Manye reaches her father in growth.’)

(Löhr 2002: 107, in Haspelmath et al 2017: 20)

5. Type 5: Primary reach equative unified - “[Kim and Pat] **are equal** (to each other) in height.”

This type is the unified counterpart of type 4: equative degree is expressed by a primary (reciprocal) predicate ‘reaching’ or ‘equating’, but the verb takes both comparee and standard as its subject (‘Kim and Pat’); the parameter is again expressed as a kind of oblique constituent (‘in height’). Cf. example (13) from Zay (Semitic):

- (13) *kbbd-wā*        *ʔalmāz*            *b-gudrn*            *qittu-nomu*  
 Kebedde-and Almaz            in-height            equal-FOC.3PL.SBJ  
 ‘Kebedde and Almaz are equally tall.’ (‘...are equal in height’, ‘equal each other in height’)

(Meyer 2005: 848, in Haspelmath et al 2017: 21)

6. Type 6: Secondary reach equative - “Kim is tall [**reaching/equaling** Pat].”

Type 6 contains an ordinary predicative parameter (‘is tall’) and differentiated comparee and standard; the equative degree is expressed by a secondary predicate meaning ‘reaching’ or ‘equaling’, which has the standard as object. Consider example (14) from Degema (Edoid):

- (14) *Ómo*    *náa*    *o=vóv*            [*túl*    *mé=ēn.*]  
 child    this    3SG=be.tall    reach    me=FE  
 ‘This child is as tall as me.’

(Kari 2004: 15, in Haspelmath et al 2017: 22)

Beside the six primary types, Haspelmath et al. (2017: 23-24) discuss some other infrequently attested types (see also Henkelmann 2006): among these are conjoined equatives (‘Kim is tall, Pat is like that,

too”) and equatives in which nominalized parameters, instead of standard and comparee, are the primary arguments (“Kim’s tallness is like Pat’s tallness”).

From their survey of the 119 languages sample, Haspelmath et al. (2017: 25-27) draws three cross-linguistic generalizations. *Generalization 1* pertains the possible combinations of standard and degree markers, whereas *Generalizations 2* and *3* are about word order patterns observed in equative constructions.

- a) *Generalization 1*: No language has only a degree marker, leaving the standard unmarked (“Kim is [equally tall] Pat”);
- b) *Generalization 2* (only Types 1 and 2 are relevant): If the parameter follows the standard, then the language generally has dominant OV order. However, as in the case of OV order and other word order patterns, areal factors affect the distribution of the various equative patterns: languages of Eurasia (except for Europe and Southeast Asia) tend to have OV and STAND-PAR order, whereas the languages of Africa (except for Ethiopia) tend to have VO and PAR-STAND order.
- c) *Generalization 3*: If the standard precedes the parameter, then the standard marker generally follows the standard, and if the standard follows the parameter, then the standard marker generally precedes the standard.<sup>12</sup>

Haspelmath et al. (2017) are not concerned with the origin and etymology of standard and equative degree markers. However, this issue is addressed by Schulze (2017) in the same volume. Schulze’s aim is to draw a typology of what he calls *like-expressions*: starting with an onomasiological approach, he looks for linguistic expressions that encode LIKE-concepts and analyzes the relevant units with respect to their etymology. Since he works within the framework of Historical Cognitive Semantics (Sweetser 1990, Geeraerts 1997, 2010, Rastier 1999), Schulze bases his analysis on a sample of languages with well-documented or safely reconstructed “ancestors”: this includes IE and Semitic languages, as well as the East Caucasian language Udi with its ancient relative Caucasian Albanian.

According to Schulze (2017: 2), expressions encoding LIKE-concepts are placed at different points of a scale that opposes fully inferential to fully lexical expressions of likeness (15). Example (16) represents the inferential endpoint of the scale, where no explicit equative marker is given and the concept of likeness results from reducing the identificational value of the so-called ISA-

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<sup>12</sup> Haspelmath et al. (2017: 27) note that Greenberg (1963), who was concerned with correlations between the order of adjective, standard marker, and standard and the order of adposition and noun, implied Generalization 3, in that he only considered two orders: “standard marker-adjective” and “adjective marker-standard” (cf. Universal 22).

construction (A is B) to a set of properties shared by humans and wolves. Example (17), from Old Hebrew, occupies the lexical endpoint of the scale, for two lexical concepts (*šelem* ‘image, idol etc.’ and *demût* ‘likeness’) are used to encode the LIKE-concept:

(15) Fully inferential < ... < ... < ... < ... Fully lexical

(16) *Lupus est homo homini.*  
 wolf.NOM be.PRS.3SG human.NOM human.DAT

(Plaut. *As.* IV, 494-495, adapted from Schulze 2017: 1-2).

(17) *na ‘ašeh ‘ādām b-šalmê-nû ki-ḏāmûta-nû (...)*  
 1PL.IMPERF-make man in-image-1PL.POSS like-likeness-1PL.POSS  
*wa yyibrâ’ ‘elohîm ‘et-hâ- ‘ādām*  
 and-3SG.M.IMPERF-create god ACC-DEF-man  
*b-šalm-û b-šelem ‘elohîm*  
 in-image-3SG.M.POSS in-image.OBL god

‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (...). So God created man in his own image, he created him in the image of God.’

(*Genesis* 1.26-27, in Schulze 2017: 2)

Schulze takes the semantics of *like*-constructions as a result of the lexical expression of likeness and the syntactic pattern into which it is embedded. Therefore, he draws the typology of basic *like*-constructions illustrated in Table 4, following classifications by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), Fortescue (2010), and Haspelmath et al. (2017).<sup>13</sup>

**Table 4.** Basic LIKE-constructions (adapted from Schulze 2017: 4-5)

	Standard <sup>14</sup>	LIKE- Relator	Comparee	LIKE-Relator	Ground	Example (English)
LINKER			X	be+LIKE	Y	<i>The man is like a giant.</i>
			X	be+ADJ+LIKE	Y	<i>The man is (as) small as a child.</i>
			X	verb+LIKE	Y	<i>The man swims like a dolphin.</i>

<sup>13</sup> Note that, due to Schulze’s onomasiological approach, LIKE-Relator stands for any element that encodes the concepts of LIKENESS or SIMILARITY in an equative or simulative construction: thus, it can be either a standard- or parameter marker of any type (conjunction, adposition, verb, adjective). Furthermore, Schulze makes no distinction between quantitative and qualitative similarity, thus subsuming equative and simulative construction under the label *like*-construction.

<sup>14</sup> Instead of standard and comparee employed here, Schulze (2017: 4-5) employs the terms Figure and Ground, drawing them from Cognitive Linguistics.

FUNCTIVE			X	LIKE	Y	<i>The man as a giant.</i>
LIKE-VERB			X	equal	Y	<i>The man equals a giant.</i>
LIKE-ADJECTIVE	Y-	LIKE	X			<i>The child-like man.</i>

Regarding the origin of standard markers (LINKER), Schulze (2017: 12) notes that these are often derived from some form of the relative pronoun in IE languages: take for instance French *comme* from the grammaticalization of Latin *quo-modo* ‘in which manner’, Russian *kak* ‘like’ from Old Church Slavonic *kako* ‘like’ (corresponding to Greek *pôs, hópôs*), Greek *hôs* ‘like’ < \**yo-s* ‘from/with this’ from an old instrumental-ablative of the relative pronoun with the adverbial ending *-s* (Beekes 2009: 493, 1683), or German *wie* equivalent to Gothic *hvaiwa* < \**k<sup>w</sup>oi* ‘where’ + \**uē*. Notably, Icelandic *sem* ‘like’ directly corresponds to the relative pronoun *sem*, as shown by examples (18) and (19):

- (18) *þeir voru sem sauðir*  
they be.PAST.3PL like sheep.PL  
‘They were like sheep.’

(Mk 6:34, in Schulze 2017: 12)

- (19) *Konan sem sat á bekknum hló.*  
woman.DEF REL sit.PAST.3SG on bench.DEF laugh.PAST.3SG  
‘The woman who sat on the bench laughed.’

(Sigurðsson 2006: 2, in Schulze 2017: 13)

In its turn, *sem* (cf. English *same*), comes from IE \**sama(n)-* ‘together, being one with’ (Kroonen 2013: 425) and as a standard marker replaced the Old Icelandic relative particle *es* (later on *er*).

Additional patterns can be found in Semitic languages. For instance, the Quranic Arabic marker *miṭlun* ‘like’ is a noun denoting ‘something similar, something of the same kind, image, equivalent’ (Wehr 1979: 1047) and is related to Arabic *matalun* ‘likeness, parable, proverb, adage’ and Old Hebrew *māšāl* ‘parable, allegory, saying’. Schulze also connects it to the Akkadian verb *mašālu*, whose original meaning was ‘to be divided into equal halves’ and then turned to mean ‘to be equal to (the other half)’ > ‘to be similar’ (cf. Oppenheim and Reiner 1977: 358): from this, Schulze concludes that in this case the concept of likeness was likely grounded in a concept of ‘equal portion’.

Turning to like-verbs, these are often derived from adjectives encoding similarity: consider for instance English *to equal* from the adjective *equal*, in its turn from Latin *aequalis* ‘uniform, identical, equal’ (< *aequus* ‘level, even, just’), German *gleichen* ‘to equal’ from *gleich* ‘equal’ (<

OHG *gilihho* ‘having the body, gestalt of’; \**lika* ‘body’), or French *ressembler* from \**re-similare* ‘back + be similar to’. The same holds, e.g., for Arabic *maṭala* ‘to resemble, to be or look like, to imitate, copy’ (cf. *miṭlun* ‘something similar, alike’, *maṭalun* ‘likeness etc.’ above). An alternative pattern is instantiated by the Russian verb *poxodit* ‘to resemble’, a motion verb denoting ‘to move towards’ (20). Germanic and Romance languages also have expressions of similarity that are grounded in the concept of ‘coming close to’: take English *come close to*, German *nahe kommen* ‘come close’ and *gleich-kommen* ‘equal’, French *approcher de qc.* (< *proche* ‘close’), Italian *avvicinarsi a qc.* (< *vicino* ‘close’) for ‘be (more or less) similar to’ (Schulze 2017: 15). Heine and Kuteva (2002) mention other examples from non-IE languages, such as Malaita (Solomon Islands) *To’aba’ita mai* ‘to come’ > ‘to become’, Sango (CAR, Kongo, Tschad) *gä* ‘to come to’ > ‘to become’.

(20) *ona poxod-it na korolev-u*  
 she resemble.PRES-3SG on queen-ACC  
 ‘She equals a queen.’

(Schulze 2017: 15)

The examples above suggest that LIKE-verbs are more often conceptually related to and morphologically derived from LIKE-adjectives, rather than from LIKE-relators (e.g. conjunctions, adpositions). Table 5, providing a selection of equative particles and conjunctions, verbs, and adjectives from twelve languages, illustrates the point. Sometimes, however, LIKE-adjectives can be based on the same lexical form as the standard marker, as in the case of the Swedish adjective *samma* in example (21) and the conjunction *som* ‘like’:

(21) *Gas kann inte lagra-s på sammasätt som olja.*  
 gas can.PRES not store-MP for same way like oil  
 ‘Gas cannot be stored in the same way as oil.’

(Schulze 2017: 17)

**Table 5.** Selection of *like*-expressions (Schulze 2017: 15)

RELATOR LANGUAGE	CONJUNCTION / ADPOSITION	ADJECTIVAL	VERBAL
Arabic (Cl.)	<i>ka(mâ)-, miṭlun, šibhun</i>	<i>maṭṭlun / šabihun</i>	<i>maṭala</i>
Armenian (Cl.)	<i>ibrew</i>	<i>nman</i>	<i>nmanel</i>
Armenian (Mod. East)	<i>pes, nman</i>	<i>pes, nman</i>	<i>havasarvel</i>
English	<i>like, as</i>	<i>equal, -like</i>	<i>equal, resemble</i>
French	<i>comme</i>	[ <i>comme</i> ], <i>pareil</i>	<i>ressembler</i>
Georgian	<i>rogorc, msgavsad</i>	<i>msgavsi</i>	<i>msgavseba</i>

German	<i>wie</i>	<i>gleich, -gleich</i>	<i>gleichen</i>
Greek (Cl.)	<i>hōs, hōseí</i>	<i>hómoios</i>	<i>homoion eīnaí</i>
Irish	<i>amhail, ar nós</i>	<i>cosúil</i>	[ <i>is</i> ] <i>cosúil le</i>
Latin	<i>sicut</i>	<i>similis, aequalis</i>	<i>similis, -e esse</i>
Russian	<i>kak</i>	<i>poxožij, podobnyj</i>	<i>poxodit'</i>
Swedish	<i>som</i>	<i>samma</i>	<i>likna</i>
Turkish	<i>gibi</i>	<i>benzer, -gibi</i>	<i>benzemek</i>

Among LIKE-adjectives, English compound adjectives such as *child-like* include the notion of transfiguration: they result from the grammaticalization of compounds with *\*-līka* ‘body’ (Old English *līč* > *like*) in expressions meaning ‘having a given form or shape’. Similarly, the German adjective *kindlich* ‘childish, childly’ illustrates the development of *\*-līka* into a derivational suffix, while the German adjectival suffix *-gleich* derives from *\*ga-līka-* ‘alike’ (Schulze 2017: 18). In addition, *like*-expressions in the East Caucasian language Lezgi suggest that the notion of LIKENESS may derive from the one of BECOMING: *xtin* (adjectival ‘like’) is probably a participle-like form of the verb *xun* ‘to become’. The following example illustrates the use of *xiz* ‘like’:

- (22) *am bilbil xiz rax-az-wa.*  
 DIST nightingale like speak-INF-PRES

‘He speaks like a nightingale.’ (lit.: ‘He speaks being a nightingale’)

(Bilalov and Tagirov 1987, in Schulze 2017: 26)

The Russian adjective *podobnyj* ‘similar, alike’ is a compound derived from *po-doba*, (cf. Old Church Slavonic *doba* ‘use, advantage’ < IE *\*dhabh-* ‘fitting, adequate’ (Derksen 2008: 408). From it, Russian forms the construction *angelo-podobnyj* ‘angelic’, ‘angel-like’.

From the above overview, it results that the expression of LIKENESS and SIMILARITY is grounded in procedures of conventionalization, whereby speech communities refer to various source domains in order to establish these expressions (see Chapter 3.4 for the notion of source and target domain). In other words, the concepts of LIKENESS and SIMILARITY are understood in terms of other, more concrete concepts, through the cognitive processes of metaphor and metonymy. From the etymological analysis of what he calls ‘LIKE-Relators’, Schulze concludes that the linguistic expression of LIKE-concepts is grounded in at least three conceptual domains: a) motion/location, b) transformation/transfiguration, and c) unification. Alternatively, standard markers can result from grammaticalization processes related to the area of pronouns. König (2017, same volume) also showed that, especially in European languages, equative and simulative constructions originate from deictic expressions, more specifically from demonstratives of manner, quality, and degree. I will



come back to this point in Chapter 8 on the origin and further developments of the standard markers *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*.

### 2.2.2 Qualitative comparison of equality

Qualitative comparison is encoded by similitive constructions. The very notion of qualitative comparison is problematic. Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 278, 313) and Vanhove (2017: 196, 199) call similitive constructions comparisons of manner, but Jäger (2018: 13) questions this interpretation and proposes a feature-based semantics [–Difference, –Grade], opting for the term non-grade-equative (*Nicht-Grad-Äquativ*; 2018: 433). Others explain similarity as a concept denoting “similar features” (Jenny 2017: 293) or “partial identity” (Haspelmath 2017: 13). Finally, according to Keydana et al. (2021), similitive constructions conceptualize an entity of one category (the comparee) in terms of another category (the standard).

Similitive constructions of the simplest kind lack an explicit parameter of comparison, as in example (23). Otherwise, parameters guiding the comparison may take the form of adjectives (24) or verbs (25):

(23) *My father is like a mountain.*

(24) *My father is **tall** like a mountain.*

(25) *Michael Jackson **moves** like James Brown.*

(Keydana et al. 2021: 5-6)

Degree reading may emerge as a consequence of the use of gradable concepts as parameters (e.g. *tall*) but is not contributed by the similitive construction;<sup>15</sup> indeed, similitives evoke the entire concept encoded by the standard, and not the parameter alone. Entailment of the positive is a crucial difference between similitives and equatives and can serve as a criterion for distinguishing one construction from the other.

Hypothetical comparison is encoded by simulative constructions (Treis 2018: iii), which explicitly highlight the counterfactual nature of the comparison, as in (26):

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<sup>15</sup> Keydana et al. (2021: 5) interpret in this way the following quotes by Jäger (2018: 13): “Nicht-Grad-Äquative besitzen damit [...] keine ausschließlich gradbasierte Semantik, wobei unter Umständen die verglichene Art und Weise auch Grade einer Eigenschaft umfassen kann, grundsätzlich aber eine ganze Reihe von ggf. auch nicht-graduierbaren Eigenschaften eine Rolle spielt.” (= ‘Therefore, non-degree equatives [...] do not have an exclusively degree-based semantics, whereby the compared manner may also include degrees of a property, but in principle a whole series of possibly non-gradable properties also plays a role.’, my translation).

(26) *Michael Jackson moves as if he were James Brown.*

(Keydana et al. 2021: 6)

Similatives are usually not included into typological works on comparison constructions. Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) is a contrastive study of equative and similative constructions, based on a sample of 43 European languages. From this study, it results that the standard marker in equative and similative constructions is identical or formally related in the majority of Standard Average European (SAE) languages. Similative markers in European languages are most commonly expressed by means of a preposition-like standard marker (27), whereas many eastern European non-SAE languages, as well as Basque, employ a postposition-like element, as in (28):

- (27) a. Swedish *Hans skriver **som** sin syster.*  
b. Croatian *On piše **kao** njegova sestra.*  
c. Sardinian *Isse iscriet **comente** sa sorre.*  
he writes like his sister  
'He writes like his sister.'

- (28) a. M. Eastern Armenian<sup>16</sup>  
*Na grum e ir k'roj nman.*  
3SG writing is his sister.GEN/DAT like  
'He writes like his sister.'
- b. Basque  
*Nik bezala egin du.*  
1SG.ERG like do 3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS  
'He has done it like me.'

Unlike equative constructions, similatives usually do not comprise a parameter marker in SAE languages and it seems likely that this tendency is universal and not restricted to European languages (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 314; cf. also Nose 2009).

In the majority of SAE languages, the standard marker in equative and similative constructions is identical or formally related. In this, English constitutes a notable exception (*as* vs. *like*), together with three Romance languages (French, Friulian, and Sardinian), and nine non-SAE languages that

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<sup>16</sup> On similatives in Armenian, see also Dum-Tragut (2009: 540-541).

differentiate equative from similitive standard markers (1998: 315). Examples (29) (30) illustrate French equative and similitive constructions respectively:

- (29) *Jacques est aussi grand que Pierre.*  
 Jacques is as tall as Pierre  
 ‘Jacques is as tall as Pierre.’
- (30) *Il écrit comme sa sœur.*  
 he writes like his sister  
 ‘He writes like his sister.’

Although a large-scale typological study is still lacking, the use of the same standard marker in both types of constructions seems common worldwide. Thus, in languages where equative degree is not overtly marked (unlike in French where *aussi* is used), and where no formal distinction is made between lexemes expressing properties and action/processes (e.g. adjectives vs. verbs), there is no formal difference between equative and similitive constructions (Treis 2017: xviii).

### 2.3 Comparison of equality in ancient Indo-European languages

Keydana et al. (2021) provide an extensive, mostly synchronic overview of comparison constructions in ancient IE languages. The volume covers all the major subphyla of the IE family and all types of construction introduced in Section 2.1. In fact, one of the advantages of this volume is that one and the same classification criterion is employed to sketch a typology of all types of construction expressing comparison and gradation.

Throughout the volume, comparison constructions are classified along two dimensions: a) the morphosyntactic function of standard marker (STM) and b) the one of the parameter marker (PM). Table 6 illustrates the taxonomy:

**Table 6.** Taxonomy of comparison constructions (adapted from Keydana et al. 2021: 13)

STM	PM	BOUND MORPHEME	FREE MORPHEME	‘exceed/equate’ (E)	–
FLAG		1. FLAG / BM	2. FLAG / FM	3. FLAG / E	4. FLAG / –
PTCL		5. PTCL / BM	6. PTCL / FM	7. PTCL / E	8. PTCL / –
–		9. – / BM	10. – / FM	11. – / E	

Starting with standard markers, Table 6 shows that these can be either flags or particles. When the standard marker is a flag, the standard is marked by some case ending or adposition; this can either

be specific of comparison constructions or have broader scope, as for instance the ablative case. Also particle standard markers may either be construction specific or have other functions. In their taxonomy, the term particle is used to denote any indeclinable standard marker and includes both morphologically complex items (e.g. Latin *tamquam*) and simple ones (e.g. Vedic *ná*). Alternatively, a construction may have no standard marker at all (types 9, 10, and 11). Parameter markers can be bound or free morphemes; furthermore, parameter markers of the exceed/equate type may be adjectives, adverbs, or verbs with different valency. Finally, types 4 and 8 lack a parameter marker.

In what follows, I will review the main types of equative and similitive constructions attested in ancient IE languages other than Vedic. This will serve to contextualize the discussion on comparative constructions in Vedic and in particular in the ṚV, which will be the focus of Chapter 6.

### 2.3.1 Equatives in Indo-European

In IE languages, various types of equative constructions are attested, the most frequent of which have a particle-like standard marker. In some languages, equatives also comprise a parameter marker (type 6), whereas others systematically lack it (type 8). Example (31) shows a relative-based equative construction (type 6) in Latin, while example (32), again from Latin, is a clausal type 8 construction characterized by the standard marker *quam*:

(31)	<i>Quid</i>	<i>est</i>	<i>oratori</i>	<b><i>tam</i></b>	<i>necessarium</i>
	what(N).NOM	be.PRS.3SG	orator.DAT	as	essential.NOM.N
	CPREE			PM	PAR
	<b><i>quam</i></b>	<i>vox?</i>			
	as	intonation(F).NOM			
	STM	STAND			

‘What is so essential to an orator as intonation?’

(Cic. *de Orat.* 1.251, from Keydana et al. 2021: 16)

(32)	<i>non</i>	<i>edepol</i>	<i>piscis</i>	<i>expeto</i>	<b><i>quam</i></b>	<i>tui</i>
	NEG	by.Pollux	fish.ACC.PL	wish.PRS.1SG	as	2SG.POSS.GEN
	_____CPREE_____				STM	_____
	<i>sermonis</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>indigens</i>			
	conversation.GEN	be.PRS.1SG	needing.NOM			
	_____STAND_____					

‘By Pollux, I’m not looking for fish as much as I am in need of a conversation with you.’

(Plaut. *Rud.* 943, in Ittzés 2021: 499)

Designated case markers for standards in equatives are not attested in ancient IE languages. However, when the parameter marker is expressed by a verb or an adjective, the standard is flagged by the case selected by it (type 3). Take example (33) from Ancient Greek, where the adjective *antírrupon* ‘equal’ selects the dative case for the standard (*tōi andri* ‘to her husband’); note that the equative degree is not explicitly expressed in this case but can only be inferred by the context. A hybrid construction (type 7) is reported in (34) from Avestan: the adjective *auuānt-* (semantically comparable with Latin *tantus*) functions as a degree marker but does not select any case for the standard, which is marked by the particle *yaθa* ‘as’; in this case, parameters are expressed by the instrumental of a series of quality nouns.

(33)	<i>nomízō</i>	<i>dè</i>	<i>gunaīka</i>	<i>koinōnòn</i>	<i>agathèn</i>	<i>oīkou</i>
	think.PRS.1SG	PTCL	wife.ACC	partner.ACC	good.ACC	household.GEN
			CPREE			
	<i>oūsan</i>		<i>pánu</i>	<b><i>antírrupon</i></b>	<i>eīnai</i>	<i>tōi andri</i>
	be.PTCP.PRS.ACC		entirely	equal.ACC	be.INF.PRS	art.DAT husband.DAT
				PM		STAND.STM
	<i>epì</i>	<i>tò</i>	<i>agathón.</i>			
	towards	ART.ACC	good.ACC			
	PAR					

‘I think that a wife who is a good partner in the household is entirely equal to her husband in providing for its good.’

(Xen. *Ec.* 3.15, in de Kreij 2021: 355)

(34)	<i>azəm</i>	<i>daδqm [...]</i>	<i>aom</i>	<i>stārəm [...]</i>	<b><i>auuāntəm</i></b>
	1SG.NOM	made.1SG	this.ACC	star.ACC	so.great.ACC
				CPREE	PM
	<i>yesniata</i>			<b><i>auuāntəm</i></b>	
	worthiness.of.being.worshipped.INS			so.great.ACC	
	PAR			PM	
	<i>vahmiata</i>			<b><i>auuāntəm</i></b>	<i>xšnaoθβata</i>
	worthiness.of.being.invoked.INS			so.great.ACC	worthiness.of.being.satisfied.INS
	PAR			PM	PAR
	<b><i>auuāntəm</i></b>	<i>frasastata</i>			<b><i>yaθa</i></b> <i>mqm=cit [...]</i>
	so.great.ACC	worthiness.of.being.celebrated.INS			as 1SG.ACC=PTCL
	PM	PAR			STM STAND

‘I created [...] this star as worthy of being worshipped, as worthy of being invoked, as worthy of being satisfied, as worthy of being celebrated as me [...]’.

(Yt. 8.50, in Milizia 2021: 427)

Finally, it is worth noting that comparative constructions of the type *melle dulcior* ‘sweeter than honey’ are sometimes listed among the strategies employed by IE languages for the encoding of quantitative comparison of equality. Reflexes of the PIE comparative suffix *\*-ios* such as Latin *-ior* are attested in several IE languages and employed for the expression of separative comparatives.<sup>17</sup> Some scholars argue that, when adjectives in the comparative degree take a generic standard, the whole construction must be interpreted as an equative pattern: *melle dulcior* thus ‘as sweet as honey’ (cf. Benveniste 1948: 135; Löfstedt 1956: 310; Rosén 1999: 193; Cuzzolin 2011: 604, among many others). For Latin, some scholars suggested that the ablative standard (cf. *melle*) in such constructions originally represented an instrumental, in contrast to “genuine” comparative constructions in which the ablative standard marker goes back to the PIE separative ablative (Ittzés 2021: 490; see Cuzzolin 2011: 609 for an overview of the discussion). Beside the *melle dulcior* type, constructions containing the parameter marker *magis* ‘more’ and the ablative of a “quality-typifying substantive” (as Rosén 1999: 193 puts it) encoding the standard are also interpreted as equative constructions typical of formulaic language. The following (35) passage from Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*, contains two comparisons of the types described above: *magis saxo durum* ‘harder/as hard as stone’ and *mollius unda* ‘softer/as soft as water’.

(35)	<i>quid</i>	<i>magis</i>	<i>est</i>	<i>saxo</i>	<i>durum,</i>	<i>quid</i>
	what.NOM	more	be.PRS.3SG	stone.ABL	hard.NOM	what.NOM
	CPREE	PM		STAND.STM	PAR	
	<i>mollius</i>	<i>unda?</i>				
	soft.CPD.NOM	water.ABL				
	PAR.PM	STAND.STM				

‘what is harder than (as hard as?) stone, what softer than (as soft as?) water?’

(Ov. *Ars* 1.475, in Ittzés 2021: 491)

<sup>17</sup> See Stassen (1985), Heine (2002), and Dixon (2012) for different classifications of comparative constructions and Treis (2017) for an overview. Stassen (1985), who takes the type of standard marker as the main criterion to set up his taxonomy, call comparatives whose standard marker is a separative (source, origin) morpheme (‘from’, ‘up from’, ‘beyond’, ‘behind’, ‘after’) “separative comparatives”; Heine (2002) calls them “Source comparatives”.

For Ancient Greek, de Kreij (2021: 354) reports example (36) from Homer. Here too, the parameter is marked by the comparative suffix *-iōn* but, since the standard of comparison represents the prototype example of the concept expressed by the parameter, the expression can be read as an (exaggerated) equative instead of a “normal” comparative.

(36)	<i>toũ</i>	<i>kai</i>	<i>apò</i>	<i>glōssēs</i>	<i>mélitos</i>	<i>glukiōn</i>
	REL.GEN	PTCL	from	tongue.GEN	honey.GEN	sweet.CPD.NOM
					STAND.STM	PAR.PM
	<i>rhéen</i>		<i>audē</i>			
	flow.IMPF.3SG		speech.NOM			
			CPREE			

‘From whose tongue speech flowed sweeter than honey.’

(Hom. *Il.* 1.249, in de Kreij 2021: 354)

Itzès (2019, 2021: *passim*) challenges the equative interpretation of the type *melle dulcior*. In Itzès (2019), he brings textual evidence in favor of a comparative interpretation of this pattern and suggests regarding it as a special instance of the comparative of superiority (“sweeter than honey”) which allows the inference of an elative reading from the pragmatic point of view (“very sweet”). A similar view can be found in Thesleff (1954: 127), who describes Early and Classical Greek constructions of this type as “violent intensifications” and would probably categorize them as elative.

### 2.3.3 Similatives in Indo-European

The most common way of expressing similatives in IE languages is by means of a preposition-like standard marker analogous to the one employed in equative constructions. Unlike equatives, similatives do not in general comprise a parameter marker. Thus, most similative constructions belong to type 4 or to type 8. Two examples of type 4 similatives are given below: in (37), from Old Church Slavonic, the standard marker is the preposition *po*, while in (38) from Hittite it is the adverbial suffix *-ili*. One example of type 8 similative is (39), again from Hittite, in which the particle *iwar* ‘like’ functions as standard marker.

- (37) *i sь filosofь[sic! y] besědovaše, sьbiraja po*  
 and ADP philosopher.INS.PL<sup>18</sup> converse.IPF.3SG collect.PTCP.PRS ADP  
 (CPREE) PAR STM  
*bьčelě ljubostradněi ...*  
 bee.DAT sedulous.DAT  
 STAND

‘And [he] conversed with philosophers, collecting like a sedulous bee ...’

(in Akermann 2021: 152-153)<sup>19</sup>

- (38) *ut-ni-i UR.GI7-li wakki[škizzi]*  
 land.NOM dog-ADV bite.PRS.3SG  
 CPREE STAND-STM PAR

‘The land bit[es] like a dog.’

(CTH 16 KBo 3.41+ i 17’, Puḫanu chronicle, in Molina 2021: 38)

- (39) *zig=a=mu=z(a) DINGIR-YA attāš iwar zik*  
 you=but=1SG.DAT=REFL god.NOM-my father.NOM like 2SG.NOM  
 CPREE STAND STM CPREE

‘But you, my God, are like a father to me’

(CTH 374 (MH) KBo 52.13+ iii 3’-4’, in Molina 2021: 39)

When expressed, the parameter of similitive constructions may be a verb, as in the case of *ar(a)šmi* ‘I flow’ in example (40) from Hittite, or an adjective, as *épios* ‘gentle’ in example (41) from Ancient Greek.<sup>20</sup> Note however that, in languages that employ the same standard marker for similitives and equatives and no parameter marker for equatives, the two kinds of comparison are hardly

<sup>18</sup> About the ending -ь, Akermann comments: “A lapsus scribendi of the copyist: *filosofь*, with the last stroke lacking, hence as if GEN.PL instead of the correct INS.PL. *filosofy* (-y for the Cyrillic <ь>)”.

<sup>19</sup> ViTheSt 39v9–11, Dubrovina et al. 1977: 146, PCCG 99: 117, Mat. II: 980, SRJa.1–17 XV: 115.

<sup>20</sup> Contributions collected in Keydana et al. (2021) refrain from glossing verbs occurring in similitive constructions as parameters (PAR), while they gloss adjectives in this way. This choice may be sensible in the case of clausal similitives, in which the two clauses can be taken to represent that standard and comparee. Although no motivation is explicitly given for this choice in phrasal similitives, it may derive from the interpretation of similitives as holistic comparisons that evoke the whole concept of the standard, and not the parameter alone; still, this does not explain the different treatment of verbs and adjectives occurring in the same kind of constructions. Since I believe that verbs play a crucial role in determining the relevant dimension of comparison (see the discussion on broad- vs. narrow scope similes in Chapter 4, as well as Chapters 6 and 9), in the examples presented below, all taken from Keydana et al., I will supply the gloss PAR for verbs occurring in similitive constructions (mainly types 4 and 8).



distinguishable. This is the case of Ancient Greek, which employs the standard marker *hōs* in both equative and similitive constructions, and no parameter marker; in the case of Hittite, Zeilfelder (1998: 480) tentatively suggests a difference between (equative) *mān/mahḥan* ‘exactly as’ and similitive *iwar*, but she acknowledges that the difference is by no means clear-cut; rather, *māḥhan* ‘like’ seems to be employed in similitive constructions just as *iwar*, whereas *mašiwān* ‘as much as’ is restricted to equatives (Molina 2021: 39; Zeilfelder 2001: 472).

- (40) *nu wātar māḥhan kuwāpi ar(a)šmi*  
 CONN water.NOM as where flow.PRS.1SG  
 STAND STM PAR.(CPREE)  
 ‘Where I flow like water’

(CTH 374 KBo 52.13+ iii 19’, in Molina 2021: 39)

- (41) *patēr d’ hōs épios êen*  
 father.NOM.SG PTC like gentle.NOM.SG.M be.IMPF.3SG  
 STAND PM PAR (CPREE)  
 ‘And (he) was as gentle as a father.’

(Hom. *Od.* 2.47)

As in the case of equatives, verbs or adjectives often function as parameter markers. Take for instance example (42) from Classical Armenian, where the parameter marker *nman* ‘equal’ selects the dative case for the standard *hatoy* ‘seed’; other adjectival and verbal parameter markers are *hawasar* ‘equal, similar’ and *nmanem* ‘resemble’ (Kölligan 2021: 52).

- (42) *nman ê ark’ayowt’iwn erknic’ hatoy*  
 similar.NOM be.PRS.3SG kingdom.NOM heaven.GEN.PL seed.DAT  
 PM CPREE STAND.STM  
*mananxoy*  
 mustard.GEN  
 ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.’

(Mt. 13.31, in Kölligan 2021: 52)

Compounding is also frequently attested in the encoding of similitives or equatives. Compounds may combine different elements of a similitive constructions: for instance, they can include the parameter marker and the parameter, as in the case of Old Church Slavonic *podob[o-strastь]na* ‘suffering the

same way’ in (43) and its Greek counterpart *homoio-patheĩs*. Alternatively, they can combine a noun denoting the standard of comparison and an element functioning as the parameter marker, although the parameter is itself not expressed: take for instance the three Ancient Greek compounds in (44), where the parameter marker is denoted respectively by an adjective, adverb, and preposition. Other examples are the Avestan *hazaoša-* ‘having the same wishes’, *hama.gaonāṅhō* ‘having the same color’ (Milizia 2021: 419, 423), or the Goidelic compound *adr-amail* ‘father-like’, whose parameter marker is the noun *samail* ‘likeness, similarity’ (Griffith 2021: 236).

(43)	<i>i</i>	<i>ny</i> [=vě]	<b><i>podob[o-strastʹ]na</i></b>	<i>vamʹ jesvě</i>	<i>člověka</i>
	also	1DU.NOM	similar-suffer.NOM.DU	2PL.DAT be.PRS.1DU	person.NOM.DU
		CPREE	PM-PAR	STAND	[CPREE]

‘We [both] are also men [suffering] like you.’

(Acts 14.15, in Akermann 2021: 155<sup>21</sup>)

(44)	<i>antí-theos</i> /	<i>isó-theos</i> /	<i>theo-eidēs</i>
	ADP-god	ADJ-god	god-ADJ
	PM-STAND	PM-STAND	STAND-PM
	‘god-like’		

(Hom. *Il.* 9.632 / *Il.* 2.565 / *Il.* 2.623, in de Kreij 2021: 353)

Furthermore, a very common type of similitive compound consists of two nouns or a noun and an adjective, one of which expresses the standard, and the other the parameter, as in (45); finally, compounds can contain two nouns denoting the standard and the comparee, as in (46):

(45)	<i>meli-ēdēs</i> /	<i>thumo-léōn</i> /	<i>bo-ōpis</i>
	honey-sweet	heart-lion	cow-eye
	STAND-PAR	PAR-STAND	STAND-PAR
	‘honey-sweet’ /	‘lion-hearted’ /	‘cow-eyed’

(Hom. *Od.* 19.551 / *Il.* 5.639 / *Il.* 1.551; in de Kreij 2021: 353)

(46)	<i>rhodo-dákylos</i> ‘having fingers like roses’
	rose-finger
	STAND-CPREE

(Hom., Hes., *passim*, in Keydana et al. 2021: 16)

<sup>21</sup> Slepč mp 12r11–12: Acts 14.15; Il’jinskij 1912: 7, NTG: 343, SJS III: 98) (= AOchr, Mak, Christ, Siš).

### 3. Cognitive Linguistics

In this work, I frame my analysis of R̥gvedic similes within a cognitive linguistic approach, borrowing concepts and tools from Construction Grammar, Frame Semantics, and Blending Theory. Cognitive Linguistics relies on three guiding hypotheses (Croft and Cruse 2004: 1):

- a) Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty;
- b) Grammar is conceptualization;
- c) Knowledge of language emerges from language use.

Hypothesis a) is a response to the generative grammar's well-known theory that language is an innate and autonomous cognitive faculty, separate from other non-linguistic cognitive modules. From a cognitive perspective, the particular configuration of cognitive abilities employed in language – real-time perception and production of a sequence of discrete, structured symbolic units – is probably unique to language, but the single cognitive skills required are not (Croft and Cruse 2004: 2). A corollary to this first hypothesis is that linguistic knowledge is represented in the same way as other conceptual structures: this applies not only to meaning, but also to syntactic, morphological and phonological form. From the assumption that linguistic knowledge is conceptual structure, it follows that grammar is responsible for the conceptualization of the linguistic knowledge we possess (hypothesis b; Croft and Cruse 2004: 3). Finally, language knowledge is built through a process of abstraction and schematization of specific utterances on specific occasions of use (hypothesis c; Croft and Cruse 2004: 4)

The following subsections will deal with the two main organizing principles of conceptual knowledge (semantic frames and mental spaces; 3.1), with the organization of grammatical knowledge into networks linked by taxonomic relations (Construction Grammar; 3.2), and with the production of novel conceptual structures through the combination of existing spaces and domains (Blending Theory; 3.3).

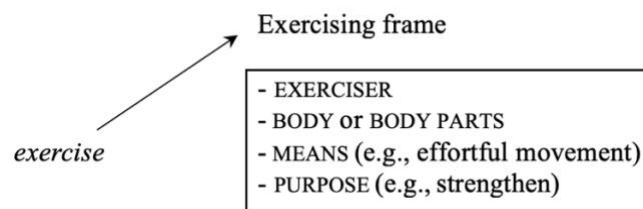
#### 3.1 The Organization of conceptual structure: frames and spaces

Frames are one of the two organizing principles of conceptual structure. The term “frame” was first introduced to linguistics by Fillmore (1976, 1977ab, 1982) to represent a system of concepts which are related by some motivating context such that, without knowledge of the entire system, one does not have complete knowledge of any of the component concepts (Fillmore 1982: 111). According to Fillmore's Frame Semantics (1977ab, 1982, 1985; see also Fillmore and Baker 2001, 2010), concepts

in a frame belong together because they are associated in ordinary human experience. A frame is evoked by words in context and allows understanding by giving access to all the essential knowledge that relates to those words. For example, the verb *exercise*, evokes the Exercising frame, which also includes elements such as an exerciser (a person with a body), some means (specific movements of the body), and a purpose (strengthening or otherwise improving the body). These frame elements are called roles because they generalize over many potential situations and individuals. In specific instances of a frame roles receive fillers: for instance, in example (1) *runners, swimmers and other athletes* fills the exerciser role, *amplifies your vaccine response* fills the purpose role, and so on.

(1) *A study on a group of runners, swimmers and other athletes suggests that exercising amplifies our vaccine response.*

The evocation of the Exercising frame by the verb *exercise* can be illustrated as in Figure 1:



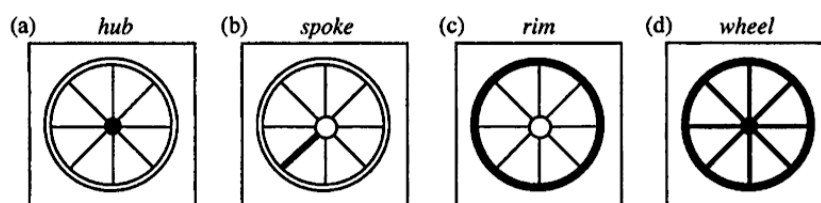
**Figure 1.** The verb *exercise* evokes the Exercising frame (adapted from Sullivan 2013: 19).

One argument in favor of a frame-based approach to lexical semantics is that many word concepts cannot be understood without having access to the social and cultural background in which the action, state, or thing exists. For example, the concept *vegetarian* is a relevant concept only in the frame of a community in which meat-eating is common; furthermore, it is used appropriately only in situations in which the individual so designated deliberately chooses a meat-free diet, for religious, health or ecological reasons (Fillmore 1982:120).

The relationship between a word concept and the frame to which it belongs is called the profile-based relation by Langacker (1987). The notion of profile is introduced by Langacker by means of the word *spoke*: in order to understand what a spoke is, one must understand the concept of *wheel*. In this example, the *spoke* functions as a profile, that is, the substructure encoded by the word in question, whereas the *wheel* is the base<sup>22</sup> against which the profile is understood. Several

<sup>22</sup> Langacker (1987) and Lakoff (1987) also use the term “domain” to indicate the base, and both terms can be employed in the sense of Fillmore (1982) “frame”.

concepts can have the same base: *hub*, *spoke*, and *rim* all have *wheel* as base and contrast semantically with each other because each of them designates a different part. The term “profile” can also be used as a verb to describe the profile-base relationship: for example, the previous sentence can be reworded saying that *hub*, *spoke*, and *rim* all profile a different part of the base *wheel*. The profile-base relationship can be represented as in Figure 2:



**Figure 2.** The profile-base relation: *hub* vs. *spoke*, *rim*, *wheel* (Langacker 2008: 67)

An expression can profile either a thing or a relationship. A typical example are kin terms such as *daughter*, which presupposes the concept ‘parent’, and the type of kin relationship that holds between them. Furthermore, a speaker can show that he applies a particular frame to a situation by employing words that are grounded in that frame. This concept is well illustrated by the words *land* and *ground*: as argued by Fillmore (1982: 120-121), the difference between these two words mainly consists in the fact that *land* designates the dry surface of the earth as distinct from the Sea, whereas *ground* designates the dry surface of the earth as distinct from the Air above it. Thus, the two words differ not much in the entity that they identify, but in how they situate such entity in a larger frame.

Semantic frames represent one of the two major dimensions in the organization of conceptual structure. The other relevant dimension is the one described by Mental Space Theory (Fauconnier 1985, 1997; see also Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996). Mental spaces are partial and short-term representations of the status of a speaker’s knowledge (beliefs, desires, hypothetical, counterfactuals) with respect to reality. Consider the utterances in (2):

- (2) a *Gina bought a sports car.*
- b. *Giorgio believes Gina bought a sports car.*
- c. *Gina wants to buy a sports car.*

(adapted from Croft and Cruse 2004: 32)

Utterances such as (2)a situate events or states in the mutually known world of the interlocutors (normally the present reality), which is called base space (Fauconnier 1997: 38-39). Utterances such as (2)b and (2)c, on the other hand, allocate the situation to Giorgio’s belief or to Gina’s desire, that

is, to a new mental space which is linked to the base space and in which the described situation holds true (Croft and Cruse 2004: 32). The verbs *believe* and *want* in (2)b and (2)c are responsible for the creation of the new mental space and are called space builders by Fauconnier. Space builders include a wide range of semantic phenomena, such as temporal expressions (3)a, negation (3)b, disjunction (3)c, fictional situations (3)d and image contexts (3)e (Croft and Cruse 2004: 33-34).

- (3) a. *In 1770, France was a monarchy.*
- b. *I don't have a car.*
- c. *Either you take a cab or you walk home.*
- d. *In the movie, Ian McKellen is Gandalf.*
- e. *In the photo, she has black hair.*

(adapted from Croft and Cruse 2004: 34)

Thus, words and constructions can evoke frames and build spaces. For every new space built, there is a mapping of elements from it onto the base space. Fauconnier and Turner's more recent work (Fauconnier 1997; Fauconnier and Turner 2002) focuses on the fact that information from two different spaces can be blended in a resulting space to produce novel conceptual structures. I will introduce this theory, called Blending Theory, in Section 3.3.

### 3.2 Construction Grammar

The founding hypothesis of Construction Grammar is that constructions, i.e., recurrent pairings of form and function, are the basic units of language (Fillmore and Kay 1993; Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988; Lakoff 1987; Goldberg 1995). Any linguistic pattern is defined as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function cannot be strictly predicted from the sum of its parts or from other already existing constructions. In Construction Grammar, no strict distinction is assumed between the lexicon and the syntax and all grammatical knowledge is represented in a uniform fashion in the syntax-lexicon *continuum* (Goldberg 1995: 6-7). From this it follows that constructions constitute a gradient on two dimensions: from substantive to schematic and from atomic to complex. Table 7 illustrates the range of constructions found in language:

**Table 7.** Types of construction in a language (adapted from Goldberg 2006: 5)

CONSTRUCTION TYPE	EXAMPLES
Morphemes (atomic and substantive; bound)	[ <i>pre-</i> ], [ <i>-ing</i> ]
Words (atomic and substantive; non-bound)	[ <i>this</i> ], [ <i>green</i> ]
Complex words (complex but bound)	[NOUN- <i>s</i> ], [VERB-TNS]

Syntactic categories (atomic and schematic)	[DEM], [ADJ]
Idioms (complex and – mostly – substantive)	[ <i>kick</i> -TNS <i>the bucket</i> ]
Valency (complex and partially substantive)	[Sbj <i>consume</i> Obj]
Syntactic constructions (complex and – mostly – schematic)	[SBJ <i>be</i> -TNS VERB <i>-en by</i> OBL]

As an example of a common construction in Vedic, take the Pseudoreversative Construction in (4): here the combination of the preverb *ápa* ‘away’ with the verb  $\sqrt{vr}$ - ‘cover’ designates an action (‘open, uncover’) which is opposite to the action designated by the simple verb and that cannot be strictly predicted from the sum of the parts (McIntyre 2002; Sturm 2016).

(4) *ápa* ‘away’ +  $\sqrt{vr}$ -<sub>1</sub> ‘open, uncover’ (simplex: ‘cover’)

<i>tvám</i>	<i>valásya</i>	<i>gómató</i>	
2SG.NOM	Vala.GEN	filled_with_cattle.GEN	
<i>ápa-avar</i>	<i>adrivo</i>	<i>bílam</i>	
away-cover.AOR.2SG	possessing_stones.VOC	cave(N).ACC	

‘You uncovered the opening of Vala filled with cattle, o possessor of the stone.’

(RV 1.11.5ab)

Constructions combine freely to form actual expressions as long as there is no conflict among them: for instance, the sentence in (5) involves a list of constructions given in (6):

(5) *What did Liza buy Zach?*

(6) a. *Liza, buy, Zach, what, do* constructions

- b. Ditransitive construction
- c. Question construction
- d. Subject-Auxiliary inversion construction
- e. VP construction
- f. NP construction

In the same way, an utterance such as (7) includes at least the constructions listed in (8):

(7) <i>pitā́</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>sūnáve</i>	<i>mṛṛá</i>	<i>no</i>
fatherNOM.SG	like	son.DAT	spare.IMPV.PRES.2SG	1PL.DAT

‘Like a father to his son offer mercy to us.’

(RV 10.25.3c-e)

- (8) a. *pitā́, iva, sūnáve, mṛlā́, nas* constructions (words)  
 c. Ditransitive construction – NomAccDat  
 d. Similative construction  
 e. Formula spanning one or more of the above levels

Constructions form a structured inventory of a speaker’s knowledge of the conventions of his language (Langacker 1987: 63-76). This inventory is represented in terms of a taxonomic network of constructions, with each construction taking the place of a node in the network (Croft and Cruse 2004: 262). Taxonomic relations describe relationships of schematicity between two constructions. Take for instance example (9), where the substantive idiom is an instance of the more schematic idiom *The X-er, the Y-er*.

- (9) a. [The X-er, the Y-er]  
 |  
 b. [*The bigger they grow, the harder they fall.*]

(Croft and Cruse 2004: 263)

Any construction with idiosyncratic properties at any level must be represented as an independent node in the network. Several levels of schematicity can thus be represented between the two poles of schematic and substantive. For instance, the following levels of schematicity can be defined between the fully substantive idiom *kick the bucket* and the most schematic representation of the verb phrase:

- (10) [VERBPHRASE]  
 |  
 [VERB OBJ]  
 |  
 [*kick* OBJ]  
 |  
 [*kick* [*the bucket*]]

From example (10), it appears that in the taxonomic network the same or similar information is redundantly represented at different levels of schematicity. For instance, the fact that *the bucket* is the direct object of *kick* in *kick the bucket* can be represented in the [*kick the bucket*] idiom and in any of the more schematic constructions by which it is dominated (Croft and Cruse 2004: 265). Goldberg’s theory of construction grammar, together with other constructional theories, takes a usage-based approach to the question of how information is stored in the speaker’s mind. According to the usage-based model (see Langacker 1987, Barlow and Kemmer 2000, Bybee and Hopper 2001, among





			<i>Pat faxed Bill the letter.</i>
b. Caused Motion	X CAUSES Y TO MOVE Z	SUB V OBJ OBL	
			<i>Pat sneezed the napkin off the table.</i>
c. Resultative	X CAUSES Y TO BECOME Z	SUBJ V OBJ XCOMP	
			<i>She kissed him unconscious.</i>
d. Intrans. Motion	XMOVES Y	SUBJ V OBL	
			<i>The fly buzzed into the room.</i>
e. Conative	X DIRECTS ACTION AT Y	SUBJ V OBL <sub>AT</sub>	
			<i>Sam kicked at Bill.</i>

(Goldberg 1995: 3)

In the constructional approach to argument structure, systematic differences in meaning between the same verb in different constructions are explained with the particular constructions providing their own meaning. As an example of a wide-spread argument structure construction in English take the Caused Motion construction in (16):

(16) *Pat put the ball on the table.*

(Goldberg 2006: 6)

In the example, the three-argument verb *put* appears with an agent, a theme, and a location as expected. Thus, it may look that the form and general interpretation of this basic sentence pattern is determined by the verb by means of some semantic and/or syntactic information specified in it. However, while (16) represents the prototypical case, the same pattern can occur with verbs which are not regularly associated with three arguments. Take example (17):

(17) *They laughed her off the stage.*

The verb *laugh* is an intransitive verb and, in this sentence, it keeps its meaning of making spontaneous sounds and movements of the face that are the instinctive expressions of amusement. Since *laugh* is no verb of physical force exertion, it is the argument structure construction that provides the direct link between form and the caused motion interpretation (Goldberg 2006: 7). Example (18), from the RV, shows two instances of the Caused Motion Constructions occurring next to each other. In both instances, the intransitive verb of emission  $\sqrt{\text{šuc}}$ - ‘blaze’ in combination with a preverb takes a transitive object and gains a caused motion interpretation; depending on the direction expressed by the preverb, the construction has ablative (*ápa*- ‘away’  $\sqrt{\text{šuc}}$ - ‘blaze’ > ‘blaze away’,

‘to drive off by blazing’) or allative meaning (*á* ‘here’  $\sqrt{śuc}$ - ‘blaze’ > ‘blaze here’, ‘bring here by blazing’):

- (18) a.     *ápa nah śósucad aghám*  
           away 1PL.GEN     blaze.PTCP.PRS.NOM     bad(N).ACC
- b.     *ágne śúśugdhy á rayím*  
           Agni.VOC     blaze.IMPV.PF.2SG     here     wealth.ACC
- ‘Blazing away the bad for us, blaze wealth here, o Agni.’

(ṚV 1.97.1ab)

Other examples of Caused Motion Constructions in Vedic are listed in Forssman (2000): from the composite verb *ápa-*  $\sqrt{yaj}$ - ‘to drive off by means of a sacrifice’ (lit. ‘sacrifice away’), these constructions are called *apa-yaj*-expressions (*Ausdruckweise*).

As shown by the examples above, verbal meaning is distinguished from constructional meaning. Part of the distinction between verbal and constructional meaning, consists in the fact that verbs are associated with frame-specific roles (*participant roles*), whereas constructions designate event types which are basic to human experience, such as those denoting that someone did something to someone, something moved, someone experienced something, etc., and are thus associated with more general roles (*argument roles*) such as agent, patient or goal (Goldberg 1995: 39-43; cf. also Fillmore 1968, Langacker 1991). Verbs lexically profile those aspects in the frame associated with them that are obligatorily accessed and function as focal points within the scene (Langacker 1987). The verbs *loan* and *borrow* instantiate this point, as they evoke the same frame but differ in the roles profiled:

- (19)   *loan* <**loaner goods** borrower>  
        *borrow* <**borrower goods** loaner>

In example (19), profiled participant roles are represented in boldface. Generally, profiled participant roles are those roles which are normally obligatorily expressed in finite clauses; these are often instances of the more general categories of “agent” or “patient”. Profiling mismatches occur when a verb’s non-profiled participant role is fused with a profiled argument role, as when the two-participant verb *mail* enters the Ditransitive Construction, as shown by Figure 3 (the dotted line represents the profiling mismatch):

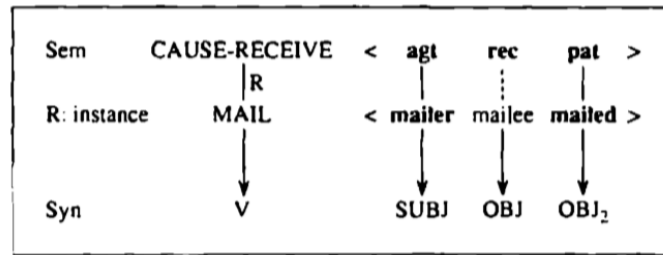


Figure 3. Profiling mismatch: *mail* (Goldberg 1995: 53)

Other kind of mismatches may be brought about by distinct senses associated with a verb, by a particular construction *shading* (passive construction), *cutting* (impersonal construction) or *merging* (reflexive construction) some participant roles of the verb, or by the presence of null complements. This last possibility deserves some attention in a discussion on the R̥V, since definite referential null objects (Fillmore 1986) are particularly common in this text. Indeed, as shown in an overview by Keydana and Luraghi (2012), null objects are not only common in conjuncts, but are also attested with participles embedded into finite sentences, in discourse-conditioned contexts (anaphora and cataphora) and even with extratextual reference (on referential null arguments in the R̥V, see Chapter 8.2.4). Consider example (20), where the null object refers to the dead man praised in this funeral hymn:

- (20) *praticīne*                      *mām*                      *ahani*                      *iṣvāḥ*  
directed.LOC.N                      1SG.ACC                      day(N).LOC                      arrow(F).GEN  
*parṇam*                      *ivā*                       $\emptyset$                       *dadhuḥ*  
feather(N).ACC                      like                      set.PF.3PL

‘On the day facing me [=today] they have set (him=dead man) down like a feather from an arrow.’

(R̥V 10.18.14)

### 3.2.2 Constructional approaches to formulaicity

The notion of formula in oral poetics is mostly associated with the work of Milman Parry and of his student Albert B. Lord, who showed that Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were almost totally composed through the reuse of fixed expressions (*formulas*) and schematic patterns for regular expressions (formulaic *systems*). Through extensive fieldwork on the living oral epic tradition of pre- and post-World-War-Two Yugoslavia, Lord showed that the composition of epic songs – a process that he called “oral composition in performance” – was learned through a process similar to language acquisition. This was based on knowledge of:

- a) formulas, that is, fixed expressions regularly used under certain metrical conditions to express a given essential idea (e.g. “swift footed Achilles”, “When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared”)
- b) themes (or type-scenes), narrative blocks that structure the story (e.g. the assembly, the arrival of a messenger, the battle)
- c) story-patterns, a repertoire of plots tying themes together (e.g. the disappearance, absence, and return of the hero, the wrath and revenge of the warrior)

Furthermore, Lord showed that Parry’s formulaic systems made of schematic patterns with slots to be filled could be extremely productive and constituted the basic tool of the mature singer.

Although in the above summary of Perry and Lord’s work some of the major tenets of construction grammar and usage-based approaches to language acquisition can already be spotted (see Pagán Cánovas and Antović 2016 for a thorough discussion of correspondences), it was Kiparsky (1976) who first attempted a syntactic definition of formulas. Kiparsky suggested comparing formulas to bound expressions found in ordinary language, and further distinguished between flexible bound phrases and formulaic systems on the one side and fixed bound phrases and straight formulas on the other. While he recognized the true essence of the formula in “the abstract bond between *àlgos* and *path-*” (Kiparsky 1976: 86), he stipulated that formulas should be syntactic constituents dominated by a single node, thus building a syntactic layer into the underlying form of a formula. Meter, on the other hand, is left out of the equation (“no metrical criteria are made part of its [the formula’s] definition”; 1976: 87).

In Kiparsky’s model, the difference between fixed and flexible phraseology lies in the storage process: fixed phrases are stored in their surface form (so they cannot undergo syntactic modification), while flexible phrases are amenable to transformation (and therefore they should be syntactically well-behaved). Kiparsky indeed succeeded at characterizing the two opposite poles of traditional phraseology (fixity vs. flexibility), but he also recognized a *continuum* between fixity and flexibility, which could not be built into his analysis due to his theoretical framework (Bozzone 2014: 19).

Bozzone (2014) systematizes earlier scholarship on formulas and formulaic language (Parry 1971; Russo 1966; Nagler 1967; Hainsworth 1968; Kiparsky 1976; Watkins 1995, among others) within the framework of Construction Grammar. Just like idioms, formulas can be described as a construction, i.e., “learned pairings of form and function” (Goldberg 2006). This definition captures the fact that formulas are stored (“learned”), and that, beyond their textual level, they are defined by

their function. This definition also allows for different levels of formal abstraction within formulas: it can span from straight formulas, to formulaic patterns, to “structural formulas” (Bozzone 2010).

Formulas can be lexically filled (21), lexically empty (22) and partially lexically filled (23):

(21) *tòn d’apameibómenos proséphē pódas ōkùs Akhilleús* (Il. I 84)

(22) [—]Obj.Pr [∪∪∪∪]Subj.Part [∪∪]V [∪∪∪∪—X]Subj.NP

(23) [—]Obj.Pr [∪∪∪∪]Subj.Part *proséphē* [∪∪∪∪—X]Subj.NP

Furthermore, formulas have semantic, syntactic and discourse function:

(24) [*pódas ōkùs Akhilleús*]NP.Subj = ‘swift-footed Akhilleus’

a. Semantic function: designating ‘Akhilleus’ (and his thematic connotations)

b. Syntactic function: NP<sub>Subj</sub>

c. Discourse function: resuming the old discourse topic ‘Akhilleus’ and possibly marking a scene boundary.

The same intuition that the concepts of oral formula and grammatical construction are based on very similar foundations is presented independently by Pagán Cánovas and Antović in a series of papers (2016a, 2016b, 2018) and in their introduction to the 2016 volume *Oral Poetics and Cognitive Science*. They illustrate their point with an analysis of a formula discussed by Lord in his *The Singer of Tales* (1960: 52), which they label “the horse-mounting pattern”. The set of expressions making up the formula is given in example (25):

(25) *Pa zasede krilata đogata*. ‘Then he mounted his winged horse.’

*Pa posede šajku bedeviju*. ‘Then he mounted his bedouin mare.’

*Eh, zasede njezina đogata*. ‘Well, she mounted her white horse.’

*Zasedoše konje u avliju*. ‘They mounted their horses in the courtyard.’

*Pa zaseše konje na jaliju*. ‘Then they mounted their horses on the bank.’

*Zasedoše dva konja menzila*. ‘They mounted two post horses.’

Pagán Cánovas and Antović (2016: 92-95) focus on the connection between the use of the grammatical structure and the schematic meaning of these utterances. Recurring elements in the formulaic variants are a form of the verb *sedeti* ‘sit’ preceded by a prefix (*za-sede*, *po-sede*, *za-sedoše*, *po-sedoše*, *za-seše*) and inflected in the aorist tense, an object and an attribute or adjunct. Since both

prefixes *za-* and *po-* typically denote the commencement of an action and since the aorist seems to imply the completion of a short, recent action, the particular combination of the prefixes and the aorist gives a meaning ‘he/they started sitting’, which Lord conveniently translates with ‘mounted’. Furthermore, in some of the examples, an empty slot at the beginning of the decasyllable is filled by the particle *pa*. Instead of interpreting it as a mere filler, Pagán Cánovas and Antović see *pa* as a conjunction with temporal meaning suggesting that the hero had just accomplished an action, ‘and then’ moved on to the new action of mounting a horse. Thus, the structure as a whole seems to be provided with meaning, turning ‘sit’ into ‘mount’ and introducing the beginning of a new, sudden action. Pagán Cánovas and Antović represent this construction as follows:

- (26) FORM: ([optional temporal conjunction/filler] + verb with prefixation + aorist + noun/ object + [optional attribute to the object/spatial adverbial])  
 MEANING: (a perfective, momentary action which has just started, immediately after the previous action finished, to which the speaker has an emotional attitude) + the object of the action + optional description of the object

### 3.3 Blending Theory

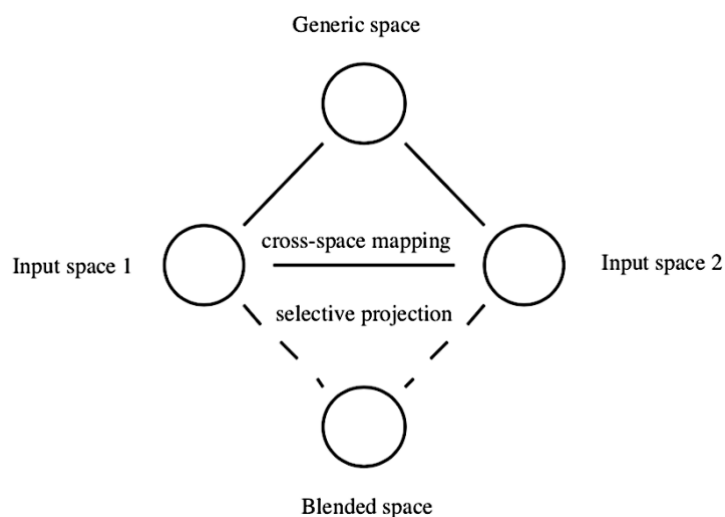
Blending Theory (Turner 1996; Fauconnier 1997; Fauconnier and Turner 2002) is concerned with the production of novel conceptual structure through the combination of existing spaces and domains. The process consists in projecting information from two different mental spaces in a resulting blended space, which then dynamically develops emergent structure (Fauconnier and Turner 2003). A famous example of conceptual blending is “the boat race”, in which a modern catamaran sails from San Francisco to Boston in 1993 and tries to go faster than a clipper that sailed the same course in 1853. A sailing magazine reports:

- (27) As we went to press, Rich Wilson and Bill Biewenga were barely maintaining a 4.5-day lead over the ghost of the clipper *Northern Light*, whose record run from San Francisco to Boston they’re trying to beat. In 1853, the clipper made the passage in 76 days, 8 hours.

(Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 58)

The magazine quote in (27) merges two distinct events, the run by the clipper in 1853 and the run by the catamaran in 1993 on the same course, into a single event: the race between the catamaran and the *ghost* of the clipper *Northern Light*. Figure 4 shows the integration network employed to represent conceptual blending. In this network, the two events constitute two different input spaces, each with

its own characteristics, such as period and time of travel, the boat, and so on. The more schematic frame of sailing from San Francisco to Boston connects the two spaces and constitute the generic space. A fourth, blended space is constructed through selective projection from the inputs, pattern completion, that is, recruitment of background knowledge about the projected elements, and dynamic elaboration. The blend has emergent dynamics, which means that it can be “run”, while it maintains connections to the input spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 60).



**Figure 4.** Integration Network (Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 59)

The model of meaning construction proposed by Blending Theory accounts for many surface products: literal expression, metaphor, metonymy, analogy, counterfactuals, and many more. Conceptual blending is so widespread because it provides compressions to human scale of certain “vital relations” occurring between mental spaces, such as time, space, cause-effect, identity, part-whole and change (Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 63). These relations do not only apply across mental spaces, but also define essential topology within them.

### 3.4 Figurative Language

In Section 3.2.1, we saw that, according to Construction Grammar, grammatical constructions are endowed with semantics, just as words are. The Caused Motion construction of example (17), repeated here as (28), provided evidence for this assumption: since *laugh* is not a verb of physical force exertion and since *off the stage* does not imply movement in itself (one could already *be off the stage*), it is the entire construction that contributes the meaning of caused motion.

(28) *They laughed her off the stage.*



Goldberg (1995, 2006) makes a step forward and argues that not only are constructions provided with meaning, but they can also convey figurative meaning. The Caused Motion construction in example (28) acquires metaphorical meaning when it describes a situation involving no literal motion. The result is exemplified in (29), where the Caused Motion construction is interpreted metaphorically as a Caused Change of State, due to the conceptual metaphor STATES ARE CONTAINERS (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 133):

(29) *They laughed her out of her depression.*

In what follows, I will provide the theoretical background on conceptual metaphor and figurative language in general.

#### 3.4.1 The basic theoretical tool-kit: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, frames, spaces

In the previous paragraph, I anticipated that the conceptual metaphor STATES ARE CONTAINERS is responsible for the metaphorical meaning of the Caused Motion Construction in Example (29). But what is a conceptual metaphor and what does it mean to say that a construction has metaphorical meaning?

Since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal book *Metaphors we live by* (1980), cognitive linguists agree that metaphor is not a purely linguistic phenomenon, but rather a way of understanding one conceptual domain, the target domain, in terms of another domain, which is called source (Croft and Cruise 2004: 194). The target domain is usually an abstract concept, such as STATE, whereas the source domain is a more concrete entity, such as CONTAINER. The association is made via mapping of conceptual structure from one domain onto the other. As a consequence, for a construction to have metaphorical meaning means that it construes a situation in terms of another. According to the conventions found in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the formula TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN describes the metaphorical link between domains; domains themselves will be represented here in small capitals too (STATES, CONTAINERS in the following example) in order to distinguish them from frames (e.g., Exercising; see Section 3.1). The mapping between the two domains is asymmetrical, in that the conceptual structure of the source domain is projected onto the target, and not vice versa (Croft and Cruise 2004: 196).

Going back to our STATES ARE CONTAINERS metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:31-32), we can try to understand its functioning starting from more basic examples. In example (30), the use of *in* and *out* is a metaphorical extension of their basic locative meaning: a STATE (distress, depression) is conceived as a CONTAINER that one can be *inside* of (30)a or *outside* of (30)b:

- (30) a. *She's chosen to devote her life to helping those in distress*  
 b. *She is finally out of depression*

(adapted from Croft and Cruise 2004: 196)

Thus, (30)a and (30)b are two instances of the STATES ARE CONTAINERS metaphor, where the STATE represents the target and the CONTAINER the source domain. If experiencing depression is conceptualized as being physically contained in a closed space, the change of state from mental wellness to depression can be described in terms of entering this space, as example (31) shows:

- (31) *She fell into deep depression*

On the contrary, to recover from depression is to exit the container and, if recovery is achieved with the help of some friends or a doctor, motion out of the container is in fact Caused Motion, as in our example (29), repeated here as (32):

- (32) *They laughed her out of her depression*

Just as STATES, RELATIONSHIPS are intangible entities that tend to be conceptualized and thus linguistically expressed through metaphors. A famous example is the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in (33), which comprise the mappings listed in Table 8:

- (33) a. *We've gone off the tracks.*  
 b. *Their relationship is foundering.*

(Croft and Cruise 2004: 200)

**Table 8.** Selected mappings from JOURNEY to LOVE RELATIONSHIP; roles in boldface are not inherited from the higher-level schemas (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 57)

source: JOURNEY	target: LOVE RELATIONSHIP
Location	State (life situation)
Destination	Purpose
Impediment to motion	Difficulty
<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
<b>Passengers</b>	<b>Lovers</b>
<b>Co-location in vehicle</b>	<b>Participation in relationship</b>
<b>Shared destination</b>	<b>Shared purpose</b>

Metaphors are organized in a taxonomic hierarchy, that is, at different levels of schematicity. For instance, Lakoff (1993: 222) groups LOVE IS A JOURNEY with A CAREER IS A JOURNEY under a more schematic metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY. This, in turn, is an instance of the so-called event structure metaphor (roughly, ACTION IS DIRECTED MOTION), which includes the mappings in (34):

- (34) PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS  
DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO MOTION  
CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS  
ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS  
MEANS ARE PATHS TO DESTINATIONS

A kind of metaphor that appears to be motivated by different mechanisms and subject to different constraints than conceptual metaphors is image metaphor. Image metaphors involve mapping specifically of image structure from one domain onto another, like *hourglass waist* or *apple cheeks*, without involving any other structural mapping beyond the image similarity (Lakoff and Turner 1989; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 59-60). Image structure includes both part-whole relations such as those between a roof and a house, and attribute structure including color, intensity of light, physical shape. Furthermore, an image metaphor may also involve the structure of events, mapping attributes such as continuous vs. discrete, open-ended vs. completed, repetitive vs. non-repetitive and brief vs. extended (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 90). As an example of one dynamic image mapped onto another, Lakoff and Turner cite a Sanskrit poem, describing a river whose water line drops down slowly as clothing sliding down the body of a lover. In this example, the water maps onto the clothing, the light brown riverbanks onto the body, and the slow dropping of the water onto the slow removal of clothing (35):

- (35) *Slowly slowly rivers in autumn show*  
*sand banks*  
*bashful in first love woman*  
*showing thighs*

(*The Peacock's Egg*, p.69, in Lakoff and Turner 1989: 91)

While metaphor is a way of conceptualizing a domain in terms of another domain, in metonymy one entity is used to refer to another entity belonging to the same or to a contiguous conceptual domain (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 36; Croft 1993). For example, in (36), the costumer of a restaurant is

referred to as the food he ordered. The man and the sandwich belong to the same domain and are connected by means of encyclopedic knowledge (Lakoff 1987).

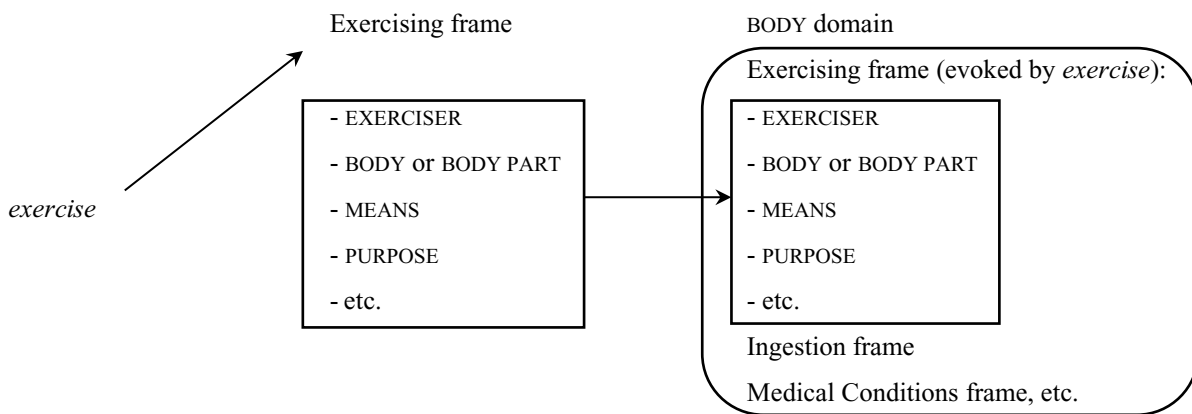
(36) *The ham sandwich is waiting for his check.*

(Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 35)

Metaphor and metonymy are the most pervasive types of figurative use of language, but personification, irony, hyperbaton, simile, and other tropes are instances of this phenomenon. Dancygier and Sweetser's *Figurative language* (2014) provides tools to extend the analysis from metaphor and metonymy to all other forms of figurative language. Among these, the notion of frame and the one of blend introduced in Sections 3.1 and 3.3 are of primary importance.

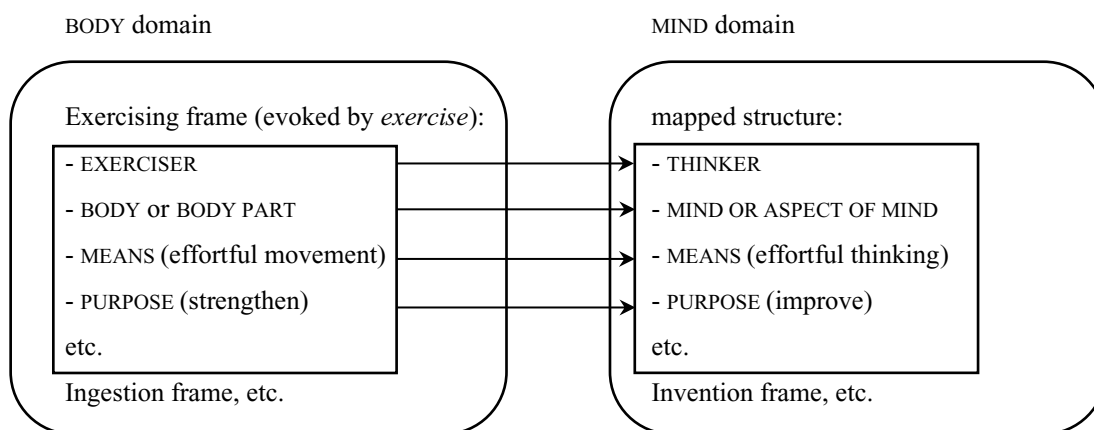
From what has been said so far, a domain can be defined as “a chunk of conceptual matter which either contains structure to be projected onto another domain or receives such a projection” (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 17). However, delimiting a domain without ambiguity may present problems: a “domain” may be something as broad as MOTION or something as narrow as SEA-JOURNEY, or something intermediate such as JOURNEY. A number of theorists, from Croft and Cruse (2004) to Sullivan (2013) and Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) therefore prefer to define metaphors as mappings between frames (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 17).

A single frame does not necessarily correspond to a broad conceptual domain: rather, a metaphoric source or target domain can combine structure from multiple frames (Sullivan 2013: 24). For instance, the Exercising frame introduced in Section 3.1 is part of the broader domain of BODY, together with other frames such as Ingestion, Medical Conditions, Observable Body Parts; following the profile-base dichotomy drawn from Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1997, 2002; see Section 3.1), the item *exercise* in example (1) is said to profile the Exercising frame in the BODY domain, whereas the structure of the domain that is not profiled constitutes the *base* against which the profiled structure is understood (Sullivan 2013: 25). The profiling of the Exercising frame in the body domain can be represented as in Figure 5 (the arrows represent processes of evocation):



**Figure 5.** The verb *exercise* evokes the Exercising frame and the BODY domain (adapted from Sullivan 2013: 26)

Employing frames in the analysis of figurative language is convenient because we know something of their structure and structure is exactly what gets mapped in metaphoric mappings; a domain, on the contrary, is nothing else than a connected piece of conceptual structure, with no specification of its inner structure (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 19). The information about a frame in a source domain can be mapped onto a target domain when metaphor comes about. For instance, in the phrase *mental exercise*, the structure of the Exercising frame of the BODY domain is mapped onto the MIND domain, via THE MIND IS A BODY metaphor. Figure 6 shows several mappings of THE MIND IS A BODY metaphor which preserve elements from the Exercising frame.



**Figure 6.** The phrase *mental exercise* evokes THE MIND IS A BODY (Sullivan 2013: 37).

The notion of frame also helps understanding the kind of connections established in metonymy. In a sentence such as (36), the phrase *the sandwich* evokes the Restaurant frame, which also includes a customer, a waiter, an exchange of money in turn of food and service, and so on. Thus, one role of the frame, the food, is mapped onto another role of the same frame, the customer.

A final implementation of our analytic structure is represented by the analysis of conceptual metaphor in terms of blending (Section 3.3) as pursued by Grady, Oakley, and Coulson (1999). One of the main differences between Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Blending Theory consists in the number of domains or spaces employed in the representation. While Conceptual Metaphor Theory works with two domains, the source and the target, Blending Theory operates with four mental spaces connecting to each other in the integration network. This feature of Blending Theory is of the utmost importance, as it captures the metaphoric cognitive structure emerging from mapping between source and target domain, which is different from either domain considered alone. Consider, for example, the well-known metaphor in (37):

(37) *This surgeon is a butcher.*

(Grady et al. 1999: 103)

This expression is intended as a statement of a surgeon's incompetence, although the very notion of incompetence is not present in either space. The contents of the four mental spaces are represented in Figure 7:

<i>Generic space:</i>	Agent	
	Undergoer	
	Sharp instrument	
	Work space	
	Procedure: cutting flesh	
<i>Input space I (Target):</i>	Role: Agent:	Surgeon (X) (i.e. some individual)
	Role: Undergoer:	Patient (Y) (a different individual)
	Instrument:	Scalpel
	Work space:	Operating theatre
	Goal:	Healing
	Means:	Surgery
<i>Input space II (Source):</i>	Role: Agent:	Butcher
	Role: Undergoer:	Dead animal
	Instrument:	Butcher's knife etc.
	Work space:	Butcher's shop
	Goal:	Producing edible portions
	Means:	Cutting flesh
<i>Blended space:</i>	Role: Agent:	Butcher (X)
	Role: Undergoer:	Patient (Y)
	Work space:	Operating theatre
	Goal:	Healing
	Means:	Butchery

**Figure 7.** Conceptual integration network: *surgeon as butcher* (Croft and Cruise 2004: 208)

As shown by Figure 7, the generic space contains the organizing structure shared by the two inputs, namely an agent performing some operation with a sharp instrument on an undergoer. The blended space inherits some features of the target, such as a given patient undergoing the surgery, the operating theater and, crucially, the goal of healing the patient, and some features from the source, such as the role “butcher” and its related means. Thus, the central inference that the butcher is incompetent is not inherited from the input spaces but is part of the emergent structure developed in the blend: given the incompatible association of the means in the Butchery space with the healing goal of Surgery, the structure projected from the two input spaces can be combined coherently only inferring the surgeon’s incompetence (Grady et al. 1999: 104-106).

To conclude, some clarifications of the relationship between frames and spaces is in order. Mental spaces are partial cognitive structures prompted by language and based on our perception of the world. Therefore, they can have different levels of complexity and their specific content may differ depending on the reader or listener and the context (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 77-78). For example, the *surgeon as a butcher* metaphor can evoke a quite skeletal or frame-based structure, containing unfilled roles for a butcher, an animal, and some cutting means; in other cases, however, the same expression may evoke a specific butcher acting with particular violence on a defenseless animal in a specific occasion. Whichever the specificity of the structures, I will follow Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) and refer to the structure involved in mapping as spaces, even in those cases in which they are in fact equivalent to frames.

### 3.4.2 The metaphoric use of constructions

The introduction in Section 3.4 suggests that metaphoric language depends not only on the choice of words, but also on particular grammatical constructions. In order to understand the role that constructions play in the construal of metaphoric meaning, the two Langackerian notions of conceptual autonomy and dependence are of particular importance.

Autonomous elements are elements that can be visualized or reasoned about in isolation; dependent elements, on the other hand, can only be conceptualized in relation to the element they refer to. In a phrase such as *tall man*, for instance, *man* is autonomous, because it is possible to conceptualize a *man* without reference to his height. The element *tall* is dependent, because the meaning of *tall* depends on the conceptualization of a human or an object that demonstrates the quality of height. Dependent elements include a substructure, the so-called elaboration site, that can be filled in by the autonomous element; that is, *tall* includes an elaboration site of a thing or person capable of being tall.

Asymmetry patterns in the conceptual autonomy of elements change depending on the type of grammatical construction: in head and modifier constructions such as *tall man*, the head is more autonomous, in argument structure constructions, the arguments are more autonomous than the verbal head, and in predicational sentences the subject is more autonomous than the predicate.

Croft (2003) notices the potential of autonomy and dependence in explaining metaphoric language. He suggests that metaphoric language occurs when semantically autonomous and dependent elements belonging to different conceptual domains are combined in a grammatical construction, which forces the dependent element to be interpreted metaphorically. In this vein, Sullivan (2013) proposes the generalization that in grammatical constructions that are employed metaphorically, a conceptually dependent element constitutes the metaphoric source domain, and a conceptually autonomous element constitutes the target domain. The point can be exemplified by the adjectival phrase *bright student*: in this phrase, *student* evokes the domain of INTELLIGENCE, whereas the predicating adjective *bright* evokes the domain of LIGHT-EMISSION and, being the dependent element, must be interpreted metaphorically.

As we will see in Chapter 4.2, this generalization is crucial for the definition of similes as metaphoric comparative constructions.



## 4. Similes

After introducing the main principles on which Cognitive Linguistics rely, as well as its understanding of metaphor and figurativity in general, in this chapter I will provide an overview of the literature on similes. This will serve as a basis for Chapters 9 and 10, where I will analyze Ṛgvedic equative and similitive constructions as similes. In Section 4.1, I will summarize the main theories concerning the relationship between metaphor and simile, presenting them in a chronological fashion and including theories developed in the context of different disciplines. In section 4.2, I will focus specifically on the difference between metaphor and simile as elaborated in Cognitive Linguistics theories and on the characterization of simile as a figure in its own right. Finally, in Section 4.3 I will discuss some issues in simile identification, dedicating special attention to the problems that may arise in detecting and analyzing figurative expressions in ancient texts.

### 4.1 Theories of the relation between simile and metaphor

The distinction between simile and metaphor is among the oldest and most widely discussed in rhetorical theory, stemming from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Most theories in philosophy, psychology, and linguistics have characterized the two figures as essentially similar, the difference consisting mainly in a matter of form. Since the difference between metaphor and simile seemed to be so superficial, theorists have tended to define one figure in terms of the other. As we will see in the following sections, some theorists took metaphor as a sort of elliptical simile, whereas others take metaphor as the more basic of the two figures (4.1.1). A third group of theories argues that metaphors and similes are different (4.1.2) and propose different points of divergence.

#### 4.1.1 Metaphors and similes are similar

One very long tradition, stretching from Quintilian to Reinhart (1976) and Miller (1993), suggests that interpreting metaphor is essentially a matter of finding the simile to which it corresponds. Miller most clearly expresses the idea that metaphor is a sort of elliptical comparison in stating that the "simplest way to characterize a metaphor is as a comparison statement with parts left out" (Miller 1993: 379). On this view, a simile conveys more explicitly the semantic structure of the expression, while metaphor is to be seen as a kind of shorthand.

The idea that simile precedes other figures is especially widespread in the Sanskrit tradition of *alaṅkāraśāstra* 'poetics' (lit. 'the art of embellishment'). For instance, in his *Kāvyaḍarśa* ('Mirror of poetry'; VII century A.D.), the poet and scholar Daṇḍin considers simile (*upamā-*) the seed (*bīja-*)

of all figurative phenomena<sup>23</sup> and lists thirty-two sub-types of it. About a century after Daṇḍin, Vāmana labels the simile the root (*mūla-*) of all poetic ornaments (*alaṃkāras*) and selects for discussion only those ornaments which can be analyzed as deriving from this figure (Bronner 2007: 93-94). Rudraṭa (IX century ca.), the first systematist of *alaṃkāras*, accepts the fundamental character of simile, as do all other Indian scholars. Starting by the assumption that similes are explicit comparisons, he groups together those figures which he believes to derive from basic similes. These are identification (*rūpaka*: literally, ‘characterizer’, though often misleadingly translated as ‘metaphor’) and metaphor proper (*utprekṣā*). In identification, the explicit marker of comparison is omitted; in metaphor, which also lacks an explicit marker, the source (which he calls *upameya*) is not explicitly mentioned, but is only hinted at by attributing to it a quality or mode of behavior which is appropriate to the target (the *upamāna*; e.g. in “the darkness falls” the darkness is compared to a heavy object; Gerow 1971: 36-37).

Another tradition, spanning theorists as diverse as Aristotle, Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and Glucksberg and Keysar (1990), reverse the relationship between metaphor and similes, arguing that the latter are explicit expressions of the former. In Chapter 3.4.1, we have seen that Conceptual Metaphor Theory defines metaphor as a conceptual mapping from source to target domain and employs predicational expressions such as STATES ARE LOCATIONS to summarize the wide variety of forms that metaphorical expression may take. However, Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides no description of simile as a distinct category but describes it as the explicit expression of a metaphorical mapping. For instance, Lakoff and Turner (1989: 141-142) describe the poetic simile *the sky is smooth as a turquoise* as a combination of the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING and an image-metaphor.

Glucksberg and Keysar (1990) interpret nominative metaphors of the type *A is B* as class inclusion statements. Expressions in (1) and (2) state that dogs belong to the class of animals and, not differently, that John belongs to the class of lions.

- (1) *Dogs are animals.*
- (2) *John is a lion.*

However, literal inclusion statements such as (1) refers to a category, metaphors such as (2) refer to a superordinate category, for which the literal category is a prototypical example. Since lions are

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<sup>23</sup> Daṇḍin distinguishes factual description (*svabhāvokti*, lit. ‘speaking of things the way they are’) which has science as its domain, from figurative or ‘crooked speech’ (*vakrokti*), which is typical of poetry. All *alaṃkāras* are instances of *vakrokti*.

conventionally seen as prototypical members of the category of strong, courageous beings, then *John is a lion* means that John is a strong and courageous person. Following this view, a simile of the type *A is like B* is interpreted by translating it into a metaphor, that is, reconstructing the superordinate category to which *B* refers and applying its defining features to *A*.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly to what we have seen for Conceptual Metaphor Theory, in the framework of Blending Theory (see Chapter 3.3), Fauconnier and Turner (2002) provide no regularized apparatus for distinguishing conceptual blending of similes from metaphors. However, they suggest that specific words and forms may make the process of blending explicit. Thus, one of the main differences between metaphor and simile is that, thanks to the presence of ‘like’, the latter makes speakers aware of mapping.

#### 4.1.2 Similes and metaphors are distinct

A third view of the relationship between similes and metaphors is that the two figures differ in the type of interpretation that they prompt. Gentner (1983) and Gentner and Bowdle (2001), among others, have argued that metaphors primarily require a relational interpretation, in that they map common functions, processes, or systematic relations between two entities, as in example (3); in contrast, similes such as (4) map matches of size, shape, or physical features and thus require an attributive interpretation. Furthermore, turning example (4) into a metaphor gives the image metaphor *her lips are roses*, which corroborates the hypothesis that similes triggers mapping of size, colors, and other attributes.

(3) *This surgeon is a **butcher**.*

(4) *Her lips are like **red roses**.*

Beside differences in the kind of mapped elements, there appears to be an effect of both grammatical form as well as conventionality on the interpretation of metaphorical expressions: conventional metaphors in predicative form are processed by means of categorization, by contrast, conventional similes, as well as novel metaphors and similes, are processed by comparison (Gentner and Bowdle 2001, 2005).

Aisenman (1999) draws on Gentner and Bowdle’s (2001) distinction and shows that, in an experimental setting, subjects preferred similes when the interpretation was based on an attributive predicate and metaphors when the predicates were relational. However, Gentner and Bowdle (2008) reconsidered the issue of the opposition between relational and attributive interpretations, arguing

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<sup>24</sup> See Croft and Cruse (2004: 212) for a detailed discussion.

that neither metaphor nor simile specialize for either interpretation. For instance, the metaphor in (5) represents a relational mapping, the one in (6) an attributive one, and example (7) cannot really be described as either:

(5) *Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.*

(6) *His eyes were deep pools of misery.*

(7) *The voice of your eyes is deeper than all the roses.*

(E.E. Cummings, *100 selected poems*; in Gentner and Bowdle 2008: 110)

#### 4.2 Differences between metaphor and simile according to Cognitive Linguistics

Theories in Cognitive Linguistics developed after Lakoff and Johnson's formulation of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and after Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) formulation of Blending Theory tend to consider metaphor and similes as prototypically distinct, even though both involve two distinct domains.

A major change in the study of the relationship between metaphor and simile has been to recognize that, although sometimes they may appear interchangeable, these two figures are not simply alternative ways of expressing the same idea. According to Israel et al. (2004: 128), examples such as (8)a and (8)b employed to prove the translatability of metaphors into similes may be misleading: in fact, many metaphors lack any clear counterpart simile and most similes likewise resist any easy paraphrase as metaphors.

(8) a. *Odysseus is a weasel.*

b. *Odysseus is like a weasel.*

(Israel et al. 2004: 128)

For instance, while the metaphors in (9) are easily interpretable, trying to recast them as similes results in non-felicitous expressions like the ones in (10).

(9) a. *Her argument was somewhat murky.*

b. *I found the argument to be flat-footed.*

c. *The house had great bones.*

(10) a. *Her argument was like something murky.*

b. *I found the argument to be like a flat-footed runner.*

c. *The structure of the house was as solid as great bones.*

(Israel et al. 2004: 128)

Similarly, the similes in (11) from Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood* cannot easily be translated into metaphors without giving rise to uninterpretable expressions like those in (12):

- (11) a. *The windshield wipers made a great clatter like two idiots clapping in church.*  
b. *Two bears sat facing each other like two matrons having tea.*
- (12) a. *\*The clattering windshield wipers were idiots clapping in church.*  
b. *\*The two bears were matrons having tea.*

(Israel et al. 2004: 128)

Examples (9) to (12) make it clear that the fallacy of theories based on the inter-translatability of metaphor and simile (Section 4.1.1) lies in taking only nominative constructions of the type *A is B* and *A is like B* into account. Furthermore, the same fallacy characterizes theories presented in Section 4.1.2: although most of these theories take metaphor and simile as mapping different kinds of properties, empirical studies on which they are based employ putative paraphrases as stimuli and not always yield consistent results (see Gentner and Bowdle 2008: 110). Thus, more recent theories in Cognitive Linguistics tend to keep the analysis of nominative constructions of the type *A is like B* separate from the one of similes taking different forms.

Croft and Cruse (2004: 212-215) describe the distinction between metaphor and simile in terms of scope of the correspondences between the two domains involved. They note that, although most of the discussion on simile centers on expressions of the type *A is like B*, this kind of simile is comparatively rare. What most similes do, indeed, is to restrict the set of correspondences between source and target domain, as in examples (13) and (14):

- (13) *Marino was breathing hard like a wounded bear.*  
(14) *And I know Anderson follows her around like a puppy.*

(Croft and Cruse 2004: 213)

In contrast, metaphors prototypically involve open mappings, in which the correspondences between source and target cannot be exhaustively listed. Croft and Cruse point out that a second important difference between simile and metaphor is the absence of blending: they argue that while prototypical metaphors involve a blend of two domains, these are presented as separate in similes. They illustrate the point presenting a metaphor and its correspondent simile (15):

- (15) a. Metaphor: *The elevator has a mind of its own.*

b. Simile: *The elevator behaves like a being with a mind of its own.*

(Croft and Cruse 2004: 213)

Finally, Croft and Cruse admit that some (non-prototypical) similes are more metaphor-like, in that they do not restrict the scope of the comparison (16)a, and that some metaphors, like image metaphors, are more simile-like, in that they involve a restricted mapping (16)b:

(16) a. Metaphor-like simile: *Cameras were already on her like a storm of hurled spears.*

b. Simile-like metaphor: ... *her breath smoking out* (= came out like smoke, because it was a cold day, and it condensed)

(Croft and Cruse 2004: 214)

The result is the following set of possibilities:

(17)	Mapping	Blending?
Prototypical metaphors	open	yes
Simile metaphors	restricted	yes
Prototypical similes	restricted	no
Metaphorical similes	open	no

(Croft and Cruse 2004: 215)

Israel et al. (2004) argue that the main differences between metaphor and similes are best illustrated by those cases which cannot be easily translated into the alternative figure. First, they stress the importance of grammatical form. Both metaphor and similes are essentially analogical, involving processes of conceptual blending between source and target. However, one of the most striking differences between these figures is explicitness: while metaphors need not be overtly signaled in any way, similes must be. Metaphor is ultimately a figure of thought and can therefore take many different grammatical structures; indeed, words belonging to different lexical classes may be used metaphorically, as shown for instance by the adjective in *sultry glances* or the spatial preposition in *around midnight*. Furthermore, an ordinary expression such as *we're not getting anywhere* can be ambiguous between a literal and metaphorical reading if taken out of context; finally, even non-linguistic domains, such as gestures or social practices may be metaphorically structured (Lakoff 1993, Gibbs 1994). As shown by these examples, rather than individuating and comparing the two domains, metaphors background the source domain using it to construe the target.

On the contrary, simile is a figure of speech requiring overt reference to both source and target entities, and an explicit construction connecting them: in other words, similes can be described as explicit, figurative comparisons (Israel et al. 2004: 129). Like literal comparison, similes often specify a parameter (or *tertium*) thus facilitating the process of finding out the intended relation between source and target concepts (see Croft and Cruse's 2004 restricted mapping). However, unlike literal comparisons, similes are figurative – comparing things normally felt to be incomparable, typically using vivid images to suggest unexpected connections between source and target. From this it follows that any construction which can express a literal comparison should in principle be available to form a simile. Take for instance the expressions in (18) which, although instantiating different constructions, can all be interpreted as similes:

- (18) a. *'The retirement of Yves Saint Laurent is the fashion equivalent of the breakup of the Beatles.'*  
b. *'The duchess – you've seen her portrait ... sir, it no more approached her than a weed comes up to a rose.'*  
c. *'This publication had the heart of a music fanzine but the character of an underground comic.'*  
d. *'You think of a womb as a kind of place for transients, but it's a whole other life in there.'*  
e. *'And my husband and I basically view skiing as an invitation to suicide.'*

(Israel et al. 2004: 125)

As we have seen in Section 4.1.2, Aisenman (1999) suggested that similes and metaphors differ in the types of properties they typically map: while metaphors typically map relations, i.e., features of functions or behavior, similes are mostly employed for mapping attributes such as shape, size, color, and so on. Although many frozen similes such as *white as snow*, *blind as a bat*, or *good as gold* do indeed express attributes, this seems to be at best a tendency, rather than a rule. Indeed, it is not hard to find similes involving mapping of complex relations, such as the one in (19), which describes the way a heart feels pounding in one's chest:

- (19) *His throat got drier and his heart began to grip him like a little ape clutching the bars of its cage.*

(Israel e al. 2004: 132)

Israel et al. (2004) therefore suggest that the difference between metaphor and simile is not much about the kinds of properties they map but rather about the mapping process itself. While metaphors add structure to a target, conceptualizing it in terms of a source, similes match structures which are recognized to be simultaneously present in both domains: in other words, “similes do not add structure to a target, but highlight what’s already there” (Israel et al. 2004: 132).

As suggested also by Croft and Cruse (2004), while metaphors prototypically involve open mappings, in which cross-domain correspondences cannot be exhaustively listed, similes tend to highlight a single salient property in the two domains. Thus, the explicit nature of similes has consequences on their discursive functions in that they mainly serve as a figure of description and elaboration. Indeed, although they do not always map attributes, and whatever the complexity of their source domain, similes tend to function attributively. This last statement is confirmed by examples such as (20), in which the rich structure of the source merely serves to highlight a single property of the target (i.e. the motion of a horse and a man’s startled response to the phone respectively):

- (20) a. *The horse ran up the stairs like a boarder late for supper.*  
b. *When the phone rang, he jumped like a jittery private in a foxhole.*

(Israel et al. 2004)

Furthermore, we may add that the restricted mapping prompted by similes allows them to refer to contingent properties of the target; on the contrary, metaphors usually refer to permanent features because their open mapping serves to construe the target rather than describing it.

Acknowledging their significance, subsequent literature has substantially elaborated and terminologically systematized the observations proposed by Israel et al. (2004), welcoming their invitation to consider simile a figure in its own right.

Moder (2008) remarks that most of the approaches discussed above typically examine metaphorical expressions isolated from their original discourse context, using researcher-generated examples. Instead, in order to evaluate competing theories about similes and metaphors, she integrates a discourse-based approach with aspects of Blending Theory. Beside distinguishing between conventional and novel similes on the basis of their frequency in the corpus, Moder (2008) divides similes into two types: narrow-scope and broad-scope similes. Narrow-scope similes specify the attribute or dimension relevant for mapping and are therefore restricted in their interpretation, denoting resemblance or comparison (21). On the contrary, broad-scope similes cue more extended mappings, much as Croft and Cruse’s (2004) prototypical metaphors (22)a; typically, the preferred



mapping of broad-scope similes is suggested in the so-called elaboration given right after the *like* clause, as in (22)b:

(21) *Governor Engler stood **smiling at the door** like the proud father at a wedding reception.*  
(Moder 2008: 312)

(22) a. *The location of El Paso-Juarez on one of the world's super highways of dope smuggling, produces a reality which is **like those 3-D pictures of Jesus**.*  
b. *It changes, depending on your perspective.*  
(Moder 2008: 315)

Moder's study concludes that the difference between metaphors and similes cannot be reduced to a matter of comparison vs. categorization. The most important difference between metaphors and similes as occurring in their communicative contexts consists in the cognitive cues that such figures provide to the hearer in order to build a proper mapping: narrow-scope similes employ internal material in order to guide the correct mapping, whereas broad-scope similes project previously mentioned discourse inferences into a blend with the source domain, or let the context elaborate the relational mapping in a specific way. Thus, while narrow scope similes appear to function descriptively in a way consistent with the analysis of Israel et al. (2004), broad scope similes appear to add structure to the target domain and thus to be assimilable with nominative metaphors.

Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) take up Moder's (2008) distinction between narrow- and broad-scope similes as well as Sullivan's (2013) employment of frames and constructions (see Chapter 3.4.2) in order to describe the kind of mappings triggered by different kinds of similes. In the first place, they consider the contributions of the literal meaning of the comparative construction *X ... like Y* to the figurative use of these constructions and argue that since comparison is an inherently asymmetric relationship between a compared entity and a standard of comparison, *like* comparative constructions lend themselves well to the semantic asymmetry of metaphoric mappings as described by Sullivan (2013). In addition, Dancygier and Sweetser point out that while narrow-scope similes can be realized by different syntactic constructions, broad-scope ones are primarily realized through the Predicative Construction.

Narrow-scope similes seem indeed to evoke some similarity between the source and the target, with respect to some explicitly expressed property, as in (23).

(23) *The classroom was buzzing like a beehive.*

In the example above, the verb *buzzing* isolates only one from among all the possible dimensions of similarity between the evoked frames of Classrooms and Beehives: the dimension of noise. This simile can be interpreted as an image mapping (Lakoff and Turner 1989), representing a vivid example of the kind of noise produced by a classroom. This suggests that, rather than being varieties of each other, metaphors and narrow-scope similes use frames in different ways: while metaphor prompts a structural mapping between source and target, it would be difficult to argue that there is a structural mapping being triggered between classrooms and beehives, and no inference seems to be licensed beyond the specific aspect of the frame evoked. Thus, it can be said that narrow-scope similes involve a limited blend and that they describe a non-salient attribute of the target by comparing it to a source which is a more salient, exaggerated, or vivid example representing the same attribute (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 145).

Contrary to narrow-scope ones, broad-scope similes realized through the Predicative Construction do not make explicit the aspects of topology that link the inputs. What is more, while the similarity between source and target domain may be already accessible in narrow-scope similes, in broad-scope ones this is either revealed by the simile or established by it, just as in the case of metaphor. To illustrate these points, Dancygier and Sweetser (2014: 144-145) make use of the famous Chocolate Box simile from the movie *Forrest Gump*:

(24) *Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get.*

(*Forrest Gump*, 1994, director Robert Zemeckis)

In this case, the simile triggers a conceptual mapping between the frames of Chocolate Box and Life: unpredictability of our lives is understood as varied and unlabeled contents which can only be identified by being tasted. This conceptual mapping is licensed by more schematic metaphors such as the Object Event Structure Metaphor, where SITUATIONS are understood as OBJECTS (chocolates), and BEING IN A SITUATION IS HAVING AN OBJECT, and the KNOWING IS SEEING metaphor, which maps things which are not accessible to sight (like the filling in a truffle) onto the unpredictability of future life situations (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 146). Thus, these features make the kind of mapping occurring in broad-scope similes resemble the one occurring in conceptual metaphor rather than image metaphors. However, while the mapping triggered by a metaphor such as *Life is a journey* is accessible without contextual explanation, the schematic metaphorical structure in the Chocolate Box simile becomes available only once we have heard the elaboration.<sup>25</sup> This can be explained as a matter

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<sup>25</sup> Note that this does not exclude that a statement like *Life is a journey* may also be followed by an elaboration. However, while in the Chocolate Box simile an elaboration is necessary because, as the film was released, the connection between

of conventionalization: the simile needs elaboration because there is not enough structure already mapped from the Chocolate Box frame onto Life, as is the case of the Journey frame. This lack of conventionalization also explains the presence of *like*, which signals the need to find a link between the source and the target and to construe the latter in terms of the former. This interpretation would predict that, if the Chocolate Box similes becomes conventionalized enough, the relevant mapping would be steadily available to speakers and the need to make the mapping explicit would fail. Thus, Dancygier and Sweetser suggest that if the Chocolate Box simile came up frequently enough in discourse, one could imagine employing a metaphor such as (25) to mean that his life has a different range of unpredictable situations. Indeed, this is what happens in the case of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which can be instantiated by expressions such as (26)ab:

(25) *I've just got a different box of chocolates than Suzie.*

(26) a. *As I've traveled through life, I've made a lot of friends along the way.*

b. *I go where my path leads me.*

(Grady 1998: 113)<sup>26</sup>

To sum up, starting from the assumption that similes of the type *A is like B* are comparatively rare and their analysis must be kept distinct from that of similes based on other types of comparative constructions, Cognitive Linguistics studies on the difference between metaphor and simile basically agree on the following points:

- a) Type of figure: while metaphor is mainly a conceptual figure, simile is essentially a figure of speech consisting in an explicit form of comparison; however, unlike literal comparison, simile is essentially figurative, making unexpected connections between literally unlike concepts.
- b) Explicitness: due to its conceptual nature, metaphor need not be signaled in any specific way; rather, it can be expressed by any kind of syntactic construction provided that they involve two different domains. In metaphors, however, the source domain is not explicitly expressed, but remains in the background providing the structure to construe the target domain. Similes, on the other hand, require individuation of both source and target domains and an explicit link between

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life and a chocolate box was felt as novel, a statement like *Life is a journey* could be followed by an elaboration in order to specify the relevant mapping among the several possible ones. For instance, in the absence of the necessary context, the speaker may want to specify that life is a journey because you can decide whether to plan all its stages or whether to go on an adventure; or perhaps he may want to highlight the connection between old age and tiredness felt at the end of a long journey.

<sup>26</sup> For other instances, see [https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Metaphor:LIFE\\_IS\\_A\\_JOURNEY](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Metaphor:LIFE_IS_A_JOURNEY).

them; like literal comparison, they often specify a parameter (or *tertium*) thus facilitating the process of finding out the intended relation between source and target concepts.

- c) Type of mapping: while conceptual metaphor prompts open mappings, in which cross-domain correspondences cannot be exhaustively listed, similes tend to highlight a single salient property in the two domains (mainly due to the presence of an explicit parameter of comparison).
- d) Discursive function: thanks to their syntactic flexibility, metaphors can introduce new referents and relations into the discourse. By contrast, as a consequence of their explicit nature, similes can only elaborate previously mentioned referents or relations, and not introduce new ones. Therefore, although they do not always map attributes, similes are mainly employed for description and elaboration.

In their turn, similes consist of a varied set of expressions, which can be categorized on the basis of the following criteria:

- a) Grammatical construction: similes are evoked by different comparative constructions, including predicative similes (*A is like B*), similitive and equative constructions (*like, as... as...*), comparative constructions of inequality (*more than, less than*); they may even employ verbs of cognition and perception (*think* and *view*) to depict the way two very different entities are experienced as similar.
- b) Type of mapping: based on the construction through which they are realized, similes can prompt narrow- or broad-scope mappings. In narrow-scope similes, the simile expression selects the relevant dimension of comparison. On the contrary, broad-scope similes do not make the relevant dimension of comparison explicit; the mapping they trigger involves conceptual structure and can therefore be assimilated to the kind of mapping prompted by metaphor.
- c) Conventionality: narrow-scope similes can be conventional or novel, whereas broad-scope similes are typically novel. This means that, while the similarity between source and target domain may be already accessible in narrow-scope similes, in broad-scope ones this is either revealed by the simile or established by it, which explains their need for an elaboration. Thus, similarly to metaphors, broad-scope similes create similarities rather than reflecting them.

#### 4.2.1 Similes as figurative comparative constructions

Point a) on the types of construction in which similes occur can be refined based on the typology of comparative constructions introduced in Chapter 2. In the first place, similes discussed in the above sections are instantiated by similitive or equative constructions, based on whether they involve

quality or quantitative comparison. For instance, the simile in (27) can be analyzed in terms of a similitive construction, where the comparee *classroom* encodes the target domain, the standard *beehive* the source domain and the parameter verb *was buzzing* provides the relevant dimension for comparison:

(27)	<i>The</i>	<i>classroom</i>	<i>was buzzing</i>	<i>like</i>	<i>a beehive.</i>
		CPREE	PAR	STM	STAND
		TARGET			SOURCE

In addition, comparative and superlative constructions can be considered as available to form a simile in all cases in which they comprise an explicit standard; on the contrary, elatives and excessives, which by definition lack a standard, are excluded from this generalization.

In the literature, the fact that comparison constructions can have figurative meaning is rarely mentioned. Figuratively employed comparison constructions can be recognized in Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 309-313) generic equatives and similitives, whose standard encodes a category and has no concrete referent. Haspelmath and Buchholz give examples such as ‘white as snow’, ‘dark as night’ where the category encoded by the standard possesses the property in question to a highly salient degree; they argue that these expressions are typically idiomatic or “frozen” and that the comparison must not be taken too literally. Haspelmath and Buchholz note that generic equatives are often formally different from specific equatives in their corpus of European languages: for instance, the demonstrative-based parameter marker is lacking or optional in generic equatives, or generic equatives preserve older standard markers, while specific ones are encoded by newer constructions. Furthermore, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 312) list noun-adjective compounds, where the standard is juxtaposed to the parameter or unverbated with it, as a further strategy for encoding generic equatives (for examples, see Chapter 2.1.2).

The fact that some languages systematically distinguish constructions with generic and specific standards, raises the question of whether comparative constructions can specialize for the expression of figurative meaning within the same language. In Chapter 6, I will argue that this seems to be the case for equative and similitive constructions introduced by the particle *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*.

### 4.3 The identification of similes

The MIPVU project (Metaphor Identification Procedure hosted at Vrije Universiteit, Steen 2007, Steen et al. 2010) developed an explicit and systematic procedure for the identification of metaphor and other figurative expressions in language use. In presenting their procedure of metaphor

identification, the MIPVU group points out some methodological problems in the detection of similes, understood as figuratively employed comparative constructions. The first issue is that of scope, that is, which words should be regarded as belonging to the simile. Take for instance the simile in (28):

(28) *Sara was undressed and ready for bed but Jenny was fully clothed, moving about the room in her harlequin dress like some angry restless dragonfly.*

(Steen et al. 2010: 93)

In example (28), it seems safe to say that the standard of comparison is *some angry restless dragonfly*. However, whether all words inside the expression do in fact belong to the source domain is a question that deserves some attention: that is, do *angry* and *restless* belong to the source domain of dragonfly, or do they belong to the target domain of Jenny, or possibly even to both domains simultaneously? In fact, *angry* and *restless* may be seen to be part of the conceptual domain of HUMANS and the projection of human behavior and emotions onto the dragonfly would entail that *angry* and *restless* are metaphorically used inside the simile in relation to *dragonfly*.

The authors suggest that, since MIPVU is primarily concerned with the linguistic level of metaphor analysis, rather than its conceptual level, this issue may be resolved by taking syntax and punctuation into account. In Example (28), ‘angry’ and ‘restless’ occur after the linguistic flag (‘like’) and function as premodifiers to the most important word in the simile, i.e. ‘dragonfly’. Thus, ‘angry’ and ‘restless’ would be coded as belonging to the source domain and as potentially metaphorical within the simile (see Kaal and Dorst 2012 on how to use punctuation, grammatical function, context, and situation models to overcome difficulties in deciding whether individual words are part of similes). In the following chapters, we will see that, although Ṛgvedic similes introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* present a quite regular syntax, Vedic flexible word order and the presence of discontinuous constituents sometimes make it hard to individuate the elements that make up a simile.

A second issue is the one of telling figurative from literal comparative constructions. According to Israel et al. (2004), a comparison is figurative when the compared entities are or are construed as being fundamentally unlike each other and therefore unlikely to be compared (cf. also Miller 1993: 373). Since two entities of any kind are likely to have something in common, what makes them similar or different is not so much an objective resemblance, but the construal of similarity or dissimilarity. In Cognitive Grammar concepts in general and word meanings in particular are characterized by one or more cognitive domains, collectively called their matrix (Langacker 1987: 147). For instance, the concept ‘human being’ is defined relative to the domains of physical objects,

living things, volitional agents, emotions, and several other domains (Croft and Cruse 2004: 25). Different domains may be more or less central to a concept or be more or less salient on a given occasion of the concept's activation. Thus, two concepts evoking the same set of cognitive domains will count as similar and similarity can be defined as the overlap between domain matrices. Now, while literal comparison involves entities which evoke similar domain matrices, figurative comparison involves concepts characterized by very different domain matrices. In other words, what makes a simile figurative is that it prompts one to make connections across concepts which seem otherwise unconnected (Israel et al 2004: 126).

While the one above is a good theoretical definition of figurative comparison, it is not always easy in practice to draw the line between literal similarity and figurative similarity. For instance, when physical appearance or other sensory influences are involved, as in example (29), one could take the comparison as being figurative or not.

(29) *“Jenny, I don't want to sound **like an old auntie**, but you are not being very sensible about Matthew.”*

(Steen et al. 2010: 95)

In the example above, since the verb *sound* can be taken as a linking verb meaning ‘to seem good, bad, interesting, exciting etc. based on what you have heard, read, or know’ or as a full verb meaning ‘to produce a sound’, the decision depends on whether the focus is on the content of what is being said or whether actual sound is involved. However, at the conceptual level, the problem can be resolved by interpreting this comparison as a case of image mapping (see Section 4.1.3), or rather a “sound mapping” in this case. Other examples of image mappings from MIPVU fiction corpus are (30) and (31):

(30) *Delaney took risks, plummeting feet first through the hatchways, and partly breaking his descent with the handrails, **falling like a parachutist**, rolling instantly deploying his Uzi.*

(Steen et al. 2010: 96)

(31) *You wouldn't have recognized him, he looked **like John the Baptist**.*

(Steen et al. 2010: 96)

In Example (30), the image mapping maps Delaney's falling onto a parachutist's falling, providing the reader with a vivid visualization of the manner in which Delaney was falling. Example (31) involves a cross-domain comparison between the target domain of modern people and the source

domain of biblical people. The result of the comparison is an image mapping that yields a visualization of the physical appearance of the character, i.e. what his hair, beard, and clothes look like; the exact nature of his appearance and any inferences to be drawn about the attitude to be taken towards this appearance are left implicit. According to Steen and associates, the methodological question remains, whether such examples are concerned with literal or metaphorical external resemblance, and whether the two domains are distinct enough to be compared. In such cases they follow Cameron (2003: 4) and take incongruity between the content of the discourse context and the content of the items in question as a hint for metaphorical discourse: two distinct and “incongruous domains”, however weak, should be considered as expressing a cross-domain mapping. A further requirement for the presence of figurativity is that some resolution can be found to incongruity that makes sense of the “double semantic content” (Kittay 1987).

In the following section, we will see that problems in the detection of similes are mostly pronounced when we are dealing with ancient texts, for the interpretation of which we cannot rely on our judgment as speakers and for which we often lack a profound knowledge of the culture that produced them.

#### 4.3.1 Analyzing figurative expressions in ancient texts

Recent literature has pointed out that analyzing figurative expressions in ancient texts raises issues about the impossibility of eliciting data – and therefore the need of large corpora – and about the problem of cultural differences, which lay the ground for misinterpretations at the level of figuration (Kövecses 2005, Di Biase-Dyson and Egg 2020: 9). It has been argued that expressions that look metaphorical to the modern eye may happen to be literal in that they constitute the actual explanation for a given phenomenon in a given culture. For instance, since Egyptians believed that sickness was caused by supernatural beings that entered the body and that had to be driven away, we may ask whether the Ancient Egyptian verb *dr* ‘to drive away, repel’ used in relation to warding off sickness should be interpreted as an instance of the conceptual metaphor SICKNESS IS WAR. According to Di Biase-Dyson (2019), the fact that Egyptians interpreted this expression in literal, religious terms, makes it a “false friend” and not a metaphor.

In fact, the matter is more complex. Within Deliberate Metaphor Theory (Steen 2008, 2011a, 2011b),<sup>27</sup> a framework interested in identifying deliberately employed figurative expressions, the fact

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<sup>27</sup> Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT) is intended to be both a refinement and an extension of Conceptual Metaphor Theory since, while still seeing metaphor as a mapping of conceptual structure from source to target domain (Steen, 2011b: 54), but it additionally “asks precise questions about the role of metaphorical language in utterance processing at various levels of mental model construction and maintenance” (Steen 2015: 71). In other words, DMT focusses on



that a figurative expression reflects religious beliefs certainly suggests that it is used unconsciously, unless other linguistic elements indicate the opposite.<sup>28</sup> However, the fact that an expression is motivated by specific beliefs and may thus be used unconsciously does not imply that it cannot be analyzed as a figurative expression (as a metaphor, in the case of the Egyptian verb *dr*). In fact, Gibbs (2011: 43) doubted the applicability of the category of deliberateness in metaphor from a psychological perspective, questioning the role of human consciousness in explicit language use (see also Gibbs 2015 and Di Biase-Dyson and Egg 2020: 3-6 for a summary of the debate). If we keep in mind that metaphor is by definition a cognitive mechanism allowing to conceptualize one domain of experience in terms of another, any attempt to distinguish between “conceptualization” and “belief” turns out to be problematic. Thus, it is certainly more useful to accept that expressions based on religious or cultural beliefs can also be analyzed as figurative expressions. For example, Sweetser (1995) has tested the potential of this approach on myths, showing that some metaphorical and symbolic structures involved in mythologies are also commonly found in everyday language.

Another question which may arise when dealing with ancient texts is that of the function that figurative expressions take in the texts. In this case, it is crucial that the genre and register of the text is also taken into account, as well as the cultural milieu that produced them (Di Biase-Dyson and Egg 2020: 12). The potential of studying the function of figurative expressions in relation to the genre of the text in which they occur is shown by Ferella (2020)’s analysis of Ancient Greek medical texts. In her study, she analyzes the use of analogies and comparisons in three Hippocratic treatises as well as two similes from the Empedoclean corpus. Ferella argues that analogies and comparisons hold two main functions in ancient Greek medical texts: beside employing more familiar images in order to illustrate otherwise invisible processes, analogies make up a heuristic method of enquiry in which the processes observed in the source domain are either/both used to infer a general theory, or/and taken as a demonstration of the assumed hypothesis. For instance, in *On the Nature of the Child* 12.6 (= VII, 488 Li.), the membranes encompassing the seed is compared to the crust of bread and the female

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metaphors as metaphors at the level of communication, thus adding a third level to the linguistic and conceptual levels that constitute the core of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

<sup>28</sup> The method behind the Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (DMIP, cf. Reijnierse et al. 2020) is based on MIPVU. According to DMIP, deliberateness can be manifested at the linguistic level, via linguistics flags such as those employed in simile (e.g. *She was like a flower*), or at the conceptual level, via novel metaphors like *She is a lightbulb!* (Di Biase-Dyson and Egg 2020: 2). Furthermore, indirect or conventional metaphors can be used to draw attention to the target domain and be explicitly signaled too: for instance, several metaphorical expressions evoking the same source domain in can be employed in close proximity in order to refer to the same target (*extended metaphor*; Semino 2008: 227). Alternatively, metaphors expressing different mappings can come in clusters or metaphors can be topic triggered, that is, they can allude to the nature of the text (Koller 2003; Herrera Soler, et al. 2006; see also Krennmayr 2011).

womb is compared to an oven in which the seed is heated. Consequently, the author argues that air inflation makes a membrane grow around the seed,

(32) *hósper ep' ártōi optōménōi, leptòn exístatai epipolês hymenoeidés: thermainómenos gàr kai physómenos ho ártos aíretai: hêi d'àn physátai, keínēi tò hymenoeidès gínetai. têi dè gonēi thermainoménēi kai physóménēi pásēi hymèn éxōthen perigínetai.*

‘in the same way (*hósper*) as a thin membrane is formed on the surface of bread when it is being baked: the bread rises as it grows warm and inflates, and as it is inflated, so the membranous surface forms. In the case of the seed, as it becomes heated and inflated, the membrane forms over the whole of its surface.’

(VII, 488 Li., in Ferella 2020: 135)

In (32), the analogy between an oven and the female womb employs a familiar image in order to explain invisible phenomena. However, the aim of the metaphor is not restricted to illustration: the mapping rests upon the belief that the conditions that enable an oven to work, i.e., heat and inflated air, are similarly reproduced in the womb. Thus, the source and target domain are not merely comparable, but yield evidence of the same natural principles (Ferella 2020: 135-136).

A somewhat different case is represented by the so-called “simile curses” or “effective similes” contained in Akkadian and Hittite incantation texts (Hillers 1983), whose analysis requires knowledge not only of the linguistic context in which they occur, but also of the extra-linguistic context including rituals and beliefs about the power of words. Different kind of similes can be distinguished in such texts, depending on whether their recitation implies manipulation of objects or generally the existence of a concrete ritual, or no ritual at all. Similes of the former type occur in the incantations recited during the *maqlû* ‘burning’, the most important Akkadian ritual against witchcraft (Abusch 2015). The *maqlû* text contains a series of incantations followed by instructions regarding the time, place, and manner of ritual performance. In order to protect the patient and to punish those responsible for the evil, the priest made figures of tallow, copper, clay, or wax which were identified with the sorcerer, as is clear from the quote in (33). Then these figures were burned as the priest recited the incantation, containing similes such as (34):

(33) ‘O Šamaš, these are the figurines of my sorcerer,  
These are the figurines of my sorceress,  
The figurines of my warlock and my witch,  
The figurines of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me [...].’

(I 73-76, in Abusch 2015: 6)

- (34) ‘As these figures melt, dissolve, and run down, so may sorcerer and sorceress melt,  
dissolve, and run down!’

(II 146-147, in Hillers 1983: 181)

Again, the aim of these similes accompanying a rite is not mere illustration: being part of an incantation, these expressions were meant to be “effective”, to yield some results in the real world. Furthermore, these similes do not necessarily involve any perceptible similarity between the two entities: they follow, and depend on, a magical identification which is posited between the two objects and predict that what is done to one object will bring off similar effects on the other.

In other cases of magical texts or treaty-curses, we are not aware of any concrete rite accompanying the simile. For instance, Hillers (1983: 182) provides the following similes from an Akkadian “Fire Incantation” (Section II, lines 11-15):

- (35) ‘Depart like a snake from your hole (?)  
Like a partridge (?) from your lair.  
Do not turn back to your prey.  
Scatter like fog, disperse like dew,  
Like smoke ascend to the heaven of Anu.’

(Lambert 1970, Section II, lines 11-15, in Hillers 1983: 182)

Here the objects mentioned are not under the sorcerer’s control. While their aim is the same as that of similes involving manipulation of an object, these similes evoke the expected result by appealing to readily observed natural phenomena and their more salient qualities. Again, however, the similarity between the two items is not already there but is the expected outcome of the incantation.

Finally, some cases lie somewhere in between, for no explicit manipulation of objects is involved, but we know from the text or from other sources that the mentioned items were visible to the priest and his addressee in a ritual context. This is the case of a series of similes occurring in the Hittite myth of Telipinu. In this myth, Hannahanna, the mother goddess, sends a bee to find Telipinu, whose disappearance caused chaos and devastation in the world. The bee finds the hiding deity, stings him awake and brings him, terribly enraged, back to the other gods. At this point, a ritual is performed to pacify Telipinu and restore prosperity to the cosmos. The incantation goes as follows:

(36) §12. Here lie *samama*-nuts. Let [...] be manifest(?). Here [lie] figs. Just as [a fig] is sweet, so let [your soul], Telipinu, become sweet in the same way.

§13. Just as an olive [holds] its oil in its heart, [just as a grape] holds its wine in its heart, so you, Telipinu, must hold goodness in your soul and heart in the same way.

§14. Here lies resinous wood (?). Let it anoint [your soul], Telipinu. Just as malt and beer bread are united in “soul”, let your soul, [Telipinu], be united in the same way with the words of (these) mortals. [Just as wheat] is pure, so let Telipinu, (namely) his soul, become pure in the same way. [Just as] honey is sweet, as ghee is mild, so let the soul of Telipinu become sweet in the same way, and let it become mild in the same way.

(A ii 15-27, in Hoffner and Beckman 1998: 16)

In this series of similes, the object representing the target domain is offered to the eye of the addressee, as if the presence of objects endowed with given qualities could guide the achievement of the same qualities in the target. Here too, the aim is effective.

To sum up, researching and analyzing figurative expressions in ancient languages is subject to the availability of a sufficiently large corpus and to substantial knowledge about the cultural background of the respective language community. Furthermore, the interdependence between figurative language and genre can provide crucial insights on the function of figurative expressions.

**Part 2**

## 5. The particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*: State of the Art

In this Chapter I present an overview of the extant literature on constructions containing the comparative particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*.

While reporting the different terminologies employed by each author, I will refer to the constitutive elements of comparative constructions with the terms introduced in Chapter 2: comparee (CPREE), standard (STAND), standard marker (STM) and parameter (PAR).

Traditional grammars of Vedic and Classical Sanskrit treat constructions introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva* and *yáthā/yathā* separately, either among other particles (Speyer 1886, Delbrück 1888, Macdonell 1916 for *iva* and *ná*) or in sections dealing with subordinate clauses (Delbrück 1888, Macdonell 1916 for *yáthā*). The three grammars substantially agree on the different functions attributed to these constructions and their contributions are summarized in Section 5.1. Starting from Section 5.2, the focus shifts to similes introduced by the three particles only, which will be the main topic of the next chapters. In Section 5.2, I give an overview of the state of the art on the syntax of such constructions introduced by the three particles, while in Section 5.3 I present two main hypotheses on the synchronic distribution and further developments of *ná* and *iva* in such constructions. Finally, in Section 5.4 I summarize the main contributions on formulaicity within Ṛgvedic similes and in general.

### 5.1 The particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*

The most frequent comparative particle in the ṚV is *ná*. In this text, the particle *ná* is used both as a negative particle and as a standard marker (1). This polysemy is not due to homophony but is the result of a semantic shift from negation to comparison; for the constructions which lead to the extension of Vedic *ná* from a marker of negation to a standard marker see Chapter 8.1. Macdonell (1916: 236) treats negative and comparative *ná* as two different but closely related lemmas, the latter deriving from the former; Delbrück (1888: 543) subsumes them under the same lemma.

(1) <i>arān</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>nemih</i>	<i>pári</i>	<i>tā</i>	<i>babhūva</i>
spoke.ACC.PL	like	felly(F).NOM	LP	3PL.ACC.N	be.PF.3SG
STAND <sub>j</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>i</sub>	PAR-	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	-PAR (CPREE <sub>i</sub> )

‘Like a rim the spokes of a wheel, he encompasses those.’

(ṚV 1.32.15d)

Negative and comparative *ná* can be distinguished thanks to their different distribution in the clause. While negative *ná* takes sentence-initial or pre-verbal position, comparative *ná* most often follow the standard of comparison, or, if this is a complex phrase, the first element of the phrase (Delbrück 1988: 542-543). Thus, probably due to the influence of *iva*, which is a clitic, comparative *ná* acquired a semi-enclitic status (Vine 1978: 183). A further difference between negative and comparative *ná* consists in the possibility of the former of merging with the following verb, if this starts with a vowel, whereas *sandhi* with the following word never applies to comparative *ná*. In the AV, the comparative function of *ná* became much more infrequent (34 occurrences, out of which 14 are quotations from the ṚV) and eventually disappears in Vedic prose.

While comparative *ná* is unknown after the *saṃhitas*, *iva* becomes the most frequent and productive comparative particle in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit. Delbrück (1888: 476-477) discusses two functions of *iva*, namely a comparative and a mitigating one (*mildernd*). The former is by far the most frequent in the Vedas, whereas the latter is more typical of Vedic prose.<sup>29</sup> In its comparative function, *iva* never introduces a comparative clause, but marks a phrasal STAND, as in (2). In its mitigating function, *iva* modifies a statement that is not intended to be understood strictly and chiefly follows adjectives, adverbs, preverbs, as in (3), and verbs (Macdonell 1916: 220).

(2) <i>sá</i>	<i>naḥ</i>	<i>pitā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>sūnāve</i>
as_such	1PL.DAT	father.SG	like	son.DAT
	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>
<i>agne</i>	<i>sūpāyanó</i>		<i>bhava</i>	
agni.VOC	easily_accessible.NOM		be.IMPV.PRS.2SG	
(CPREE) <sub>i</sub>	PAR			

‘Like a father for a son, be of easy approach for us, o Agni.’

(ṚV 1.1.9ab)

(3) <i>áranỹāny</i>		<i>áranỹāni-</i>		
lady_of_wilderness.VOC		lady_of_wilderness.VOC		
<i>asaú</i>	<i>yá</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>násyasi</i>
DEM.NOM.F	REL.NOM.F	LP	like	lose.PRS.2SG

‘O Lady of the Wilderness, Lady of the Wilderness, you there, who seem to be lost just ahead.’

(ṚV 1.146.1ab)

<sup>29</sup> On the function of *iva* in Vedic prose, see Scharpel (1970) and Brereton (1982).

Finally, *yathā* can introduce comparative, temporal, final, causal, and content clauses with verbs of knowing and saying (Delbrück 1888: 592-596). Comparative clauses can have the same subject as the main clause or a different subject, and can come with different combinations of tenses and moods in the two clauses. Typical cases are those in which the *yathā*-clause has a past tense form of the verb and the main clause an imperative, the two clauses sharing the same subject. In such cases, the verb in the two clauses is often the same, as shown by example (4), where both verbs are forms of the root  $\sqrt{han}$ - ‘smite’:

(4) <i>yáthā</i>	<i>jaghántha</i>	<i>dhṛṣatá</i>	<i>purá</i>	<i>cid</i>
as	smite.PF.2SG	be_bold.PTCP.INSTR.N	before	PTC
<i>evá</i>	<i>jahi</i>	<i>śátrum</i>	<i>asmákam</i>	<i>indra</i>
so	smite.IMPV.PRS.2G	enemy.ACC	1PL.GEN	indra.VOC

‘Just as you also smote boldly before, so smite our rival, o Indra.’

(ṚV 2.30.4cd)

In the ṚV, *yáthā* often occurs in correlative diptychs, where it is accompanied by a correlative element which functions as a parameter marker: this can be a correlative adverb, such as *evá/evá* ‘so’, *evám* ‘id.’, *tathā* ‘id.’, a form of the correlative pronoun *ta-* ‘this’ or of the correlative adjectives *etavánt-* ‘so big, so much’ (Delbrück 1888: 595).<sup>30</sup> Delbrück notes that the verb of the comparative clause is often omitted, either because it can be easily recovered from the main clause, as in (5), or because it is a copula, as in (6). However, he does not specify that, in the ṚV, elliptical comparative *yáthā*-clauses are almost as frequent as those with two verbs (ca. 76 and 87 occurrences respectively) and treats them as a subtype of the latter. Furthermore, the difference between clausal and phrasal comparatives introduced by *yáthā* does not only consist in the presence vs. absence of the verb, but also in the position of the standard marker: while in clausal comparison *yáthā* virtually always precedes the comparative clause, in phrasal comparison it regularly follows the standard or, when this is a complex phrase, the first element of the standard, as in the case of *iva* and *ná*. Macdonell (1916: 211) only describes the morphology of the particle *yáthā* as relative adverb derived from the relative stem *ya-* and the instrumental suffix *-thā*, but not its syntax.

<sup>30</sup> Note that the correlative structure is not a unique property of *yáthā*-sentences but is a typical feature of any finite subordinate clause type in Early Vedic, including relative clauses. On subordination in the ṚV, see especially Hettrich (1988) and Viti (2007).



(5) <i>sáro</i>	<i>gauró</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>piba</i>
lake(N).ACC	buffalo.NOM	like	drink.IMPV.PRS.2SG
	STAND	STM	PAR-(CPREE)

‘Drink a lake, as a buffalo does.’

(ṚV 8.45.24c)

(6) <i>nákir</i>	<i>evā</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>tuvám</i>
no_one	so	as	2SG.NOM

‘There is no one who is exactly as you (are).’

(ṚV 4.30.1c)

## 5.2 The syntax of comparative constructions

Bergaigne’s *La syntaxe des comparaisons Védiques* (1886), which precedes Delbrück’s *Altindische Grammatik* by two years, is the first study dedicated to the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* as standard markers and to the syntax of comparative constructions as attested in the ṚV and in the AV. Most importantly, Bergaigne is also the first to distinguish between clausal and phrasal comparison: his inquiry does not include clausal comparisons, such as those containing a correlative diptych introduced above, but only comparisons consisting of a single clause.

Bergaigne individuates the following constituents of phrasal comparisons: the *terme propre* (CPREE), the *terme commune* (PAR) which is most often a verb, less frequently a nominal predicate, and a *terme de comparaison* (STAND), which is introduced by one of the three particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* and which functions as an adverbial modifier. The terms of comparison are construed in the same case as those in the comparee and form what Bergaigne calls an appendix, which can be placed either at the beginning of the clause (7), at the end (8), or in the middle (9), like an aside.

(7) <i>rátham</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>durgādv</i>	<i>asavaḥ</i>	<i>sudānavo</i>
chariot.ACC	like	danger(N).ABL	good.VOC	well_bestowing.VOC
STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>		
<i>viśvasmān</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>ámhaso</i>	<i>níṣ</i>	<i>pipartana</i>
all.ABL.N	1PL.ACC	narrowness(N).ABL	LP	save.IMPV.PRS.2PL
	CPREE <sub>i</sub>	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	PAR-	-PAR

‘Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.’

(ṚV 1.106.1cd)

(8) <i>mā́</i>	<i>tvā́</i>	<i>ké cin</i>	<i>ní</i>	<i>yaman</i>
NEG	2SG.ACC	no_one	LP	hold_down.INJ.AOR.3PL
	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	CPREE <sub>i</sub>	PAR-	-PAR
<i>vīm</i>	<i>nā́</i>	<i>pāśino</i>		
bird.ACC	like	with_snare.NOM.PL		
STAND <sub>j</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>i</sub>		

‘Let no one hold you down, as men using snares do a bird.’

(ṚV 3.45.1c)

(9) <i>sadyás</i>	<i>cid</i>	<i>yáh</i>	<i>śávasā</i>	<i>pāñca</i>	<i>kṛṣṭīh</i>
in_one_day	PTC	REL.NOM	strength(N).INST	five.ACC.PL.F	people(F).ACC.PL
		CPREE <sub>i</sub>	CPREE <sub>j</sub>		CPREE <sub>z</sub>
<i>sūrya</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>jyótiṣā</i>	<i>apás</i>	<i>tatāna</i>	
sun.NOM	like	light(N).INST	water(F).ACC.PL	stretch.PF.3SG	
STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>	STAND <sub>z</sub>	PAR	

‘Who just in a single day stretches across the five peoples with his vast power, like the sun across the waters with his light.’

(ṚV 10.178.3ab)

Bergaigne introduces the basic form of phrasal comparative constructions in the first paragraph of his article and in a series of footnotes. He devotes the rest of the discussion to what he considers to be peculiarities of the syntax of phrasal comparatives, to which he attributes singular boldness (*hardiesse*) and awkwardness (*maladresse*) (Bergaigne 1888: 76). Such peculiarities are divided into three groups: a) construction of the *terme propre* or of the *terme commune* within the *termes de comparaison*, b) missing or artificial correspondence of form between the *terme(s) commune(s)* and the *terme(s) de comparaison*, and c) unexpected relationship between the *terme(s) de comparaison*.

As an example of point a), take the comparison in (10), where the parameter *áchedi* ‘was cut away’ (*terme commune*) occurs within the standard phrase *vér iva ... parṇám* ‘like the wing of a bird’. On the basis of word order, Bergaigne suggests that in such cases the verb is constructed with the standard rather than with the comparee, but he does not rule out the hypothesis of hyperbaton simply moving one element of the standard after the parameter. In some cases, however, the verb is clearly constructed with the standard, as suggested by noun-verb agreement: take for instance example (11), in which we would expect a 3<sup>rd</sup> person dual verb in agreement with the dual comparee *ródasī ubhé* ‘both worlds’, but we find the singular *vartī* ‘(it) rolls’ clearly constructed with the singular standard *cakrám* ‘wheel’. I will come back to discontinuous standards in Chapter 7.2 on the internal syntax of

similes and employ treebank data to provide a tentative interpretation of the different attested patterns.

(10)	<i>carítram</i>	<i>hí</i>	<i>vér</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>áchedi</i>	<i>parṇám</i>
	foot(N).NOM	PTC	bird.GEN	like	cut.AOR.3SG.PASS	wing(N).NOM
	CPREE		STAND-	STM	PAR	-STAND

‘Because her foot was cut away like the wing of a bird.’

(ṚV 1.116.15a)

(11)	<i>ánu</i>	<i>tvā</i>	<i>ródasī</i>	<i>ubhé</i>
	LP	2SG.ACC	world(F).NOM.DU	both.NOM.DU.F
	PAR-	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	CPREE <sub>i</sub>	
	<i>cakráṃ</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>vartī</i>	<i>étaśam</i>
	wheel(N).NOM	like	roll.PRS.3SG	Etaśa.ACC
	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	-PAR	STAND <sub>j</sub>

‘After you (roll) both worlds, as the wheel rolls (after) Etaśa.’

(ṚV 8.6.38ab)

Turning to point b), Bergaigne observes that sometimes there is a missing or artificial correspondence of form or function between comparee and standard; for instance, in example (12) the locative *sūrye* ‘in the sun’ corresponds to the accusative *agním* ‘towards Agni’ in the comparee. In (13), Bergaigne sees a case of missing correspondence between comparee and standard because the instrumental phrase *vásunā bhāvīyasā* ‘with more abundant goods’ in the comparee semantically corresponds to the nominative *āpaḥ* (*āpo* due to *sandhi*) in the standard, both having the semantic role of instrument. Bergaigne explains such cases as cases of anacoluthon, sometimes due to insertion of a ready-made formula in a comparison. As we will see below, Jamison (1982) provides a syntactic explanation for most cases of missing correspondence in case or function between the elements of a comparison.

(12)	<i>agním</i>	<i>áchā</i>	<i>devayatām</i>	<i>mánāmsi</i>
	Agni.ACC	LP	god_seeking.GEN.PL	thought(N).NOM.PL
	CPREE <sub>j</sub>			CPREE <sub>i</sub>
	<i>cákṣūṃṣi</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>sūriye</i>	<i>sám caranti</i>
	eye(N).NOM.PL	like	sun.LOC	LP converge.PRS.3PL
	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>	PAR- -PAR

‘Toward Agni the thoughts of those seeking the gods converge, like eyes upon the sun.’

(13)	<i>tám</i>	<i>ít</i>	<i>ṛṇakṣi</i>	<i>vásunā</i>	<i>bhávīyasā</i>
	3SG.ACC	PTC	fill.PRS.2SG	good(N).INST	abundant.INST.N
	CPREE <sub>j</sub>		PAR		CPREE <sub>i</sub>
	<i>síndhum</i>		<i>ápo</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>abhíto</i>
	river.ACC		water(F).NOM.PL	like	from_all_sides
	STAND <sub>j</sub>		STAND <sub>i</sub>		STM
	<i>vicetasah</i>				
	conspicuous.NOM.PL.F				

‘Just him do you engorge with more abundant goods, as waters, conspicuous from everywhere, engorge a river.’

Finally, Bergaigne observes some peculiar constructions within the standard phrase: in some cases, two elements of the standard are found in the same case rather than being one a dependent of the other. For instance, in (14) one would expect to find the genitive *súraḥ* or *súryasya* modifying the nominative *cákṣuḥ* ‘eye’, resulting in a comparison of the Maruts to ‘the eye of the sun’; instead, we find the nominative *súryaḥ* (*súryo* due to *sandhi*) which suggests that the phrase is a decomposed *bahuvrīhi*, equally yielding ‘like the eye of the sun’ (cf. Geldner 1951).<sup>31</sup>

(14)	<i>gávām</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>śriyáse</i>	<i>śyṅgam</i>	<i>uttamám</i>
	cow(F).GEN	like	splendor.DAT	horn(N).NOM	tallest.NOM.N
	<i>súryo</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>cákṣū</i>	<i>rájaso</i>	
	sun.NOM	like	eye(N).NOM	dusky_realm(N).GEN	
	STAND-		STM	-STAND	
	<i>visárjane</i>				
	stopping(N).LOC <sup>32</sup>				

<sup>31</sup> Jamison and Brereton (2014) translate: ‘(Your) horn, like (those) of cows, stands tallest for splendor; (your) eye is like the sun in his surging through the dusky realm.’ The suggested phrase *súryasya cákṣuḥ*, with a proper genitive, is found in the same hymn ṚV 5.59.5d and elsewhere in the same metrical position, Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) suggests that in (14) the poet is not comparing the Maruts to the eye of the sun, but rather the Maruts’ eye to the sun.

<sup>32</sup> According to Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*), the quality held in common by the sun and the Maruts’ eye is the light emitted in the journey through ‘dusky realm’, but this depends on one’s interpretation of *visárjane*. Geldner (1951) gives it a later sense ‘Aufhören’ (= ‘stopping’) not otherwise found in the ṚV, Renou (1955) takes it as ‘expansion’. Based on *rájaso visáré* (ṚV 1.79.1) used of Agni compared to the sun, Jamison takes *visárjane* as a variant of *vī ṣṣr-* ‘stream/run/spread

‘Wie der Rinder Horn ist euer höchstes Horn prächtig zu schauen, wie das Auge der Sonne bei Aufhören des Dunkels.’ (Geldner 1951)

(ṚV 5.59.3ab)

Jamison (1982) discusses Ṛgvedic similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*, recognizing the main characteristics of these constructions in the fact that they are always phrasal and in the principle of identity of form and function between two noun phrases, the one which is being compared and the one to which it is compared. In other words, with all these standard markers, the two noun phrases are ordinarily in the same case so that the noun in the simile (i.e. the standard) is appropriately construed with the verb as the target noun (the comparee; Jamison 1982: 251-252).

Jamison (1982) lists three main configurations of standard(s) and comparee(s). In this, she is followed by Pinault (1997b: 310), who dedicated a series of articles to Ṛgvedic similes, trying to explain the origin of the comparative function of *ná* (1985), to which I will go back in Chapter 8.1, and the distribution of the three particles (1997a, 1997b), which will be the subject of Section 5.3. The three configurations are the following:

- a) Single comparison: single comparisons can take an adjectival predicate as parameter or a verbal one. In both cases, the standard is in the same case as the comparee and the same holds for attributive adjectives, as in (15). The comparison most often involves the subject, but it can also take oblique arguments as comparees.

(15)	<i>áchā</i>	<i>vadā</i>		<i>tánā</i>		<i>girá</i>	...
	LP	speak.IMPV.PRS.2SG		long.INST.F		song(F).INST	
	<i>agním</i>	<i>mitráṃ</i>		<i>ná</i>		<i>darśatám</i>	
	Agni.ACC	ally.ACC.SG		like		beautiful.ACC	
	CPREE	STAND		STM		PAR	

‘Speak here with a song at length [...] to Agni, lovely to see like an ally (/like Mitra).’

(ṚV 1.38.13)

- b) Double comparison: double comparisons are characterized by the presence of two parallel elements in the CPREE and in the STAND, as in examples (2), (7), and (8).

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through’. Given that the focus of this section is Bergaigne’s syntactic analysis of Ṛgvedic similes, my gloss ‘stopping’ is intended to account for Bergaigne’s interpretation, mirrored by Geldner’s translation.



Furthermore, agent nouns can take genitive or accusative dependents, also depending on whether their accent falls on the root or on the suffix. An example is (18), where both *bráhmanām* (GEN) ‘formulations’ and *usrā́* (ACC) ‘ruddy (dawns)’ are objects of *janitá́* ‘begetter’.

(18)	<i>usrā́</i>		<i>iva</i>	<i>sū́ryo</i>		<i>jyótiṣā́</i>		<i>mahó</i>
	ruddy.ACC.PL.F		like	sun.NOM		light(N).INST		great.NOM
	STAND <sub>j</sub>		STM	STAND <sub>i</sub>		STAND <sub>z</sub>		
	<i>víśveṣā́m</i>	<i>íj</i>	<i>janitá́</i>			<i>bráhmanām</i>		<i>asi</i>
	all.GEN.PL.N	PTCL	begetter.NOM			formulation(N).GEN.PL		be.PRS.2SG
			PAR			CPREE <sub>j</sub>		(CPREE <sub>i</sub> )

‘As the great sun is (the begetter) of ruddy dawn through its light, you are the very begetter of all formulations.’ (Jamison 1982: 257)

(ṚV 2.23.2cd)

Non-parallelism in function occurs with some verbs in *-aya-* that are in syntactic transition from intransitive causative to transitive causative in the ṚV (*śrāváyati* ‘makes (something) (be) heard’/‘makes (someone) hear’, *citáyati* ‘appears, is perceived’, ‘perceives’, ‘makes perceived, manifest’, ‘makes perceive’ etc.), or with verbs that express complementary functions such as  $\sqrt{pi-}$  ‘swell/make swell’ and  $\sqrt{duh-}$  ‘milk/give milk’. The latter two verbs can appear in different sentence frames: for instance, in (19) the verb *pínvatam* ( $\sqrt{pi-}$ ) is constructed transitively with the gods *Aśvins* as subject and the cow as direct object, whereas the participle *pipyúṣīm* in (20)ab is constructed intransitively taking either the cows (20)a or the refreshment/(nourishment) (20)b as subject. Alternatively, the cow can surface as subject with the milk serving as direct object or oblique complement; in this case, the verb is usually, but not necessary, middle, as in (21).

(19)	<i>pínvatam</i>		<i>gá́</i>	...	<i>aśvinā́</i>
	swell.IMPV.PRS.2DU.ACT		cow(F).ACC.PL		<i>Aśvin</i> .VOC.DU
	‘You, <i>Aśvins</i> , swell the cattle (with milk).’				

(ṚV 1.118.2c)

(20)	a.	<i>dhenúm</i>	<i>pipyúṣīm</i>
		milk-cow(F).ACC	swell.PTCP.PF.ACC.F
		‘the swelling milk-cow’	

(ṚV 2.32.3b)

- b.     *pipyúṣīm*                                     *iṣam*  
           swell.PTCP.PF.ACC.F                   refreshment(F).ACC  
           ‘the swelling refreshment’

(ṚV 8.7.3c)

- (21) *gaúr* ...                     *páyate*                     *páyobhiḥ*  
        cow(F).NOM                 swell.PRS.3SG.MID       milk(N).INST.PL  
        ‘The cow ... swells with milk.’

(ṚV 1.164.28)

On the basis of the above examples, the non-parallelism in function between comparee and standard in (22) can be explained with the fact that the verb *pīpayah* is constructed transitively with the comparee (*tuvám* ‘you’ as subject and *iṣam* ‘refreshment’ as direct object), but intransitively with the standard (*ápaḥ* ‘waters’ as subject):

- (22) *tuvám*           *tyám*           *na*           *indara*           *deva*           *citrám*  
        2SG.NOM       DEM.ACC.F     1PL.DAT       Indra.VOC       god.VOC       bright.ACC.F  
        CPREE<sub>i</sub>  
        *iṣam*                     *ápo*                     *ná*     *pīpayah*           *párijman*  
        refreshment(F).ACC   water(F).NOM.PL     like   swell.SUBJ.PF.2SG.AC   circling.LOC  
        CPREE<sub>j</sub>                     STAND                     STM    PAR

‘You, god Indra, will make this bright refreshment swell for us as waters do in their circling.’

(ṚV 1.63.8ab)

Finally, non-parallelism in function can appear due to the polysemy of the middle voice, which sometimes allows a medial, self-involved transitive value to occur simultaneously with an intransitive or reflexive value. In this case, both values need not be characteristic of the particular verb in question, and either of the two may represent a nonce usage which is comprised by the range of usages that are typical of the medio-passive voice in general. Take for instance example (23), in which the middle form *dhūnute* must be read intransitively with the comparee and transitively with the standard. With respect to this example, Jamison (1982: 261) argues that, although otherwise transitive, middle forms of the verb  $\sqrt{dhū}$ - ‘shake’ were relatively infrequent in the ṚV and thus their exact value was probably not fixed.



(23) *átrā ví nemír eṣaam*  
 then LP wheel\_rim(F).NOM 3PL.GEN  
 PAR- CPREE

*úrāñ ná dhūnute vṛkaḥ*  
 lamb(F).ACC like shake.PRS.3SG.M wolf.NOM  
 STAND<sub>j</sub> STM -PAR STAND<sub>i</sub>

‘Then their wheel rim shakes back and forth as a wolf shakes a lamb.’ (Jamison 1982: 261)

(ṚV 8.34.3ab)

Jamison (1982) analysis of asymmetrical patterns within similes allows us to explain cases of missing formal correspondence between comparee and standard such as (13), repeated here as (24). Such cases arise because the verb partakes in the so-called instrument-subject alternation (see Levin 1993: 80 with references): while in the comparee the instrument is encoded by the instrumental adjunct *vásunā bhāvīyasā* ‘with more abundant goods’, in the standard the semantic role of instrument is realized by the subject *ápah* ‘the waters’.

(24) *tám ít pṛṇakṣi vásunā bhāvīyasā*  
 3SG.ACC PTC fill.PRS.2SG good(N).INST abundant.INST.N  
 CPREE<sub>j</sub> PAR CPREE<sub>i</sub>  
*síndhum ápo yáthā abhíto vícetasah*  
 river.ACC water(F).NOM.PL like from\_all\_sides conspicuous.NOM.PL.F  
 STAND<sub>j</sub> STAND<sub>i</sub> STM

‘Just him do you engorge with more abundant goods, as waters, conspicuous from everywhere, engorge a river.’

(ṚV 1.83.1cd)

### 5.3 Distribution of *ná* and *iva*

Pinault (1997b) dedicates a study to the distribution of *ná* and *iva* with respect to each other in the ṚV. According to Pinault, there are no syntactic or semantic differences between *ná* and *iva*, and their distribution is determined by the ending of the previous word as well as by its morphological category.<sup>33</sup> Three main tendencies can be observed:

a) a word ending in short vowel + consonant is most often followed by *ná*;

<sup>33</sup> The same idea is briefly discussed in Jamison (1982: 254-255).

- b) a word ending in long vowel + consonant is most often followed by *iva*;
- c) a word ending in short or long vowel is usually followed by *iva* resulting in contraction.

Pinault argues that this distribution is governed by the need of having ready-made units to employ during oral composition. To give but one example, the thematic singular endings *-āya* (Dat), *-asya* (Gen), and *-ena* (Inst) are virtually always combined with *iva*. While the absence of the sequence *-ena ná* is explained by the need to avoid apology (actually attested, e.g., in R̥V 6.19.5d *samudré ná* < \* *samudréṇa ná*), the combination of oblique cases with *iva* is based on a more general need: in most cases, this combination results in a sequence # 1 2 3 *eva* (< *-a iva* due to *sandhi*) which occupies the entire opening of the trimeter before the *caesura* and provides a correct opening with rhythm # – – ∪ || or # ∪ – – ∪ || (provided that the last syllable is open); the combination of *iva* with four-syllable standards provides an equally correct opening # ∪ – – – ∪ ||. In this context, the equally long sequences # 1 2-*sya ná* and # 1 2 3-*sya ná* are avoided because *pāda* openings featuring two short syllables before the *caesura* are irregular and extremely rare (cf. Arnold 1905: 182, 188, 193-194). Furthermore, sequences involving *iva* are also suitable for the cadence because they end with a short syllable which can occupy slot 9 of the *triṣṭubh* (cadence – ∪ – x # for syllables 8 to 11) or *jagatī* (cadence – ∪ – ∪ x # for syllables 8 to 12).

Pinault argues that, although synchronically *ná* and *iva* only differ in terms of distribution, they originally had different functions: while *ná* is ancient in its function of encoding exemplary comparison on conventional themes, *iva* was originally a vague quantifier ('somehow', 'more or less', etc.) which served to express approximation. As we have seen in Section 5.1, this function of *iva* is most typical of Vedic prose and has been well described by Brereton (1982); in Classical Sanskrit, it is preserved alongside the comparative function of *iva*. Pinault suggests that the passage from the approximative to the comparative function of *iva* in the R̥V occurred due to two main factors: a) when the scope of *iva* was a noun, the difference between approximation and comparison decreases and *iva* takes a function which is similar to the one of *ná*; at this point, b) the development of formulaic expressions of comparison bleached the distinction between *ná* and *iva* and the two particles became interchangeable in this function. Pinault further notes that the availability of a particle that gives a long syllable (*-Ceva -Ca na*) may have played a role in the spread of *iva* at the expense of *ná*, eventually causing the latter to disappear in Vedic prose. Indeed, even though *ná* has higher frequency in the R̥V (see Table 1 in Chapter 1), it is *iva* that is gaining ground and there are no parts of the R̥V in which one is used to the exclusion of the other.

Pinault also tries to reconstruct the process that led to the expansion of *iva* at the expense of *ná*. He recognizes two main substitution mechanisms:

a) since the distribution of *iva* and *ná* was determined by the ending of the previous word and by its morphological category, sequences including *ná* could be replaced by sequences including *iva* that exploited the same lexical elements but had a different syntax – and thus different case endings. For instance, the metrical convenience of the sequence *-asya* (Gen) *iva* (see above) was exploited by the poets to replace older sequences that contained a nominative followed by *ná*. One of the most frequent standards in the R̥V is *sūrya-* ‘sun’. In the genitive, *sūrya-* occurs five times with the word *raśmáyaḥ*.NOM.PL ‘rains [=rays]’: this sequence is found both in the opening of trimeters, as in (25), and in their closing, as in (26).

(25) *sūryasyeva*                      *raśmáyo*              *durniyántavo*  
# 1 2 3 4            |            5 6 7              8 9 10 11 12 #  
‘Like the reins [=rays] of the sun difficult to hold back.’

(R̥V 1.135.9f)

(26) *virokíṇaḥ*                      *sūriyasyeva raśmáyaḥ*  
# 1 2 3 4            |            5 6 7 8 9            10 11 12 #  
‘Shining forth like the rays of the sun.’

(R̥V 5.55.3c)

In the nominative, *sūryaḥ* occurs thrice<sup>34</sup> within the formula # 1 2 *sūryo ná raśmibhiḥ* # ‘like the sun with its reins.DAT.PL [=rays]’ which occupies a whole octosyllabic verse. According to Pinault, since the two sequences included the same lexical material and thus had a similar semantics, the sequence *sūryo ná raśmibhiḥ* could be replaced by the more regular *sūriyasyeva raśmáyaḥ* which, differently from the former, could occur in *pāda*-initial position. The same process can be observed in the sequence *sūryasyeva yúdhyato* ‘like (that) of a battling champion.GEN’ (R̥V 3.55.8b) which replaced the less regular # *sūro ná yúdhyan* || ‘like a battling champion.NOM’ (R̥V 9.70.10c), as well as in the sequence # *vātasyeva* // *prajaváḥ* ‘like the speed of the wind.GEN’ (R̥V 7.33.8cd) which replaced # *vāto ná jūtá* || ‘swift as the wind’ (R̥V 4.17.12d; 9.97.52c).

b) sometimes, the combination of *iva* with the preceding word does not give the expected result. There are two attested possibilities: i) the two words merge into *-eva* or *-īva* as if the ending *-s* or *-m* of the standard did not exist; ii) even if the standard retains its ending and *iva* its initial syllable, *iva* must count as monosyllabic (*‘va*) to fit the verse. Both outcomes have been observed several

<sup>34</sup> R̥V 1.84.1d, 8.43.32b, and 9.41.5c.

times in the literature and listed by Arnold (1905: 78), who explains the latter with the existence of an older monosyllabic particle *va* parallel to disyllabic *iva* (see also AiG I: 317). According to Oldenberg (1907), the cases in i) are due to a peculiar form of double *sandhi*, which he calls *Verschleifung*. It has also been proposed that both phenomena constituted two “prakritisms” of the ṚV (Pischel 1900, Renou 1952: 105). Since in all cases of unexpected outcome, *iva* follows a standard that would normally require *ná*, (e.g., after nominative singular forms in *-aḥ, -iḥ, uḥ*), Pinault suggests that we are in front of a second mechanism of expansion of *iva*. In fact, in cases such as # *divá* ‘*va sánu* ‘like the back of heaven.GEN’ (ṚV 10.62.9b), the presence of an equivalent expressions with *ná* such as # *divá ná sánu* (ṚV 1.58.2) suggests that the latter was the original sequence. In order to replace *iva* for *ná* in sequences that do not admit contraction and which would therefore result in a different number of syllables, *iva* began to be attached to the stem of thematic nouns – as in composition – rather than to their nominative ending (e.g. *súreva* < *súra-iva* instead of *súraḥ ná* > *súro ná*).<sup>35</sup> According to Pinault, at the time of compilation of the Ṛgvedic corpus as we know it, a philological hand restored the endings of the standards without changing the form of *iva* and this led to the unexpected metrical results that we find in the ṚV. Afterwards, the expansion of *iva* to forms other than the nominative singular of thematic nouns was made possible by the influence of a dialectal variant of Early Vedic in which the *sandhi* outcome for *-as (/z/)* after a voiced consonant was *-e* and not *-o* as in the Ṛgvedic dialect: this made comparative phrases such as *súreva* be reinterpreted as a combination of *súraḥ va*, a reanalysis which gained a monosyllabic variant to *iva* that could replace *ná* in every context. Admittedly, this analysis requires assuming that the same literature circulated in different linguistic environments.

Viti (2002: 53-54) acknowledges that chronological stratification, metric, and stylistic requirements do not allow to identify marked differences in the syntax and semantics of *ná* and *iva* within the ṚV. Nevertheless, some tendencies can be recognized. According to Viti, while the syntax of *ná* and *iva* is virtually identical, their distribution is based on the individuation level of the referents denoted by the standard: if the standard is highly individuated, it is followed by *iva*, otherwise by *ná*.

In the first place, this tendency is shown by the fact that the two particles tend to occur with nouns belonging to different categories: *iva* tends to occur with masculine common nouns (*pitṛ-* ‘father’ in the form *pitéva*), in particular agent nouns linked to Vedic liturgy (*hóṭṛ-* ‘offeror, priest’),

<sup>35</sup> Pinault explains this process as a reanalysis of regular sequences nominative of *-an-* nouns + *iva*, such as *vṛṣā iva* > *vṛṣeva*, into base + *iva*. In this way, thematic nouns like *súra-*, whose nominative *súraḥ* would otherwise combine with *ná* in *súro ná*, could be combined with *iva* in *súra- + iva* > *súreva*.

but also other names of professions (*táṣṭṛ-* ‘craftsman’ in the form *táṣṭeva*, *ástṛ-* ‘archer’ in *ásteva*), and with nouns that denote male animals, in particular the bull (*vṛṣan-*). On the contrary, with *ná*, we find inanimate concrete nouns (*dúr-* ‘door’ in *duró ná*), mass nouns (*yavá-* ‘barley’, *ghṛtá-* ‘butter’, *páyas-* ‘milk’), and abstract nouns (*puṣṭí-* ‘prosperity’ in *puṣṭír ná ranvá* ‘as happy as prosperity’). For instance, Viti (2002: 57) notes that the accusative of *ghṛtá-* ‘butter’ occurs 13 times with *ná* (*ghṛtám ná*) and only once with *iva* (*ghṛtám iva*), proving that the latter sequence is not impossible for metrical purposes, but is simply avoided. On the other hand, nouns belonging to the following categories appear both with *ná* and with *iva*: women (*pátnībhir ná* ‘as if with brides’, but *rahasúr iva* ‘like a woman giving birth in secret’), various animals other than the bull (but *páśu-* ‘flock’ occurs always with *ná*), stars and celestial phenomena (*dyáur ná stṛbhis* ‘like the sky with the stars’, but *dyáur iva smáyamānaḥ* ‘like the smiling sky’), water, rivers, and the sea. Regarding the distribution of the two particles with animal nouns, Viti suggests that animals that are more noble, bigger, or that belong to an experiential domain closer to that of humans are marked with *iva*: for example, while the dog takes *iva* (*śvāneva < śvānā iva*), the wolf, which in Vedic culture represents all that is dangerous and must be kept away, takes *ná* (*vṛko ná < vṛkaḥ ná*).

Individuation (Timberlake 1977: 162) is the extent to which an entity is conceptualized as an individual. It is intertwined with other cognitive parameters such as definiteness (Lyons 1999) and animacy (Comrie 1981: 185-200; Croft 1990: 111-117): this makes lexico-semantic properties of standards (proper names > common nouns > names of animals > inanimate objects > etc.), case marking (nominative > accusative; possessive genitive > accusative), semantic gender (masculine > feminine) and number (singular/dual > plural) all play a role in the selection of the particle. Thus, proper names are more individuated than common nouns, male human nouns more than female human nouns, and both more than other animate nouns; animate nouns are more individuated than inanimate ones, whereas mass and abstract nouns belong to the lower part of the individuation hierarchy.

In the category of case, the nominative, being associated with the agent, is more individuated than the accusative, which is the case of the patient (Taylor 1989: 206-210). The category of gender is not included in Timberlake’s individuation hierarchy and in fact the markedness of the feminine gender is a peculiarity of IE languages: this is due to the fact that the PIE gender system consisted of two genders, animate and neuter, and the earliest manifestations of feminine gender were derivational and involved the suffix *\*-h<sub>2</sub>*, employed in origin to derive abstract nouns (Luraghi 2009). Furthermore, the attribution of a low degree of individuation to women may be due to their lower cognitive salience compared to men and to the cultural perspective of a patriarchal society such as the IE one in which men have power and social control. With this regard, Viti (2002: 63) reports the

following considerations by Givon (1995: 64-66): “while adults are larger than children and males than females, it is the cultural reality of power and social control that makes ‘adult’ and ‘male’ the unmarked case vis-à-vis the marked ‘young’ and ‘female’”.

Regarding number, the singular is more individuated than the plural. This is shown by example (27), where both standards are human, but *bhrātā* ‘brother’, a nominative singular, is marked with *iva*, whereas *ibhyān* ‘vassals’, an accusative plural, takes *ná* as standard marker. Like the singular, the dual is also more individuated than the plural, since referents that consist of couples are few and often consist of inalienable properties such as relatives and body-parts (Croft 1990: 98-101).

(27)	<i>jāmīḥ</i>	<i>sindhūnām</i>	<i>bhrātā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>svāsrām</i>
	akin.NOM	river(F).GEN.PL	brother.NOM	like	sister(F).GEN.PL
	PAR-(CPREE <sub>i</sub> )	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>
	<i>ibhyān</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>rājā</i>	<i>vānāni</i>	<i>atti</i>
	vassal.ACC.PL	like	king.NOM	wood(N).ACC.PL	eat.PRS.3SG
	STAND <sub>j</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>i</sub>	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	PAR-(CPREE <sub>i</sub> )

‘Akin to the rivers, like a brother to his sisters, (yet,) like a king his vassals, he devours the wood.’

(ṚV 1.65.7)

Finally, since individuation is scalar, if two standards are present, the most individuated one with respect to the other is marked by *iva*. For instance, a big animal like *vāśrā* ‘the bellowing one, cow’ in example (28), selects *iva* when it appears next to a small animal (*vatsám* ‘calf’). In turn, a small animal like *kapóta* ‘dove’ in example (29) occurs with *iva* if it appears next to an inanimate object with *ná*, as *samudrá-* ‘sea’ (Viti 2002: 66).

(28)	<i>vāśrā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vidyún</i>	<i>mimāti</i>
	bellowing.NOM.F	like	lighting(F).NOM	bellow.PRS.3SG
	STAND	STM	CPREE	PAR
	<i>vatsám</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>mātā</i>	<i>siṣakti</i>
	calf.ACC	like	mother(F).NOM	accompany.PRS.3SG
	STAND <sub>j</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>i</sub>	PAR-(CPREE)

‘Like a bawling (cow) the lightning bellows. Like a mother her calf, it accompanies (the rain).’

(ṚV 1.38.8ab)

(29)	<i>samudró</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>vyáco</i>		<i>dadhé</i>
	sea.NOM	like	expand(N).ACC		acquire.PRS.3SG.MID
	STAND	STM			PAR-(CPREE)
	<i>ayám</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>sám</i>	<i>atasi</i>
	DEM.NOM	PTCL	2SG.GEN	LP	rush.PRS.2SG
				PAR-	-PAR(-CPREE <sub>i</sub> )
	<i>kapóta</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>garbhadhím</i>		
	dove.NOM	like	nest.ACC		
	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>		

‘He acquires an expanse like the sea. This (soma) here is yours: you rush to it like a dove to its nest.’

(ṚV 1.30.3c-4ab)

Example (30) may seem to constitute an exception to the tendency presented above for here an inanimate noun such as *rátham* ‘chariot’ takes *iva*, whereas a human noun such as *mitráṁ* ‘ally’ takes *ná*. However, the adjective *védīyaṁ* specifies that the chariot is a ‘celebrated/very famous’ one, and thus makes it more individuated than the indefinite *mitráṁ*.<sup>36</sup>

(30)	<i>rátham</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>védīyaṁ</i>	<i>śukráśociṣam</i>	
	chariot.ACC	like	famous.ACC	having_flaming_flame.ACC	
	STAND	STM			
	<i>agním</i>	<i>mitráṁ</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>kṣitíṣu</i>	<i>praśámsiyam</i>
	Agni.ACC	all.ACC	like	people(F).LOC.PL	praiseworthy.ACC.SG.M
	CPREE	STAND	STM		PAR

‘Agni with his flaming flame—like a celebrated chariot, to be proclaimed like an envoy (installed) among the settled peoples.’

(ṚV 2.2.3cd)

Between the two prototypes of individuated and non-individuated, we find celestial elements (sky, stars, dawn, etc.) and aquatic elements (sea, rivers, lakes, etc.) because such entities can be seen both

<sup>36</sup> I thank Prof. Kölligan for suggesting this interpretation to me. Jamison and Brereton (2014) derive *védīya-* from  $\sqrt{\text{vid-}}$  ‘find’ rather than  $\sqrt{\text{vid-}}$  ‘know’ and translate ‘like a chariot worthy to be acquired’; however, the ṚV often refers to chariots in the context of successful races and conquering expeditions, which involve the chariot being celebrated.

as inanimate physical objects and as animate and humanized divine presences.<sup>37</sup> In Vedic, for example, *sūrya* ‘sun’ is considered both a physical element and an anthropomorphic deity, whereas *svār* (n) denotes only the star or its light and, as we expect, is marked only by *ná*. Viti (2002: 69) suggests that the expansion of *iva* at the expense of *ná* occurs out of semantic solidarity between names that normally take *iva* and others that would normally take *ná*: for instance, *hiraṇya-* (n) ‘gold’, *cáandra-* (n) ‘id.’, *ghṛṇi-* ‘light, heat’ are marked by *iva* due to semantic solidarity with nouns of stars and celestial bodies which often occur with *iva*.

To sum up, Pinault (1997a) and Viti (2002) take two radically different approaches to the study of the distribution of *iva* and *ná*. Pinault’s analysis certainly has exhaustiveness on his side – his study has been conducted on the entire ṚV – and the rigor of formal analysis. Even if semantic considerations are not absent in his analysis, as for example in the case of the interchangeability between *sūriyasyeva raśmáyaḥ* ‘like the rays of the sun’ and *sūryo ná raśmibhiḥ* ‘like the sun with its rays’, meter is the factor that, according to Pinault, plays the most crucial role in his model; however, in Section 5.4 we will see that such strict observance of metrical patterns cannot be observed in Ṛgvedic diction. Viti, on the other hand, admits that metrical, stylistic, and formulaic factors play an important role in the distribution of the two particles, but in her analysis semantic considerations precede formal ones. According to Viti, the distribution of *iva* and *ná* was originally based on the individuation of the standard and only later did the development of a formulaic diction blur the semantic differences between the two particles. Furthermore, Viti suggests that the expansion of *iva* also occurred on a semantic basis thanks to the principle of semantic solidarity. Finally, by accepting the antiquity of *ná* as a standard marker as proposed by Pinault and others, Viti finds further typological evidence for the proposed distribution of the two particles based on individuation: as argued by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 309-313), languages tend to treat generic and specific standards differently and, whenever a formal distinction between generic and specific is available, newer constructions encode specific standards, older constructions generic ones (see Chapter 6.1.1.4 for examples). Although not performed on the entire corpus, Viti’s investigation is also quantitatively sound: in fact, Viti manually analyzed all similes occurring in books I to III of the ṚV and then double-checked the obtained results on the entire collection.

In Chapter 8.1 on the origin of similes, we will see that, if taken seriously, Viti’s considerations on the individuation of the standard provide a further clue on how similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* have come to constitute a coherent construction from the point of view of form and function despite having very different origins. As for the expansion of *iva* within the ṚV and

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<sup>37</sup> Lakoff (1987: 92-102) noticed that in many languages the mythological and religious apparatus has produced grammatical effects in the category of gender or in nominal classifiers.



especially in the post-Ṛgvedic period, we would need an analysis that combines formal considerations, such as the ending of the preceding noun and metrical scanning of the comparative phrase, with semantic considerations, such as the sense of the preceding noun in context and the semantic class to which it belongs. Furthermore, said analysis would need to consider the type-token ratio of bigrams and trigrams including the noun or nouns included in the standard and the standard marker. This analysis exceeds the scope of this work and will be postponed to a second phase of the study.

#### 5.4 Formulaicity

Pinault (1997a) takes the complementary distribution of the comparative particles *ná* and *iva* as a reflex of the two complementary features of a formulaic system as understood by the Parryan tradition: economy and extension. Extension consists in the number of contexts covered by the system: every type of word, regardless of its length and of its ending, finds a place in the formulaic system of comparison thanks to either particle. Economy consists in making only one form available for expressing a given notion. For instance, for the simile ‘like fighting hero(es)’ we always find nominative # *śúro ná yúdhyan* | and *śúrā iva* | and never \*# *śúrā ná*, which would have been equally possible; similarly, we always find genitive *śúrasyeva / yúdhyaṭaḥ* at the exclusion of \*# *śúrasya ná yúdhyaṭaḥ* (Pinault 1997a).

Once the system was established, a younger generation of poets created new variants of the formula, trying not to disrupt the established economy. Furthermore, this system reveals a high degree of formal abstractness: every two-syllable noun which in the nominative singular has the rhythm – x could occupy the same position as *ásvaḥ*: if it ended in *-aḥ*, *-iḥ* or *-uḥ* it was followed by *ná*, whereas if it ended with vowel, it was followed by *iva*.

Pinault tests his findings against the series of similes involving ‘father and son’, which consists of a flexible system centered around some fundamental themes: parental generosity, obedience, a father’s protection of his son, a son’s search for his father. The words employed are: *pitṛ-* whose inflection has forms ending with a vowel or a consonant; *putrá-* (thematic) or *sūnú-* (athematic). Sound patterns can play a role in the choice of one of the two forms for ‘son’ since the juxtaposition of *pitṛ-* and *putrá-* gives a double or triple alliteration (P/T/R). The attested formulas allow for inversion, truncation, or displacement within the *pāda* and are rendered flexible by particle alternation:

a) Single simile: ‘like a/the father’

# <i>pitéva</i> 4 5   6 7 8 9 10 11 #	1.104.9d, 3.49.3d	‘like a father’
# 1 2 <i>pitéva</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 #	2.29.5b, 4.12.4d	‘like a father’
# 1 2 <i>pitéva</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	10.49.4a	‘like a father’
# 1 2 <i>pitéva</i> 6 7 8 #	8.21.14d, 8.22.15c, 10.33.3d	‘like a father’
# 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <i>pitéva</i> #	2.10.1a, 6.52.6d, 7.29.4d, 7.97.2d	‘like a father’
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>pitáreva</i> 10 11 #	3.18.1b, 3.58.2b, 4.41.7d	‘like fathers’
# <i>pitúr ná náma</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	10.39.1d	‘like a father’s name’
# <i>pitúr ná jívrer</i> #	1.70.10c	‘like (that) of an aging father’
# <i>pitúr ná</i> 4 5 6 7 8 #	1.127.8e	‘like that of a father’
# 1 2 <i>pitúr yáthā</i> 7 8 #	8.75.16b	‘like (that) of a father’
# 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <i>pitúr yáthā</i> #	8.86.4c	‘like (that) of a father’
# <i>dívodāsam ná</i>   <i>pitáram</i> 9 10 11 #	7.18.25b	‘like the father Divodāsa’

b) Double simile: ‘father and sons’

# 1 2 <i>pitéva sūnáve</i> #	1.1.9a, 10.25.3c	‘like a father to (his) son.DAT’
# <i>pitā putrām ná hástayoḥ</i> #	1.38.1b	‘like a father his son.ACC in (his) hands.LOC’
# <i>pitā putrām iva priyām</i> #	10.22.3d, cf. 10.119.4b	‘like a father (his) dear son.ACC’
# <i>pitéva putrān</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 #	7.54.2d	‘like a father (his) sons.ACC’
# <i>pitéva putrām</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 #	10.60.10a	‘like a father (his) son.ACC’
# <i>pitéva</i> 4 5   <i>sūnáve</i> 7 8 9 #	8.48.4b	‘like a father.NOM to (his) son.DAT’
# <i>pitúr ná putrāḥ</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 #	1.68.9a	‘like sons.NOM in their father’s.GEN (resolve)’
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>pitāram ná putrāḥ</i> #	7.26.2c	‘like sons.NOM (their) father.ACC’
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>pitāram ná putrāḥ</i> #	7.103.3c	‘like a son.NOM (his) father.ACC’
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>pitāram ná jantávaḥ</i> #	10.48.1c	‘like kinfolk (their) father.ACC’
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>pitáreva putrā</i> #	10.106.4a	‘like sons.NOM (their) parents.ACC’
# <i>putró ná pitāram</i> 7 8 #	7.32.3b	‘like a son.NOM (his) father.ACC’
# <i>putrāyeva</i>   <i>pitārā</i> 8 9 10 11 12 #	10.39.6b	‘like parents.NOM for their son.DAT’
# <i>putrām iva</i>   <i>pitārau</i> 8 9 10 11 #	10.131.5a	‘like parents.NOM.DU (their) son.ACC’
# <i>pitā putrēbhyo yáthā</i> #	7.32.26b	‘like a father.NOM to (his) sons.DAT’
# <i>putrāso ná</i>   <i>pitāram</i> 8 9 10 11 12 #	1.130.1f	‘like parents.NOM (their) son.ACC’
# <i>nityām ná sūnīm</i>   <i>pit(a)rór upāsthe</i> #	1.185.2c	‘like a natural son.NOM in the lap.LOC of his parents.GEN’
# 1 2 <i>sūnúr ná</i>   <i>pitārā</i> 9 10 11 #	7.67.1d	‘like a son.NOM to his parents.ACC.DU’

c) ‘Son’ without association with ‘father’

i. *putrá-*

# <i>putró ná</i> 4 5 6 7 8 #	5.9.4b	‘like a son.NOM’
# <i>putró ná jātáḥ</i> #	1.69.5a	‘like a son.NOM just born.PPP.NOM’
# <i>bhujé ná putrá oṇyòḥ</i> #	9.101.14b	‘like a son in (his mother’s) breast.LOC to enjoy.DAT’
# 1 2 3 4 5 / <i>áp(i)yo ná putráḥ</i> #	6.67.9d	‘like children.NOM who do not swell [=grow]’
# <i>mātéva putráṃ</i>   6 7 8 <i>upásthe</i> #	6.75.4b	‘like a mother.NOM a son.ACC in (her) lap.LOC’
# 1 <i>putráso ná</i>   <i>mātáram víbhṛtrāḥ</i> #	7.43.3a	‘like sons.NOM to be carried on their mothers.ACC’
# 1 2 <i>putró ná</i>   <i>mātārā</i> 9 10 11 #	10.1.7b	‘like sons.nom (their) mothers.ACC’
# <i>mātā putráṃ yáthā</i> 7 8 #	10.18.11c	‘like a mother.NOM (her) son.ACC’
# <i>vāśrā putráṃ iva priyám</i> #	10.119.4b, cf. 10.22.3d	‘like a bellowing one.NOM (her) son.ACC’

ii. *sūnú-*

# <i>nítyam ná sūnám</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	1.166.2a, 10.39.14d	‘like a dear son.ACC’
# <i>nítyo ná sūnúḥ</i> #	1.66.1d	‘like a dear son.NOM’
# <i>sūnúr ná</i> 4 5 6 7 8 #	6.2.7d	‘like a son.NOM’
# <i>priyáḥ sūnúr ná mārj(i)yaḥ</i> #	9.107.13b	‘like a dear son.NOM to be caressed’
# <i>sūnám ná mātā</i>   6 7 8 <i>susévam</i> #	5.42.2b	‘like a mother.NOM the beloved son.ACC’
# 12 <i>mātúr ná sūnávaḥ</i> #	7.81.4d	‘like sons.noKm of their mother.GEN’
# <i>bṛhatí iva sūnáve ródasī</i> #	1.59.4a	‘like the two lofty world-halves.NOM for their son.DAT [=Agni]’

With regard to the distribution of lexemes and forms, Pinault makes the following observations (note that since, according to Pinault, similes are most frequently found in *pāda* opening, their suitability for *pāda*-initial position constitutes the main reason for choosing one pattern over another):

- a) *pitéva*, never \**pitá ná*: nominative forms of animate nouns in *-an-* and *-tí-* are very rarely followed by *ná*;
- b) *pitúr ná*, never \**pitúr iva*, which would give too long a sequence of short syllables;
- c) *sūnúr ná*, never \**sūnúr iva*, for the same reason;
- d) *pitáram ná*, never \**pitáram iva*, for the same reason;
- e) *putró ná*, never \**putró iva*, which would give an irregular opening (– – ∪)

- f) *putrám ná* or *putrám iva* depending on the context (10.131.5 with *putrám iva* is late);
- g) *putráyeva*, and not *\*putráya ná*, which would give an irregular opening (– – – ∪); this is a more general need presented in Section 5.3: the thematic singular endings *-āya* (Dat), *-asya* (Gen), and *-ena* (Inst) are always combined with *iva*; when Nom *putró ná* or Acc *putrám ná* are converted into a sequence such as *putráya*, the addition of the particle *iva* gives the simile the length and rhythm of a metrical unit (*putráyeva* – – ∪ – ∪, e.g. opening of a trimeter with late *caesura*). Together with *pitéva*, *pitúr ná*, *sūnúr ná*, and *putró ná*, these are ready-made groups to be used at verse opening.

Problems remain with the choice of *iva* over *ná* after long or short vowel. The choice of dual *pitáreva* over *\*pitārā ná* is probably due to the need of having formulas which are immediately recognizable in their gender and number: compare for instance the unambiguous *putréva* ‘like two sons’ (< *putrā iva*) and *putrá iva* ‘like sons’ (< *putrás iva*) with the ambiguous *\*putrá ná* which may stand for both forms. Furthermore, *pitáreva* is more easily distinguishable from plural *pitáro ná*. The predominance of *-Ceva* < *\*Cā iva* remains enigmatic and might be explained with the tendency of nasal stems to be followed by *iva* in the nominative (*-a*), in order to have a better opening sequence. This tendency might have been extended to animate nouns in *-man-*, given their similarity with neuters in *-man-*, and then to all masculine nouns which have the nominative ending *-ā* (but note that, according to Viti 2002, the use of *iva* extends from animate nouns to neuter ones).

In Chapter 3.2.2, we have seen that Bozzone (2011, 2014) and independently Pagán Cánovas and Antović (2016) proposed a Construction Grammar approach to the study of formulaicity according to which a formula can be described as a construction. This definition captures the fact that formulas are stored, and that, beyond their textual level, they are defined by their function. On the formal side, this definition also allows for different levels of abstraction within formulas: it can span from straight formulas (lexically filled) to formulaic patterns (partially lexically filled), to structural formulas which are lexically empty. On the functional side, formulas have semantic, syntactic, and discourse functions.

No such study has yet been carried out on Ṛgvedic diction. However, studies on Ṛgvedic formulaicity agree in attributing a certain degree of flexibility to the compositional technique of the ṚV: Kiparsky (1976: 99-103) brought the ṚV into the general discussion about oral poetry and formulas pointing out that its compositional technique makes little use of fairly sizable, metrically defined, and invariant formulas (“ready-made surface formulae”; Kiparsky’s 1976: 83). Rather, the ṚV consists of a texture of so-called “deep-structure” or schematic formulas, which make up the poets’ repertoire, but which take different instantiations in the text thanks to lexical or grammatical

substitution, scrambling, semantic reversal, or metrical variation (Jamison and Brereton 2014: 14, cf. also Jamison 1998). Lindqvist (2015: 32-33) adopts a practical approach to the study of Ṛgvedic formulas and meters, which consists in regarding formulaic diction in this text as “a set of formulaic networks or *continua*, which owe their cohesion to similarities, their extension to differences between words and phrases; or to put it dynamically, their cohesion is due to retention on certain levels, their extension to renewal on other levels”.

From these observations, it results that constructional networks are pervasive in Ṛgvedic diction, but that straight formulas can be found only sometimes (see Lindqvist 2015: 29-35 on networks comprehending two apparently straight formulas such as *pibā sómam* ‘drink the soma!’ and *áhann áhim* ‘(he)’ slew the serpent’). By using constructions, we can expand our studies of formulaicity to these neglected areas of the technique, at least with regards to formulaicity in Ṛgvedic simile. In Chapter 9, I will refer to groups of similes such as ‘father and son’ as networks of similes, characterized by lexical and syntactic flexibility, but ultimately provided with a coherent semantics and discursive function.

## 6. Comparison of equality in the *Ṛgveda*

In Chapter 2, I introduced the notions of comparison and gradation and reviewed the typological literature on the topic. After an overview of the different types of comparison and the constructions that can encode them, I focused on Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) and Haspelmath et al. (2017) studies on equative and similative constructions. In section 2.3, I have introduced the volume *Comparison and Gradation in Indo-European* edited by Keydana et al. (2021) and reviewed the main strategies employed in IE languages for the expression of comparison of equality.

In this Chapter, I will reappraise the state of the art on constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* presented in Chapter 5 in the light of typological studies on comparison and gradation. Since these particles introduce comparative constructions of equality and related constructions, I will adopt the classification proposed by Haspelmath et al. (2017) for equatives, first distinguishing between basic (6.1) and clausal (6.2) equative and similative constructions.

As we shall see in Section 6.1.1, constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* correspond to Haspelmath et al. (2017) type 1, called “only equative standard marker” and constitute the main comparative strategy in the *ṚV*. Since, in the case of these constructions, Vedic does not distinguish between quantitative and qualitative comparison, that is, between equatives and similatives, the terminology proposed by Haspelmath et al. (2017) for equatives must be understood as extended to similatives. After a thorough formal analysis of equative and similative constructions introduced by the three particles, I will focus on an important aspect of their semantics, namely on their specialization for figurative comparison (6.1.1.4).

Section 6.1.2 presents an overview of other means employed for encoding comparison of equality in the language of the *ṚV*. Since these are not fully grammaticalized, I will call them comparative strategies, rather than constructions (Dixon 2008, 2012).<sup>38</sup> In Section 6.1.3, I analyze the use of the three particles for expressing functions that are related to comparison, that is disjunct similatives, role phrases, and approximation. Finally, Section 6.2 focusses on clausal equatives and similatives. More precisely, 6.2.2 shows a rare strategy for introducing equative clauses, while

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<sup>38</sup> Dixon’s (2008, 2012) typology of comparative constructions is based on three different morpho-syntactic criteria: a) mono- or bi-clausality of the construction, b) syntactic function of the constitutive elements, and c) degree of grammaticalization of the construction, which brings him to distinguish between comparative constructions proper and comparative strategies. As a consequence of the last criterion, Dixon also discusses non-canonical and little grammaticalized types, as well as languages showing a combination of means.

Section 6.2.1 deals more at length with the use of *yáthā* as a marker of similitive clauses and with the different functions that these clauses can take.

In Keydana et al. (2021), Kulikov dealt with comparison and gradation in Old Indo-Aryan, covering a period ranging from ṚV to Classical Sanskrit. This chapter summarizes some aspects of Kulikov’s classification, analyzing in more detail the situation attested in the ṚV.

## 6.1 Basic equatives and similitives

As we have seen in Chapter 2.2.2, Haspelmath and Buchholz’s (1998) classification of basic equative and similitive constructions is based on the following criteria:

- a) presence/absence of equative degree marker;
- b) whether the notion of equality is expressed in a primary predicate or in a secondary predicate;
- c) whether comparee and standard are encoded in separate phrases or in the same phrase.

In the following, I will employ these criteria for the classification of Ṛgvedic equative and similitive constructions.

### 6.1.1 Type 1: Only equative [/similitive] standard marker

Equative and similitive constructions introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* belong to Haspelmath et al. (2017) type 1, called “only equative standard marker” and characterized by the fact of having no parameter marker. The three particles are employed for both quantitative and qualitative comparison and thus similitives must be included in this type, too. In the classification proposed by Keydana et al. (2021), these constructions belong to type 8.

Beside the lack of a parameter marker, equative and similitive constructions of type 1 are characterized by a standard marker that is associated with the standard, and that looks like an adposition. This is precisely the function taken by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*, which generally follow the standard or, when this is a complex phrase, the first element of the phrase. Looking at the case marking of the standard, we see that this is not determined by the standard marker but is identical to that of the comparee. The identity of case between standard and comparee is called “case transparency” by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 307) and corresponds to what Jamison (1982) calls parallelism of form and function. Transparency of case is natural in constructions that derive from relative clauses such as those presented in SAE languages and analyzed by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998). In Vedic, this is the case of constructions introduced by *yáthā/yathā* which, as we will see in more detail in Chapter 8.1, derive from relative or correlative constructions. However,

not only relative-based standard markers are case-transparent and we have seen that also *ná* and *iva* have no influence on the case of the standard.<sup>39</sup>

Constructions of type 1 occur in different forms, with different configurations of parameter, comparee, and standard. To begin with, they can have a nominal or adjectival parameter. In this type of constructions, the parameter is a noun or an adjective functioning as the main predicate of the sentence, as *prámatiḥ* ‘solicitude’ in example (1) and *śúciṣ* ‘blazing’, *dakṣāyīyo* ‘besought for skill’ in (2) respectively.

(1)	<i>tvám</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>asi</i>	<b><i>prámatiḥ</i></b>	<i>pitá</i>	<i>iva</i>
	2SG.NOM	1PL.DAT	be.PRS.2SG	for-thought(F).NOM	father.NOM	like
	CPREE			PAR	STAND	STM
	‘You, (Indra), are solicitude for us, like a father.’					
	(ṚV 7.29.4d)					

(2)	<b><i>śúciṣ</i></b>	<i>tvám</i>	<i>asi</i>	<i>priyó</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>mitró</i>
	blazing.NOM	2SG.NOM	be.PRS.2SG	dear.NOM	like	Mitra.NOM
	PAR	CPREE			STM	STAND
	<b><i>dakṣāyīyo</i></b>		<i>aryamá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>asi</i>	<i>soma</i>
	besought_for_skill.NOM		aryaman.NOM	like	be.PRS.2SG	Soma.VOC
	PAR		STAND	STM	(CPREE)	
	‘You are blazing pure, like dear Mitra. You are besought for skill like Aryaman, o Soma.’					
	(ṚV 1.91.3cd)					

In some cases, the parameter is further specified by a noun in the instrumental. For instance, in example (3) we might say that the parameter consists of the adjective *sākináḥ* ‘strong’ and of the instrumental *krátvā* ‘in (your) resolve’; Accordingly, the instrumental ending *-ā* can be analyzed as a parameter marker:

(3)	<i>yó</i>	<i>dhṛṣitó</i>	<i>yó</i>	<i>ávṛto</i>
	REL.NOM	audacious.NOM	REL.NOM	unobstructable.NOM

<sup>39</sup> The same is true of some standard markers in the head-final eastern languages of Haspelmath and Buchholz’s sample, such as Chechen (Nakh-Daghestanian), Lezgian, but also of Basque (1998: 307-308). Among ancient IE languages, case transparency is found, e.g. in Ancient Greek *hōs* and Latin *ceu, quam*.



<i>krátvā</i>	<i>gaúr</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>śākináh</i>
resolve.INST	ox.NOM	like	strong.NOM
PAR.PM	STAND	STM	PAR

‘Who is audacious, who is unobstructable, [...] in his resolve strong like an ox.’

(ṚV 8.33.6d)

Alternatively, the parameter may be a verb. In this case, the comparee depends on the verb as its subject, object, or any other complement or adjunct, and the standard usually takes the same case form and function as the comparee. Compare for instance example (4), where the standard *sárgā* ‘gushes’ is in the nominative as the comparee, and (5), where both the comparee *amśúm* ‘plant’ and the standard *dhenúm vāsarím* ‘morning cow’ take the accusative.

(4) <i>práti</i>	<i>bhadrá</i>		<i>adṛkṣata</i>
LP	auspicious.NOM.PL		appear.AOR.3PL.MED
PAR-			-PAR
<i>gávām</i>	<i>sárgā</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>raśmáyaḥ</i>
cow(F).GEN.PL	gush.NOM.PL	like	ray.NOM.PL
STAND-	-STAND	STM	CPREE

‘Her (dawn’s) auspicious rays have appeared opposite, like gushes of cows.’

(ṚV 4.52.5b)

(5) <i>tām</i>	<i>vām</i>	<i>dhenúm</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>vāsarím</i>
3SG.ACC.F	2DU.DAT	milk_cow(F).ACC	like	appearing_at_morning.ACC.F
		STAND		STM
<i>amśúm</i>	<i>duhanti</i>	<i>ádribhiḥ</i>		
plant.ACC	milk.PRS.3PL	stone.INSTR.PL		
CPREE	PAR			

‘This plant, like a dawn cow, do they milk for you two with the stones.’

(ṚV 1.137.3ab)

In some cases, the presence of a quantitative adverb such as *bṛhát* in example (6) suggests an equative reading. In example (7), the correlative adverb *etávāt* ‘this much’ functions as a degree marker and makes the equative reading the only possible reading; the presence of *etávāt* is a relic of the original correlative construction described in Section 6.2.1 below.

(6) *táva*      *dyumānto*      *arcáyo*  
 2SG.GEN    brilliant.NOM.PL    flame.NOM.PL

CPREE

*gráva*                      *iva*    *ucyate*                      ***bṛhát***  
 pressing\_stone.NOM    like    resound.PRS.3PL.PASS    much/greatly  
 STAND                      STM    PAR                      (PM)

‘Your flames are brilliant: they resound as greatly as the pressing stone.’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 5.25.8ab)

(7) *ná*      ***etāvad***      *anyé*                      *marúto*                      *yáthā imé*  
 NEG      this\_much      other.NOM.PL                      marut.NOM.PL                      like    DEM.NOM.PL  
                     PM                      CPREE                      STAND                      STM

*bhrájante*      *rukmaír*                      *áyudhais*                      *tanúbhiḥ*  
 glitter.PRS.3PL    brilliant.INST.PL                      weapon(N).INST.PL    body(F).INST.PL  
 PAR

‘The others do not glitter like these maruts here, with their diamonds, their weapons, their bodies.’

(ṚV 7.57.3ab)

### 6.1.1.1 Number of elements in CPREE and STAND

All constructions seen so far compare one entity to another with respect to a parameter, which can be a quality or an action. When the parameter is an action, however, it often involves more than one participant and thus the comparative construction takes two or three elements as comparee and aligns them with the corresponding elements functioning as standard (cf. Jamison’s 1982 “double and triple similes”).

Differently from standard of clausal equative and similatives that will be introduced in Section 6.2, standards marked by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* always lack a verb; *yáthā* can introduce a subordinate clause, but not when it has enclitic behavior as in equative and similatives described in this section. Synchronically, double (and triple) equatives and similatives are probably not best treated as involving gapping, which is generally optional, but the many cases where two elements in the standard parallel two elements in the comparee suggest that the two constructions share some common features (as we shall see in Chapter 8.1, *ná* and *yáthā* similes in fact originate from constructions involving two identical or similar verbs, one of which was subject to gapping). Consider example (8):

(8) <i>anyá</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>tvā́mi</i>	<i>pári</i>	<i>ṣvajāte</i>	
another.NOM	PTC	2SG.ACC	LP	embrace.SUBJ.PRS.3SG.M	
CPREE1		CPREE2	PAR-	-PAR	
<i>líbuḷā</i>		<i>iva</i>	<i>vṛkṣám</i>		V∅
vine(F).NOM		like	tree.ACC		
STAND1		STM	STAND2		

‘[...] And another will embrace you like a vine a tree.’

(ṚV 10.10.14bc)

Gapping is a kind of ellipsis in coordination, where the omitted constituent is the verb and there are at least two contrasting elements in each clause, called contrast-points in the non-gapped clause and remnants in the gapped one (Hudson 1989: 67; Gaeta and Luraghi 2001: 90). Vedic allows both rightward and leftward gapping, which means that the verb can be omitted either in the first or in the second clause. Take for instance example (9), which immediately precedes the *pāda* in (8) and which is a case of leftward gapping: here, the verb *pári ṣvajāte* ‘embrace’ occurs only in the second clause and the two remnants *anyámj* and *tvámj* in the first clause parallel the two contrast-points *anyái* and *tvámj* in the second one.<sup>40</sup>

(9) <i>anyámj</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ṣú</i>	<i>tvámj</i>	<i>yamy</i>	V∅
another.ACC	PTC	PTC	2SG.NOM	Yamī.VOC	
<i>anyái</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>tvámj</i>	<i>pári</i>	<i>ṣvajāte</i>	
another.NOM	PTC	2SG.ACC	LP	embrace.SUBJ.PRS.3SG	

‘You (will embrace) another, Yamī, and another will embrace you.’

(ṚV 10.10.14ab)

In gapping constructions, the comparee appears in the non-gapped clause and the standard in the gapped one. Another example is provided in (10): here, the contrasted constituents are the subject and object of the clauses and the verb *ataḥsam* ‘I made’ occurs only once.<sup>41</sup> In example (11), the gapped part of the clause includes both the verb and the subject of the standard clause, whereas the contrast-points are the two objects and the two purpose adjuncts in the dative.

<sup>40</sup> As indicated by the translation, which needs the first verb to be integrated, English does not allow such order of gapping.

<sup>41</sup> Note that, although the verb occurs in sentence-final position right after the standard, it is a 1<sup>st</sup> person verb construed with the subject of the comparee.



form is often different from the overt one. This phenomenon of only partial identity of the overt and the recovered element has been termed “sloppy identity” in the literature on gapping (cf. Krisch 2009: 197 with examples on Hittite and Ancient Greek). Example (13) is a case of sloppy identity in coordination in the ṚV. Here, the overt verbal form *vitse* is a second person singular form of the verb √*vid-* ‘to know’, but the first conjunct requires a first-person plural ‘we know’.

- (13) *mūrā*                      *amūra*                      *ná*      ***vayám***                      *cikitvo*  
 fool.NOM.PL                      not\_fool.VOC                      NEG      1PL.NOM                      perceive.PTCP.PF.VOC  
*mahitvám*                      *agne*                      *tuvám*                      *aṅgá*      ***vitse***  
 greatness(N).ACC                      Agni.VOC                      2SG.GEN                      surely know.PF.2SG.MID  
 ‘We fools do not (know) your greatness, o you who are no fool, but, observant Agni, you surely know it.’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV10.4.4ab)

In similes, sloppy identity can simply involve a difference in tense or mood. For instance, example (14) contains an imperfect form *pári ... abhavat* ‘he encompassed’, but the standard requires recovering a present form:

- (14) ***pári***      *viśvāni*                      *kāvīyā*  
 LP      all.ACC.PL.N      poetic\_skill(N).ACC.PL  
*nemíś*                      *cakráṃ*                      *iva*      ***abhavat***  
 felly(F).NOM                      wheel(N).ACC                      like      be.IMPF.3SG  
 ‘He has encompassed all poetic skills, like a felly a wheel.’

(ṚV 2.5.3cd)

Alternatively, a third-person standard can be contrasted to a first- or second-person comparee (15), or the difference can comprise both person and mood, as in the case of the second-person imperative *abhy ... ūrṇuhi* ‘cover’ in example (16):

- (15) *diva*                      *iva ... aratír*                      *mānuṣā*                      *yugā*  
 sky.GEN                      like      driver.NOM                      human.ACC.PL.N                      age(N).ACC.PL  
*kṣápo*                      ***bhaasi***                      *puruvāra*                      *saṃyátaḥ*  
 night(F).ACC.PL                      shine.PRS.2SG                      of\_many\_favors.VOC                      successive.ACC.PL.F



### 6.1.1.2 Predicative Similatives

Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 319) found that a few languages cannot use similative markers predicatively, as in *He is like his sister*, and must resort to different strategies, such as verbs meaning ‘resemble’. That predicative constructions are not always allowed can be explained by the fact that in many languages the similative marker is basically a manner expression, but predicative constructions express quality, and not manner.

Haspelmath and Buchholz’s (1998: 319) explanation for the situation attested cross-linguistically finds a further confirmation in the distribution of the three particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*: while *ná* and *iva* can be employed in predicative comparisons, *yáthā/yathā*, which contains the manner suffix *-thā*, is not attested in constructions of this type. Given that predicative comparisons introduced by *ná* and *iva* are also rare, the absence of such constructions with *yáthā/yathā* may be due to the low frequency of the latter particle with respect to the former ones; however, note that, with the only exception of (18) (see example (6) in Chapter 5), clausal predicative similative introduced by *yáthā* are absent too. Example (19) is an instance of predicative similative introduced by *iva*:

- (18) *nákir evā yáthā tuvám*  
 no\_one so as 2SG.NOM  
 ‘There is no one who is exactly as you (are).’  
 (ṚV 4.30.1c)

- (19) *sūryasya iva vakṣátho jyótir eṣām*  
 sun.GEN like waxing.NOM light(N).NOM 3PL.GEN  
 STM STAND CPREE  
 ‘Their light (is) like the waxing of the sun.’  
 (ṚV 7.33.8a)

### 6.1.1.3 Attributive equative and similative constructions

In Vedic, as in many languages, equative and similative constructions can also be used attributively, as shown by examples (20) and (21).

- (20) *utá yóṣaṇe diviyé mahī*  
 CONJ young\_woman(F).NOM.DU heavenly.NOM.DU.F great.NOM.DU.F

<i>uṣāsānāktā</i>	<i>sudúghā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>dhenúḥ</i>
Dawn_Night(F).NOM.DU	giving_good_milk.NOM.F	like	milk-cow(F).NOM
CPREE	STAND-	STM	-STAND

‘And the two great, heavenly young women, Dawn and Night, (who are) like a milk-cow that gives good milk [...]’.

(ṚV 7.2.6ab)

(21)	<i>mahān</i>	<i>mitró</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>darśatáh</i> ....	<i>rocate</i>
	great.NOM	ally.NOM	like	beautiful.NOM	shine.3SG
	CPREE	STAND	STM	PAR	

‘The great one (Soma), lovely to see like an ally, shines [...]’.

(ṚV 9.2.6b)

In Sections 6.1.2.4 and 6.1.2.5 we will see that comparative compounds and adjectives are particularly useful in attributive function.

#### 6.1.1.4 Specialization for figurative comparison

In Chapter 2, we have seen that standards of equative and similitive constructions may be specific, i.e. referring to individual discourse referents, or generic, i.e. referring to a class that possesses the property in question to a highly salient degree.

In his list of different forms of idioms and formulaic language, Gibbs (2010: 699) includes comparative constructions with generic standards, which he calls “frozen similes”. Selecting a prototype example of the attribute in question, expressions such as (22)a-c have the function of intensifying the adjective:

- (22) a. *(as) clear as crystal*  
 b. *dead as a doornail*  
 c. *as good as gold*

Sometimes, frozen similes incorporate stereotyped beliefs, usually employing specific traits in animals to conceptualize people and human actions (23):

- (23) a. *as blind as a bat* (weak sighted)  
 b. *as busy as a bee* (industry)  
 c. *treat like a dog* (ill-treatment)



- d. *eat like a horse* (appetite)
- e. *as stubborn as a mule* (obstinacy)

(Gibbs 2010: 699-700)

Thus, we can say that in such constructions, one entity belonging to a given domain is described in terms of an entity belonging to another domain. This type of comparison is holistic: although properties that are relevant for the comparison can be inferred from the context, as in (24)ab, or made explicit as in (25)ab, generic equatives entail the positive of the parameter, which makes the comment added to (26)a not felicitous. Similarly, generic similatives always evoke the whole concept of the comparee: thus, since a mountain is characterized not only by height, but by its width and majesty in general, example (26)b is not felicitous either (Keydana et al. 2021).

- (24) a. *John's teeth are like milk.*  
b. *My father is like a mountain.*
- (25) a. Equative: *John's teeth are as **white** as milk.*  
b. Similative: *My father is **tall** like a mountain.*
- (26) a. Equative: *John's teeth are as white as milk. ?? Actually, they are yellow.*  
b. Similative: *My father is tall like a mountain. ?? He is incredibly thin.*

(Keydana et al. 2021: 6)

These features of generic equatives and similatives becomes clear when compared with constructions having specific standards: indeed, specific equatives do not entail the positive of the parameter, which makes the comment added to (27) felicitous.<sup>42</sup>

- (27) *John is as tall as George, but actually he is rather small.*

(Keydana et al. 2021: 6)

The fact that generic equatives entail the positive of the parameter seems to explain why they are formally different from specific equatives in several SAE languages in the sample of Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), as well as in many other languages outside the European area, such as the Tibeto-Burman. The most typical situation in European languages is that specific equatives lack the demonstrative-based parameter marker or present it only optionally: compare for instance the two

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<sup>42</sup> The same is not true, however, for similatives since saying *He writes like his sister*, one is committed to saying *He writes* (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 315).

different constructions in (28) from Occitan. Instead, in those languages that lack parameter markers also in specific equatives, generic equatives do not differ from specific equatives. In Europe, this is the case for example of the Balkan languages (Albanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Serbian/Croatian) as well as Italian, and the eastern head-final languages (Lezgian, Abkhaz, Turkish, Kalmyk).

(28) a. Specific equative

*Ma sörre es tan polida coma tu.*  
 my sister is so pretty how you  
 ‘My sister is as pretty as you.’

b. Generic equative

*Es paure coma un rat de gleisa.*  
 is poor how a rat of church  
 ‘He is as poor as a church mouse.’

(Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 310)

A functional explanation for such formal differences between specific and generic equatives lies again in the interpretation of the adjective. In Chapter 2.2.1, we have seen that the parameter marker in equative constructions signals that the adjective needs to be interpreted on the basis of the standard. Generic equatives, on the other hand, always imply the positive meaning of the adjective, so that the hearer needs not be warned about a possible specific interpretation and there is no need for a parameter marker: in a construction such as *Your horse is (as) fast as an arrow*, the adjective *fast* refers to the upper part of the scale, which is not the case in *Your horse is as fast as my tortoise*.

The difference between generic and specific equatives is not limited to the presence or absence of a parameter marker. In a few SAE languages such as French and Icelandic, a newer construction is used for specific equatives, while generic equatives have preserved the older standard marker. Take for instance example (29) from Icelandic: while *sem* in (29)b is well attested in Old Norse as a marker of equality and similarity – and all the other Scandinavian languages have *som/sum* as standard marker in equatives – the construction with *jafn... og* employed in specific equatives such as (29)a seems to be an innovation.

(29) a. Specific equative

*Systir min er jafn falleg og þu*  
 sister my is equally pretty as you

‘My sister is as pretty as you.’

b. Generic equative

*Tréð er stórt sem turn*  
tree-the is high as tower

‘The tree is (as) tall as a tower.’

(Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 311)

That generic equatives tend to be expressed differently from specific one does not only apply to European languages, but also to the languages of the Far East, as shown by Bisang (1998: 719). For instance, Modern Chinese features lexicalized generic equatives characterized by the lack of a parameter marker, by a different standard marker, and by a different word order than the one attested in specific equatives, and may derive from Classical Chinese (30). However, non-lexicalized generic equatives seem to be expressed just like specific ones in this language, as in (31):

(30) *Tā jiān rú pánshi.*

it hard/firm be.like rock

‘It is firm as a rock.’

(31) a. *Wǒ de mǎ gēn jiàn yíyàng kuài.*

I ATTR horse with arrow same fast

b. *Wǒ de mǎ yǒu jiàn nème kuài.*

I ATTR horse have arrow so fast

c. *Wǒ de mǎ xiàng jiàn nème kuài.*

I ATTR horse be.like arrow so fast

‘My horse is as fast as an arrow.’

Among ancient IE languages, while Latin generally employs both parameter and standard marker, it tends to prefer constructions lacking a parameter marker in generic contexts (Ittész 2021: 485-486).<sup>43</sup> In these constructions, the standard marker is often *tamquam* or, less frequently, *quasi*, *sicut*, *quomodo*, or *ceu*, the last one being attested only in poetry and later prose (Tarriño 2011: 407).

If we look at Ṛgvedic standards of equative and similitive constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā / yathā*, we find that these have almost exclusively generic reference. As already noted by Viti (2002: 48), a possible explanation for the choice of generic standards in Ṛgvedic similes is the religious nature of the text which, in order to be accessible to the entire community of the

<sup>43</sup> But there are some exceptions, in which the parameter marker *sic* or *ita* is added.

devotees, must refer to classes of individuals rather than specific individuals. And in fact, most Ṛgvedic equatives and similatives are of the type ‘Indra is PAR like a bull’ / ‘Indra PAR<sub>VERB</sub> like a bull’.

Even if *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* never mark pronominal standards (as we shall see in Section 6.1.2.5, this function is reserved to *-vant-* adjectives), we do find few specific standards, which refer to specific gods, mythical priests, and other creatures. More precisely, out of a random sample of 140 constructions taking various standards, nine have specific reference.<sup>44</sup> Take for instance the construction in (32), which has the god Varuṇa as standard:

(32)	<i>viśvam</i>	<i>sá</i>	<i>veda</i>	<b><i>váruṇo</i></b>	<b><i>yáthā</i></b>	<i>dhiyá</i>
	all.ACC.N	3SG.NOM	know.PF.3SG	Varuṇa.NOM	like	insight(F).INST
		CPREE	PAR	STAND	STM	

‘He [=Agni] knows everything, as Varuṇa does, through his insight.’

(ṚV 10.11.1c)

Although it is a specific standard, Varuṇa is the god who *par excellence* is endowed with the quality expressed by the parameter, that is, knowledge of all things. Indeed, Varuṇa, together with Mitra, is described in the ṚV as the sun-eyed god,<sup>45</sup> who looks on all deeds from his heavenly abode.<sup>46</sup> And there’s more: as pointed out by Macdonell (1897: 23), the fact that the eye of Varuṇa is always mentioned in the first verse of the hymns dedicated to this god suggests that this was the first idea that came to mind when thinking of him. Thus, selecting a prototype example of knowledge, the comparison with Varuṇa in example (32) has the function of reinforcing the truth value of the utterance and intensifying Agni’s possession of the same quality: that is, it has the same function of Gibbs’ “frozen similes”.

A similar case is represented by the family of constructions taking the sun (*súrya-* and *svar-*) as standard, which consists of about eighty-five comparisons. Although the sun has a definite reference, it qualifies for general accessibility as generic standards do: indeed, the function of such comparisons is to represent a prototype example of the quality expressed by the parameter, such as brilliance (verbs  $\sqrt{ruc-}$  ‘to shine, be bright’,  $\sqrt{bhrāj-}$  ‘id.’,  $\sqrt{bhā-}$  ‘id.’,  $\sqrt{dyut-}$  ‘id.’ and their compounds; adjectives *citrá-* ‘bright, glittering’, *súci-* ‘shining, gleaming’), power and control

<sup>44</sup> Recall that, within the sample of 500 manually analyzed similes, 140 have varied standards, 115 have words for ‘cow’ or for ‘cow and calf’, 85 have words for ‘sun’, 60 for ‘father’ or ‘father and son’, 60 for ‘chariot’, and 40 for ‘Mitra’/‘ally’.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. ṚV 1.115.1, 6.51.1, 7.61.1, 7.63.1, 10.37.1.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. ṚV 1.25.10-11.

(mostly expressed by the verb  $\sqrt{tan}$ - and its compounds, with the meaning ‘to extend over’), or steadiness ( $\sqrt{dhā}$ - ‘to set’,  $\sqrt{śri}$ - ‘be supported or fixed’).

Perhaps the clearest example of how a god can stand for the quality that characterizes him is Mitra, the god that ‘brings (men) together’ (*yātayati*):<sup>47</sup> as is well known, the word *mitrá*- indicates both the god Mitra and an ‘ally’. In several of the about forty comparisons involving *mitrá*- as standard, it is unclear whether the latter refers specifically to the god Mitra or generically to an ally: the aim of these examples is to emphasize the quality of the comparee of being *śéva*- ‘favorable’ (RV 1.58.6), *priyá*- ‘dear’ (RV 8.84.1) or *purupriyá*- ‘dear to many’ (RV 8.31.14), of being *hitá*- ‘installed’ (RV 10.7.5), *súdhita*- ‘well installed’, ‘installed to the fore’ (33), or installed ‘among the clans stemming from Manu’ (*mānuṣīṣu vikṣú* RV 2.4.3) just like Mitra/an ally.

(33)	<i>árcā</i>	<i>devāya</i>		<i>gnáye</i>
	sing.IMPV.PRS.2SG	god.DAT		Agni.DAT
	<i>yám</i>	<b><i>mitráṁ</i></b>	<i>ná</i>	<i>prásastibhir</i>
	REL.ACC	Mitra/ally.ACC	like	proclamation(F).INST.PL
	<i>mártāso</i>	<b><i>dadhíre</i></b>		<b><i>puráḥ</i></b>
	mortal.NOM.PL	install.PF.3PL		to_the_fore
	‘Chant to the god Agni, whom mortals have installed to the fore, like Mitra (an ally?), with their proclamations.’			

(RV 5.16.1b-c)

These examples suggest that, instead of defining constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* as generic equatives and similatives, we can say that they are specialized for figurative comparison: that is, that they are similes in all respects.

In Chapter 4, we have seen that similes can be defined as comparative constructions which owe their figurative meaning to the fact that their standard and comparee belong to two different domains. Furthermore, we have seen that similes often describe a non-salient attribute of the target domain by comparing it to a source which is a more salient, exaggerated, or vivid example representing the same attribute (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 145). In fact, equatives and similatives introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* take either generic standards which belong to the natural world, or specific standards which represent a prototypical instantiation of the parameter. Even in those cases where standard and comparee belong to the same domain, as when a god is compared to

<sup>47</sup> RV 3.51.1, 7.36.2; also see Macdonell (1897: 29).

another god with respect to some quality or action, the comparison has usually the function of intensifying the meaning of the parameter.

In the light of this analysis, some cases may seem to be more problematic at first sight. Take for instance example (34), with *átrim ná mahás támaso* ‘as Atri from great darkness’ as standard:

(34)	<i>átrim</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>mahás</i>	<i>támaso</i>	<i>(‘)mumuktam<sup>48</sup></i>
	Atri.ACC	like	great.ABL.N	darkness(N).ABL	release.IMPV.PRS.2DU
	<i>túrvatam</i>		<i>narā</i>	<i>duritād</i>	<i>abhīke</i>
	triumph.IMPV.PRS.2DU		man.VOC.DU	difficulty(N).ABL	near

‘(And you Nāsatyas should come here to my summons with your insightful thoughts—you certainly are inspired poets.) As (you did) Atri from great darkness, release (me)—triumph, men!— from difficulty at close quarters.’

(ṚV 6.50.10)

Atri is one of the poets of ancient days most frequently mentioned in the ṚV. Although other versions of the myth involve the protection of Atri by Agni (ṚV 5.15.5) or Indra (ṚV 8.36.7), Atri is chiefly represented as the *protégé* of the Aśvins, and the characteristic myth about him is connected to them: they delivered Atri from darkness (ṚV 6.50.10, 7.71.5) or rescued him out of a chasm (ṚV 5.78.4) when they obstructed the wiles of the malignant demon (ṚV 1.117.3; Macdonell 1897: 145).

Unlike examples such as (32) and (33), whose parameter referred to an inherent quality of the standard, in example (34) the poet makes reference to a punctual event in the mythic past, the one in which the Aśvins (of which Nāsatyas in the example is an epithet) rescued Atri from darkness, and asks the Aśvins themselves to repeat the same action in the present. Although the comparison might seem to have a historical meaning and therefore to be a literal comparison, the figurative meaning here derives from the mapping of darkness (*támaso*) onto the difficulty (*duritād*, lit. ‘bad course’)

<sup>48</sup> The standard translations interpret the sequence as a clausal simile with different verbs in the standard (pluperfect *(a)mumuktam*) and the comparee (imperative *túrvatamī*), with *ná* introducing the standard clause; cf. Klein (1985: 422-423) ‘As ye freed Atri from great darkness, (so) cause (us) to pass out of difficulty ...’. Since however *ná* never introduces clausal comparison, with Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) I read an imperative *mumuktam* and supply ‘me’ as object, parallel to *átrim* in the simile. As for the second verb, Jamison follows Gotō (1987: 163 n. 258) in taking *túrvatam narā* as a parenthetical clause ‘triumph, men!’. This allows the ablative phrase at the end of *pāda* d, *duritād abhīke* ‘from difficulty at close quarters’ to be construed with *mumuktam*, parallel to the ablative *mahás támasaḥ* ‘from great darkness’ in the standard; alternatively, *pāda* d could be read as an independent sentence ‘be victorious from difficulty at close quarters’, although *tūrv* is otherwise not attested with ablative dependents.

from which the poet asks to be freed. This mapping represents an instantiation of the cross-linguistically well-attested metaphor BAD IS DARK (see e.g. Forceville and Renckens 2013).

A still slightly different case is the one presented in example (35). Here, the parameter *satyá-dharman-* ‘whose ordinances hold true’ takes Savitar as standard, but we should be careful in defining this quality as a prerogative of this very god, since the same adjective is attributed to other deities in the ṚV.<sup>49</sup> Although that of being *satyá-dharman-* is certainly a quality possessed to a great degree by a god, the figurative meaning of the comparison derives here from the nature of the comparee: in this verse, the fact of being *satyá-dharman-* is attributed to gambling dice which exert so much power on the player that they are compared to gods. As we will see in Chapter 9.1.3, the cognitive process that underlies this simile is the one of personification, a type of metaphor that appears several times in ṚV 10.34, all dedicated to the gambler’s complaint against the despotic dice.

- (35) *tripañcāśáḥ*                      *krīḷati*                      *vrāta*                      *eṣāṃ*  
 consisting\_of\_53.NOM.      play.PRS.3SG              troop.NOM      3PL.GEN  
*deva*              *iva*      *savitā́*                      *satyá-dharmā*  
 god.NOM      like      Savitar.NOM              true-ordinance.NOM.PL  
 ‘The troop of them (dice) plays, three times fifty strong. Like god Savitar’s, their ordinances hold true.’
- (ṚV 10.34.8ab)

To conclude, it is worth noting that several scholars have stressed the relevance of a distinction between literal and figurative comparison: for instance, Searle (1993), speaks of “literal similes” and “metaphorical similes”, while Croft and Cruse (2004) make a distinction between “similes proper” and “statements of similarity”. Recall also Israel et al. (2004) distinction between metaphor and simile on the one hand, and between simile and literal comparison on the other.

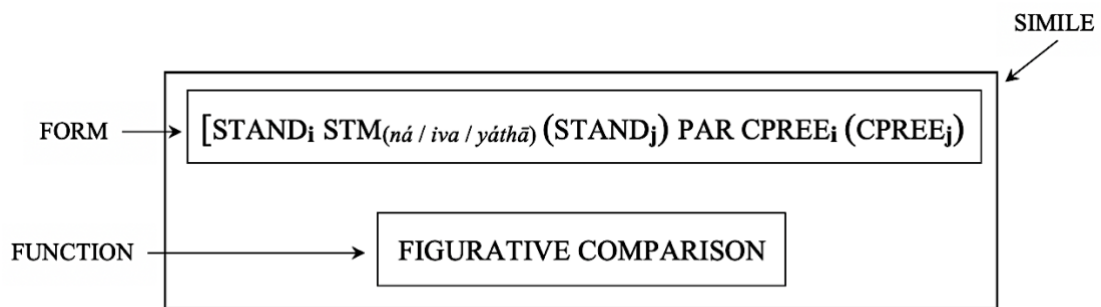
#### 6.1.1.5 Summary

In the previous sections, we have seen that Ṛgvedic equative and similitive constructions of type 1 (“only equative standard marker”), despite employing different comparative particles, constitute a coherent construction from the point of view of both syntax and semantics.

<sup>49</sup> The compound occurs in another comparison with Savitar as standard and the sun as comparee (ṚV 10.139.3). Otherwise, it refers to Agni (ṚV 1.12.2), to all gods (ṚV 5.51.2), to Mitra and Varuṇa (ṚV 5.63.1), and probably to Prajāpati (ṚV 10.121.9).

Syntactically, we have seen that a) they are always phrasal; b) they are characterized by transparency of case and thus by formal and functional parallelism between comparee and standard; c) the standard marker follows either the standard or, when this is a complex phrase, the first element of the standard.

Semantically, they are under-specified with respect to quantitative or qualitative comparison but specialize for figurative comparison and can thus be defined as similes in all respects. Indeed, they have a) either generic standards that belong to the natural world, b) or specific standards that represent a prototypical instantiation of the quality expressed by the parameter. In cases where the standard can be read literally with the parameter, c) they employ cognitive processes such as metaphor, metonymy, and personification holding between comparee and parameter. To conclude, Ṛgvedic similes may be schematically represented as in Figure 8; as shown by the representation, figurativity is an integral part of their function.



**Figure 8.** Symbolic representation of Ṛgvedic similes.

### 6.1.2 Alternative Strategies

Alongside constructions of type 1 discussed above, the language of the ṚV has at its disposal alternative means for the encoding of quantitative and qualitative comparison of equality. These are much less frequent and can be defined as comparative strategies, rather than constructions (Dixon 2008, 2012).

In the classification proposed by Haspelmath et al. (2017), these strategies correspond to type 4 “primary reach equative” and type 3 “equative degree marker unified”. In the classification proposed by Keydana et al. (2021), these alternative strategies correspond to types 2, 3, and 11, marked in bold in Table 9. Finally, comparative compounds and adverbs are also attested, some of which are not comprised in the taxonomy.



**Table 9.** Alternative strategies for expressing equatives and similatives; adapted from Keydana et al. (2021: 13).

STM	PM	BOUND MORPHEME	FREE MORPHEME	‘exceed/equate’ (E)	–
FLAG		1. FLAG / BM	<b>2. FLAG / FM</b>	<b>3. FLAG / E</b>	4. FLAG / –
PTCL		5. PTCL / BM	6. PTCL / FM	7. PTCL / E	8. PTCL / –
–		9. – / BM	10. – / FM	<b>11. – / E</b>	

### 6.1.2.1 Type 2: Standard and parameter marker

A strategy to be mentioned here is the one taking *bahuvrīhis* (i.e. exocentric, possessive compounds) such as *sá-kratu-* ‘being of one mind’. The first member of this compounds, *sá-* (/sa-) lit. ‘together’, can be considered as the parameter marker, whereas the second member constitutes the parameter. In example (36), the compound is the predicate of the clause, the comparee (Indra) is its subject, and the standard is in the instrumental.

(36)	<i>tébhīr</i>	<i>bhava</i>	<i>sá-kratur</i>	<i>yéṣu</i>	<i>cākān</i>
	3PL.INST	be.IMPV.2SG	same-resolve.NOM.	REL.LOC.PL	enjoy.INJ.PF.3SG
	STAND.STM	(CPREE)	PM-PAR		

‘Be of the same resolve with those in whom you take pleasure.’

(ṚV 10.148.4c)

More often, however, compounds of this type function as secondary predicates, as for instance *sá-cetasā* in (37):

(37)	<i>tám</i>	<i>asya</i>	<i>dyāvāpṛthivī</i>	<i>sá-cetasā</i>
	DEM.ACC	3SG.GEN	Heaven_Earth(F).NOM.DU	same-perception.NOM.DU.F
			CPREE	PM-PAR
	<i>viśvebhīr</i>	<i>devair</i>	<i>ānu śúṣmam</i>	<i>āvatām</i>
	all.INST.PL	god.INST.PL	LP force.ACC	help.IMPV.3DU
		STAND.STM		

‘Heaven and Earth, of one mind with all the gods, assisted his impetuous force.’

(ṚV 10.113.1ab)

In some cases, an explicit standard is lacking and must be inferred from the linguistic context. For instance, in example (38) the standard of *pāda* b is represented by the immortal woman (*amṛtām*) that has been hidden away in *pāda* a:

- (38) *ápa aāgūhann amṛtām mártiyebhyaḥ*  
 LP hide.IMPF.3PL immortal.ACC.F mortal.ABL.PL.M  
 (STAND)
- kṛtvī sá-varṇām adadur vívasvate*  
 make.ABS same-appearance.ACC.F give.IMPF.3PL Vivasvant.DAT  
 (CPREE) PM-PAR
- ‘They hid her away, the immortal, from the mortals. Having made a female of the same appearance (lit. same color), they gave her to Vivasvant.’
- (ṚV 10.17.2ab)

### 6.1.2.2 Type 3: Equative degree/similative marker unified

Constructions of type 3 contain an ordinary predicative parameter and an equative degree-marker (‘equally’), but comparee and standard are expressed in a single noun phrase and there is no standard-marker. In the ṚV, this strategy is attested twice with the degree marker *sáma-* ‘equal to’ (Kulikov 2021: 390). Take for instance example (39), in which we would expect the noun phrase *tvám (ca) mātá ca* ‘you and a mother’ comprising comparee and standard, but we find the reduced phrase *mātá ca*. However, the dual verb *chadayathaḥ* ‘you two appear’ as well as the vocative *vaso* ‘good one’ allow restoring the elided second-person referent. In this case, the parameter is in the dative (*vasutvanāya rādhasē* ‘in goods and largesse’).

- (39) *mātá ca me chadayathaḥ samā*  
 mother(F).NOM CONJ 1SG.DAT appear.PRS.2DU equal.NOM.DU  
 STAND (CPREE) PM
- vaso vasutvanāya rādhasē*  
 good.VOC richness(N).DAT largesse(N).DAT  
 PAR PAR
- ‘You (Indra) and a mother seem to me to be alike, o you who are good, in goods and largesse.’<sup>50</sup> (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

<sup>50</sup> With Geldner (1951), I take *vasutvanāya* and *rādhasē* as parameters of the equative construction. Jamison and Brereton (2014) interpret them with *vaso* ‘o you who are good for goods and largesse’.

More frequently, parameter marker and parameter are expressed by *bahuvrīhis* of the type we have seen in constructions of type 2. Beside *sá-*, compounds occurring in constructions of this type can take *samāná-* ‘equal, same’ as first member, as in *samāná-várcas-* ‘having equal splendor’.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, *anyá-* ‘another, different’, *ví-* ‘apart, in different directions’, *viṣu-* ‘id.’ are employed as first members in order to express dissimilarity, as in *anyá-rūpa-* and *viṣu-rūpa-* ‘having another, different form’.

In constructions of type 3, compounds agree with dual or plural referents to indicate a reciprocal similitive, as in the case of the coordinative compound (*dvandva*) *náktoṣásā* ‘Night and Dawn’ in (40) and of the plural *uṣásas* ‘Dawns’ in (41).

- (40) *ná methete ná tastatuḥ suméke*  
 NEG oppose.PRS.3DU.MID NEG stand.PF.3DU well\_grouped.NOM.DU.F  
*náktoṣásā sá-manasā ví-rūpe*  
 Night\_Dawn(F).NOM.DU same-mind.NOM.DU.F different-FORM.NOM.DU.F  
 CPREE/STAND PM-PAR PM-PAR  
 ‘They do not oppose each other, nor do they stand still, though well grounded – Night and Dawn, of like mind but different form.’

(ṚV 1.113.3cd)

- (41) *śúbham yác chubhrā uṣásas cáranti*  
 beauty(F).ACC when beautiful.NOM.PL.F Dawn(F).NOM.PL proceed.PRS.3PL  
*ná ví jñāyante sa-dṛśṭr ajuryāḥ*  
 NEG LP distinguish.PRS.3PL.PASS same-appearance.NOM.PL.F unaging.NOM.PL.F  
 PM-PAR CPREE/STAND  
 ‘When the beautiful Dawns proceed in beauty, they cannot be distinguished (lit. they have the same appearance) – the unaging ones having the same appearance.’

(ṚV 4.51.6cd)

Alternatively, compounds can apply to a singular referent to indicate difference in form like, e.g., *viṣurūpo* in (42):

<sup>51</sup> Two different first constituents are attested in *saci-vid-* ‘one minded’ (< Loc. of *sác-* ‘to accompany’) and in *sató-vīra-* ‘of equal strength’ (< *satás-* ‘equally, like’).



makes it hard to tell whether the verb takes a comparative meaning or rather the meaning ‘obtain’. Example (44) is a case in point: in the second *pāda*, the verb  $\sqrt{nas}$ - takes the object *sakhyám* ‘fellowship’ and must be read as ‘obtain’; in contrast to this, in the second *pāda*, the verb takes the quality *śávāmsi* ‘strengths’ as object and thus requires a comparative reading.

(44)	<i>ná</i>	<i>yásya</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>śavasāna</i>
	NEG	REL.GEN	2SG.GEN	strong_one.VOC
	<i>sakhyám</i>	<i>ānámśa</i>	<i>mártiyah</i>	
	fellowship.ACC	attain.PF.3SG	mortal.NOM	
	<i>nákiḥ</i>	<i>śávāmsi</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>naśat</i>
	no_one	strength.ACC.PL	2SG.GEN	equal.SUBJ.AOR.3SG
	CPREE	PAR	STAND	PM

‘He will not equal your strengths, of you whose fellowship no mortal has attained, o you who swell with strength.’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(RV 8.68.8)

Three, less frequent constructions involve the compound verbs *ánu*  $\sqrt{bhū}$ - ‘be after’, *práti*  $\sqrt{as}$ - ‘come close to’, and *sám*  $\sqrt{as}$ - ‘be with’. Similarly to what we have seen in the case of  $\sqrt{as}$ -,  $\sqrt{nas}$ -, and  $\sqrt{āp}$ -, these compound verbs develop a metaphorical meaning and come to signal equality.<sup>53</sup>

In one of its two occurrences, *ánu*  $\sqrt{bhū}$ - (45), takes the comparee as subject (*dyaúr* ‘the sky’), the parameter as object (*mahitvám* ‘greatness’), and the standard as a possessive modifier of the latter (*te* ‘your’). In its other occurrence (46), *ánu*  $\sqrt{bhū}$ - enters a similar construction, but the comparee (Indra) is referred to by the metonymic expression *te mahitvám* ‘your greatness’, a stylistic device found also in other IE languages (e.g., Homeric Greek *hieròn ménos Antinóio* lit. ‘Antinoos’ holy strength’ used to refer to Antinoos in *Od.* 18.34). Thus, while *mahitvám* is part of the comparee, the two instrumentals *śavasā* ‘majesty’ and *barháṇā* ‘power’ constitute the parameter of comparison.

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the verb, and another kind of equative attested cross-linguistically in which abstract nominalized forms of the property constitute the main arguments of the verb.

<sup>53</sup> Kulikov (2021: 15) introduces *ánu*  $\sqrt{bhū}$ - under constructions of type 2, which have a free morpheme – usually a preverb – as parameter marker. In fact, in one of its two occurrences, *ánu* stands in ambiguous position between the accusative *mahitvám* and the verb (45), whereas in its other occurrence, it seems to have nominal scope on the preceding noun *dīyám* ‘heaven’ (46). However, given the (partially) non-compositional meaning of this preverb-verb combination (‘be after’ > ‘be equal to’), I prefer to treat the whole composite verb *ánu*  $\sqrt{bhū}$ - as a parameter marker.

(45)	<i>ná</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>mahitvám</i>	<i>ánu</i>	<i>bhūd</i>	...	<i>dyaúr</i>
	NEG	2SG.GEN	greatness(N).ACC	LP	be.AOR.INJ.3SG		sky.NOM
		STAND	PAR	PM-	-PM		CPREE

‘Heaven did not come close to (/equal) your greatness then.’

(ṚV 3.32.11)

(46)	<i>te</i>	<i>sáho</i>	<i>diyám</i>	<i>ánu</i>	<i>śávasā</i>	<i>barháṇā</i>	<i>bhuvat</i>
	2SG.GEN	might.NOM	sky.ACC	LP	majesty.INS	power.INS	be.INJ.AOR.3SG
	CPREE-	-CPREE	STAND	PM-	PAR	PAR	-PM

1. ‘Your might [...] was equal to heaven in majesty and power.’ (Kulikov 2021: 389)

2. ‘Your [...] strength will pervade heaven with vast power and mightiness.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 1.52.11)

Except for very few cases, such as (46), all constructions of type 4 presented so far have negative polarity, stating that no comparee can equal a given standard (usually a god) in a given quality.<sup>54</sup> In Chapter 2.1, we have seen that, in relative constructions, the comparee possesses a property to a different degree than the average in the comparison class. Thus, in terms of pragmatic inference, constructions with negative polarity allow an elative reading, since they can be understood as expressing a very high degree: for instance, example (45) may in fact be interpreted as a means of expressing the notion ‘extremely great’. Take also example (47), again with the verb  $\sqrt{naś}$ -, and with Agni, the personification of the ritual fire, as standard: since, in the sacrificial system of the ṚV, oblations to the gods are made into the ritual fire, Agni’s role as the middleman between human offerers and divine recipients is often emphasized and the god is often called *hóṭi*- ‘offerer’ himself (or *yájamānaḥ* as in the remainder of ṚV.8.31). By stating that no one can equal him in his ritual work, example (47) attributes to Agni this ability to a degree that exceeds every human and divine sacrificer:

(47)	<i>nákiṣ</i>	<i>ṭám</i>	<i>kármaṇā</i>	<i>naśan</i>
	no_one	3SG.ACC	ritual_work.INST	reach.SUBJ.AOR.3SG
	CPREE	STAND	PAR	PM

<sup>54</sup> All six occurrences of  $\sqrt{naś}$ - with comparative meaning have negative polarity, and so do ten out of twelve occurrences of *ud* / *ánu*  $\sqrt{naś}$ - as well as four out of five occurrences of  $\sqrt{āp}$ -. The remaining occurrences are interrogative and also suggest an elative reading.

‘No one can equal him (Agni) in his ritual work, [nor send him away, nor keep him away. Just he who, as sacrifice (*yájamānaḥ*), seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.]’

(ṚV 8.31.17a)

A recurring motif is the comparison with heaven and earth, who systematically fail to reach the god in a given quality. In these cases, the nature of the comparee is also responsible for the elative reading taken by the construction for, although heaven and earth are themselves prototype examples of majesty and greatness, it is stated that they cannot reach the gods in these qualities.

Although many examples presented above are indeed metaphoric, constructions of type 4 are not specialized for figurative comparison and can also encode literal comparison between entities belonging to the same domain; in this, they differ from constructions of type 1 which take the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* as standard marker. For instance, example (48) compares the present Dawn with past ones:

(48)	<i>bhadrá</i>		<i>tvám</i>		<i>uṣo</i>		<i>vitarám</i>		<i>ví ucha</i>
	auspicious.NOM.F		2SG.NOM		Dawn.VOC		forth		LP shine.IMPV.PRS.2SG
	<i>ná</i>	<i>tát</i>	<i>te</i>		<b><i>anyā</i></b>		<b><i>uṣáso</i></b>		
	NEG	3SG.ACC.N	2SG.GEN		other.NOM.PL.F		dawn(F).NOM.PL		
		PAR	STAND		CPREE-		-CPREE		
	<i>naśanta</i>								
	equal.SUBJ.AOR.3PL.MID								
	PM								

‘[Of lovely appearance like a maiden groomed by her mother, you reveal your body to be seen.] Dawn forth widely, o Dawn, as the auspicious one. The other dawns will not achieve this of yours.’

(ṚV 1.123.11cd)

The following example, the last to be mentioned here for constructions of type 4, is another case of literal comparison. Differently from examples seen so far, the construction in (49) takes the adjective *sáma-* ‘equal to’ as degree marker. Kulikov (2021) reports both *sáma-* and *túlya-* ‘id.’ for Old Indo-Aryan, but the latter is not attested in the ṚV.

(49)	<i>utá</i>	<i>ghā</i>	<i>némo</i>		<i>ástutaḥ</i>
	CONJ	PTCL	another.NOM		not_praised.NOM
	<i>púmāṃ</i>	<i>íti</i>	<i>bruve</i>		<i>paṇíḥ</i>
	man.NOM	PTC	call.PRS.3SG.M		niggard.NOM
	(STAND)				
	<i>sá</i>	<i>váiradeye</i>		<i>ít</i>	<b><i>samáḥ</i></b>
	3SG.NOM	wergild(N).LOC		PTC	equal.NOM
	CPREE	PAR			PM

‘And some other guy, a niggard not deserving praise, (may be) called a “man”, but he is only equivalent (to a man) in the matter of wergild.’

(ṚV 5.61.8)

#### 6.1.2.4 STAND-PAR compounds

In this and the next sections I will analyze comparative strategies which are not included in Haspelmath et al. (2017) classification. These include compounds with STAND-PAR structure, the so-called “similative demonstratives” (van der Awera and Sahoo 2015, 2020), and adverbs in *-vát*.

In Section 6.1.1.4, we have seen that generic equatives and similatives tend to lack overt marking of parameter and/or to preserve older standard markers. Two strategies that completely lack overt marking of parameter or standard are compounding (50) and juxtaposition (51). As shown by the examples, noun-adjective compounds and juxtaposition tend to be strongly lexicalized and idiomatic. They can have equative semantics, as in the examples below, as well as in similative one (e.g. *snail mail*); furthermore, in some cases the first element can lose its basic meaning and selectional restrictions and confer an elative reading to the adjective, as in the case of German *Stein* ‘stone’ and *Stock* ‘stick’ in example (52) and of the German compound *fuchs-teufels-wild* (lit. fox-devil-wild) ‘mad as hell’.

(50)	a. German	<i>raben-schwarz</i>	‘black as pitch’	(lit. raven-black)
	b. Breton	<i>gwenn-erc’h</i>	‘white as snow’	(lit. white-snow)
	c. English	<i>pig-ignorant</i>	‘ignorant like a pig’	
(51)	a. Albanian	<i>dylë i verdhë</i>	‘pale as wax’	(lit. wax pale)
	b. Rumanian	<i>beat turtă</i>	‘blind drunk’	(lit. drunk flat-bread)

(adapted from Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 312)

(52)	a. <i>stein-alt</i> ‘old as the hills’, <i>stein-hart</i> ‘rock-hard’, <i>stein-reich</i> ‘very rich’
	b. <i>stock-steif</i> ‘very rigid’, <i>stock-taub</i> ‘pitch-deaf’, <i>stock-betrunken</i> ‘dead drunk’, <i>stock-</i>



*nüchtern* ‘sober’, *stock-dunkel* ‘pitch black’, *stock-blind* ‘dead blind’

(König 2017: 24)

Comparative compounds are well attested in ancient IE languages where, beside other kinds of comparisons, they also occur in equatives (53) and similitives (54) constructions:

(53) Equative compounds

a. Ancient Greek: *meli-ēdēs* ‘as sweet as honey, honey-sweet’ (Hom. *Od.* 19.551)

b. Avestan: *katō-masah-* ‘as large as a house’ (Vd. 19.4)

(54) Similitive compounds

a. Ancient Greek: *bo-ōpis* ‘cow-eyed’ (Hom. *Il.* 1.551)

b. Avestan: *naire.manah-* ‘thinking like a man’ (Yt. 19.38)

c. Latin: *tauri-formis* ‘having the form of a bull’ (Hor. *carm.* 4.14.25)

The ṚV has a class of *bahuvrīhis* whose first element can be read as standard of an equative/similitive construction and whose second element can be read as parameter. In these compounds, the second member is often an action noun, expressed by a root noun, a deverbal substantive in *-as-*, and so on (Kulikov 2021: 394-395). The interpretation is A+B ‘having B (like) A’, as for instance in the case of *agnī-bhrājas-* ‘flashing like fire’ in (55):

(55)	<b><i>agnī-bhrājaso</i></b>	<i>vidyúto</i>	<i>gābhastiyoh</i>
	fire-flash.NOM.PL.M	lightning_bolt.NOM.PL	fist(M/F).LOC.DU
	STAND-PAR	CPREE	

‘Lightning bolts flashing like fire (are) in your fists.’

(ṚV 5.54.11c)

Most compounds of this type allow alternative readings; for instance, *agnī-bhrājas-* can be read as a regular *bahuvrīhi* ‘having the flash of fire’. In a few cases, however, the comparative analysis is corroborated by the existence of comparative constructions employing the same lexical material: compare for instance *agnī-bhrājas-* in (55) with the basic equative *agnír ná ... bhrājasā* ‘like fire with their flash’ in (56), the compound *ghṛta-pū-* ‘purified like ghee’ (ṚV 9.17.10) with *ghṛtām ná ... súpūtam* in (57), and possibly the compound *vī-patman-* ‘flying like a bird’ (ṚV 1.180.2) with *prá*

*váyo ná páptan* ‘fly forth like birds’ in (58).<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the compound *máno-javas-* ‘swift as thought’ has a comparative counterpart in *jávīyas- manasas.ABL* ‘swifter than thought’ that corroborates its equative reading.

- (56) *agnír ná yé bhrājasā rukmāvakṣaso*  
 Agni.NOM like REL.NOM.PL flash(N).INST brilliant\_breast.NOM.PL  
 STAND STM CPREE (PAR)

‘Who, with diamonds on their breasts, are like fire with their flash.’

(ṚV 10.78.2a)

- (57) *prá ... mánma ghṛtám ná*  
 LP thought(N).ACC ghee(N).ACC like  
 CPREE STAND STM  
*yajñá āsīye sú-pūtam*  
 sacrifice.LOC mouth(N).LOC well-purified.ACC.N  
 PAR

‘Forth [...], do (I bring) my thought, well purified in my mouth at the sacrifice like ghee (in Agni’s mouth).’

(ṚV 5.12.1a-c)

- (58) *prá yád váyo ná páptan vásmanas pári*  
 LP when bird.NOM.PL like fly.INJ.AOR.3PL dwelling(N).ABL LP  
 STAND STM PAR  
*śravasyávo hṛṣīvanto vanar-śadaḥ*  
 seeking\_fame.NOM.PL excited.NOM.PL wood-sitting.NOM.PL  
 CPREE

‘When those seeking fame, excited, sitting on/in wood, fly forth like birds from their dwelling.’

(ṚV 2.31.1cd)

As we have seen for other IE languages above, STAND-PAR compounds of this type can have either equative (59) or simulative (60) semantics:

<sup>55</sup> Note that GRA (*s.v.*) translates *vi-patman-* with *forteilend* (‘harrying away’), taking *vi-* as a preverb and so do also Jamison and Brereton (2014), who translate ‘of wide flight’.

(59)	Equative		
	<i>agni-táp-</i>	‘burning like fire’	ṚV 5.61.4
	<i>samudrá-vyacas-</i>	‘expansive as the sea’	ṚV 1.11.1
	<i>máno-javas-</i>	‘swift as thought’	8x
	<i>śyená-jūta-</i>	‘swift as an eagle’	ṚV 9.82.9
	<i>váta-ramhas-</i>	‘swift as the wind’	4x
(60)	Similitive		
	<i>svar-dṛś-</i>	‘looking like the sun’	13x
	<i>mayūra-śeṇya-</i>	‘having the tail of a peacock’	ṚV 8.1.25
	<i>mayūra-roman-</i>	‘peacock-haired’	ṚV 3.45.1
	<i>agni-rūpa-</i>	‘fire-shaped’	ṚV 10.84.1
	<i>mádhu-varṇa-</i>	‘honey-coloured’	3x

Although they are also attested in predicative function, as in (61), STAND-PAR compounds tend to occur with attributive function or as secondary predicates (62), as we have seen for PM-PAR compounds.

(61)	<i>párā</i>	<i>vīrāsa</i>	<i>etana</i>	
	LP	hero.VOC.PL	go.IMPV.PRS.2PL	
	<i>máryāso</i>	<i>bhádra-jānayaḥ</i>		
	young.VOC.PL	lucky-woman.VOC.PL		
	<b><i>agni-tápo</i></b>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>ásatha</i>	
	fire-hot.NOM.PL	FIN	be.SUBJ.PRS.2PL	
	‘Go forth, heroes, you young bloods with lucky women, so that you will be hot as fire.’			
	(ṚV 5.61.4)			

(62)	<i>híraṇyatvaṅ</i>	<b><i>mádhu-varṇo</i></b>	<i>ghṛtásnuḥ</i>	
	golden_skinned.NOM	honey-colored.NOM	ghee_backed.NOM	
	<i>pṛkṣo</i>	<i>váhann</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>rátho</i>
	nourishment.ACC.PL	carry.PTCP.PRS.NOM.	LP	chariot.NOM
	<i>vartate</i>	<i>vām</i>		
	turn.PRS.3SG.MID	2DU.GEN		
	‘Golden-skinned, honey-colored, ghee-backed, and carrying nourishments, your chariot turns here.’			
	(ṚV 5.77.3ab)			

Later Vedic texts, and especially Classical Sanskrit, have another type of constructions that take the second member of a *tatpuruṣa* (i.e., a subordinate compound) as standard. A handbook example of this subtype is *puruṣa-vyāghrā-* ‘man like a tiger’ (AiG II/1: 251; Kulikov 2021: 394). As in the case of comparative *bahuvrīhis*, these compounds allow an alternative, non-comparative reading and can be interpreted as partitive compounds (e.g. ‘a tiger among men’; PWG: *s.v.*). This type is however not attested in the ṚV.

As we have seen in Sections 6.1.2.1 and 6.1.2.3, other Ṛgvedic compounds are found in equative and similitive strategies of type 2 and 3. Furthermore, they can be employed in comparative, elative, and excessive constructions, for which see Kulikov (2021).

Thus, compounding morphology provides a relatively rich set of patterns for encoding comparisons of degree or manner in the ṚV. Compounding-based strategies seem to be denotatively equivalent to corresponding non-compounding-based ones, but some differences in use can be pointed out. As argued by Milizia (2021: 466-467) for Old Iranian, the employment of comparative compounds can be ruled out when a modifier must be added to one of the involved lexemes, since compounds with three or more members are exceptional in IE languages and become productive only in later Vedic texts. Furthermore, compounds produce a lower morphosyntactic complexity of the clause in which they appear, and this feature could explain their tendency to occur as attributes or secondary predicates, instead of functioning as the main predicate of the clause. Finally, compound constituents can neither undergo pragmatically motivated displacements nor be associated with focusing particles and this property could also play a role in the pragmatic-stylistic choice between compounding-based and non-compounding-based strategies.

#### 6.1.2.5 Similitive demonstratives

The grammars of Vedic and Sanskrit report a series of comparative adjectives in *-vant* formed on pronominal stems only:<sup>56</sup> from personal pronoun stems we find *tvāvant-* ‘such as you’ (17x), *māvant-* ‘such as me’ (9x), whereas from relative and demonstrative pronouns we find *yāvant-* ‘how much, as long as’ (8x), *tāvant-* (6x) ‘so great, so long, to such an extent’, *etāvant-* ‘so great, so often’ (11x).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> The equative suffix *-vant-* is not to be confused with the homonymous possessive suffix *-vant-*, since their identity is not supported by comparative evidence. The fact that the two types have different outcomes in Avestan (e.g. OAv. *θβāuuqas* ‘like you’ < \*-*uānt-s*, but OAv./YAv. *astuuā* ‘having bones’ < \*-*uās*) and that Ancient Greek *eōs* and *téōs* differ from the regular *-eis/-essa/-en* outcome of *-vant-* stems suggest that pronominal adjectives in *-vant-* and possessives in *-vant-* (with their variant *-mant-*) trace back to unrelated sources (Pinault 1985a: 349-351; Bach 2018: 24)

<sup>57</sup> From personal pronoun stems after the model of *māv(a)nt-* and *tvāv(a)nt-*, we find additionally Loc. pl. *yusmāvatsu* ‘like you’ (ṚV 2.29.4) and dat. sg. *yuvāvate* ‘like you both’ (ṚV 3.62.1). From quantitative pronoun stems like *yāv(a)nt-*

The meaning of these adjectives becomes clear if one considers them in the broader system to which they belong, but which will only become productive in later Vedic.

Beside referring to adverbial constructions expressing similarity such as the one we have seen so far, in Owen-Smith (2013), van der Auwera and Sahoo (2015) van der Auwera and Coussé (2016), and van der Auwera and Sahoo (2020) the term “similative” has been used to refer to expressions of similarity in the nominal domain, more particularly to adnominal and pronominal uses of English *such* in (63), as well as to their counterparts in other languages.

- (63) a. *I want such a cat.*  
b. *There you can buy bags, scarves and such.*

Van der Auwera and Sahoo (2020: 2) attribute to *such* the function of creating a similarity-based *ad hoc* category (cf. Barsalou 1983, 2010; Mauri 2014, 2017). For instance, in (63)b the speaker seems to refer to things that one can wear that are not clothes; since there is no ready-made concept for this, expressed by a word or conventionalized phrase, the speaker has created a new *ad hoc* category using the word *such*.

Since English *such* has both a demonstrative and a similarity component, van der Auwera and Sahoo (2020) define it as a “similative demonstrative” or “demonstrative similative”. While setting up this category may seem *ad hoc* for English, where *such* is isolated and does not belong to any paradigm, it makes good sense from a cross-linguistic perspective, especially in languages where the counterpart of *such* lies at the intersection between similatives and demonstratives.

This is for instance the case of Latin, where *talis* is part of a system with four similatives, namely a demonstrative *talis*, an interrogative *qualis*, a relative *quails*, and a relative indefinite *qualiscumque* (van der Auwera and Sahoo 2020: 7-8); in turn, *talis* belongs to the category of demonstratives to which items such as the pronoun *is* ‘that’, *tantus* ‘that much’, *ibi* ‘there’, and *tot* ‘so many’ belong, and both series are sometimes subsumed under the greater category of ‘correlatives’, as in Lavency (1997: 68) and Panhuis (2012: 40).

The Vedic correlative system is illustrated in Table 10, based on two cross-cutting semantic parameters. The parameter on the top row concerns “operations” of demonstrating, referring to discourse participants, questioning, relativizing. The parameter in the left-hand column is instead ontological in that it deals with properties of what is demonstrated, questioned, and relativized.

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and *tāv(a)nt-* are the additional forms *īvant-* ‘so great, so splendid’ (8x) and abl. sg. (*ā*) *kīvatas* ‘how long, since when’ (RV 3.31.17).

As can be seen from the table, in the ṚV, and more systematically in later Vedic texts, the system of correlatives is richer than in Latin, for it includes personal pronouns and adjectives, beside demonstrative, interrogative, and relative ones, and because it involves a systematic distinction between proximal and distal demonstratives.<sup>58</sup>

**Table 10.** Correlatives in the ṚV; adapted from van der Auwera and Sahoo (2020: 10).<sup>59</sup>

	Demonstrative		Person		Interrogative	Relative
	Proximal	Distal	First	Second		
Identity	<i>idám</i> ‘this’	<i>tád-</i> ‘that’	<i>ahám</i> ‘I’	<i>tvám</i> ‘you’	<i>ká-</i> ‘who?’	<i>yá-</i> ‘who’
Similarity	<i>ī-dṛś-</i> x4 ‘such’	<i>tā-dṛś-</i> x1 ‘such’	(later) <i>mā-dṛś-</i> ‘such as me’	(later) <i>tvā-dṛś-</i> ‘such as you’	<i>kī-dṛś-</i> x1 ‘of what kind?’	<i>yā-dṛś-</i> x2 ‘of what kind’
Degree	<i>īyant-</i> 3x ‘this much’, <i>īvat-</i> 8x ‘this much’	<i>tāvant-</i> ‘that much’	<i>māvant-</i> 9x ‘much as me’	<i>tvāvant-</i> 17x ‘much as you’	<i>kīyant-</i> 6x ‘how much’, <i>kīvant-</i> 1x ‘how much’	<i>yāvant-</i> ‘how much’

From Table 10, a neat difference emerges between similarity, expressed by the *-dṛś-* series, and degree, expressed by the *-ant/-vant-* series. The ṚV contains very few exemplars of the *-dṛś-* series, which results from the grammaticalization of the root  $\sqrt{dṛś}$ - ‘look’ (GRA: *s.v.*; Whitney 1879: 198). Example (64) should however make the meaning of the series clear: here, the poet hopes that Indra and Varuṇa will be gracious to him and his patron. As suggested by van der Auwera and Sahoo, *īdṛś-* builds an *ad hoc* category probably referring to pious poets and patrons.

- (64) *indrā-varuṇayor*                      *ahám*  
 Indra-Varuṇa.GEN.DU                      1 SG.NOM  
*samrājor*                                      *áva*                                      *á*                      *vṛṇe*  
 sovereign\_lord.GEN.DU                      help(N).ACC                                      LP                      choose.PRS.1 SG.MID  
*tā*                      *no*                                      *mṛlāta*                                      *ī-dṛśe*  
 3DU.NOM                      1PL.DAT                      be\_gracious.SUBJ.PRS.2DU                      such.DAT.M/F/N  
 ‘I choose the aid of Indra and Varuṇa, the sovereign kings. They will be gracious to people such as us.’

<sup>58</sup> In the identificational series, beside the anaphoric *is*, Latin has a proximal demonstrative *hic*, a medial *ille*, and a distal *iste*, whereas for place it has proximal *hic* and distal *ibi*. But for similarity, size, and quantity this parameter is not relevant. Thus, there is only one demonstrative simulative: there is nothing that corresponds to the *hic – ille – iste* differentiation for *talis* (van der Auwera and Sahoo 2020: 8).

<sup>59</sup> In its turn taken from Bhat (2004: 181).

The adjectives *tā-dṛś-* and *yā-dṛś-* take part in correlative constructions and will be introduced in Section 6.2.2. Example (65) allows us to introduce the *-ant-/-vant-* series, which is the most represented in the ṚV. The verse contains the adjective *māvant-* referring to *vīpra-* ‘inspired (poet)’: in this case too, the adjective creates a new category of poets endowed with the same qualities as the speaker but refers to the degree to which these qualities are possessed.

(65)	<i>gántārā</i>	<i>hí</i>	<i>stho</i>	<i>ávase</i>
	going.NOM.DU	PTC	be.PRS.2DU	aid(N).DAT
	<i>hávam</i>	<i>vīprasya</i>		<i>māvataḥ</i>
	call.ACC	inspired_poet.GEN		like_me.GEN

‘For you two are the ones who come for aid to the call of an inspired poet like me.’

(ṚV 1.17.2ab)

The adjective *māvant-* occurs twice pronominally, and six times adnominally. Except for *nṛ-* ‘man’ (ṚV 10.50.2), other nouns modified by *māvant-* refer to singers/priests: cf. *dāśvás-* ‘devote, pious one’ (ṚV 1.8.9), *jaritṛ-* ‘singer’ (ṚV 4.16.16c), and the substantivized participle *stuvát-* ‘praiser’ (ṚV 8.88.3).<sup>61</sup>

Turning to *tvāvant-*, 6 out of 9 occurrences of this lemma in the nominative occur in the formulaic expression *ná tvāvān anyáḥ* ‘(there is) no one like you’, which has negative polarity.<sup>62</sup> The negative polarity, that we have also found in constructions of type 4 above (Section 6.1.2.3), suggests that in *tvāvant-* constructions the referent of the base constitutes the best exemplar of the *ad hoc* category in question: in other words, they allow an elative reading. Differently from constructions of type 4 that can take an accusative or instrumental parameter, however, constructions with *tvāvant-* never make the parameter of comparison explicit but can be interpreted as indicating an indefinite set of qualities characterizing the newly created category.

In constructions of this type, *tvāvant-* takes a function which is similar to the one of the ablative *tvád* ‘than you’ in the likewise formulaic construction *ná tvád anyáḥ X* ‘(there is) no other X than you’, both often occurring in hymns dedicated to Indra.<sup>63</sup> Compare for instance example (66)

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., ṚV 4.57.1 and 6.60.5, and ṚV 1.165.9 with a slightly different constructio

<sup>61</sup> The substantivized adjective *vīpra-* ‘inspired (poet)’ has two further occurrences in ṚV 1.129.11 and 1.142.2.

<sup>62</sup> Other occurrences are ṚV 1.81.5, 1.165.9, 6.21.10, 6.30.4, 7.32.23.

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. ṚV 1.57.4, 1.84.19, 8.66.13, 8.78.4, and 10.121.10 for *ná tvád anyáḥ*.

with the ablative *tvád* and (67) in which both the nominative *tvāvān* and the ablative *tvád* are redundantly present (Pinault 1985a: 357):

- (66) *ná tvád anyó maghavann asti marḍitá*  
 NEG 2SG.ABL other.NOM generous.VOC be.PRS.3SG comforter.NOM  
 ‘There is no other dispenser of mercy than you, bounteous one.’  
 (ṚV 1.84.19c)

- (67) *ná tvāvāṃ anyó amṛta tvád asti*  
 NEG like\_you.NOM other.NOM immortal.VOC 2SG.ABL be.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Immortal one, there exists no one like you, other than you.’  
 (ṚV 6.21.10c)

The partial overlapping with constructions with an ablative standard constitutes a further confirmation to the elative reading, since *\*-jios-* comparatives with a generic standard of the type *ghṛtāt.ABL svād-īyas.COMP* ‘sweeter than honey’ or with a figura etymologica *tavásas.ABL táv-īyān.COMP* ‘stronger than the strong’ also suggest an elative reading (see Itzész 2019 on Latin *melle dulcior* type, with references to Orlandini and Poccetti 2010; see also Chapter 2.3.1). In fact, *tvāvant-*constructions are sometimes based on recurrent lexical material: for instance, since Indra is himself called *jiyāyas-* or *jyēṣṭha-*, Pinault (1985a: 357) interprets *jiyāyān* ‘stronger in’ (68) with *ná tvāvāṃ anyó asti* ‘there is no one like you’. Similarly, *tvāvato maghónaḥ* ‘someone as generous as you (are)’ in (69) becomes clear in the light of the fact that Indra is often himself called *maghávan-* ‘the generous’ *par excellence* (cf. example (66) above; see also GRA: *s.v.*).

- (68) *satyám ít tán ná tvāvāṃ anyó asti*  
 true.NOM.N PTCL 3SG.ACC.N NEG like\_you.NOM other.NOM be.PRS.3SG  
*índra devó ná mártiyo jiyāyān*  
 Indra.VOC god.NOM NEG mortal.NOM strong.CPD.NOM  
 ‘This is really true: there exists no other stronger than you, Indra, no god nor mortal.’<sup>64</sup>  
 (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)  
 (ṚV 6.30.4ab)

- (69) *revāṃ íd reváta stotā*  
 rich.NOM PTC rich.GEN praise.NOM

<sup>64</sup> Pinault (1985a: 357): ‘Ceci est vrai: n’y a personne d’autre aussi fort que toi, ô ndra, ni dieu ni mortel.’



<i>syāt</i>	<i>tvāvato</i>	<i>maghónaḥ</i>
be.OPT.PRS.3SG	like_you.GEN	benefactor.GEN

‘Rich indeed should be the praiser of a rich benefactor like you, and far(-famed) indeed (the praiser) of a famous one, o possessor of the fallow bays.’

(ṚV 8.2.13ab)

In its remaining occurrences, *tvāvant-* is employed pronominally, as in example (70).

(70)	<i>tvāvataḥ</i>	<i>purū-vaso</i>			
	like_you.GEN	having_many-goods.VOC			
	<i>vayám</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>praṇayitaḥ</i>	...	<i>smási</i>
	1PL.NOM	Indra.VOC	leader.VOC		be.PRS.1PL

‘To such a one as you, Indra, you leader with many goods, do we belong.’

(ṚV 8.46.1)

#### 6.1.2.6 Adverbs in -vát

The ṚV has also a class of comparative adverbs in *-vát* which, as thoroughly discussed by Pinault (1985a), feature similitive rather than equative semantics. This type is attested by 27 lemmas in the ṚV, is almost unknown to early Vedic prose, and clearly expands in the *Kalpasūtras* ‘aphorisms on the ritual’, probably due to their condensed and brachylogic style. In the *Sūtras*, adverbs in *-vat* can express both literal and figurative comparison. Compare for instance example (71), where the adverb *upanayanavat* ‘like (during) the initiation rite (*upanayana-*)’ refers to a specific standard, with example (72), where the adverb *daṇḍavat* has a generic base and can be paraphrased with *daṇḍa iva* ‘like a stick’.

(71) *atha asyā upanayanavad dhastam grhṇāti nīcāriktam ariktena*

‘(The future husband) ... takes, as is done during the initiation rite, his whole hand with his whole hand, palm down.’ (Pinault 1985a: 341)

(VārGS XIV 13)

(72) *na snāyād daṇḍavat*

‘No bath; (or, if it doesn’t take one, it must stand straight) like a stick.’ (Pinault 1985a: 341)

(VārGS VI 11)

In the ṚV, *-vát* adverbs show a much more specialized semantics than in the *Sūtras*. A striking majority of them are derived from proper names of Vedic Ṛṣis or of other mythical characters; adverbs

that are not derived from proper names nevertheless derive from the noun *ṛṣi-* ‘seer’ itself, from the more generic *nṛ-* ‘man, hero’ or from kinship names (*pitṛ-* ‘father’, *jāmi-* ‘siblings, blood-relatives’), with only a few adverbs deriving from adjectives in late books. A full list of Ṛgvedic similative adverbs in *-vát* is given below, separated by base type into a) proper names, b) common nouns, and c) adjectives.

a) i. Proper names of ancient *Ṛṣis* (19x):

<i>virūpavát</i>	‘like Virupa’	1.45.3
<i>atrivát</i>	‘like Atri’	1.45.3, 5.4.9, 5.7.8, 5.22.1, 5.51.8, 5.72.1
<i>priyamedhavát</i>	‘like Priyamedha’	1.45.3
<i>yayātivát</i>	‘like Yayāti’	1.31.17
<i>mandhātrvát</i>	‘like Mandhātar’	8.40.12
<i>bharadvājavát</i>	‘like Bharadvāja’	6.65.6
<i>aurvabhṛguvát</i>	‘like Aurva and Bhṛgu’	8.102.4
<i>āpnavānavát</i>	‘like Apnavāna’	8.102.4
<i>vasiṣṭhavát</i>	‘like Vasiṣṭha’	7.96.3
<i>kāṇvavát</i>	‘like Kaṇva’	8.6.11, 8.52.8
<i>vyaśvavát</i>	‘like Vyaśva’	8.23.23, 8.24.22, 8.26.9, 9.65.7
<i>sthūragūpavát</i>	‘like Sthūrayūpa’	8.23.24
<i>jamadagnivát</i>	‘like Jamadagni’	7.96.3, 9.97.51 +
<i>nabhākavát</i>	‘like Nabhāka’	8.40.4.5

ii. Proper names of heroes or mythic priests

<i>manuṣvát</i>	‘like Manu’/‘like men’ ( <i>mānuṣ-</i> )	6.68.1, 1.46.12, 1.105.13, 2.5.2, 3.17.2, 3.32.5, 6.68.1, 10.61.5, 10.70.8, 10.110.8 1.44.11, 8.27.7, 8.43.27, 1.31.17, 8.43.13, 4.34.3, 5.21.1, 7.2.3, 7.11.3
<i>manuvát</i>	‘like Manu’ ( <i>mānu-</i> )	2.10.6
<i>bhṛguvát</i>	‘like Bhṛigu’	8.43.13
<i>átharvavát</i>	‘like Atharvan’	6.15.17, 10.87.12
<i>aṅgirasvát</i>	‘like Aṅgiras’	1.31.17, 1.45.3, 1.62.1, 1.68.3, 2.17.1, ≠ <i>áṅgirasvat-</i> ‘accompanied by the Angirases’

b) Common noun

<i>pitṛvát</i>	‘like the fathers/ancestors’	8.40.12, 10.66.14
<i>ṛṣivát</i>	‘like a seer’	10.66.14
<i>nṛvát</i>	‘like a man’	3.34.5, 4.22.4, 6.19.1, 10.28.12 <sup>65</sup>
<i>jānivát</i>	‘like relatives’	10.23.7

c) Adjectives

<i>pākavát</i>	‘simply, honestly’ ( <i>pāka-</i> ‘childlike, simple’)	10.100.3
<i>pratnavát</i>	‘as of old’ ( <i>pratná-</i> ‘former, old’)	1.124.9, 6.16.21, 6.22.7, 6.65.6, 8.13.7, 9.9.8, 9.49.5, 9.91.5
<i>purāṇavát</i>	‘as of old’ ( <i>purāṇá-</i> ‘ancient’)	8.40.6, 8.73.11, 10.43.9
<i>pūrvavát</i>	‘as of old’ ( <i>pūrvá-</i> ‘preceding, early’)	1.31.17, 3.2.12

Differently from *vant-* adjectives, adverbs in *-vát* do not express exemplar comparison: they do not compare the comparee with the prototypical possessor of a given quality, but rather compare two agents of the same action, of which one (the comparee) belongs to the present, whereas the other (the standard) belongs to the past (cf. similitive clauses in Section 6.2.2).

The historical character of this type of comparison becomes clear from examples such as (73), where the ‘new’ (*návyam*) song of the poet is compared to that/those of the *Aṅgirasas* (Pinault 1985a: 344):

(73)	<i>tád</i>	<i>asmai</i>	<i>návyam</i>	<i>aṅgirasvát</i>	<i>arcata</i>
	3SG.ACC.N	3SG.DAT	new.ACC.N	like_Āngirasas	chant.IMPV.PRS.2PL

<sup>65</sup> Pinault (1985a: 354 ff.), according to whom *nṛvát* ‘like men’ and *nṛvánt-* ‘provided with/accompanied by men’ must be kept separate, takes only these to be occurrences of “true” *-vát* adverbs meaning ‘like men’, but once in *ṚV* 6.53.10 meaning ‘in the company of men’. Barth (2018: 10), according to whom the adverb corresponds to the neuter accusative form of *nṛvánt-*, notes that this is attested twelve times in total, but the precise number of times that it functions adverbially as opposed to adnominally is much debated. GRA (*s.v.*) identifies seven of the twelve occurrences as adverbial, either ‘kräftig, tüchtig, reichlich’ (*ṚV* 3.34.5, 4.22.4, 6.1.12, 6.19.1, 6.53.10, 10.28.12) or ‘nach Männer Art’ (*ṚV* 8.5.2). Various translators choose divergent interpretations on a case-by-case basis.

<i>śúṣmā</i>	<i>yád</i>	<i>asya</i>	<i>pratnáthā</i>	<i>udīrate</i>
power.NOM.PL	FIN	3SG.GEN	as_of_old	rise_up.PRS.3PL.MID

‘As did the Aṅgirasas, chant this new (chant) to him, so that his explosive powers rise up as in ancient times.’

(ṚV 2.17.1ab)

In these cases, the focus of the comparison is not on the manner in which the action is carried out, but on the action itself: referring to a time in which a prayer (probably) yielded a positive result, these expressions suggest a causal relation between the poet’s song and a god’s reaction. In example (73), this causal inference is made explicit by *pāda* b, where it is said that singing a song like the Aṅgirasas should make Indra’s powers rise up as they did ‘in ancient times’ (*pratnáthā*).<sup>66</sup>

Pinault points out that *vát*-adverbs referring to ancient *Ṛṣis* tend to occur in hymns attributed to the same bardic family: for instance, with the only exception of ṚV 1.45.3, the adverb *atrivát* is unknown to hymns outside of book V, attributed to the Atris. The employment of such forms constitutes the poet’s “signature” and links his composition back to a tradition inaugurated by his ancestors. This motive is in line with the Vedic notion of poetry, according to which new praises are justified by reference to previous praises which were composed by the poet himself or by his ancestors and which had a positive outcome. I will come back to this function of comparison, in which we can perceive a causal nuance, in Section 6.2.2, when dealing with a particular kind of similitive clauses introduced by *yáthā*. For the Vedic notion of poetry and poetic word see the introduction to Part 3.

In constructions with *-vát*, the standard (i.e., the referent of the noun that functions as base) is usually to be understood in the same function as the comparee, that is, as the subject of the clause. However, in some cases the standard must be interpreted with an oblique case relationship, e.g. ‘as by X, as was done to/for X’. In all these cases, the subject of the clause is a god, who is asked to behave again as he did at the time of ancient seers or mythical priests, as shown by example (74):

(74)	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>áyajo</i>	<i>hotrám</i>	<i>agne</i>	<i>pr̥thivyā</i>
	like	sacrifice.IMPF.2SG	Hotar_role(N).ACC	Agni.VOC	Earth(F).GEN
	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>divó</i>	<i>jātavedaś</i>	<i>cikitvān</i>	
	like	Heaven.GEN	Jātavedas.VOC	perceive.PTCP.PF.NOM	
	<i>evá</i>	<i>anána</i>	<i>haviṣā</i>	<i>yakṣi</i>	<i>devān</i>
	thus	DEM.INST.N	offering(N).INST	sacrifice.IMPV.PRS.2SG	god.ACC.PL

<sup>66</sup> Note that, with adjectival stems, the suffix *-vát* is in competition with the manner suffix *-thā*, as shown by pairs such as *pratnavát* ‘as of old’ and *pratnáthā* ‘id.’, as well as their synonyms *pūrvavát* and *pūrvāthā* (Pinault 1985a: 344).

<i>manuṣvād</i>	<i>yajñām</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>tira</i>	<i>imam</i>	<i>adyá</i>
as_for_Manu	sacrifice.ACC LP		carry_out.IMPV.2G	DEM.ACC	today

‘Just as you performed the sacrificial role of the Hotar of the Earth, o Agni, and just as you observantly (performed that) of the Heaven, Jātavedas, so sacrifice to the gods with this offering. As you did for Manu, carry out this sacrifice today.’<sup>67</sup>

(ṚV 3.17.2)

The semantic difference between similatives with *-vát* and with *ná*, *iva*, or *yáthā/yathā* becomes clear in passages taking the same noun as standard. Compare for instance examples (75) and (34), repeated here as (76), both taking the ancient Ṛsi Atri as standard.

The Anukramaṇī, or indices to the ṚV, ascribes the Agni hymn to which (75) belongs to the poet Vasuśruta Ātreya, whose patronymic clearly connects him to Atri. In this verse, comparing his song to Atri’s, the poet wishes Agni can help him just as he did in the case of this ancient seer. In (76), the poet also relies on the mythical past for the success of his prayer in the present, and makes reference to the Aśvins’ rescue of Atri (*násatyā* is another name of these gods); however, we have seen in Section 6.1.1.4 that the chasm from which Atri was saved stands here metaphorically for the difficulties that afflict the poet and no mention is made of Atri’s active praying to the gods. The figurative meaning emerges from the mapping between darkness (*mahás támaso*) and difficulty (*duritād*), which is an instance of the BAD IS DARK metaphor.

(75) To Agni; poet Vasuśruta Ātreya

<i>ágne</i>	<i>atriván</i>	<i>námasā</i>	<i>grṇānó</i>
Agni.VOC	as_by_Atri	reverence(N).INST	sing.PTCP.PRS.NOM.MID
<i>asmákam</i>	<i>bodhi</i>	<i>avitá</i>	<i>tanúnām</i>
1PL.GEN	become.IMPV.2SG	helper.NOM	body(F).GEN

‘O Agni, being sung with reverence as (you were) by Atri, become the helper of our bodies.’

(adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 5.4.9cd)

(76) To the Aśvins; poet Ṛjísvan Bhāradvāja

<i>átriṁ</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>mahás</i>	<i>támaso</i>	<i>(‘)mumuktaṁ</i>
Atri.ACC	like	great.ABL.N	darkness(N).ABL	release.IMPV.PRS.2DU
<i>túrvatam</i>		<i>narā</i>	<i>duritād</i>	<i>abhīke</i>
triumph.IMPV.PRS.2DU		man.VOC.DU	difficulty(N).ABL	near

<sup>67</sup> For the translation of *pāda* d, I follow Geldner’s (1951) interpretation of *manuṣvād*.

‘(And you Nāsatyas should come here to my summons with your insightful thoughts—you certainly are inspired poets.) As (you did) Atri from great darkness, release (me)—triumph, men!— from difficulty at close quarters.’

(ṚV 6.50.10)

Other proper names refer to heroes or mythic priests: Manu, Bhṛgu, Atharvan, Aṅgiras (see Macdonell 1897). The most frequent names employed in these constructions are the Aṅgiras, who with their songs helped Indra freeing the cows from the Vāla cave, and Manu, the first man and sacrificer. Two further examples clarify the difference between the similatives with *-vát* and those marked by the three comparative particles: in example (77), the adverb *bhṛguvát* ‘like Bhṛgu’ occurs among other *vát*-adverbs derived from names of mythic priest and creates a connection between the poet’s invocation of Agni and those times when these mythic priests invoked the same god. In example (78), on the other hand, the simile involving the Bhṛgus, here presented as a group,<sup>68</sup> serves to the conceptualization of poetic composition in terms of craft, a mapping which is also in line with the Vedic notion of poetry that will be presented in the introduction to Part 3.

(77) *utá tvā bhṛguvác chuce*  
 and 2SG.NOM like\_Bhṛgu blazing.VOC  
*manuṣvád agna āhuta*  
 like\_Manu Agni.VOC bepure.PPP.VOC  
*aṅgirasvád (d)havāmahe*  
 like\_Aṅgiras invoke.PRS.1PL.MID

‘And you, o Agni blazing when bepourd, like Bhṛgu, like Manu, like Aṅgiras, do we invoke.’

(ṚV 8.43.13)

(78) *etám vām stómam aśvināv akarma*  
 DEM.ACC 2DU.DAT song.ACC Aśvin.VOC.DU make.AOR.1PL  
*átakṣāma bhṛgavo ná rátham*  
 fashion.AOR.1PL Bhṛgus.NOM.PL like chariot.ACC

‘We have made this praise song for you, o Aśvins. We have fashioned it, like the Bhṛgu a chariot.’

(ṚV 10.39.14ab)

<sup>68</sup> The noun *bhṛgu-* has 21 occurrences in the ṚV, of which 19 are in the plural. Beside the adverb *bhṛguvát*, which is better interpreted as referring to a single individual, the dative singular occurs in ṚV 1.60.1 and 8.3.9 and seem to refer to a historical character.

To continue with the Bhṛgus, the following passage is admittedly problematic. The simile *makhám ná bhṛgavaḥ* ‘Bhṛgus (did) the Battle’ in (79) seems to actually refer to a past deed of the Bhṛgus belonging to what Geldner calls an otherwise unknown saga.<sup>69</sup> However, in addition to not being able to grasp the reference contained in the simile, it is also not clear to us what the sacrifice-defiling dog that Soma should send away stands for. Therefore, we cannot exclude that the comparison evoked metaphorical mappings, which we fail to grasp due to our lack of knowledge of the events described.

(79) *ápa śvānam arādhásam*  
 LP dog.ACC ungenerous.ACC  
*hatā makhám ná bhṛgavaḥ*  
 smite.IMPV.2PL battler/demon.ACC like Bhṛgus.NOM.PL  
 ‘[Like a mortal he [=the dog] has shown preference for the speech of the stalk being pressed.]  
 Smite away the dog, the ungenerous one, as the Bhṛgus (did) the Battler/ demon.’<sup>70</sup>  
 (RV 9.101.13cd)

Adverbs derived from common nouns are probably secondary and indeed only *nṛvát* is attested in the family books. The adverbs *ṛṣivát* ‘like (ancient) seers’ and *pitṛvát* ‘like the ancestors’ were built on the model of adverbs derived from proper names, because these regularly referred to ancient *Ṛṣis* or mythical ancestors. Instead, the hapax *jānivát* ‘like a relative’ (RV 10.23.7) is incompatible with the historical reading and has generic reference: this suggests that the temporal reference was disappearing as new *vát*-forms derived from common nouns were being created.

The origin of the adverb *nṛvát* is more problematic. Pinault, who rejects Whitney’s (1879: 360) hypothesis that *vát*-adverbs constitute the adverbially-used neuter singular accusative of possessive *-vant-* stems, suggests that *nṛvát* was built after adverbs based on proper names.<sup>71</sup> More precisely, Pinault attributes the origin of this adverb to a peculiarity of the noun *nṛ-* ‘man’ itself: since this noun has no nominative (the *\*nā* would be too short), Pinault hypothesizes that *nṛvát* took the

<sup>69</sup> As noted by Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*), the word *makhá-* is found with reference to a defeated enemy of Indra in RV 10.171.2; the fact that this hymn is attributed to Iṭa Bhārgava, whose patronymic connects him to the Bhṛgus, reinforces the impression that the simile in (79) refers to a precise event in the past.

<sup>70</sup> The simile in d, “as the Bhṛgus did the Battler” (*makhám ná bhṛgavaḥ*), refers to what Ge calls an otherwise unknown saga. The *makhá-* is found as a defeated enemy of Indra in X.171.2, a hymn attributed to one Iṭa Bhārgava, the patronymic of the victors in our vs. Note that the denom. verb *makhasyate* occurs in our vs. 5c.

<sup>71</sup> According to Pinault (1985a: 364ff.), adverbs in *-vát* derived from proper names may instead have originated as determinative compounds with an endless locative of the root-noun *\*uét-* ‘year’ as second member, such they would originally mean something like ‘as in the time of X’.

place of *\*nā̃ iva*, as suggested also by the fact that, in all occurrences of *n̄rvát*, the comparee of the similative construction is in the nominative case. Since some occurrences of *n̄rvát* do not admit a historical reading, this hypothesis would also explain the disappearance of the temporal reference in later forms and the extension of figurative meaning to the class of *vát*-adverbs, as attested in later texts.

In contrast with Pinault and adjusting Whitney's hypothesis,<sup>72</sup> Barth (2018) argues that the adverb *n̄rvát* may be the only case of actual derivation of the similative adverb from the possessive adjective; at a relatively early stage after the formation of *n̄rvát*, the suffix *-vát* became an independently productive suffix giving rise to adverbs derived from proper names. As for the semantic shift from possession to comparison, Barth adduces two possibilities:

- a) Derivation from the agent noun *n̄r̄-* 'man':
  - n̄rvánt-* 'having men' and therefore 'accompanied by men'
  - 'in the company of men, with the men'
  - 'of the group of men'
  - 'having the properties of men, man-like'
- b) Derivation from an abstract noun *n̄r̄-* 'strength, vigor, manliness':<sup>73</sup>
  - n̄rvánt-* 'having strength, strong'
  - 'having that which is proper to a man' (*n̄r̄-* = 'manliness')
  - 'manly, like a man' (due to interference of *n̄r̄-* 'man')

Whether it is because it is placed at the beginning or at the end of the period of productivity of *-vát* as a standard marker of historical comparison, we see that *n̄rvát* also admits different readings than the historical one. The adverb *pit̄rvát* 'like the ancestors', on the contrary, is still found in complementary distribution with *pitéva*, given the different reference of their standards. Compare for instance examples (80) and (81) with specific-historical and generic standards respectively:

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<sup>72</sup> Whitney considers adjectives in *-vant-* derived from pronominal stems (Section 6.1.2.4) within the same class of possessive *-vant-* adjectives, without explaining the semantic shift between possession and comparison. More precisely, Whitney takes the type pronoun-*vánt* as a point of departure for the creation of comparative adverbs, since the function of the former is compatible with that of the latter. Barth acknowledges instead the independence of the equative suffix *-vant-* from the possessive suffix *-vant-*, since their identity is not supported by comparative evidence.

<sup>73</sup> On the base of Nussbaum's (2007) postulation of a root-noun abstract *\*h<sub>2</sub>ner-* 'vigor, strength' beside the agent root-noun *\*h<sub>2</sub>ner-* 'strong one, man'. The hypothesis is based on the meaning of the second compound member in Greek *agénōr* 'manly, heroic' and *anévōr* 'cowardly' (Barth 2018: 27).



- (80) *vásiṣṭhāsaḥ*                      *pitr̥vād*                                      *vācam*                                      *akrata*  
 Vasiṣṭhas.NOM.PL      like\_(their)\_fathers      speech(F).ACC                      make.AOR.3PL.MID  
 ‘The Vasiṣṭhas have made speech in the manner of their father.’

(ṚV 10.66.14a)

- (81) *pitā*                      *iva*                      *putrān*                      *prāti*      *no*                                      *juṣasva*  
 father.NOM      like      son.ACC.PL      LP      1PL.ACC                      favor.IMPV.AOR.2SG.MID  
 ‘Like a father his sons, favor us in return.’

(ṚV 7.54.2d)

Finally, adverbs derived from adjectives also have temporal reference and were probably built on the *aṅgiraṣvát* model. At some point, the suffix probably lost its temporal meaning because this was clear from the base; at this time, other N-*vát* forms were created, and the suffix entered in competition with the manner suffix *-thā* in the formation of deadjectival adverbs. At the end of the ṚV period, the suffix could appear with comparative value on any type of base (Pinault 1985a).

### 6.1.3 Functions related to comparison

Particles or cases employed as standard markers may be specialized for this function or, as it often happens, have other functions in the language in which they occur. We have seen that comparative *ná* coexists with negative *ná* from which it derives and with which it occurs in almost complementary distribution in the ṚV. Accented *yáthā* also introduces clausal comparison (Section 6.2), often in correlative constructions with *evá* ‘so, in this way’, as well as final, temporal, and causal subordinate clauses; on the contrary, unaccented *yathā* is employed only in phrasal comparison. Finally, *iva* is specialized to phrasal comparison, but its approximating function is attested already in the ṚV.

In their study on equatives in the languages of Europe, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) individuated a number of constructions related to comparison of equality on a formal as well functional level. These constructions are the so-called disjunct similatives and role phrases, which I will introduce in Sections 6.1.3.1 and 6.1.3.2 respectively. Furthermore, in Section 6.1.3.3, I will briefly show the function of *iva* as an approximation marker, postponing the analysis of the pragmaticalization process that this particle undergoes to Chapter 8.2.

#### 6.1.3.1 Disjunct similatives

A kind of expressions that often show formal analogies with similatives are disjunct similatives such as *Like my wife, I love mushrooms*. These constructions do not compare two ways of carrying out the

same event, but rather express addition. Roughly, the sentence can be paraphrased as ‘I love mushrooms, and incidentally, my wife does, too’ (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998).

In the ṚV, a few constructions with *ná* and *iva* seem to express truth values rather than true similatives and are thus eligible for this interpretation. Take for instance example (82), with *ná*: here, the presence of the additive focus particle *cid* suggests an additive interpretation of *viśām ná viśvo* ‘like every (member) of the clans’.

- (82) *ádrau cid asmā antár duroṇé*  
stone.LOC PTC DEM.DAT.M/N LP house(N).LOC  
*viśām ná viśvo amṛtaḥ svādhīḥ*  
clan.GEN.PL like all.NOM immortal.NOM attentive.NOM  
‘Even in the rock (as well as) within the house, every immortal, like every (member) of the clans, is very attentive to him.’

(ṚV 1.70.4)

Addition seems to be the preferred interpretation in negative contexts: in example (83), with *iva*, Vasiṣṭhas’ praise is compared to the speed of the wind with respect to the faculty of *not being reachable*. Pragmatically, this implies that *neither* Vasiṣṭhas’ praise hymn *nor* the speed of the wind can be pursued by anyone.

- (83) *vātasya iva prajavó nāniyéna*  
wind.GEN like speed.NOM no\_one.INST  
*stómo vasiṣṭhā ánuetave vaḥ*  
praise.NOM Vasistha.VOC pursue.DAT 2PL.GEN

‘Like the speed of the wind, your praise hymn, o Vasiṣṭhas, can be pursued by no other.’

(ṚV 7.33.8ab)

### 6.1.3.2 Role Phrases

Role phrases express the role or function in which a participant appears. A role phrase can be thought of as a secondary predication over a participant which is referentially controlled by that participant. Role phrases can be controlled by different participants in the clause: for instance, the role phrase in (84)a is subject-controlled, whereas the one in (84)b is object-controlled:

- (84) a. *I am asking you for this as your mother.*

- b. *I am asking you for this as my son.*

Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 322) found that in most European languages, role phrases are marked by the same particles that are used as standard marker in equatives and similatives. Beside (84), where the English preposition *as* is the same employed in equative constructions, take for instance examples (85)ab from Macedonian and Occitan:

- (85) a. Macedonian: *Taa mu go daval kako dar.*  
 she him it gave as gift  
 ‘She gave it to him as a gift.’
- b. Occitan: *Trabalha coma engenhaire.*  
 works as engineer  
 ‘He works as an engineer.’

Bisang (1988: 730) found no parallelism between role phrases and equative and similative constructions in his sample of Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese and suggested that this could be an areal phenomenon of European languages. However, in his analysis on functives (roughly, role phrases) in cross-linguistic perspective, Creissel (2014) reports that the functive-similative syncretism is so widespread at world level, that one might wonder whether similatives and functives should be defined as distinct functions rather than being considered as two particular cases of a more general notion.

In addition to languages having a single marker for role phrases and similative uses (e.g. Spanish *como* or Zulu *njenga*), languages may have productive functive markers which are marginally employed in similative uses, or productive similative markers which are marginally employed in functive uses. For instance, the Russian instrumental case is relatively productive as a functive marker (86), but is also marginally used in similative constructions, as in (87):

- (86) *On rabotaet inženerom.*  
 3SG work.PRS.3SG engineer.INST  
 ‘He is working as an engineer.’
- (87) *Letela streloj Stal'naja, vovsju staralas'.*  
 flew arrow.INST Stalnaya as.hard.as.one.can tried  
 ‘Stalnaya flew like an arrow, she did her utmost best.’

(I.S. Shmelev, 1927-1944; Rakhilina and Tribushinina 2010: 10)

As for ancient IE languages, Ittzés (2021: 486) notes that Latin role phrases marked by *ut* or *tamquam* are formally identical to the phrasal standards of generic comparisons. The semantic difference is made clear by the following examples, taken from Tarrío (2011: 417): in (88), *ut fratrem* is a role phrase because Quintus is Cicero’s actual brother, whereas in (89) this requirement is not fulfilled and *ut fratrem* is a generic simulative.

(88) *eas litteras ad eum misi quibus*  
 DEM.ACC.PL.F letter(F).ACC.PL to DEM.ACC send.PF.1SG REL.DAT.PL  
*et placarem ut fratrem et monerem ut*  
 CONJ appease.SUBJ.IMPF.2SG like brother.ACC CONJ advise.SUBJ.IMPF.1SG like  
*minorem*  
 junior.CDG.ACC  
 ‘I wrote to him in such a way as I thought would not hurt his feelings as a brother, while giving him some good advice as my junior.’ (Tarrío 2011: 417)

(Cic. *Att.* 1.5.2)

(89) *quem meus Cicero ... amabat ut fratrem*  
 REL.ACC my.NOM Cicero.NOM love.IMPF.3SG like brother.ACC  
 ‘Whom my little Cicero loved like a brother.’ (Tarrío 2011: 417)

(Cic. *ad Q. fr.* 1.3.3)

The employment of *ut* as a marker of role phrases reflects a grammaticalization path from deictic manner adverbs to simulative markers and then from simulative markers to functive markers documented in Creissel (2014; see also König 2017 and Chapter 8.2 on this grammaticalization path). In Latin, *ut* was subsequently replaced by *quōmodo*, whose reflexes (French *comme*, Italian *come*, etc.) are used as simulative and functive markers in modern Romance languages.

The same grammaticalization path is attested in other IE languages. Ancient Greek *hōs*, meaning originally ‘so, in this way’, had a wide range of uses as a conjunction and marked standards of equatives and simulative; in Modern Greek it has specialized as a marker of depictives (including functives), distinct from the simulative marker *san* ‘like’. Similarly, English *as* comes from Old English *alswa* ‘quite so’, a compound form whose second element is the reflex of Proto-Germanic *\*swae* ‘in this way’ (cf. English *so*, Dutch *zo*, etc.).

In the R̥V, with standards such as *hótr-* ‘Hotar (i.e., the fire priest)’, *átithi-* ‘guest’, *mitrá-* ‘Mitra, ally’, the boundary between simulative and role phrases becomes blurred. Take for instance

example (90), where the god Agni is compared first to a guest (*átithir ná*) and then to a sacrificial priest (*hótā iva*):

(90)	<i>siyonaśír</i>		<i>átithir</i>		<i>ná</i>		<i>priṇānó</i>
	resting_comf.NOM		guest.NOM		like		please.PTCP.NOM.MID
	<i>hótā</i>		<i>iva</i>		<i>sádma</i>		<i>vidható</i>
	Hotar.NOM.SG		like		seat(N).ACC		do_honor.PTCP.AOR.GEN
	<i>ví</i>		<i>tārīt</i>				
	LP		traverse.INJ.AOR.3SG				

‘Resting in a comfortable place like a guest whose pleasure is served, like a Hotar he has traversed the (sacrificial) seat of him who does honor.’

(ṚV 1.73.1cd)

That of guest, and especially that of Hotar, can certainly be interpreted as two roles that Agni assumes when he is hosted by men on the sacrificial ground and “leads” the sacrifice making the oblation reach the other gods through his smoke. However, if we look at the broader context in which the hemistich occurs, we see that the main function of the two similes is to present distinctive features of Agni to make him immediately recognizable as the recipient of the hymn. Indeed, the first three verses or ṚV 1.73 consist of three restrictive relative clauses that describe Agni through a series of similes, but the god’s name is not mentioned until verse 4, where he is kindled by men. Example (91) reports the entire first verse of ṚV 1.73:

(91)	<i>rayír ná yáh pīṭṛvittó vayodhāḥ</i>
	<i>suprāṇītīś cikítúṣo ná śásuḥ</i>
	<i>siyonaśír átithir ná priṇānó</i>
	<i>hóteva sádma vidható ví tārīt</i>

‘Who confers vitality like wealth acquired from one’s father, providing good guidance like the instruction of a perceptive man, resting in a comfortable place like a guest whose pleasure is served, like a Hotar he has traversed the (sacrificial) seat of him who does honor.’

(ṚV 1.73.1)

As it becomes clear from *pādas* a and b, the similes have generic standards that present the quality in question (*vayodhāḥ* ‘bestowing health’, *suprāṇītīḥ* ‘providing safe guidance’) in the highest degree or that constitute the prototypical participants of the event in question (*siyonaśír* ‘resting

comfortably’, *sádma ví √tar-* ‘traverse the sacrificial seat’). In other words, similes function as adverbial modifiers of the main predicate, specifying its degree when this is a quality, or the way in which it is carried out, when this is an event; on the other hand, an actual role phrase like *hótā* in example (92), where no comparative particle occurs, expresses a predication about a participant involved in the event denoted by the verb. Here, both *hótā* and *tuvám* ‘you’ refer to Agni, and *hótā* predicates the property of Agni as fulfilling the role of the sacrificer.

(92)	<i>tuvám</i>	<b><i>hótā</i></b>		<i>mánur-hito</i>	
	2SG.NOM	Hotar.NOM		Manu-installed.NOM	
	<i>ágne</i>	<i>yajñēsu</i>		<i>sīdasi</i>	
	Agni.VOC	sacrifice.LOC.PL		sit.PRS.2SG	
	<i>sá</i>	<i>imám</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>adhvarám</i>	<i>yaja</i>
	as_such	DEM.ACC	1PL.DAT	rite.ACC	sacrifice.IMPV.PRS.2SG
	‘As the Hotar installed by Manu, Agni, you sit at the sacrifices. So perform this rite for us now.’				

(ṚV 1.14.11)

Although similitives and role phrases can be distinguished on the basis of the general semantic distinction between verb modifiers and secondary predicates, pragmatically, the distinction is not so clear-cut: indeed, the fact that Agni traverses the sacrificial seat ‘like a Hotar’ in (91) does not imply ‘Agni fulfills the role of a Hotar’, but does not exclude it either. In conclusion, in the ṚV similitive constructions can give rise to pragmatic inferences that lead to interpret them as role phrases, but ultimately the latter are expressed in Vedic as other depictives, that is with simple substantives, compounds, and participles, without particles (Casaretto 2020: 48). One reason not to consider *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* as even marginal markers of role phrases is that this function does not seem to continue in later texts. Furthermore, while the semantics of *iva* would allow a process of reanalysis like the one identified by Creissel (2014) for other IE languages such as Latin and Greek, the semantics of *ná*, which derives from negation, would be in contrast with the function of role marker.

Finally, similitive constructions are by their nature subject to pragmatic inferences of different types. Indeed, beside role phrases, basic equatives can sometimes be interpreted as resultatives, that is, as secondary predicates expressing a state which results from the accomplishment of the event encoded by the main verb (Himmelmann and Schultze-Bernd 2005: 41). One example is (93) where, if we interpret *mitrá-* as ‘ally’ and not as the god ‘Mitra’, we could take it as the result of installing

Agni among men (recall that Agni is the middleman between gods and human and thus an ally to humans in the sacrifice):

- (93) *árcā*                      *devāya*              *agnáye*  
 chant.IMPV.PRS.2SG    god.DAT              Agni.DAT  
*yám*                      ***mitráṃ***                      *ná*      *prásastibhir*  
 REL.ACC              Mitra/ally.ACC              like      proclamation(F).INST.PL  
*mártāso*                      *dadhíre*                                      *puráh*  
 mortal.NOM.PL              install.PF.3PL.MID                      to\_the\_fore  
 ‘Chant to the god Agni, whom mortals have installed to the fore, like an ally (/like Mitra), with their proclamations.’

(RV 5.16.1b-d)

Finally, similatives such as (94) express a notion that can be labeled participant-oriented similative, paraphrasable as ‘having taken on the appearance of’:

- (94) *She appeared on stage as a man.*

As pointed out by Creissel (2014), *as a man* does not specify a particular way of appearing on stage but refers to the appearance taken on by the woman at the moment of getting on stage: in other words, *as a man* is a participant-oriented adjunct, rather than a manner adjunct. Creissel points out the contrast between participant-oriented similatives such as (94) and plain (or event-oriented) similatives, illustrated by (95): here, the woman is clearly recognizable as a woman but does something in a way considered typical for men.

- (95) *She appeared on stage like a man.*

Let us now see whether Vedic similes taking the verb  $\sqrt{dṛś}$ - ‘appear’ allow a reading such as (94). Sanskrit-English dictionaries report the following meaning for middle-passive forms of  $\sqrt{dṛś}$ -:

- *mit doppeltem Nom. (der eine auch mit iva), erscheinen wie, aussehen* ‘with double nominative (of which one also with *iva*) appear like, look like’ (GRA: *s.v.*)
- to be seen, become visible, appear, [...]; to be shown or manifested, appear as (*iva*) (MW, *s.v.*)

When the verb designates a state, the noun followed by *iva* functions as an obligatory complement of the verb and the construction indicates physical or conceptual similarity. Take for instance example (96), where the intelligence of men is conceptually compared to ponds of different depths. In this case, *iva* could be interpreted as an approximation marker (see below), as suggested by Pinault (2004).

- (96) *ādaghnāsa*                      *upakakṣāsa*                      *u*                      *tve*  
reaching\_mouth.NOM.PL      reaching \_shoulder.NOM.PL      PTC      some.NOM.PL  
*hradā*                      *iva*                      *snātvā*                      *u*                      *tve*                      *dadṛṣe*  
pond.NOM.PL      like      fit\_for\_bathing.NOM.PL                      PTC      some.NOM.PL      seem.PF.3PL.MID  
‘[Though all have eyes and ears, the companions are unequal (*ásamā*) in quickness of mind.]  
Some seem like ponds reaching up to the mouth or up to the armpits, and others seem like  
ponds good to bathe in.’

(ṚV 10.71.7)

However, when the verb designates a punctual event, as in the English example, the noun followed by *iva* does not seem to function as a participant-oriented adjunct, but as a true manner adjunct. For example, the adverbial accusative *pratīcīnam* in (97) suggests that the simulative refers to the sudden arrival which is common to the god (probably Agni) and to a battler, and not to the appearance of the god.

- (97) *śūrasya*                      *iva*                      *yúdhya*to                      *antamásya*  
hero.GEN                      like                      battle.PTCP.GEN                      nearest.GEN  
*pratīcīnam*                      *dadṛṣe*                      *vísvam*                      *āyát*  
turned\_towards.NOM.N                      appear.PF.3SG.MID                      every.NOM                      approach(N).NOM

‘His every approach appears right in your face, like that of a champion battling up close.’

(ṚV 3.55.8ab)

Similarly, in (98) the adverb *vīthag* makes the parameter of comparison explicit and the construction seems to refer to the sudden appearance of the kindled fires and the beacons of dawn; however, the inference of a physical similarity between comparee and standard cannot be excluded here.



(98)	<i>eté tyé</i>	<i>vṛthag</i> <sup>74</sup>	<i>agnáya</i>
	DEM.NOM.PL	opposedly/at_will	fire.NOM.PL
	<i>iddhásah</i>	<i>sám</i>	<i>adṛkṣata</i>
	kindle.PPP.NOM.PL	LP	appear.AOR.3PL.MID
	<i>uṣásām</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>ketávaḥ</i>
	dawn(F).GEN.PL	like	beacon.NOM

‘These fires kindled here in opposing (places) have come to sight all at once, like the beacons of the dawns.’

(ṚV 8.43.5)

To conclude, it would not be accurate to consider the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* as productive markers of role phrases and the possible inferences in this sense should be attributed to the general conceptual proximity between similatives, role phrases, and other kind of secondary predicates. For other possible inferences prompted by comparison of equality see also causal inferences triggered by adverbial *Modalsätze* (Section 6.2.2).

### 6.1.3.3 Approximation

Beside its function of marking the standard of equative and similative constructions, grammars report a second use of *iva* as approximation marker (so-called *milderndes iva*, Delbrück 1888: 477; see also Macdonell 1916: 220). Approximation markers can be distinguished into adaptors and rounders: adaptors such as English *like* and *kind of* trigger loose readings of a lexical expression, whereas rounders such *about* indicate imprecise numerical values (Prince et al. 1982: 93).<sup>75</sup>

In the ṚV, where this function is much rarer than it will become in later Vedic prose, *iva* functions as an adaptor in combination with nouns (99), adjectives (100), verbs (101), and adverbs. Furthermore, if the particle follows the preverb, it has scope over the whole verb phrase, as in (102). In a couple of cases, *iva* occurs with numerals and thus functions as a rounder, as in example (103).

<sup>74</sup> *vṛthag*, which is found only in (98) and in the nearby ṚV 8.43.3, is generally considered to be a formal cross of *vṛthā* ‘at will’ with *prthag* ‘separately’ (see EWAia s.v., AiG I: 231).

<sup>75</sup> Approximation markers can in their turn be distinguished from shields in that the former operate on the propositional level, whereas the latter affect the illocutionary force of an utterance by weakening the epistemic force (plausibility shields like *I think*) or by evidential means indicating less reliable types of information sources (attribution shields such as *quotation marks*; Prince et al. 1982; Mihatsch 2009: 66).

- (99) *sádma*      *iva*    *dhīrāḥ*                      *sammāya*                      *cakruḥ*  
 seat(N).ACC    like    clever.NOM.PL                      together\_build.ABS    make.PF.3PL  
 ‘The clever ones made (for him, Agni) some kind of seat by building together.’ (Pinault 2004: 291)<sup>76</sup>
- (ṚV 1.67.10b)
- (100) *nṛ-mānā*                                      *vīrā-pastīyo*  
 hero-mind.NOM                                      warrior-house.NOM  
*ārṇā*                                      *dhīrā*                                      *iva*    *sānitā*  
 stream(N).ACC.PL    inspired.ACC.PL.N    like    winner.NOM  
 ‘The one with heroic mind (Indra), whose house is full of warriors, is winning streams that are somehow full of insights.’ (Pinault 2004: 297)<sup>77</sup>
- (ṚV 5.50.4cd)
- (101) *té*                      *śú*      *ṇo*                      *marúto*                      *mṛṛḥlayantu*  
 3PL.NOM                      PTC    1PL.DAT                      Marut.NOM.PL                      have\_mercy.PRS.3PL  
*yé*                      *smā*    *purá*                      *gātūyānti*                      *iva*    *devāḥ*  
 REL.NOM.PL    PTC    before                      make\_way.PRS.3PL    like    god.NOM.PL  
 ‘Let the Maruts have mercy upon us, the gods who up till now have provided the way, as it were.’
- (ṚV 1.169.5cd)
- (102) *tád*                      *indra*                      *prá*    *iva*    *vīryam*                      *cakartha*  
 3SG.ACC.N    Indra.VOC    LP    like    heroic\_deed(N).ACC                      do.PF.2SG  
*yát*                      *sasántam*                      *vájreṇā*                      *ábodhayó*                      ‘*him*  
 REL.ACC.N    sleep.PTCP.ACC                      mace.INST                      awake.IMPF.2                      serpent.ACC  
 ‘This heroic deed you carried out, Indra—that/when you “awakened” the sleeping serpent with your mace, as it were.’
- (ṚV 1.103.7ab)
- (103) *yó*                      *jaritṛbhyo*                      *maghāvā*                      *purū-vásuḥ*  
 REL.NOM                      singer.DAT.PL                      bounteous.NOM                      many-good.NOM  
*sahásreṇa*                      *iva*    *śíkṣati*  
 thousand(N).INST    like    exert.PRS.3SG

<sup>76</sup> Jamison and Brereton (2014) give a comparative reading to this passage: ‘Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely’. See Chapter 8.2 for a discussion.

<sup>77</sup> Again, Jamison and Brereton (2014) give a comparative reading to this passage: ‘The manly minded one [=Indra], with a dwelling full of heroes, (will) win the floods, like wise (thoughts?)’.

‘Who as a bounteous one possessing many goods—by the thousands, as it were—exerts himself for you singers.’

(RV 8.49.1cd)

It is hard to provide the exact frequency with which *iva* occurs in this function, since commentaries and translations often differ in the interpretation of the respective passages. For example, Geldner as well as Jamison and Brereton tend to supply missing elements of what they consider to be a simile; Pinault, on the contrary, refrains from supplying a comparee when this is not explicitly expressed and thus interprets *iva* as an adaptor in a higher number of cases. For instance, in example (104), Jamison and Brereton interpret *hradám kulyā iva* ‘as brooks (reach) a lake’ as the standard of a simile and supply *your resolve* as comparee, suggested to them by the singular *krátum* ‘resolve’ in *pāda* b. Pinault (2004: 291) takes *kulyā* as subject of *aśata* and *iva* as an approximator signaling that these streams are not real streams, but praising words that invigorate Indra (the sea).

(104)	<i>prá</i>	<i>sugopā</i>		<i>yávasam</i>		<i>dhenávo</i>	<i>yathā</i>
	LP	with_good_herdsman.NOM.PL		pasturage(N).ACC		cow.NOM.PL	like
	<b><i>hradám</i></b>	<b><i>kulyā</i></b>		<b><i>iva</i></b>		<b><i>aśata</i></b>	
	lake.ACC	brook.NOM.PL		like		reach.AOR.3PL.MID	

1. ‘[Your resolve (*krátum*), deep like pools—you foster it, like cows.] As milk-cows with a good herdsman reach pasturage, as brooks reach a lake, (so your resolves) have reached fulfillment.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. ‘As milk-cows provided with a good herdsman (reach) the pasture, some kind of streams have reached the sea.’ (Pinault 2004: 291)

(RV 3.45.3cd)

Pinault (2004) assumes that *iva* originally functioned only as an approximation marker, and that from this function the comparative use developed. He counts about 171 occurrences, instantiating 160 types, of the particle as an adaptor. According to him, *iva* occurs in this function after nouns or substantivized adjectives (approx. 60 occurrences), in predicative constructions with or without copula, and with verbs such as ‘appear’ (approx. 40 occurrences), or in combination with adjectives (approx. 30 occurrences). It occurs more rarely with adverbs and verbs (approx. 20 and 8 occurrences respectively).

Some of the cases reported by Pinault can be interpreted as similes in all respects, while in other cases, especially in predicative constructions, the function of *iva* is simply ambiguous between

comparison and approximation; since, as we shall see better in Chapter 8.2, the development of the approximative function from the comparative one is cross-linguistically well attested, ambiguous contexts may have constituted bridging contexts (Heine 2002: 2) for the emergence of the adaptor function. For instance, in the predicative construction in 0, *iva* allows both a comparative and an approximative reading.

- (105) *mā bhūma niṣṭyā iva tvád áraṇā iva*  
 NEG be.AOR.1PL outsider.NOM.PL like 2SG.ABL stranger.NOM.PL like  
 ‘May we not be like outsiders, like foreigners to you.’  
 (ṚV 8.1.13)

As I mentioned above, the most common function of *iva* in prose is that of an approximator, and the function of rounder is also well attested (see Brereton 1982 for an exhaustive analysis of the uses of *iva* in prose). For this reason, grammars and commentators pay attention to this use of *iva* in the ṚV, some taking it as an anticipation of the developments attested in prose, some, like Pinault, taking it as the original function of the particle. However, it is perhaps relevant to note that also *ná* is sometimes found after a verb and can thus be interpreted as an approximation marker. Take example (106):

- (106) *agnih śociṣmāñ atasāni uṣṇán*  
 Agni.NOM inflamed.NOM brushwood(N).ACC.PL scorch.PTCP.NOM  
*kṛṣṇá-vyathir asvadayan ná bhūma*  
 black-course.NOM sweeten.IMPF.3SG like ground(N).ACC  
 ‘Agni, inflamed, scorching the brushwood, with his black wayward course, has “sweetened,” as it were, the ground.’  
 (ṚV 2.4.7ab)

Furthermore, *ná* is also attested with a noun and substantivized adjective, in cases where no comparee can be supplied; take for instance example (107), where *bṛható ná vagnún* ‘the calls of the lofty one’ must be interpreted as the object of the participle *indhānā* ‘kindling’:

- (107) *asyá yámāso bṛható ná vagnún*  
 3SG.GEN journey.NOM.PL lofty.GEN like call.ACC.PL  
*indhānā agnéḥ sákhiyuh śivásya*  
 kindle.PTCP.NOM.PL.MID Agni.GEN friend.GEN kind.GEN

1. ‘Of this one here—of Agni, our kindly companion—his journeys are, as it were, kindling the calls of the lofty one [=pressing stone?].’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
2. ‘Seine Fahrten, die gleichsam laute Rufe des guten Freundes Agni entflammen [...]’ (Geldner 1951)

(RV 10.3.4ab)

The approximative use of *ná* in the RV is only marginally attested, even more than it is for *iva*. As we have seen in Chapter 5.1, *ná* is attested only 45 times as a standard marker in the AV and will definitively lose this function in Vedic prose. Since the productivity of *ná* is already decreasing in the RV (see Chapter 5.3, Pinault 1997), if we believe that the approximative function derived from the comparative function, we could hypothesize that *ná* escaped this development, which involved *iva*. These issues are treated in full in Chapter 8.2.

## 6.2 Equative and similitive clauses

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 304-305) distinguish basic equative and similitive constructions, characterized by a single verb, from equative and similitive clauses.<sup>78</sup> According to the authors, the latter are used to express more complex comparisons, that is comparisons where the verb is part of the standard and thus the two situations compared differ not only in their participants, but also in their verbal core:

- (108) a. Equative: *They are not as good as they seemed.*  
 b. Similitive: *He writes like his sister talks.*

(Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 305; 319)

In those languages whose equative and similitive constructions are based on relative clauses, the equative standard marker is simply used as a subordinating conjunction in comparative clauses and thus basic and clausal equative and similitives are very similar to each other. Among European languages, this is the case of English (standard marker/conjunction *as* for equatives, *like* for similitives), German (*wie*), Swedish (*som*), Slovene (*kot*), Italian (*come*), Modern Greek (*óso*). In contrast to this, languages whose standard markers are not based on relative pronouns need an additional subordinating element, such as a relative suffix, as e.g., in Basque and Turkish, or a free subordinator, as e.g., in Celtic languages, Hungarian, Maltese, as well as Hebrew. Compare the

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<sup>78</sup> Jamison (1982: 254) distinguishes between intra-clausal similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* and clausal similes introduced by *yáthā*, often having a correlative adverb in the main clause.

following examples of equative (109) and similitive (110) clauses, from Welsh and Breton respectively:

- (109) *Mae fy mrawd yn dawnsio cyn wich-ed ag y*  
 is my brother PRS dance PAM splendid-EQD STM that  
*mae fy chwaer yn canu.*  
 is my sister PRS sing  
 ‘My brother dances as beautifully as my sister sings.’

- (110) *Skrivan a ra-hi evel ma komz he breur.*  
 write PTC do-she like that talk her brother  
 ‘She writes like her brother talks.’

Although equative and similitive clauses seem to employ the same means in many languages, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 320) note that similitive clauses such as (108)b and (110) do not seem to occur very commonly. These clauses answer the question ‘in what way?’ and apparently speakers do not often express a manner by invoking another situation in which the same manner occurs.

Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 319-320) also distinguish between similitive clauses and similes such as (111), in that the former are manner adjuncts, whereas the latter are propositional adverbials. Finally, accord clauses as in (112) represent an illocutionary adverbial. Nevertheless, formally these three construction types are expressed in very similar ways.

- (111) *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*  
 (Ps 42.2; Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 319)  
 (112) *As scientists have long predicted, the earth’s atmosphere is heating up gradually.*  
 (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 319)

As we shall see in the next section, in the R̥V, the subordinator *yáthā* introduces manner clauses that can have different functions and can hardly be distinguished into equative and similitive clauses.

### 6.2.1 Equative clauses

The R̥V has a very small class of so-called equative clauses presenting the adjective *yávat-* ‘how much, how big’ derived from the stem of the relative pronoun to which corresponds a correlative adjective *távat-* ‘so much, so big’ in the main clause, as in (113). These constructions, in which the

adjectives incorporate both the notion of quantity and the marking of the parameter (see Section 6.1.2.5), are called quantitative equatives by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 298).<sup>79</sup>

- (113) *tāvad*                      *uṣo*                      *rādho*                      *asmábhya*  
 so\_much.ACC.N              Dawn.VOC              largesse(N).ACC              1PL.DAT  
*rāsva*  
 grant.IMPV.AOR.2SG.MID  
*yāvat*                      *stotṛbhyo*                      *árado*                      *gṛṇānā*  
 as\_much.ACC              praiser.DAT.PL              excavate.IMP.2SG              hymn.PTCP.NOM.F.MID  
 ‘As much largesse grant to us, Dawn, as you excavated for the praisers when you were being hymned.’

(ṚV 7.79.4ab)

In the ṚV, quantitative equative clauses can take different configurations. In (113), *tāvad* is a modifier of the object *rādhas* (n) ‘largess’ and agrees with it. In (114), *yāvad* and *tāvāṃ* function as predicates and agree with the subjects of the two clauses (*bhúvanam víśvam* ‘the whole creation’ and *ayám sómah* ‘this soma’ respectively). In example (115), the neuter *yāvad* is also predicatively employed, although it does not agree with the feminine dual subject *dyāvāpṛthivī* ‘heaven and earth’; finally, in the second hemistich of example (115), the accusative singular neuter *yāvad* is an adverbial modifier of the past participle *viśṭhitam* ‘spread out’ referred to *bráhma* ‘sacred formulation’.

- (114) *yāvad*                      *idám*                      *bhúvanam*                      *víśvam*                      *ásti*  
 as\_great.NOM.N              DEM.NOM.N              being(N).NOM              all.NOM.N              be.PRS.3SG  
*tāvāṃ*                      *ayám*                      *pátave*                      *sómo*                      *astu*  
 so\_great.NOM              DEM.NOM              drink.INF              soma.NOM              be.IMPV.3SG  
 ‘As great as this whole creation here is [...] so great let this soma here be, for drinking.’  
 (ṚV 1.108.2a,c)

- (115) *yāvad*                      *dyāvā-pṛthivī*                      *tāvad*                      *ít*                      *tát*  
 as\_great.NOM.N              heaven-earth(F).NOM.DU              so\_great.NOM.N              PTC              3SG.NOM.N  
*yāvad*                      *brahma*                      *viśṭhitam*  
 as\_far.NOM.N              sacred\_formulation(N).NOM              spread.PPP.NOM.N

<sup>79</sup> Since languages that have special quantitative equative markers are those that form the core of the SAE type, i.e., those that have the relative-based equative constructions, the authors consider the use of special quantitative pronominal words an additional feature characterizing SAE languages.

*tāvātī*                      *vāk*  
 so\_far.NOM.F              voice(F).NOM

‘As great as heaven and earth, so great is that. [...] As far as the sacred formulation is spread out, so far is speech.’

(RV 10.114.8b,d)

In one case (RV 7.32.18), the equative construction takes a form of the relative adjective (*yāvatas* ‘as much as’) and a neuter form of another correlative, *etāvāt-* ‘so much’. Starting from the AV, other adjectives were created on this model, such as *samāvant-* ‘so great/of equal size’, ‘equal to’ and *uttarāvant-* ‘superior’ that were employed in basic equatives of the “primary reach” type:

(116) *samāṃ*              *jyōtiḥ*                      *sūryeṇā*  
 equal.NOM.N    light(N).NOM              sun.INST  
*āhnā*                      *rātrī*                      *samāvātī*  
 day(N).INST              night(F).NOM              equal.NOM.F

‘The (moon)light (is) the same as the sun, night equals the day.’ (my translation)

(AVŚ 4.18.1ab)

### 6.2.2 Similitive and related clauses

As mentioned above, Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998: 319-320) describe similitive clauses, similes, and accord clauses as three different semantic types of adverbial clauses. For the remainder of this section, it will be useful to refer to these clauses generically as comparative clauses of manner. Although from a semantic point of view, the prototypical function of the comparative clause of manner is to express the way or manner in which the verbal action is performed, the many nuances that these clauses can take depend on their content, on the characteristics of the predication in which they are integrated, and on the level of the clause in which they act.

According to a functionalist approach (Dik et al. 1990; Hengeveld 1989, 1990), on which Haspelmath and Buchholz base their distinction into similitive clauses, similes, and accord clauses, adverbial expressions can be related to three different functional/semantic layers of an utterance:

- a) The state of affairs (or event) denoted by the sentence
- b) The propositional content of the sentence
- c) The speech act associated with the sentence



State of affairs, or events, can be located in space and time and can be evaluated in terms of their reality. Propositional contents can be located neither in space nor in time and can be evaluated in terms of their truth; they are mental constructs about states of affairs, that only exist in the mind of their user. Finally, speech acts locate themselves in space and time and can be evaluated, among other things, in terms of their informativeness (Hengeveld 1998: 344-345).

In a study on comparison of equality in Latin, Tarrío (2011) bases her analysis of comparative clauses of manner in this language on the above classification. First, Tarrío recognizes comparative clauses of manner that operate at the representational level and therefore refer to the state of affairs denoted by the sentence. These clauses can function as manner adjuncts (the function recognized by Haspelmath and Buchholz for clausal similatives) as in examples (117) and (118), or as arguments of the main verb, as in (119).

As an adjunct, the comparative clause of manner can carry out some of the functions that Dik (1989: 195; Dik et al. 1990: 30) includes under the heading Means and Manner, that is instrument, manner, speed, and quality. In (117), the coordination of the comparative clauses with the manner adverb *recte* ‘all right’ proves their isofunctionality. Differently, when a noun phrase or a deictic precedes the subordinate construction, the latter shares the syntactic role with it and provides the semantic content, as in the case of *hoc modo* ‘in this way’ ... *ut* ‘as’ in (118).

(117) *quid tu? recten atque ut uis uales?*  
 INT 2SG.NOM alright.INT CONJ as want.2SG be\_good.2SG  
 ‘How are you? Are you all right, and as well as you could wish?’ (Tarrío 2011)  
 (Plaut. *Aul.* 183)

(118) *hoc modo res gesta est ut ego dico*  
 DEM.ABL manner.ABL thing(F).NOM carry\_out.PPP.NOM.F  
 be.PRS.3SG as 1SG.NOM say.PRS.1SG  
 ‘The matter happened in this way, as I am telling you.’ (Tarrío 2011)  
 (Plaut. *Rud.* 1072)

(119) *ero ut me uoles esse*  
 be.FUT.1SG as 1SG.ACC want.SUBJ.2SG be.INF.PRS  
 ‘Just as you shall desire me to be, I will be.’ (Tarrío 2011)  
 (Plaut. *Capt.* 228)

Comparative clauses of manner such as (118) are less integrated into the structure of the sentence because they function as appositions to the deictic element. On the contrary, when the comparative clause functions as an argument of the main verb, it is embedded in the main clause, which is the most integrated form of subordination (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 178).

Besides providing information about the state of affairs denoted by the sentence, comparative clauses of manner can also be used to present the situation “in such a way that the addressee is able to recognize the communicative intention of the speaker” (Hengeveld 1989: 128). Comparatives that provide this type of information operate at the level of proposition or at the level of illocution, according to the classification of Hengeveld (1990) and Dik et al. (1990). The former are instantiated by a group of comparatives that, according to Latin grammars, introduce parentheses or examples limiting or reinforcing the truth value of the proposition (Kühner and Stegmann 1914 2: 450; Hofmann and Szantyr 1965: 634). Take for instance example (120), where the speaker refers to a third party – *Timaeus* – that is responsible for the information:

(120) *a sole numquam absistens partibus*  
 from sun.ABL never recede.PTCP.NOM degree(F).ABL.PL  
*sex atque quadraginta longius, ut Timaeo placet*  
 six CONJ forty long.CDG.ACC.N as Timaeus.DAT seem\_good.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Never receding from the sun more than 46 degrees, according to Timaeus.’ (Tarrío 2011: 413)

(Plin. *Nat.* 2.38)

Sometimes, comparative clauses can acquire a causal nuance and can also be carriers of focus. Take example (121), where the adjective *furiosus* receives a greater emphasis than if it were constructed as an attribute and the subordinate introduced by *ut* might be interpreted as the cause of replying in a particular way:

(121) *aiunt hominem, ut erat furiosus, respondisse*  
 say.3PL man.ACC as be.IMPF.3SG mad.NOM reply.INF.PF  
 ‘They say that the fellow, like the madman he was, replied ...’ (Tarrío 2011: 415)

(Cic. *S. Rosc.* 33)

Alternatively, the speaker can employ a comparative clause to establish a parallelism between an element in the subordinate clause and another in the main one, to emphasize either an opposition or a similarity between them: that is, the comparative can mark a focus of contrast, as in (122):

(122) *te*            *istic* *inuitum*            *non* *esse*            *uehementer*  
 2SG.ACC        here    unwilling.ACC        NEG    be.INF.PRS        exceedingly  
*gaudeo*        *et,*    ***ut***    *illud*                    *erat*            *molestum,*  
 be\_glad.2SG    CONJ    as        dem.NOM.N            be.IMPF.3SG    vexatious.NOM.N  
***sic***    *hoc*                            *est*            *ucundum*  
 so        DEM.NOM.N            be.PRS.3SG    gratifying.NOM.N

‘I am exceedingly glad that you are content to be where you are, and as your former state of mind was vexatious, so your present one is gratifying to me.’ (Tarrío 2011: 416)

(Cic. *epist.* 7.13.2)

Finally, comparative clauses can refer to the speech act and be used by the speaker to structure, comment on, or justify his utterance or discourse:

(123) ***ut***    *enim*            *sunt,*            *quemadmodum*        *supra*            *dixi,*  
 as        indeed            be.PRS.3PL    in\_the\_way            before            say.PF.1SG  
*qui*                            *urbanis*                    *rebus*                    *bellicas*  
 REL.NOM.PL            of\_the\_city.ABL.PL.F    thing(F).ABL.PL        of\_war.ACC.PL.F  
*anteponant,*                    ***sic***    *reperias*            *multos,*                    *quibus ...*  
 place\_before.SUBJ.3PL        so        find.SUBJ.3SG    many.ACC.PL            REL.DAT.PL

‘For whereas there are many, as I have said before, who place the achievements of war above those of peace, so one may find many to whom ...’ (Tarrío 2011: 419)

(Cic. *off.* 1.82)

In the R̥V, Hettrich (1988: 262-278) counts 72 comparative<sup>80</sup> clauses of manner introduced by *yáthā* and divides them into three main types that he calls *adverbiale*, *relativische*, and *weiterführende Modalsätze*. Hettrich recognizes three different types of comparative clauses of manner on the basis of formal – mainly syntactic – affinities, to which generally correspond functional/semantic affinities.

With 48 occurrences, the *adverbiale Modalsätze* are the most frequent. Among these, twenty present the adverb *evā* ‘so’ in the main clause, one the more recent form *evám*, and one the reduplicated form *evaívá* which correlates with *yáthā-yathā* in the subordinate clause. Other correlatives are *etávat* ‘this much’, attested three times, and *táthā* ‘so’, which occurs only once; the

<sup>80</sup> However, in my corpus, I could count 87 comparative clauses of manner introduced by *yáthā*.

remaining occurrences have no correlative element. Examples (124), already presented in Chapter 5.1, and (125) are two instances of this type:

(124)	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>jaghántha</i>	<i>dhṛṣatā́</i>	<i>purá́</i>	<i>cid</i>
	as	smite.PF.2SG	be_bold.PTCP.INSTR.N	before	PTC
	<i>evá́</i>	<i>jahi</i>	<i>śátrum</i>	<i>asmá́kam</i>	<i>indra</i>
	so	smite.IMPV.PRS.2G	enemy.ACC	1PL.GEN	indra.VOC

‘Just as you also smote boldly before, so smite our rival, o Indra.’

(ṚV 2.30.4cd)

(125)	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>cid</i>	<i>vṛddhám</i>	<i>atasám</i>	
	as	PTC	grow.PPP.ACC.N	brushwood(N).ACC	
	<i>ágne</i>	<i>saṁjūrvasi</i>	<i>kṣámi</i>		
	Agni.VOC	burn_up.PRS.2SG	ground(F).LOC		
	<i>evá́</i>	<i>daha</i>	<i>mitra-maho</i>	<i>yó</i>	<i>asma-dhrúg</i>
	so	burn.IMPV.2SG	ally-might.VOC	REL.NOM	to_us-hostile.NOM
	<i>durmánmā</i>	<i>kás</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>vénati</i>	
	ill_intentioned.NOM	INT.NOM	CONJ	be_jealous.PRS.3SG	

‘Just as you incinerate the brushwood grown thick on the ground, o Agni, in the same way burn whoever stalks (us), lying to us and ill-intentioned, o you who deploy the might of alliance.’

(ṚV 8.60.7a-c)

The majority of cases have identical verbs in the standard and in the comparee, as shown by the perfect form *jaghántha* ‘you smote’ and the imperative *jahi* ‘smite!’ in example (124), or verbs that belong to the same semantic class, as shown for instance by *saṁjūrvasi* ‘you incinerate/burn completely’ and *daha* ‘burn!’ in (125). Consequently, standard and comparee share identical or similar argument structure constructions and are constructed in the same way. In some cases, however, the two verbs are different and there is no parallelism between the arguments in the standard and in the comparee.

Hettrich attributes to *adverbiale Modalsätze* the function of determining the manner or the extent to which the event denoted by the main clause takes place; however, while he finds a clear parameter of comparison in some instances, such as *dhṛṣatā́* ‘boldly’ in example (124), he states that the similarity between the two clauses is sometimes very general and hard to grasp, also due to the lack of a formal correspondence between main and subordinate clause.

With 13 occurrences, *relativische Modalsätze* are the second most attested type in the ṚV. According to Hettrich, this type of modal clauses corresponds to restrictive relative clauses in which the relative pronoun functions as an apposition to the correlative element. As shown by examples (126) and (127) respectively, the fact that relative modal clauses take the correlative *tád* and *táthā*, both derived from the pronominal stem, shows their functional proximity to relative clauses (which also take a form of the demonstrative *tád-*), as opposed to adverbial modal clauses which mostly take *evá/evā*.

- (126) *yáthā cin<sup>81</sup> mányase hṛdá*  
 as PTC conceive.PRS.2SG.MID heart(N).INST  
*tád ín me jagmur āśasaḥ*  
 so PTC 1SG.GEN go.PF.3PL hope(F).NOM.PL  
 ‘Just as you [=Agni? poet?] conceive with your heart, in the same way my hopes have gone.’  
 (ṚV 5.56.2ab)

- (127) *yáthā váśanti deváas táthā íd asat*  
 as desire.PRS.3PL god.NOM.PL so PTC be.SUBJ.PRS.3SG  
 ‘As the gods desire, just so will it be.’  
 (ṚV 8.28.4a)

In this sentence type, the relative adverb *yáthā* is used where one would expect *yád* as the neuter accusative of the relative pronoun. Indeed, the following relative clause (128) seems to have the same meaning as (126) and (127) above:

- (128) *yán na índro jujuśé yác*  
 REL.ACC.N 1PL.GEN Indra.NOM enjoy.PF.3SG.MID REL.ACC.N  
*ca váṣṭi*  
 CONJ desire.PRS.3SG  
*tán no mahān karati ... á cit*  
 DEM.ACC.N 1PL.GEN great.NOM make.PRS.3SG LP PTC  
 ‘What of ours Indra enjoys and what he is eager for, that of ours will the great [...] one arrange to be right here.’  
 (ṚV 4.22.1ab)

<sup>81</sup> Note that the focus particles *cid* and *íd* often, but not always, occurs after the relative and/or the correlative element. For the different functions taken by *cid* and *íd*, see Coenen (2021).

Finally, the so-called *weiterführende Modalsätze* (11 occurrences) show a formal and functional/semantic affinity with appositional relative clauses. Since here, as in appositional relative clauses, the subordinate clause refers to the main clause as a whole (see Lehmann 1984: 273 f.), this type of modal clause lacks a correlative element. The type is very formulaic, and all occurrences take the perfect indicative *vidé* ‘is known’ or *vidúḥ* ‘they know’ as verb of the *yáthā*-clause. Take example (129):

- (129) *abhi prá gó-patim girā*  
 LP LP cow-lord.ACC song(F).INST  
*índram arca yáthā vidé*  
 Indra.ACC chant.IMPV.PRS.2SG as know.PRS.3SG.MID  
 ‘Chant forth with a song to the lord of cows, to Indra, in the way that is known.’  
 (ṚV 8.69.4ab)

With regard to the position of the *yáthā* clause, it must be noted that, while in adverbial and relative modal clauses this can either precede or follow the main clause, in *weiterführende Modalsätze* it follows the main one or is embedded in it.

Analyzing Ṛgvedic comparative clauses of manner from the point of view of the sentence layer at which they operate, we note that, while those identified by Hettrich generally constitute homogeneous groups from the point of view of their function, there are also some internal differences and overlaps between them.

Among the three types of comparative clauses introduced by *yáthā*, the so-called *relativische Modalsätze* systematically operate at the first functional/semantic layers of the utterance and refer to the state of affairs denoted by the sentence. In the examples presented above, the subordinate construction shares the syntactic role with the correlative adverb and provides the semantic content. In three cases, included among *adverbiale Modalsätze* by Hettrich because they lack a correlative element, the subordinate clause itself takes the function of a manner adjunct, as in (130).<sup>82</sup> There are no examples in the ṚV of comparative clauses that function as an argument of the main verb.

- (130) *pibā dadhīg yáthā uciṣé*  
 drink.IMPV.PRS.2SG heartily as be\_accustomed.PF.3SG.MID  
 ‘Drink heartily as you are accustomed.’  
 (ṚV 8.88.2c)

<sup>82</sup> Cf. also ṚV 2.22.1 and ṚV 7.56.20.

To these, correlative construction taking the simulative *yādṛś-* and *tādṛś-* introduced in Section 6.1.2.5 must be added. As mentioned in that section, the *-dṛś-* series of demonstrative similatives (in van der Auwera and Sahoo 2020 terms) expresses similarity, in contrast to the *-ant-/vant-* series which expresses degree.

- (131) *yādṛg*                      *evá*    *dádṛśe*                      *tādṛg*                      *ucyate*  
of\_what\_kind.ACC.N    so    appear.PF.3SG.MID    so.ACC.N    say.PRS.3SG.PASS  
‘Just as he appears, so is he said (to be).’

(ṚV 5.44.6a)

In describing the type of verbs used in the *adverbiale Modalsätze*, Hettrich notes that the subordinate clause often has a verb in the perfect or imperfect, while the aorist occurs only once (ṚV 10.76.3). In fact, most of the examples attested in the ṚV involve a comparison with a mythical event, carried out by the same subject of the main clause or by another subject. If the verb of the main clause is a present or future indicative, the subordinate expresses a parallelism between past and present/future that could take on causal nuances. Consider example (132):

- (132) *triudāyám*                      *deva-hitam*                      *yáthā*    *va*  
thrice\_ascending.NOM.N    god-established.NOM.N    as    PTC  
*stómo*                      *vājā*                      *ṛbhukṣaṇo*                      *dadé*                      *vaḥ*  
song.NOM    Vaja.VOC.PL    Ṛbhukṣan.VOC.PL    give.PF.3SG.MID    2PL.DAT  
*juhvé*                      *manuṣvād*                      *úparāsu*                      *vikṣú*  
pour.PRS.1SG.MID    like\_Manu    below.LOC.PL.F    clan(F).LOC.PL  
*yuṣmé*                      *sácā*                      *bṛhád-diveṣu*                      *sómam*  
2PL.LOC    together    lofty-heaven.LOC.PL    soma.ACC

‘Just as the thrice ascending (soma-pressing) has been established by the gods for you and the praise song has been given to you, o Vājas, o Ṛbhukṣans, I, like Manu, offer the soma among the clans below [=humans] to you together with the (clans) of lofty heaven [=gods].’

(ṚV 4.37.3)

In this example, the poet compares offerings to the deities that were made in the past to the soma offering that he is making now, with the aid of men and gods. The comparison does not refer to the way these offerings were made, but to the very fact that they were made. As we have seen for adverbs in *-vát* (Section 6.1.2.6), the fact that the officiant belongs to a tradition constitutes a justification and

endorsement to his actions: therefore, the comparison between past and present can take on causal nuances and be interpreted as a cause-effect relation. According to Hengeveld (1998: 346), just like adverbial clauses, causal clauses can have three different readings depending on the entity types they designate:

- (133) Cause, state of affair level: *The fuse blew because we had overloaded the circuit.*  
 (134) Reason, propositional level: *Jenny went home because her sister would visit her.*  
 (135) Explanation, illocutionary level: *Jenny isn't here, for I don't see her.*

Examples (133), (134), and (135) are all of causal nature, yet they are all of a different type. In (133), the subordinate clause describes a real-world event causing the main clause event, and the two events occur successively. In (134), the reason adverbial does not cause the main clause event in any literal sense, but represents the consideration, that is, the propositional content that led the participant in the main clause event to engage in it. Finally, the adverbial clause in (135) allows the speaker to utter the speech act contained in the main clause and can thus be seen as constituting a separate speech act.<sup>83</sup>

The causal nuance of the R̥gvedic example (132) emerges from the reinterpretation of two subsequent events as causally linked (we would say that, in this case, *post hoc* is equal to *propter hoc*). However, previous offerings do not cause the main clause event in any literal sense but represent the reason that leads the priest to offer the soma.

Sometimes, the comparison with a past event seems to allow the speaker to utter the speech act contained in the main clause and may thus be seen as an explanation belonging to the illocutionary level. This happens when the main clause contains a 1<sup>st</sup> person performative verb such as *īmahe* ‘we beg you’ in (136), but it is especially frequent with imperative forms such as *matsva* ‘become exhilarated!’ in (137). Note that in (136), the verb ‘you helped’ (*āvataṃ*) can be recovered from the preceding verse.

- |       |              |            |                     |                  |              |
|-------|--------------|------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------|
| (136) | <i>yáthā</i> | <i>utá</i> | <i>kṛtviye</i>      | <i>dháne</i> ... | <i>aṃśúm</i> |
|       | as           | CONJ       | to_be_decided.LOC.N | prize(N).LOC     | Amśu.ACC     |

<sup>83</sup> Note that, in German, cause/reason and explanation adverbials have a different syntax, in that the former have verb-final position, whereas the latter have V2 position. Compare examples i and ii:

- i. Reason: *Jenny ging nach Hause, weil ihre Schwester sie besuchen wollte.* (‘Jenny went home, because her sister would visit her.’)
- ii. Explanation: *Jenny ist nicht hier, weil ich sehe sie nicht.* (‘Jenny is not here because I don’t see her.’)



<i>etāvad</i>	<i>vām</i>	<i>vṛṣaṇ-vasū</i>	...	<i>aśvinā</i>
so_much.ACC.N	2DU.ACC	bull-good.VOC.DU		Aśvin.VOC.DU
<i>gṛñāntaḥ</i>	<i>sumnām</i>	<i>īmahe</i>		
singer.NOM.PL	favor(N).ACC	beg.PRS.1PL.MID		

‘And just as you (helped) Aṃśu when the stake was to be decided [...] for so much favor [...] do we singers beg you, o Aśvins with bullish goods.’

(ṚV 8.5.26-27)

(137)	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>saṃvarté</i>	<i>ámado</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>kṛśá</i>
	as	Samvarta.LOC	be_exilarate.IMPF.2SG	as	Kṛśa.LOC
	<i>evá</i>	<i>asmé</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>matsuva</i>	
	so	1PL.LOC	Indra.VOC	be_exilarate.IMPV.AOR.2SG.MID	

‘Just as you became exhilarated at Saṃvarta’s, at Kṛśa’s, just so become exhilarated among us, Indra.’

(ṚV 8.54.2cd)

Thus, our knowledge of the role that tradition and myth play in Vedic religious practice (see Introduction to Part 3) allows us to recognize a causal nuance in comparisons between actions carried out in the past and actions that are repeated or that the poet wishes that were repeated in the present. This hypothesis is interesting because, although *yád* is the only relativizer attested in the ṚV for which the causal function is certain (Viti 2007: 140), *yáthā* is already mentioned by Pāṇini in this function and is one of the causal relativizers of Classical Sanskrit. Hettrich (1988: 296-297) identifies two possible cases in which *yáthā* introduces a causal subordinate, but the question is debated both in grammars and in translations, as results from Jamison and Brereton’s comparative reading reported under examples (138) and (139). Crucially, in both cases the main clause contains a performative verb (*johavīmi* ‘I implore’ and *īmahe* ‘we implore’), whereas the subordinate clause denotes a past event.

(138)	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>pūṛvebhyo</i>	<i>jaritṛbhya</i>	<i>indra</i>	
	as/since	previous.DAT.PL	singer.DAT.PL	Indra.VOC	
	<i>mayo</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>āpo</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>tṛṣyate</i>
	joy(N).NOM	like	water(F).NOM.PL	like	thirsty.DAT
	<i>tām</i>	<i>ānu</i>	<i>tvā</i>	<i>nivídam</i>	<i>johavīmi</i>
	as_such	LP	2SG.ACC	invocation(F).ACC	invoke.PRS.1SG

1. ‘Da du den früheren Sängern, Indra, wie ein Labsal, **wie** Wasser für den Dürstenden gewesen bist, rufe ich dich nach diesem Einladungsspruch.’ (Hettrich 1988: 296)

2. ‘Just as for the previous singers, Indra, you became like joy, **like** waters for the thirsty, (so) I keep invoking you according to the formal invocation [/*nivid*].’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 1.175.6a-c)

(139) *tám*            *tvā*            *yajñébhīr*            *īmahe*  
as\_such        2SG.PL        sacrifice.INST.PL        beg.PRS.1PL.MID

*tám*            *gīrbhīr*            *gir-vaṇastama*  
as\_such        song(F).INST.PL        rich\_in\_songs.SDG.VOC

*indra*        *yáthā*        *cid*        *āvitha*        *vájeṣu*        *purumāyiyam*  
Indra.VOC    as/for        PTC        help.PF.2SG    contest.LOC.PL        Purumāyya.ACC

1. ‘Dir nahen wir mit Opfern, dir mit Lobreden, du Lobbegehendster, Indra, da du ja schon dem Purumāyya in den Kämpfen beigestanden hast.’ (Hettrich 1988: 297)

2. ‘We implore you with our sacrifices, with our songs, o Indra most longing for songs, just as you helped Purumāyya in the prize-contests.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 8.68.10)

Finally, for some *adverbiale Modalsätze* Hettrich (1988: 264-265) recognizes a general parallelism between the events denoted, which can hardly be understood in terms of ‘Manner’ or ‘Degree’, and in which there are clear differences between the events denoted by main and subordinate clauses. Take for instance example (140), from a hymn dedicated to Savitar (lit. ‘the Impeller’): in the interpretation of Jamison and Brereton, the verse emphasizes Savitar’s natural control over the rhythms of life, alternatively setting the world in motion and causing it to settle down. This emphasis is obtained through the comparative construction contrasting the flight of the gods (or specifically of the impetuous Maruts, the gods of the thunderstorm) for the impulsion of Savitar<sup>84</sup> with their standing still for the same impulsion: that is, the comparative clause operates at the propositional level marking a focus of contrast.

(140) *indra-jyeṣṭhān*        *bṛhádbyah*        *párvatebhiyah*  
Indra-chief.ACC.PL    lofty.DAT.PL        mountain.DAT.PL

<sup>84</sup> If, with Jamison and Brereton, we assign the verb *suvasi* (*√sū-*) in the second *pāda* its standard meaning ‘impel’, the contrast between movement and immobility provided by the comparative clause becomes more evident. In Geldner’s interpretation, which interprets *√sū-* as ‘assign’, the contrast is mitigated because it is not clear that the flight of the Maruts is also due to the impulsion of Savitar.

<i>kṣáyāṃ</i>	<i>ebhyaḥ</i>	<i>suvasi</i>	<i>pastýāvataḥ</i>
house.ACC.PL	DEM.DAT.PL	impel.PRS.2SG p	roviding_home.ACC.PL
<b><i>yáthā-yathā</i></b>	<i>patáyanto</i>	<b><i>viyemirá</i></b>	
as-as	fly.PTCP.PRS.NOM.PL	spread_out.PF.3PL.MID	
<b><i>evá_evá</i></b>	<b><i>tasthuḥ</i></b>	<i>savitaḥ</i>	<i>savāya</i> <i>te</i> <sup>85</sup>
so-so	stand.PF.3PL	Savitar.VOC	impulsion.DAT 2SG.GEN

‘(You impel) those whose chief is Indra [=Maruts] from the lofty mountains, and you impel the dwelling places that provide homes [=clouds?] for them. Just as they spread out while flying, just so do they stand still for your impulsion, o Savitar.’

(ṚV 4.54.5)

Most *adverbiale Modalsätze* to which Hettrich recognizes a weak parallelism express figurative comparison and should therefore be considered similes in all respects. For instance, the verse presented in (141) is part of a spell to heal a character named Subandhu and restore his mind: employing two verbs belonging to the same semantic class (*náhyanti* ‘they tie’ and *dādhāra* ‘(he) holds fast’), the comparison maps physical control exerted on a yoke in order to make it fast to psychological control that a third person, possibly the sorcerer, must exert on Subandhu’s mind in order to restore it.

(141)	<b><i>yáthā</i></b>	<i>yugám</i>	<i>varatráyā</i>
	as	yoke(N).ACC	strap(F).INST
	<b><i>náhyanti</i></b>	<i>dharúnāya</i>	<i>kám</i>
	tie.PRS.3PL	support(N).DAT	PTC
	<b><i>evá</i></b>	<b><i>dādhāra</i></b>	<i>te</i> <i>máno</i>
	so	hold.PF.3SG	2SG.GEN mind(N).ACC

‘Just as they tie a yoke with a strap to make it fast, even so does he hold fast your mind, [for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.]’

(ṚV 10.60.8a-c)

Since the comparative clause involves generic referents, it does not present an objective similarity between the two events and thus does not belong to the level of predication. By establishing a

<sup>85</sup> But cf. Geldner’s (1951) translation: ‘Du hast die Götter mit Indra als Oberstem den hohen Bergen zugewiesen, diesen weisest du die flußreichen Wohnsitze zu. So sehr sie auch im Fliegen die Flügel ausgebreitet haben, so standen sie doch auf deine Weisung still, o Savitri.’

parallelism between the event denoted by the main clause and a more salient, exaggerated, or vivid example of the same event, the comparative marks the content of the main clause as object of the focus: again, it belongs to the propositional level.

Finally, of the comparative clauses listed by Hettrich, we still have to analyze the function of the so-called *weiterführende Modalsätze*. We have seen that these clauses are very formulaic and that they take either the form *yáthā vidé* ‘as is known’, *yáthā vidá* ‘as you know’, or *yáthā vidúḥ* ‘as they know’; however, even for these we can recognize two different functions, exemplified by the following examples:

- (142) *abhi prá gó-patim girā*  
 LP LP cow-lord.ACC song(F).INST  
*índram arca yáthā vidé*  
 Indra.ACC chant.IMPV.PRS.2SG as know.PRS.3SG.MID  
 ‘Chant forth with a song to the lord of cows, to Indra, in the way that is known.’  
 (ṚV 8.69.4)

- (143) *nābhā yajñásya sám dadhur yáthā vidé*  
 navel(F).LOC sacrifice.GEN LP join.PF.3PL as know.PRS.3SG.MID  
 ‘[These (clans), his advance (troops), find pleasure in the track that is in heaven.] In the navel of the sacrifice they have joined together, as is (well-)known.’  
 (ṚV 8.13.29)

In example (129), repeated here as (142), the subordinate clause *yáthā vidé* specifies that the singer should chant forth to Indra ‘in the way that is known’, that is, according to the standard procedure; in this case, the comparison belongs to the propositional level. In example (143), on the other hand, the subordinate clause acts as a modifier of the speech act, with which the speaker refers to the content of his discourse: in this case, the comparison operates at the illocutionary level as an accord clause (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 319-320) or as a *conformity clause* (Bisang 1998: 725).

### 6.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have reappraised the state of the art on Ṛgvedic similes presented in Chapter 5 in the light of typological studies on comparison and gradation. In order to fully understand their function, I have framed the analysis of Ṛgvedic similes within the rich system of constructions and strategies employed for the expression of comparison of equality in the ṚV. The main finding of this chapter is that different strategies attested in the ṚV for the expression of comparison of equality tend

to specialize for a given semantics or for a given pragmatic function. Constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* (type 1) constitute a coherent construction from the point of view of both syntax and semantics. Syntactically, they are always phrasal and are characterized by transparency of case as well as by the clitic behavior of their standard markers. Semantically, they are under-specified with respect to quantitative or qualitative comparison but specialize for figurative comparison and can thus be defined as similes in all respects.

Compounds with STAND-PAR structure (e.g., *agní-bhrājas* ‘flashing like fire’) share several characteristics with Ṛgvedic similes: they too are under-specified with respect to quantitative or qualitative comparison and specialize instead for figurative comparison. Although they seem to be denotatively equivalent to phrasal similes, their morphologically simpler form causes them to occur more often as attributes or secondary predicates instead of functioning as the main predicate of the clause.

Other comparative constructions specialize for either equative or similitive semantics. Primary reach equatives (type 4) and adjectives in *-vant-* in both phrasal and clausal constructions encode quantitative comparison; while the former allow both literal and figurative readings, the deictic nature of the latter anchors them to the expression of literal comparison. Compounds with PM-PAR structure (type 2 and type 3, e.g., *sá-varṇa-* ‘of same appearance’, *ví-rūpa-* ‘of different form’), adjectives in *-dṛś-* (e.g., *ī-dṛś-* ‘such’), adverbs in *-vát* (e.g., *aṅgirasvát* ‘like the Aṅgirasas’) as well as comparative clauses introduced by *yáthā* are all employed for the expression of qualitative comparison. This group too presents different semantic and pragmatic nuances. Adjectives in *-dṛś-* and PM-PAR compounds express similarity with respect to a certain quality, whereas adverbs in *-vát* and *Adverbiale Modalsätze* are specialized for historical comparison. Finally, the three types of comparative clauses of manner can be related to three different functional/semantic layers of the utterance, namely to the state of affairs level, to the propositional level, or to the speech act level.

## 7. A corpus-based analysis of similes' synchronic syntax

After describing the strategies employed in the ṚV for the expression of comparison of equality (Chapter 6), in this chapter I present a corpus-based analysis of Ṛgvedic similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*.

As anticipated in Chapter 1.3.2, the sample employed for this analysis consists of 900 syntactically annotated similes, to which the 20 cases of approximating *iva* and *ná* must be subtracted because annotated according to a different scheme (see below). The resulting sample consists therefore of 880 similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*; all 76 occurrences of the latter are included in the sample. In Section 7.1 I illustrate the annotation scheme developed for Early Vedic similes within the Vedic Treebank. In Section 7.2, I provide a synchronic description of the internal (7.2.1) and external syntax (7.2.2) of such similes.

### 7.1 Annotating Ṛgvedic Similes

#### 7.1.1 The Vedic Treebank

The Vedic Treebank (VTB) is a corpus of selected passages from Vedic literature, syntactically annotated according to the Universal Dependencies standard (see Section 7.1.2). The treebank is hosted within the Digital Corpus of Sanskrit (DCS, Hellwig 2010-2021), which provides *sandhi* splits and morphosyntactic annotations alongside the raw source texts. The annotation is performed directly in the web interface of the DCS which features a supportive, trainable machine learning classifier (see Hellwig et al. 2020 for details). At the time of writing, the VTB has seen three major versions. Beside a selection of hymns from the ṚV, the first version (Hellwig et al. 2020) contained extracts from four other Vedic texts, namely metrical parts of the Śaunaka recension of the Atharvaveda (AVŚ) and prose passages extracted from the *Maitrāyaṇīsamhitā* (MS), *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (AB), and *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB). On the whole, the first version contained about 4,000 sentences with approximately 27,000 word tokens. This initial version was released along with annotation guidelines that keep track of those cases where the annotation deviates from the UD standard and which should serve as a *vademecum* for future annotators as well as a reference for users.

The second version of the VTB (Biagetti et al. 2021) contained samples from a new text, the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (BĀU), as well as new passages from the existing five texts resulting in a total of 6,600 sentences with 47,000 tokens. Besides being accompanied by revised and extended guidelines, the second version came out with a systematic evaluation of the inter-annotator agreement (IAA). In order to evaluate the annotation process and the consistency of the annotated data, 96 unsegmented text lines with 1,886 tokens were randomly drawn from yet unannotated portions of the

texts contained in the treebank and independently annotated by three of the authors. Agreement in sentence segmentation, calculated with the Jaccard coefficient, achieved the lowest scores. As shown by Table 11, while annotators 2 and 3 agreed in 74% of cases, the overall value barely exceeds 55%.

**Table 11.** Jaccard coefficients for the agreement of sentence segmentations. Columns labeled 1-2, 1-3, 2-3 show the pairwise agreement scores between Annotators 1 and 2, between Annotators 1 and 3, and between Annotators 2 and 3. The column ‘all’ reports the agreement between all three annotators; adapted from Biagetti et al. (2021).

	1-2	1-3	2-3	all
Agreement	0.641	0.661	0.74	0.556

Sentence segmentation is the task of dividing a string of written language into its component sentences. Developers of treebanks of ancient languages which originally lacked punctuation marks often choose to perform sentence segmentation automatically, on the base of the punctuation adopted by the digital version of the text.

The Sanskrit writing system employs the so-called *daṇḍa* (a single vertical bar |) and double *daṇḍa* (a double bar ||) to mark higher levels of compositional complexity such as books, chapters, and paragraphs in prose or stanzas and hemistiches in poetry but does not feature a punctuation system that structures syntactic units. The VTB reproduces the original division of the texts through *daṇḍas* and leaves it open to the annotator to decide whether these correspond to sentence boundaries.

The lack of a punctuation system, added to the lack of unambiguous grammatical sentence and clause boundary markers (e.g. strict verb position at the periphery, obligatory conjunctions) as well as of a sharp-cut distinction between main and subordinate clauses is responsible for the low agreement scores reached in the task of sentence segmentation.

As sentence segmentation translates into a substantial amount of variation in root assignment and subsequently in dependency and label annotation, labeled-only, unlabeled, and labeled attachment agreement were evaluated in a second setting “sameSeg” containing only those sentences that were segmented in the same way by all three annotators.

**Table 12.** Label-only (LOA), unlabeled (UAA) and labeled attachment agreement (LAA) for sample; adapted from Biagetti et al. (2021).

Setting	1-2	1-3	2-3	all
LOA				
all	0.695	0.722	0.746	0.721

sameSeg	0.764	0.757	0.789	0.77
UAA				
all	0.754	0.807	0.803	0.696
sameSeg	0.823	0.823	0.852	0.76
LAA				
all	0.663	0.692	0.716	0.578
sameSeg	0.732	0.722	0.755	0.638

As shown by Table 12, labeled-only attachment agreement, where only the labels of tokens, but not their heads are taken into consideration (see e.g. Ragheb and Dickinson 2013), reached higher scores in both settings and for all combinations of annotators, ranging from 69% to almost 80%. The scores reached by unlabeled and labeled attachment agreement (see e.g. Kübler et al. 2009) are significantly lower than those reported for other ancient languages. While the VTB obtained 76.0% of UAA and 63.8% LAA, Bamman et al. (2010), for example, reached 87.4% UAA and 80.6% LAA in the Ancient Greek Dependency Treebank, while Zeldes and Abrams (2018) even report 96% UAA on Coptic texts after inserting punctuation.

A detailed qualitative study revealed several sources of disagreement (Biagetti et al. 2021). Beside differences in sentence segmentation and in the distinction between coordination and subordination, disagreement was found in the annotation of quotes from other texts, in the scopes of particles, in the annotation of verb arguments and adjuncts. Furthermore, differences also arose as a consequence of our imperfect understanding of word order constraints within nominal expressions and of the lack of unambiguous grammatical cues for recognizing secondary predicates from adjectives and appositions.

Overall, the evaluation of this version of the VTB showed that syntactic data, even if annotated by multiple experts, should be taken *cum grano salis*, and that linguistic studies conducted on their basis need to be counterchecked in detail.

At the moment of writing, a third version of the VTB is being prepared in the context of the research project CHRONBM (Hellwig and Sellmer forthc.). The project aims at covering the whole Vedic corpus from its beginning in the ṚV until the late Vedic Upaniṣads in order to observe diachronic as well as diatopic developments in Vedic syntax and eventually gain a better understanding of the diachronic structure and geographical distribution of the Vedic corpus.



## 7.1.2 Universal Dependencies

Universal Dependencies (UD) is a project that is developing cross-linguistically consistent treebank annotation for many languages (Nivre et. al 2016).<sup>86</sup> Syntactic annotation in the UD scheme consists of typed dependency relations (*deprel*) between words. The basic representation forms a tree, where exactly one word is the head of the sentence depending on a conventional `root` and all the other words depend on exactly one word. An inventory of 40 items contains all possible relations (Table 13).

**Table 13.** Universal Dependency relations.<sup>87</sup>

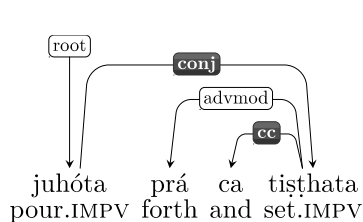
	Nominals	Clauses	Modifier words	Function words
Core Arguments	nsubj obj iobj	csubj ccomp xcomp		
Non-core dependents	obl vocative expl* dislocated	advcl	advmod discourse	aux cop mark
Nominal dependents	nmod appos nummod	acl	amod	det clf* case
Coordination	MWE <sup>88</sup>	Loose	Special	Other
conj cc	fixed flat compound	list* parataxis	orphan goeswith* reparandum	punct* root dep

<sup>86</sup> The latest version (2.8, released May 15, 2021) includes 202 treebanks of 114 languages.

<sup>87</sup> *Deprels* marked with an asterisk are not employed in the annotation of the VTB. Abbreviations: `acl` ‘adjectival clause’ (clause modifier of noun), `advcl` ‘adverbial clause modifier’, `advmod` ‘adverbial modifier’, `amod` ‘adjectival modifier’, `appos` ‘apposition’, `aux` ‘auxiliary’, `case` ‘case marking’, `cc` ‘coordinating conjunction’, `ccomp` ‘clausal complement’, `clf` ‘classifier’, `compound`, `conj` ‘conjunct’, `cop` ‘copula’, `csubj` ‘clausal subject’, `dep` ‘unspecified dependency’, `det` ‘determiner’, `discourse` ‘discourse element’, `dislocated` ‘dislocated element’, `expl` ‘expletive’, `fixed` ‘fixed multiword expression’, `flat` ‘flat multiword expression’, `goeswith` ‘goes with’, `iobj` ‘indirect object’, `list`, `mark` ‘marker’, `nmod` ‘nominal modifier’, `nsubj` ‘nominal subject’, `nummod` ‘numeral modifier’, `obj` ‘object’, `obl` ‘oblique’, `orphan` ‘orphaned dependent’, `parataxis`, `punct` ‘punctuation’, `reparandum` ‘overridden disfluency’, `root`, `vocative`, `xcomp` ‘open clausal complement’.

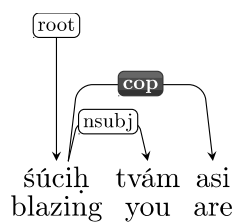
<sup>88</sup> Multi-word expression: sequences of words which, in different degrees, behave as a single lexical unit. Three kinds of them are distinguished and given three different relations: `fixed` links together grammaticalized sequences of function words, `flat` is used to analyze exocentric expression like names, titles, and honorifics, whereas `compound` is used for (mostly endocentric) compounded words. Considered the peculiarities of compounding in Vedic, the `compound` relation is used differently in the VTB (see Hellwig et al. 2020; cf. also Biagetti 2018).

The following principles are observed in the annotation to maximize parallelism while accounting for differences between languages. Dependency relations hold primarily between content words, rather than being mediated by function words (*primacy of content words*).<sup>89</sup> Thus, case-marking elements like prepositions, postpositions, and clitic case markers are treated as dependents of the nouns they attach to or introduce (*case*). Coordination follows a similar treatment, with the leftmost conjunct as the head, and other conjuncts as well as the coordinating conjunction depending on it via *conj* and *cc* respectively (Figure 9). Finally, auxiliary verbs and copulas are not the head of the clause but depend on the lexical predicate (Figure 10).



‘Pour and set it forth.’ (RV 1.15.9b)

**Figure 9.** Coordination.



‘You are blazing pure’ (RV 9.88.8)

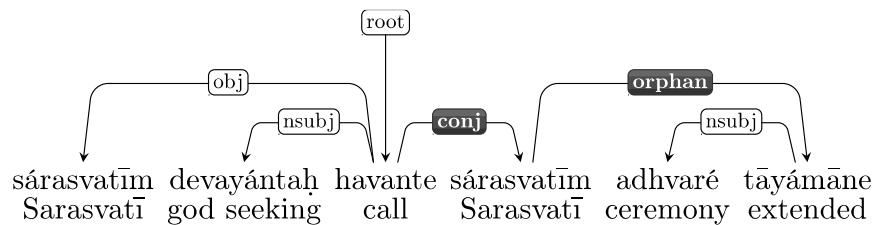
**Figure 10.** Copula annotation.

In UD, the treatment of central dependency relations between content words is based on the distinction between core arguments (subjects, objects, clausal complements) and obliques. Even if the major role of syntactic analysis is to represent function, the scheme also provides for some structural analysis, distinguishing between a) nominal phrases, b) clauses headed by a predicate, and c) different kinds of modifier words. This distinction is clearly encoded in dependency labels. For example, if a verb is taking an adverbial modifier, it may bear one of three relations a) *obl*, b) *advcl*, or c) *advmod* depending on which of the three categories above it belongs to. In the same way, the core grammatical relations differentiate core arguments that are clauses, such as *csubj* or *ccomp*, from those that are nominal phrases, such as *nsubj* and *obj*.

Within clausal dependents, UD does not distinguish between finite and non-finite clauses. Instead, a distinction is made between clausal dependents that feature obligatory control (*xcomp*) and those that do not (*ccomp*) as well as between clausal subjects and adverbs (*csubj*, *advcl*), which have verbal attachment, and clausal modifiers of nouns (*acl*, *acl:rel*).

<sup>89</sup> This decision is motivated by the observation that marking relations between content words maximizes parallelism. Indeed, the same grammatical relation can be expressed by morphology in some languages or constructions and by function words in other languages or constructions, while some languages may not mark the information at all.

The principle of the primacy of content words has consequences on the annotation of ellipsis. Differently from other formalisms based on dependency grammar, such as the PROIEL scheme (Haug and Jøhndal 2008), UD does not make use of empty nodes to represent ellipsis or gapping. Instead, UD marks all kinds of ellipsis by promoting a member of the elliptical clause to the head position on the base of a “coreness” hierarchy.<sup>90</sup> The promoted member takes the syntactic relation that the elided element would otherwise bear; to signal that the dependency structure is incomplete, all non-promoted dependents of the elided element receive the relation `orphan`. Take for instance Figure 11, which represents the treatment of ellipsis in coordination: as a consequence of the elision of the verb *havante* ‘they call’ in the second conjunct, the object *sarasvatīm* ‘Sarasvatī’ is promoted to the head position of the coordinate clause (`conj`), whereas the adjunct *tāyamāne* depends on it via the relation `orphan`.

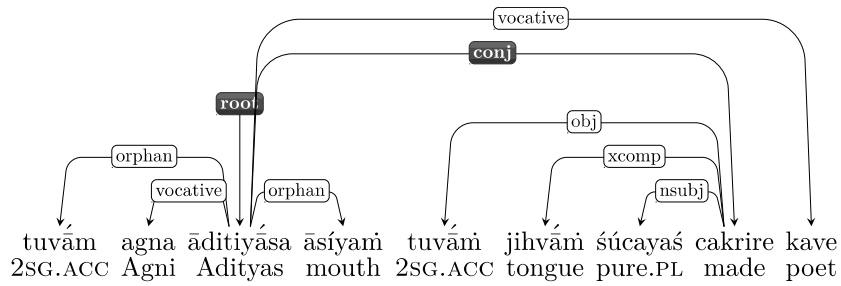


‘Sarasvatī do those seeking the gods invoke, Sarasvatī when the ceremony is being extended.’ (ṚV 10.17.7)

**Figure 11.** Annotation scheme for verb ellipsis.

In the case of leftward gapping, the dependent which in the first conjunct has the highest rank is promoted to the “new-head” position, while the second conjunct, i.e. the one bearing the verb, is connected to the new head via `conj` and does not require any `orphan` relation. This is shown by Figure 12, where the subject *ādityāsaḥ* ‘the Adityas’ is promoted to the root position, the object *tuvām* ‘you’ and the predicative *āśiyam* ‘mouth’ take the relation `orphan`, whereas the verb *cakrire* ‘they made’ is linked to the root via `conj`.

<sup>90</sup> Orphaned dependents are considered for promotion in the following order: `nsubj` > `obj` > `iobj` > `obl` > `advmod` > `csubj` > `xcomp` > `ccomp` > `advcl` > `dislocated` > `vocative`.

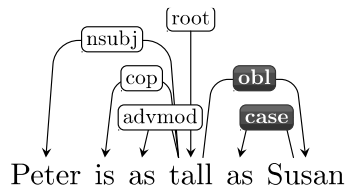


‘The Adityas made you their mouth, o Agni, the pure ones made you their tongue, o poet!’ (ṚV 2.1.13ab)

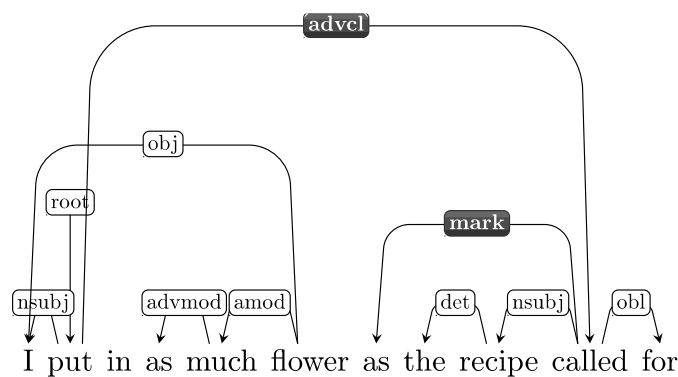
**Figure 12.** Annotation scheme for leftward gapping in coordination.

### 7.1.3 Similes annotation scheme

UD guidelines provide annotation schemes for basic equatives and for clausal ones. In the former, the standard is linked to the parameter via the relation `obl`, while the standard marker depends on the standard via the relation `case` (Figure 13). In clausal comparison, the verb of the comparative clause is attached to the main verb through the relation `advcl`, the standard marker depending on it via `mark` (Figure 14).



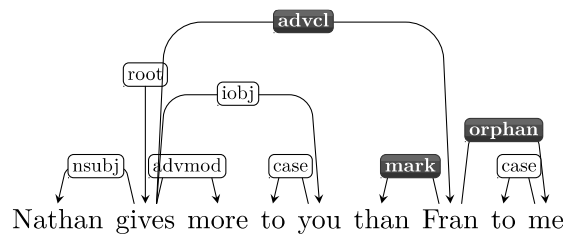
**Figure 13.** Annotation scheme for basic comparatives.



**Figure 14.** Annotation scheme for clausal comparatives.

The annotation of gapping structure in comparative clauses is mentioned in the report of a working group dedicated to comparative constructions. The report provides the sentence in Figure 15 as an

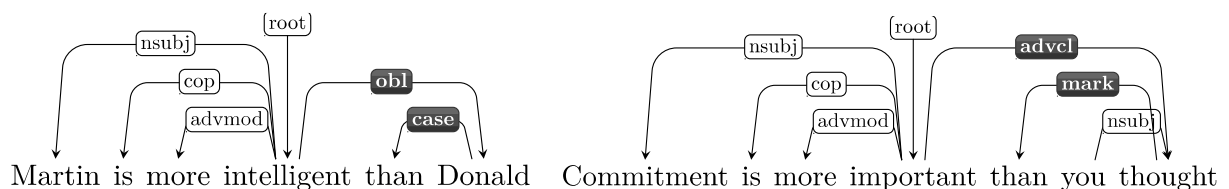
example of gapping in comparative clauses and suggests analyzing such comparative gapping using the `orphan` relation, much like the more widespread gapping in coordination.



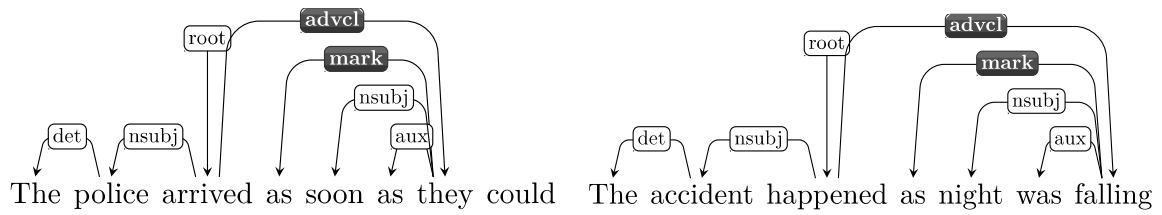
**Figure 15.** Annotation scheme for gapping in comparison.

As we have seen in Chapter 6.1.1.1, Ṛgvedic similes introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* systematically lack a verb in the standard clause. From a descriptive point of view (i.e. for the purposes of annotation) it is useful to analyze simple similes as cases of verb ellipses in which the promoted element has no dependents, and double and or triple similes as cases of gapping, in which the second remnant is attached to the promoted one with the relation `orphan`.

In UD, there are no relations designed specifically to mark equative and similitive constructions. First of all, UD employs the same scheme for equality and inequality comparison, as shown by the annotation of the two comparative constructions in Figure 16. Furthermore, phrasal comparatives are simply assimilated to other obliques (`obl`), whereas comparative clauses are treated in the same way as other adverbial clauses (`advcl`). Similarly, standard markers take the same *deprel* as other function words such as adpositions (`case`) and subordinating conjunctions (`mark`). Take for instance the two trees in Figure 17, where the clausal comparative contained in the first sentence takes the same labels as the temporal clause contained in the second; in fact, the same annotation scheme is employed for adverbial clause modifiers of all types.



**Figure 16.** Annotation scheme for basic and clausal comparison of inequality.



**Figure 17.** Annotation scheme for adverbial clause modifiers. Left: comparison; right: temporal clause.

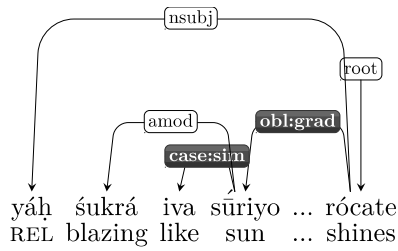
Since the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* have other functions beside that of standard marker (see Chapter 6.1.3), and since comparison is also expressed by other strategies (Chapter 6.1.2), it was necessary to increase the informativeness of the annotation, in order to be able to make granular and targeted queries on different types of constructions.

In order to represent the syntax of similes in detail, the VTB distinguishes the following subtypes of comparative constructions:

**Table 14.** Comparative constructions with their respective annotation.

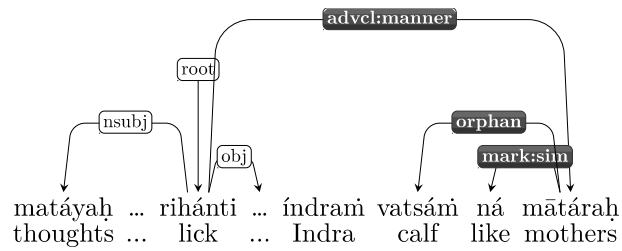
CONSTRUCTION	EXAMPLE	ANNOTATION (dependent → relation → head)
PREDICATIVE SIM.	‘Agni is like the sun.’	<i>like</i> → case:sim → <i>sun</i> <i>Agni</i> → nsubj → <i>sun</i>
SIM. WITH ELLIPSIS	‘Agni shines like the sun.’	<i>like</i> → case:sim → <i>sun</i> → obl:grad → <i>shines</i>
	‘The lightning bellows like a cow.’	<i>like</i> → case:sim → <i>cow</i> → obl:manner → <i>bellow</i>
SIM. WITH GAPPING	‘Thoughts lick Indra like mothers a calf.’	<i>like</i> → mark:sim → <i>mothers</i> → advcl:manner → <i>lick</i> ; <i>calf</i> → orphan → <i>mothers</i>
CLAUSAL SIM.	‘Just as you drank the previous soma drinks, so take a drink today.’	<i>as</i> → mark → <i>drank</i> → advcl:manner → <i>drink</i> ; <i>previous drinks</i> → obj → <i>drank</i> ; <i>so</i> → advmod → <i>drink</i>

As shown by Table 14, the VTB formally distinguishes similes with ellipsis (annotated with *obl* and *case*) from similes with gapping (annotated with *advcl* and *mark*).



‘He (Agni) who shines like the blazing sun [...]’ (ṚV 1.43.5ab)

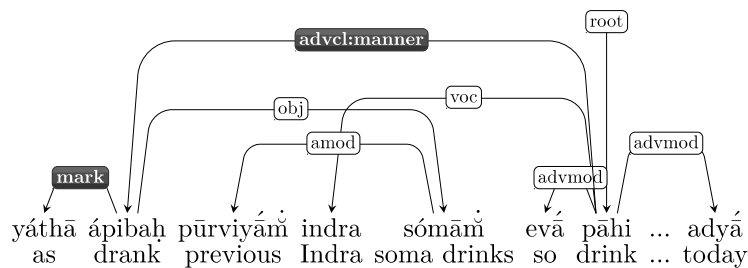
**Figure 18.** Annotation scheme for similes with ellipsis.



‘Thoughts lick Indra [...] like mothers a calf.’ (ṚV 3.41.5)

**Figure 19.** Annotation scheme for similes with gapping.

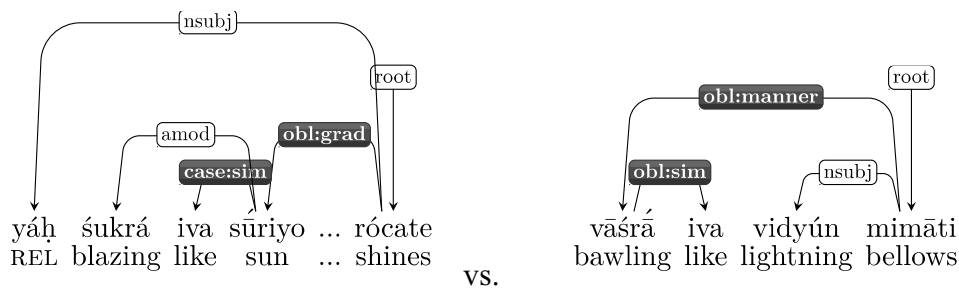
In addition to the universal dependency taxonomy, UD allows the employment of language-specific extensions that capture peculiar constructions found in a given language or in a group of languages. These extensions are regarded as subtypes of existing UD relations and have the format `universal:extension`: for instance, `obl:manner` stands for the language-specific `manner` extension of the UD relation `obl`. In the VTB, the sublabel `:sim` attached to the relations `case` and `mark` allows the user to easily retrieve all particles that introduce basic similes and to distinguish them from those that introduce clausal similes (which take `mark` alone). Compare for instance the annotation of basic similes like those in Figure 18 and Figure 19 with that of a clausal simile like the one in Figure 20:



‘Just as you drank the previous soma drinks, Indra, so take a drink today [...]’ (ṚV 3.36.3cd)

**Figure 20.** Annotation scheme for clausal similes.

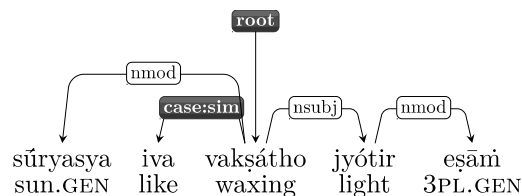
Finally, the sublabels `:grad` and `:manner` added to the relations `obl` and `advcl` allow, on the one hand, to distinguish standards of comparison from other kinds of adverbial modifiers, and, on the other hand, to distinguish between quantitative (`:grad`) and qualitative comparison (`:manner`). Since, as we have seen in Chapter 6, Vedic employs the same standard marker for equative and similatives, the sublabels `:grad` and `:manner` were given on a lexical basis, e.g. to gradable vs. non gradable adjectives respectively. This distinction was meant to point out any syntactic differences in the expression of quantitative and qualitative comparison, for example in the order of constituents.



‘He who shines like the blazing sun.’ (1.43.5ab); ‘Like a bawling (cow) the lightning bellows.’ (1.38.8a)

**Figure 21.** Annotation scheme for quantitative (`:grad`) and qualitative (`:manner`) comparison.

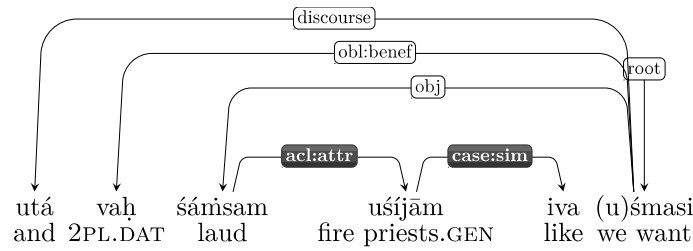
As we have seen in Chapter 6, constructions characterized by ellipsis and gapping that were presented above do not exhaust the forms that Ṛgvedic similes can take. Thanks to the annotation scheme presented above, predicative similes are easily retrieved from the corpus by looking for all those constructions whose head does *not* take any of the `obl:manner`, `obl:grad`, or `advcl:manner` relations, but nevertheless governs one of the three particles via the relation `case:sim` or `mark:sim`. As Figure 22 and Figure 23 show, this query returns both similes that constitute the sentence main predication (in which case their head is the `root`), and those that function as a secondary predicate (in which case the relation of the head is variable).



‘Their light is like the waxing of the sun.’ (ṚV 7.33.8a)

**Figure 22.** Predicative simile, head = `root`.

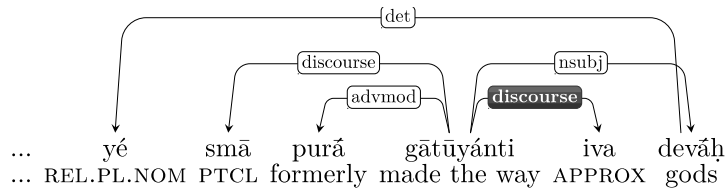




‘And we want a laud for you (that is) like that of the fire-priests.’ (ṚV 2.31.6a)

**Figure 23.** Predicative simile, head = secondary predicate (*acl:attr*).

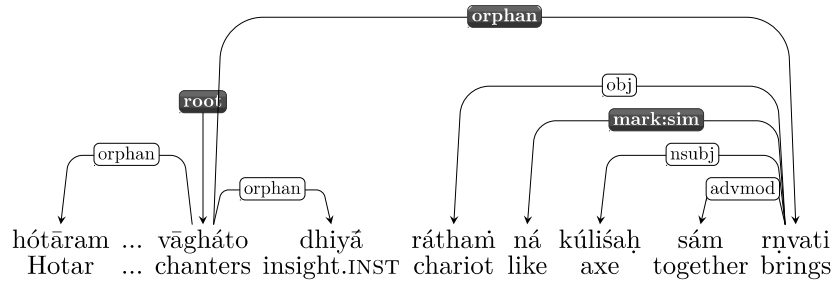
In cases in which *iva* e *ná* function as approximation markers, they depend on their head via the relation *discourse*, which in UD is reserved to discourse markers. For instance, in Figure 24 *iva* modifies the verb and depends on it via the relation *discourse*.



‘... the gods who up till now have provided the way, as it were.’ (ṚV 1.169.5d)

**Figure 24.** Annotation of *iva* as approximation marker (*discourse*).

In the following sections we will come across cases in which word order and especially verbal agreement suggest that the verb is exceptionally constructed with the standard rather than with the comparee. As shown by Figure 25, these cases are also captured by the annotation scheme. In this example, we would expect a plural verb *\*sám ṛṇvanti* in agreement with the nominative plural *vāghátas* ‘chanters’; on the contrary, the verb *sám ṛṇvati* ‘bring’.PRS.3SG agrees with the nominative singular *kúliśaḥ* ‘axe’ which constitutes the standard of the simile. As a whole, the sentence is treated similarly to a case of leftward gapping in coordination (see Section 7.12, Figure 12): as a consequence of the lack of the verb in the comparee, the subject *vāghátas* is promoted to the *root* position, while the object *hótāram*, the adjunct *dhiyá*, as well as the verb contained in the standard depend on it via the relation *orphan*.



‘As an axe brings together a chariot, the chanters (bring together) with their insight the Hotar.’ (ṚV 3.2.1cd)

**Figure 25.** Annotation of similes whose verb is constructed with STAND.

#### 7.1.4 Methodological note: ambiguity in Ṛgvedic similes

The results of the IAA-task performed on the second version of the VTB was an opportunity to reflect on the potential of treebanks in the study of ancient languages in general and of Ṛgvedic syntax in particular. As is well known, a methodological aspect that differentiates the creation of treebanks for modern languages from that of treebanks for ancient languages is the fact that we cannot rely on speakers’ judgment for the latter. Therefore, while it is true that syntactic ambiguity is present in all languages, for ancient languages its resolution is entrusted to the judgment of scholars, who can rely on linguistic context and secondary literature, but not on their own intuition as speakers.

In reading the ṚV, we sometimes get the impression that poets deliberately employed syntactic ambiguity to achieve effects which are typical of this text, such as the superimposition of different narrative levels in the same passage or the fondness for riddles. Take for instance ṚV 4.1.9a, which Brereton and Jamison (2020: 180-181) see as an instance of deliberate ambiguity:

(1) *sá cetayat mánuṣo yajñá-bandhuḥ*  
 3SG.NOM perceive.INJ.PRS.3SG man.ACC.PL/GEN.SG sacrifice-tie.NOM

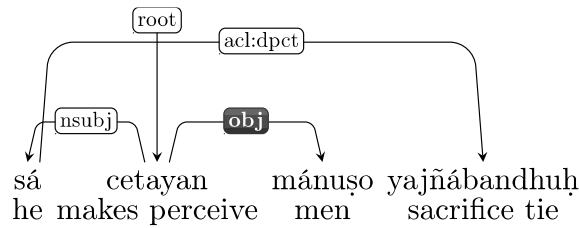
1. ‘He [=Agni] makes **men** perceive [=instructs them], as their tie to the sacrifice **of Manu.**’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. ‘Als der Opfergenosse **des Manu** erleuchtete er **die Menschen.**’ (Geldner 1951)

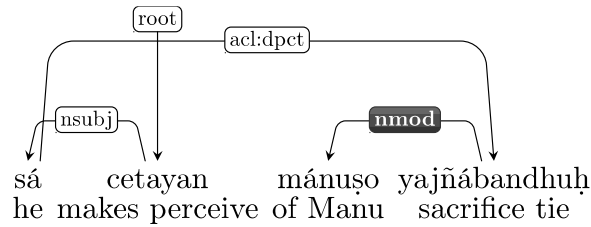
(ṚV 4.1.9a)

The form *mánuṣaḥ* (*mánuṣo* in the example due to *sandhi*) belongs to the stem *mánus-*, which means both ‘man’ and ‘Manu’ (the name of the first man and sacrificer). In this nominal paradigm, the ending *-aḥ* marks both the genitive singular and the accusative plural. Since in ṚV 4.1.9a the form *mánuṣaḥ* occurs between the transitive verb *cetayat* ‘he makes perceive’ and the compound *yajñá-bandhuḥ* ‘tie to the sacrifice’, the two translations of Geldner (1951) and Jamison and Brereton (2014) agree in giving it a double interpretation: in this passage, it is both object of the preceding verb

(accusative plural ‘men’/‘die Menschen’) and a possessive modifier of the compound (genitive ‘of Manu’/‘des Manu’). Even if we accept the scholarly belief that the passage is deliberately ambiguous – since we are no native speakers, it may be that we see ambiguity even where there was none –, treebank annotation forces us to choose only one of the two functions of *mánuṣaḥ*, as shown by the graphs in Figure 26 and Figure 27.



**Figure 26.** Labelled graph for *mánuṣaḥ*.ACC.PL ‘men’ as object of *cetayat*.



**Figure 27.** Labelled graph for *mánuṣaḥ*.GEN.SG ‘of Manu’ as modifier of *yajñābandhuḥ*.

While annotating similes, one is often faced with similar dilemmas, especially if, following Geldner or Jamison and Brereton, one wishes to restore null arguments in the comparee or in the standard. Take for instance the simile in example (2):

- (2) *súryo*                      *raśmím*                      *yáthā* *srja*  
 sun.NOM                      ray/rein.ACC                      like    let\_loose.IMPV.PRS.2SG  
 ‘Like the sun its ray, let loose [your rein].’

(RV 8.32.23a)

The noun *raśmím*, is to be intended as ‘rein’ in the comparee and as ‘ray’ in the standard, where it occurs next to the nominative *súryas* ‘sun’. However, the zeugma cannot be reproduced in the treebank, where each word in the sentence must depend on exactly one word. Since it stands between the genitive and the standard marker *yáthā*, *raśmím* belongs syntactically to the standard and receives the label `orphan`, as usual in similes with gapping (see Section 7.1.3 above); the main predicate *srja* ‘let loose’ takes no overt object, as shown in Figure 28:

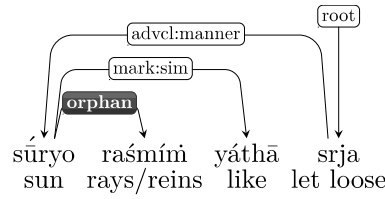


Figure 28. Annotation of ṚV 8.32.23a

A slightly different case is represented by example (3), where the word *padām* is a pun meaning both ‘track/footstep’ and ‘word’. As in the previous example, the word in question belongs syntactically to the standard of the simile since it is followed by the standard marker *ná*. The word *ápagūḷham* ‘hidden’, on the other hand, can be considered either a substantivized participle functioning as the object of the participle *vividvān* ‘having found’, or as a modifier of *padām* in the standard, in which case the participle takes no overt object. The two options are represented in Figure 29 and Figure 30 respectively; looking at the phraseology employed in the ṚV to refer to sacred knowledge and poetry, *padām ... gór ápagūḷham* should probably be taken as a single phrase referring to the arduous pursuit of cryptic meaning by way of verbal art (Jamison and Brereton 2014: 565; cf. also the introduction to Part 3)

(3) <i>padām</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>gór</i>	<i>ápagūḷham</i>	<i>vividvān</i>		
footstep/word(N).ACC	like	cow(F).GEN	hide.PPP.ACC.N	find.PTCP.PF.NOM		
<i>agnír</i>	<i>máhyam</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>id</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>vocan</i>	<i>manīṣām</i>
Agni.NOM	1SG.DAT	LP	PTC	PTC	proclaim.INJ.AOR.3SG	thought(F).ACC

‘Having found the word hidden like the track of the cow, Agni has proclaimed the inspired thought to me.’

(ṚV 4.5.3cd)

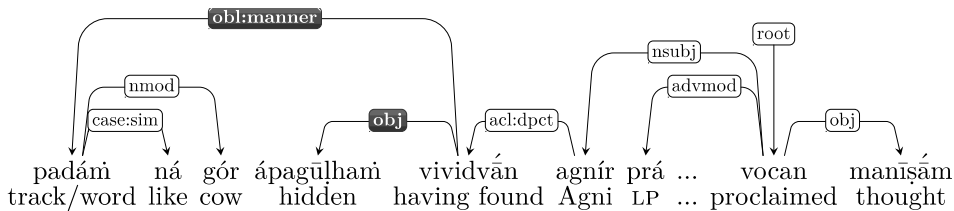
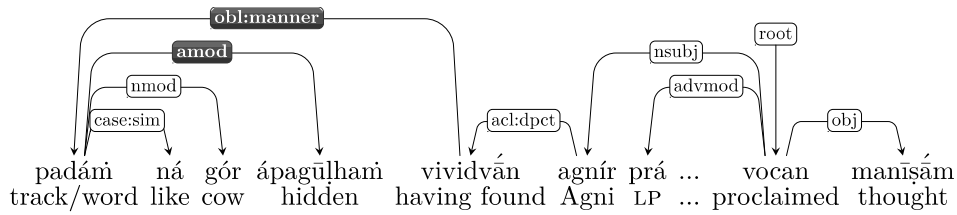


Figure 29. Annotation of *ápagūḷham* as part of the CPREE.



**Figure 30.** Annotation of *āpagūlhami* as part of the STAND.

As we have seen In Section 7.1.1, the evaluation task showed that sentence segmentation constitutes a major source of disagreement among annotators of the VTB. However, a more detailed analysis revealed that different agreement scores were reached for the six texts contained in the sample.

**Table 15.** Numbers of cases in which all three annotators agree (column 2) / in which at least one annotator disagrees (column 3) about sentence boundaries, split by the six texts from which samples were drawn.

	Agreement	Disagreement
AB	28	29
AVŚ	26	20
BĀU	56	51
MS	12	24
<b>ṚV</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4</b>
ŚB	43	76

In Table 15, (dis-)agreement scores for sentence segmentation are split by the annotated texts. The “Agreement” column reports the number of sentences that are segmented in the same way by all three annotators, while the “Disagreement” column contains the remaining cases. The table shows that a significantly higher agreement score was reached for the two metrical texts, and especially for the ṚV, than for the four prose texts. This result does not come as a surprise: due to editorial conventions,<sup>91</sup> prose texts usually contain longer text lines, which are more likely to receive different segmentations. On the other hand, it has been shown that metrical units (marked by *daṇḍas* and double *daṇḍas*) and linguistic units usually coincide in the ṚV, since clauses tend to be comprised within the boundaries of a verse, hemistich, or text line (Dunkel 1985; Gunkel and Ryan 2018). For instance, verses consisting of trimeters, such as the *triṣṭubh* and the *jagatī*, contain complex sentences which exhibit coordinative and subordinating strategies. On the contrary, verses consisting of

<sup>91</sup> As we have seen above, the DCS reproduces the traditional division of texts by means *daṇḍas* and double *daṇḍas*, which in prose are used to organize the text in macro-units such as books, chapters, and paragraphs, but not into syntactic units.

dimeters, such as the *gāyatrī*, tend to encapsulate syntactically simple clauses. Finally, there are very few examples of syntactic enjambment between verses, which occur in highly dramatic contexts for expressive purposes (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 189).

If it is true that metrical and syntactic boundaries tend to coincide in the ṚV, this is even more so in the case of Ṛgvedic similes, which never override the boundary of a single verse. More precisely, the standard tends to be included within a single *pāda* and, when the parameter does not belong to the same *pāda*, it tends to occur in an adjacent one in octosyllabic meters, or in the same hemistich in trimeters. Take for instance the simile in (2) above, whose standard and parameter constitute a single *pāda*, and the one in (4), whose standard and parameter belong to the same hemistich. With this respect, the simile in (5), whose standard spans *pādas* c and d of a *jagatī*, constitutes a very rare exception.

- (4) *ádhvaryavaḥ páyasa údhar yáthā góḥ*  
 Adhvaryus.VOC milk(N).INST udder(N).NOM like cow(F).GEN  
*sómebhir īm pṛṇatā bhojám índram*  
 soma.INST PTC fill.IMPV.PRS.2PL provider.ACC Indra.ACC  
 ‘Adhvaryus! Like the udder of a cow with milk, fill Indra the Provider with soma juices.’  
 (ṚV 2.14.10ab)
- (5) *sá no duhīyad yávasā iva gatvī*  
 3SG.NOM.F 1PL.DAT give\_milk.OPT.PRS.3SG.MID milk(N).ACC.PL like go.ABS  
*sahásradhārū páyasā mahī gauḥ*  
 th\_streamed.NOM.F milk(N).INST great.NOM.F cow(F).NOM  
 ‘She [the sacrificial goddess worthy of the sacrifice] should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams who has gone to the pastures.’  
 (ṚV 10.101.9cd)

Although sentence boundaries do not seem constitute a major problem, other sources of disagreement that were pointed out during the evaluation task are met when annotating Ṛgvedic similes. Above all is the difficulty of determining the function of nouns, adjectives, and compounds within a nominal sequence. As argued in Biagetti et al. (2021) on the base of the evaluation sample, the context alone often does not make up for the lack of unambiguous grammatical cues (e.g. agreement, word order) and for our imperfect knowledge of word order constraints in the domain of modification and secondary prediction. When annotating similes, this results in the impossibility of determining in each case which element is part of the standard and which of the comparee, and in which syntactic



33 but also as in Figure 34. Both interpretations are indeed possible, since the standard ‘like cows to(wards) their calf’ is attested elsewhere with both motion and emission verbs (see e.g.  $\sqrt{\text{nakṣ}}$ - ‘approach’ in ṚV 6.45.28 and  $\sqrt{\text{nū}}$ - ‘bellow’ in ṚV 6.45.25).

(7) <i>vāśrā</i>		<i>aṛṣanti</i>		<i>īndavo</i>
bellowing.NOM.PL.F		rush.PRS.3PL		drop(F).NOM
<i>abhí</i>	<i>vatsám</i>	<i>ná</i>		<i>dhenávaḥ</i>
LP	calf.ACC	like		milk-cow.NOM.PL.F

1. ‘Bellowing like cows to their calf, the drops rush.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
2. ‘Bellowing, the drops rush like cows to their calf.’

(ṚV 9.13.7ab)

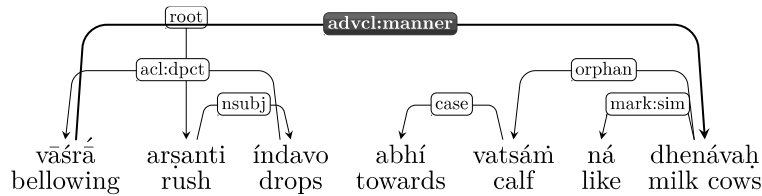


Figure 33. ‘Bellowing like cows to their calf, the drops rush.’

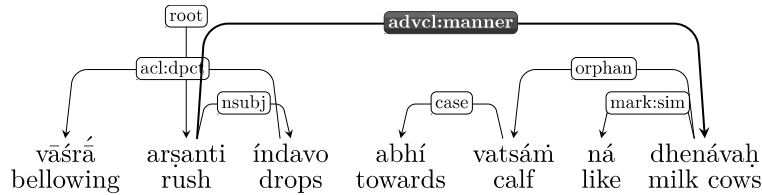


Figure 34. ‘Bellowing, the drops **rush like** cows to their calf.’

This methodological note should serve to demonstrate that, by choosing to analyze Ṛgvedic similes through the annotation contained in a treebank, one accepts not to compromise in the case of syntactically ambiguous passages such as those presented above. While this may have the disadvantage of discarding possible interpretations already during the annotation process, this disadvantage is offset by other research possibilities offered by treebanks. As we should see in the following sections, treebank annotation has indeed the further advantage of allowing queries that combine multiple parameters and to rethink the kind of question that we want to ask the corpus also when the annotation process has already begun or once it has come to an end.

As far as the annotation of the ṚV is concerned, we have seen that the evaluation task has given better results for this text than for the other five texts contained in the VTB. To minimize the



risk of inconsistency, similes analyzed in this work were mostly annotated by myself, whereas those annotated by a second annotator have been fully revised by me.<sup>94</sup>

## 7.2 Synchronic syntax of Ṛgvedic similes

Apart from general information such as the enclitic behavior of the standard marker, which is presented in all studies on Ṛgvedic similes (see Chapter 5), the syntax of these constructions has been dealt with in sparse publications and from different points of view and there is still no unified account of the different issues raised by the literature. In the next sections, I will explore two issues that have been repeatedly reported in the literature, but which have not yet received an answer. In Section 7.2.1, I will discuss a group of similes characterized by discontinuous (or “interrupted”) standards. In Section 7.2.2, I will explore word-order correlations between standard, parameter, and comparee and ask which factors may be responsible for the choice of one order over the others.

### 7.2.1 Internal Syntax: discontinuous standards

In Chapters 5 and 6, we have seen that when they function as standard markers, the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* generally follow the standard and that, if the latter is a complex phrase, they follow the first element of that phrase. Although this holds true for most cases, there are similes in the ṚV whose standard seems to be “interrupted” by other elements, a possibility already noted by Bergaigne (1886; cf. Chapter 5.2, examples (10) and (11)).

#### 7.2.1.1 Constraints in the syntax of *iva* clauses

For similes taking *iva* as standard marker, these cases were brought to attention again by Hale (2010). Hale is moved by the desire to fully understand the internal syntax of what he calls “*iva* clauses”, that is, standards of similes introduced by *iva*, in order to find the right interpretation of some ambiguous passages. One of such passages is AVP 6.6.6ab in (8):

- (8) *sindhu-prajāno*                      *madhugho*  
 Sindhu-born.NOM.M                      Madhugha.NOM  
*aśva*                      *iva*                      *nīyate*                      *janām*                      *anu*  
 horse.NOM                      like                      lead.PRS.3SG.PASS                      man.ACC.PL                      LP  
 ‘Madhugha is led like a Sindhu-born horse among men.’ (Griffiths 2009: 84)

<sup>94</sup> I would like to thank Andrea Farina who, as part of an internship carried out during the Master’s Degree in Linguistics at the University of Pavia, assisted me in annotating part of the similes.

In view of BĀU 6.1.13 *mahāsuḥayaḥ saindhavaḥ* and ŚāṅkhĀ 9.7 *saindhavaḥ suḥayaḥ* ‘a (great) prize-stallion from the Indus region’, Griffiths (2009: 84) suggests taking the adjective *sindhuprajāna-* ‘Sindhu-born’ with *aśva-* ‘horse’ in the next *pāda*. However, since in AVP 7.12.4ab the same adjective modifies the word for ‘flower’ (*puṣpa-*), and since *madhugha-* in (8) is a flower, Hale concludes that *sindhuprajāna-* could fit both *aśva-* and *madhugha-*.

In order to disambiguate the scope of the adjective, one should ask whether *iva* is properly positioned a) under the interpretation which takes *sindhuprajāna-* as a modifier of *madhugha-*, b) under the interpretation which takes *sindhuprajāna-* as a modifier of *aśva-*, or c) under both interpretations. Furthermore, since taking *sindhuprajāna-* as a modifier of *aśva-* results in a discontinuity of the standard, we should ask whether this kind of discontinuity is allowed by the syntax of similes or if there are some relevant constraints with this respect. Extending the question to other ambiguous cases, two word-order issues about *iva*-clauses can be asked (Hale 2010):

- a) What are the word order possibilities of the elements which make up the *iva* clause? That is, what is the internal syntax of the *iva* clause?
- b) What determines where *iva* is placed amongst the elements of its clause? That is, what is the syntax of *iva* itself, and how does this relate to, e.g., more general Wackernagel’s Law-like phenomena?

Starting from the positioning of *iva*, Macdonell (1916: *s.v.*) and GRA (*s.v.*) observed that the particle can occasionally be delayed after the second word of the standard, as in (9); furthermore, Hale provides examples of *iva* occurring after the third word of the standard, as in (10).

(9) <i>pári</i>	<i>viśvāni</i>	<i>kāvīyā</i>		
LP	all.ACC.PL.N	wisdom(N).ACC.PL		
<b><i>nemís</i></b>	<b><i>cakrá</i></b>	<b><i>iva</i></b>	<b><i>abhavat</i></b>	
rim(F).NOM	wheel(M/N).ACC	like	be.IMPF.3SG	
‘He surrounds all wisdoms, like the rim (surrounds) the wheel.’				

(RV 2.5.3cd)

(10) <b><i>parṇā</i></b>	<b><i>mṛgāsya</i></b>	<b><i>patáror</i></b>	<b><i>iva</i></b>	<b><i>ārabhe</i></b>
feather(N).ACC.PL	wild.GEN	flying.GEN	like	grab.DAT
‘[What tree emerged in the midst of the flood to which the son of Tugra clung in his distress,]				

to grab hold of its leaves as if to the feathers of a wild bird in flight?’

(ṚV 1.182.7c)

Turning to discontinuity of the standard, Hale demonstrates on the base of a series of examples (cf. e.g. (11) and (12)) that the only open-class lexical item which interrupt an *iva* clause is the verb, which may be accompanied by its preverb. More rarely, as Oldenberg (1907) had already noted, the preverb alone may intervene, as in (13).

- (11) *ráthair*                      *iva*    ***prá***    ***bhare***                      *vājayádbhiḥ*  
 chariot.INST.PL            like    LP       bring.PRS.1SG.MID       prize\_seeking.INST.PL  
 ‘I hasten forth as if with prize-seeking chariots.’

(ṚV 5.60.1c)

- (12) *yád*    *eṣaam*            *anyó*            *anyásya*            *vācam*  
 when    DEM.GEN.PL    other.NOM       other.GEN            speech(F).ACC  
*śāktásya*       *iva*    ***vádati***                      *śíkṣamāṇaḥ*  
 teacher.GEN    like    speak.PRS.3SG            learn.DES.PTCP.PRS.NOM.MID  
 ‘Once one of them speaks the speech of the other, like a pupil that of his teacher.’

(ṚV 7.103.5ab)

- (13) *yahvā́*                      *iva*    ***prá***    *vayám*                      *ujjīhānāḥ*  
 young.NOM.PL            like    LP       branch(F).ACC            rise.PTCP.PRS.NOM.PL  
***prá***    *bhānávaḥ*                      *sisrate*                      *nákam*            *ácha*  
 LP       beam.NOM.PL            advance.PRS.2PL.MID       vault.ACC       LP  
 ‘Like young (birds) rising toward a branch, his radiant beams leap forth to heaven’s vault.’

(ṚV 5.1.1cd)

From the examples above, we get the impression that, when the standard displays discontinuity, *iva* invariably follows the first element. Thus, although postponement of *iva* after the first element is generally possible, it is not clear that it is also possible in discontinuous standards. If these observations hold true, *sindhuprajāna-* in AVP 6.6.6ab must be interpreted with *madhugha-* and not with *aśva-*; otherwise, we would have a discontinuous *iva* clause interrupted by an open-class element (*madhugha-*) which is not a verb and, in spite of the discontinuity, *iva* would be postponed after the third element of the standard.

Hale takes the above observations on the syntax of *iva* clauses as a clue to trace a possible diachrony of these constructions and suggests that two of the peculiar properties of *iva* clauses, namely, that they allow interruption only by verb forms and that *iva* cannot itself introduce a verb,

may be related. In examples with an “interrupting” verb it is sometimes clear that the verb belongs to the main clause, for it only agrees with the comparee (see e.g. the first-person verb in (11)). Sometimes, however, the verb agrees with both the standard and the comparee, so that we could interpret it with either of the two; this is most common when both standard and comparee are third-person arguments, as in example (12) above.

On the basis of these observations, Hale suggests that *iva* could originally introduce a verb that, being often identical with the verb in the comparee, was frequently gapped. Furthermore, Hale (2010: 6) argues that, when not gapped and fitting either clause, “the verb would be ambiguous as to whether it was the main clause predicate, or the *iva* clause predicate. If a speaker wrongly concluded that it was the main clause verb, (s)he would then need to allow main clause verbs to intervene amongst the elements of the *iva* clause. This speaker would then begin to insert unambiguously main clause verbs into *iva* clauses (but only verbs, or their substitutes, the preverbs).” The double preverb *prá* in (13) may be a trace of the original gapping structure of *iva* clauses, before it became, in Hale’s view, the clitic version of *yáthā*.

At this point, at least three questions arise:

- a) Can we observe the same constraints in the syntax of *ná* and *yáthā* clauses? Since for these constructions the original presence of a verb has already been demonstrated (see Chapter 8.1), a detailed analysis of the syntax of these similes could shed light on the situation observed for standards marked by *iva*.
- b) Are there cases of interruption in which the verb is clearly constructed with the *iva* clause, and not ambiguous between standard and comparee?
- c) Before assuming that standards marked by *iva* initially contained a verb, can we interpret interruption in *iva* clauses as cases in which one element of the standard is displaced to the right for syntactic or pragmatic reasons?

#### 7.2.1.2 Constraints in the syntax of *ná* and *yáthā* clauses

Starting from question a), the position of *ná* and *yáthā/yathā* with respect to the standard is the same observed by Hale for *iva*. Both particles, which usually occur after the first element of the standard, can be delayed after the second element, as in examples (14) and (15), and after the third one, as shown by examples (16) and (17); note however that the latter possibility is attested only twice for *ná*<sup>95</sup> and once with *yáthā*. In ṚV 10.134.6, *yáthā* exceptionally occurs after four words belonging to the standard.

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. also ṚV 3.22.1.

- (14) *ā tvā pṛṇaktu indriyām*  
 LP 2SG.ACC permeate.IMPV.3SG Indrian\_strength(N).NOM  
*rājāḥ sūryo ná raśmībhiḥ*  
 realm(N).ACC sun.NOM like ray.INST.PL  
 ‘Let Indrian strength permeate you, as the sun permeates the airy realm with its rays.’  
 (ṚV 1.84.1cd)

- (15) *indra krátum na ā bhara*  
 Indra.VOC resolve.ACC 1PL.DAT LP bring.IMPV.2SG  
*pitā putrébhiyo yáthā*  
 father.NOM son.DAT.PL like  
 ‘Indra, bring your resolve to bear for us, like a father for his sons.’  
 (ṚV 7.32.26ab)

- (16) *svásārah śyāvīm áruṣīm ajuṣrañ*  
 sister(F).NOM.PL dusky.ACC.F ruddy.ACC.F enjoy.AOR.MID  
*citrám uchántīm uśasam ná gávaḥ*  
 brilliant.ACC dawn.PTCP.ACC.F dawn(F).ACC like cow(F).NOM.PL  
 ‘The sisters [=fingers] have delighted in the dusky one and in the ruddy one [=two fire-kindling sticks], like cows in the brilliantly dawning dawn.’  
 (ṚV 1.71.1cd)

- (17) *prá sugopā yávasam dhenávo yathā*  
 LP with\_good\_h.NOM.PL.F pasturage(N).ACC milk-cow(F).NOM.PL like  
*hradám kulyā iva āśata*  
 lake.ACC brook(F).NOM.PL like reach.AOR.3PL.MID  
 ‘As milk-cows with a good herdsman reach pasturage, as brooks reach a lake, (so your resolves) have reached fulfillment.’  
 (ṚV 3.45.3cd)

Interestingly, *ná* and *yáthā* precede the standard in four and three cases respectively. Take for instance example (18) where, interpreting *hinuvānām* ‘being spurred on’ as a modifier of *vājayúm* ‘prize-seeking (horse)’, as suggested by word order, implies taking *pīpayad* as parameter, resulting in an obscure comparison ‘swell him like a prize-seeking (horse) being spurred on’. Instead, if we take *hinuvānām* as parameter, we get a very common simile ‘him who is spurred on like a prize-seeking (horse)’. The same holds for example (19), where *vér* follows the standard marker *yáthā*.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Cf. also ṚV 7.23.4, ṚV 9.96.7, ṚV 9.96.15, ṚV 10.40.6, and ṚV 10.95.8 for *ná*; ṚV 1.83.2 and ṚV 7.31.2 for *yáthā*.

- (18) *śakrá*                      *eṇam*                      *pīpayad*                      *viśvayā*                      *dhiyā́*  
 potent.NOM                      DEM.ACC                      swell.SUBJ.PF.3SG                      every.INST.F                      insight(F).INST  
*hinuvānám*                      ***ná***                      ***vājayúm***  
 spur.PTCP.PRS.NOM                      like                      prize-seeking.ACC  
 ‘The potent one [=Indra] will swell him who is spurred on, like a prize-seeking (horse), by every insight.’

(ṚV 8.1.19cd)

- (19) *gā́yat*                      *sā́ma*                      *nabhaníyam*                      ***yáthā***                      ***vér***  
 sing.INJ.3SG                      *sāman*(N).ACC                      bursting.ACC.N                      like                      bird.NOM  
 ‘Like a bird, he sings the bursting *sāman*.’<sup>97</sup>

(ṚV 1.173.1a)

Since, when it functions as a subordinator, *yáthā* always occurs in clause-initial position, the order STM-STAND shown in example (19) could be a trace of the original clausal nature of *yáthā* similes. As for *ná*, in two cases the element that precedes it is constructed syntactically with the comparee, but must be read also with the standard. This is shown in example (20), where the genitive *vācáḥ* ‘of speech’ suggests that *ūrmím* ‘wave’ belongs to the comparee, but where it is also required by the standard.<sup>98</sup> Also for *ná*, pre-standard position could be seen as a remnant of the original syntax of *ná* which, when it functions as a negative particle, is most commonly found at the beginning of the clause or before the verb (see Chapter 8.1 for a detailed discussion on the origin of *ná* and *yáthā* similes).

- (20) *prá*                      *avīvipad*                      *vācá*                      *ūrmím*                      ***ná***                      ***sindhur***  
 LP                      shake.AOR.3SG                      voice(F).GEN                      wave(F).ACC                      like                      river.NOM  
*gírah*                      *sómaḥ*                      *pávamāno*                      *manīṣā́ḥ*  
 hymn(F).ACC.PL                      Soma.NOM                      purify.PTCP.MID.NOM                      thought(F).ACC.PL  
 ‘Like a river its wave, self-purifying Soma has sent the wave of speech pulsing forth, the hymns, the inspired thoughts.’

(ṚV 9.96.7ab)

<sup>97</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I take *vér* as a nominative form and *gā́yat* as the parameter, following Witzel-Gōto (2007). Alternatively, one could read *nabhaníyam* ‘bursting out’ as the parameter and *vér* as a genitive, with an implicit word for ‘song’ representing the standard (so Jamison and Brereton, cf. Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*). The latter interpretation would not impinge the analysis of *yáthā* as a standard marker in pre-standard position.

<sup>98</sup> So also Geldner (1951) and Renou (1955). Due to its accent, *vācáḥ* should be read as a genitive singular, and not as an accusative plural, like *gírah* ‘hymns’ and *manīṣā́ḥ* ‘inspired thoughts’ (Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*).



- a) Queries 1 & 2 find all simple similes (i.e. similes with ellipsis, characterized by the deprels `obl:manner` / `obl:grad` and `case:sim`) whose standard is interrupted by their parameter, which could be a verb or an adjective;
- b) Queries 3 & 4 find all double and triple similes (i.e. similes with gapping, characterized by the deprels `advcl:manner` and `mark:sim`) whose standard is interrupted by their parameter, which is generally a verb;

In each couple, the first query finds all cases in which the head of the standard (`obl:manner`, `obl:grad`, `advcl:manner`) is followed by the standard marker, while its dependent(s) is/are postponed after the interrupting element; the second query finds all cases in which it is the head of the simile that occurs after the interrupting element, whereas its dependent(s) occur(s) in initial position before the standard marker. As we shall see below, this distinction is crucial to recognize any function of the interruption of the standard.

The results of Queries 1 to 4 are reported in Tables 6 and 7. Both tables present the relative order of i) the head of the standard (indicated by `obl:manner` and `advcl:manner`), ii) of other elements which are part of the standard (indicated by X), iii) of the standard marker (indicated by `case` and `mark`), and iv) of the interrupting element (`PAR (+ X)`). Grammatical information and, when relevant, dependency relations are also reported for each element in the standard. For instance, the first row of Table 6 represents the standard of the simile presented in (23), where the parameter *vī nayanti* ‘they lead’ and the adjunct *mihé* ‘to piss’ separate the adjective *vājīnam* ‘prize-seeking’ (deprel `amod`) from the head of the standard *átyam* ‘steed’ (deprel `obl:manner`). The discontinuity is nicely represented by the Udapi tree-like visualization in Figure 35:

- (23) *átyam*      *ná*      *mihé*      *vī*      *nayanti*      *vājīnam*  
 steed.ACC      like      piss.DAT      LP      lead.3PL      prize\_seeking.ACC  
 ‘They (the Maruts) lead (their horse) out to piss like a prize-seeking steed.’

(ṚV 1.64.6c)

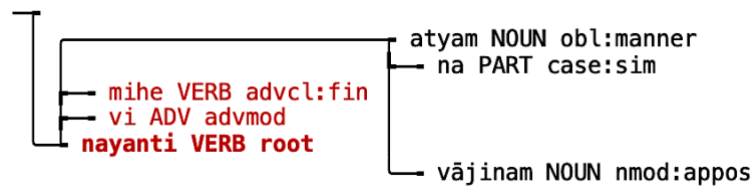


Figure 35. Udapi visualization of Query 1 for ṚV 1.64.6c.



**Table 16.** Queries 1 & 2: simple similes whose standard is interrupted by the parameter (13x with *ná* as STM, 1x with *iva* as STM, 1x with *yáthā* as STM)

obl:manner	case	X	PAR (+ X)	X	RV
<i>átyam</i> .ACC	<i>ná</i>		<i>mihé</i> .DAT (advcl:fin) <b>ví</b> <b>nayanti</b> .3PL	<i>vājīnam</i> .ACC (amod)	1.64.6
<i>paśúḥ</i> .NOM	<i>nā</i>		<b>eti</b> .3SG <i>svayúḥ</i>	<i>ágopāḥ</i> .NOM (acl:dpct)	2.4.7
<i>ándhaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<b>pūtám</b> .NOM.SG.N	<i>párisīktam</i> .NOM (acl:dpct) <i>aṃśóḥ</i> .GEN	4.1.19
<i>átyaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<b>hvāryáḥ</b> .NOM.SG.M	<i>śísuḥ</i> .NOM (amod/appos)	6.2.8
<i>āpaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>	<i>śṛṣṭāḥ</i> .NOM (acl:dpct)	<i>adhavanta</i> .IMPF.3PL.M	<i>nícīḥ</i> .NOM (acl:dpct)	7.18.15b
<i>vatsāsaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<b>prakrīḍīnaḥ</b> .NOM.PL.M	<i>payodhāḥ</i> .NOM (acl:attr/dpct)	7.56.16
<i>róhan</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>bhrājase</i> .2SG.M	<i>dīvam</i> .ACC (obl:goal)	9.17.5
<i>ráthaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>sarji</i> .INJ.PASS.3SG	<i>sanāye</i> .DAT (advcl:fin) <i>hiyānáḥ</i> .NOM (acl:dpct)	9.92.1
<i>átyaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>kradaḥ</i> .INJ.AOR.2SG	<i>háriḥ</i> .NOM (amod)	9.97.18
<i>rátham</i> .ACC	<i>ná</i>		<i>pṛtanāsu tiṣṭha</i> .IMPV.2SG	<i>yám</i> .ACC <i>bhadráyā sumatyā codáyāse</i> (acl:rel)	10.29.8
<i>ráthaiḥ</i> .INST	<i>iva</i>		<i>prá bhare</i> .1SG.M	<i>vājayádbhiḥ</i> .INST (acl:attr)	5.60.1
X	case		PAR (+ X)	obl:manner	RV
<i>deváḥ</i> .NOM (appos)	<i>nā</i>		<b>eti</b> .3SG	<i>sūryaḥ</i> .NOM	6.48.21
<i>apām</i> .GEN (nmod)	<i>ná</i>		<b>yanti</b> .3PL	<i>ūrmáyaḥ</i> .NOM	9.33.1b

**Table 17.** Queries 3 & 4: double similes whose standard is interrupted by the parameter (7x with *ná* as STM, 7x with *iva* as STM).

advcl:manner	mark	X	verb (+ X)	orphan	RV
<i>āpaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>pīpayāḥ</i> .PF.SUBJ.2SG	<i>párijman</i> .LOC	1.63.8
<i>ásvaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<b><i>niktáḥ</i>.NOM.SG.M</b>	<i>nadīṣu</i> .LOC	8.2.2
<i>vatsáḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>	<i>mātúḥ</i> .GEN (nmod)	<i>úpa sarji</i> .INJ.AOR.3SG.PASS	<i>údhani</i> .LOC	9.69.1b
<i>átyāsaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<b><i>sasṛjānásah</i>.PF.MID.NOM.PL</b>	<i>ājaú</i> .LOC	9.97.20
<i>ásvaḥ</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<b><i>niktáḥ</i>.NOM.SG.M</b>	<i>vājí</i> .NOM <i>dhánāya</i> .DAT	9.109.10
<i>ásvām</i> .ACC	<i>iva</i>		<i>pipyata</i> .IMPV.PF.2PL	<i>dhenúm</i> .ACC <i>údhani</i> .LOC	2.34.6
<i>átyām</i> .ACC	<i>iva</i>		<i>prāsṛjaḥ</i> .IMPF.2SG	<i>sārtavā</i> .INST <i>ājaú</i> .LOC	3.32.6
<i>mātá</i> .NOM	<i>iva</i>	<i>putrám</i> .ACC (orphan)	<i>bibhṛtām</i> .IMPV.3DU	<i>upásthe</i> .LOC	6.75.4
<i>ráthāḥ</i> .NOM	<i>iva</i>		<i>prá yayuḥ</i> .PF.3PL	<i>sātim</i> .ACC <i>ácha</i>	9.69.9
<i>rājā</i> .NOM	<i>iva</i>	<i>yúdhvā</i> .ACC (orphan)	<i>nayasi</i> .2SG tvám íd	<i>sícau</i> .ACC	10.75.4
<i>tanyatúḥ</i> .NOM	<i>yathā</i>		<i>svānáḥ arta</i> .INJ.3SG.M <i>tmánā</i>	<i>diváḥ</i> .ABL	5.25.8d
orphan	mark	X	verb (+ X)	advcl:manner	RV
<i>nimnám</i> .ACC (goal)	<i>ná</i>		<b><i>yainti</i>.3PL</b>	<i>síndhavaḥ</i> .NOM	5.51.7
<i>ājím</i> .ACC (goal)	<i>ná</i>		<i>jagmuḥ</i> .PF.3PL <i>girvāhaḥ</i> .VOC	<i>ásivāḥ</i> .NOM	6.24.6
<i>yūthā</i> .ACC	<i>iva</i>	<i>paśváḥ</i> .GEN (nmod)	<b><i>ví unoti</i>.3SG</b>	<i>gopāḥ</i> .NOM	5.31.1
<i>síndhau</i> .LOC	<i>iva</i>		<i>prá īrayam</i> .INJ.1SG	<i>návam</i> .ACC	10.116.9

In each section of Table 16 and Table 17, standards marked by *ná* precede those marked by *iva* and *yáthā/yathā*. Out of a corpus of 880 similes,<sup>100</sup> 19 standards marked by *ná* are interrupted by the parameter of comparison, 8 of those marked by *iva*, and just 1 by *yáthā*.

Table 16 and Table 17 show that, when the standard displays discontinuity, *ná* and *yáthā* invariably follow the first element, as it was observed by Hale for *iva*. The only exception is represented by the simile in (24), whose standard is interrupted by the vocative *maghavan*, and in which *yáthā* is delayed after the fourth word.

(24)	<i>pūrveṇa</i>	<i>maghavan</i>	<i>padā́</i>	
	fore.INST.N	bounteous.VOC	foot(N).INST	
	<i>ajó</i>	<i>vayám</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>yamo</i>
	goat.NOM	branch(F).ACC	like	carry.SUBJ.AOR.2SG
	‘You will hold (it = your ability) <sup>101</sup> as a goat (does) a branch with its forefoot, bounteous one.’			
	(ṚV 10.134.6cd)			

Both tables also show that standard marked by *ná* can be interrupted by a finite verb alone (e.g. *adhavanta* ‘ran’ in 7.18.15b) or by a finite verb and its preverb (e.g. *úpa sarji* ‘it is released’ in ṚV 9.69.1b), by a verb and a secondary predicate (*eti suvayúr* ‘he goes left to himself’ in ṚV 2.4.7b), or by a verb and an adjunct, as we have seen in example (23). Alternatively, the standard can be interrupted by a participle (e.g. *pūtám* ‘purified’ in ṚV 4.1.19d) or by an adjective (e.g. *hvāryáh* ‘moving crookedly, in circle’ in ṚV 6.2.8d). Standards introduced by *iva* can be interrupted by the verb alone, or by the verb and its preverb, as rightly observed by Hale (2010). Finally, the only occurrence of interrupted *yáthā* clause contains comparee, verb, and adverb, as shown in example (25):

(25)	<i>utá</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>tanyatúr</i>	<i>yathā</i>	
	CONJ	PTC	2SG.GEN	thunder.NOM	like	
	<i>svānó</i>		<i>arta</i>	<i>tmánā</i>	<i>diváh</i>	
	roar.NOM		arise.INJ.AOR.3SG.MID	self.INST	heaven.ABL	
	‘... and just like thunder from heaven your roar has arisen by itself.’					
	(ṚV 5.25.8ab)					

<sup>100</sup> Of the about 900 constructions that were annotated in the treebank, ca. 880 were annotated as equative and similitive constructions, whereas in ca. 20 the comparative particle

<sup>101</sup> The referent of the null object can be recovered from *pāda* b: *śáktim* ‘ability’.

Cases in which the verb can be read with both the standard and the comparee are marked in bold in Tables 6 and 7. These are cases in which the verb is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person indicative present and in which both standard and comparee have third-person referents, as well as cases that contain an adjective or participle instead of a finite verb. Out of nineteen similes introduced by *ná* in Tables 6 and 7, thirteen have a verb or adjective that can be constructed with both standard and comparee (see again example (23)); of the eight occurrences with *iva*, only one has this feature (26), to which examples reported by Hale must be added. In all remaining *iva* clauses, the verb is clearly constructed with the comparee, either because it is a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person form, as in (27), or because it is in some tenses or mood different from the present indicative, as in example (28): as we have seen in Chapter 6.1.1.1, since the standard of similes has usually generic reference, the gapped verb requires a generic present reading.

- (26) *yūthā́*                      *iva*    *paśvó*                      *ví*    ***unoti***                      *gopā́*  
 flock(N).ACC.PL            like    livestock.GEN            LP    urge.PRS.3SG    herdsman.NOM  
 ‘Like a herdsman the flocks of livestock, he (Indra) urges (his chariot, *rátha-* in *pāda* a).’ (my translation)  
(ṚV 5.31.1c)
- (27) *ráthair*                      *iva*    ***prá***    ***bhare***                      *vājayádbhiḥ*  
 chariot.INST.PL            like    LP    bring.PRS.1SG.MID    prize\_seeking.INST.PL  
 ‘I press forward as if with chariots seeking prizes.’  
(ṚV 5.60.1c)
- (28) *mātā́*                      *iva*    *putrám*                      ***bibhṛtām***                      *upásthe*  
 mother(F).NOM            like    son.ACC                      carry.IMPV.PRS.3DU    lap.LOC  
 ‘Let them<sup>102</sup> carry (the arrow) as a mother does a child in her lap.’  
(ṚV 6.75.4ab)

Turning to the following question, point b) asked whether we find cases of interruption in which the verb is clearly constructed with the *iva* clause, and not ambiguous between standard and comparee. Cases in which the verb is clearly constructed with the standard are not captured by the queries presented above because they have a completely different parse tree (see Section 7.1.3, Figure 25).

Two new queries, Queries 5 and 6 (Appendix 1), return five cases in which the verb is constructed with a *ná* clause. One example was presented in Section 7.1.3 (Figure 25) with a

<sup>102</sup> That is, *ārtmī* ‘the two bow-ends’ in *pāda* d.

representation of its syntactic tree. As is clear from the two other examples presented below, a verb constructed with the standard can imply interruption of the standard itself (29), or not (30).<sup>103</sup>

- (29) *prá soma deva-vītaye*  
 LP Soma.VOC god-pursue.DAT  
*sindhur ná pīpye árṇasā*  
 river.NOM like swelling.PF.3SG.MID flood(N).INST  
*aṁśóḥ páyasā ...*  
 plant.GEN milk(N).INST  
 ‘O Soma, like a river that has swollen with its flood, (you have swollen) forth with the milk of the plant to pursue the gods.’  
 (ṚV 9.107.12a-c)
- (30) *dhenúr ná śísve svásareṣu pīnvate*  
 milk-cow(F).NOM like young.DAT good\_pasture(N).LOC.PL swell.PRS.3SG.MID  
*jánāy rātá-haviṣe mahīm íṣam*  
 person.DAT bestowed-oblation.DAT great.ACC.F refreshment(F).ACC  
 ‘As a milk-cow in good pastures swells for her young, they (the Maruts)<sup>104</sup> (swell) great refreshment for the person who has bestowed oblations.’  
 (ṚV 2.34.8cd)

By contrast, the query does not return any case in which an *iva* clause is clearly constructed with the verb. Finally, in three cases *yáthā* occurs in a hybrid construction. Take for instance example (31):<sup>105</sup> contrary to ordinary clausal similes, where *yáthā* is always found at the beginning of the clause it introduces, in these cases it follows the first two elements of the standard (*devá* ‘gods’ and *bhāgám* ‘sacrificial portion’), as in basic similitive constructions. On the other hand, the three verb phrases *sám gachadhvam* ‘come together’, *sám vadadhvam* ‘speak together’, and *sám vo mánāmsi jānatām* ‘together let your thoughts agree’ are constructed with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person comparee (whose referent are probably the Āryas), so that it is not ambiguous that *upāsate* ‘approach respectfully’ is constructed with the standard.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. also ṚV 5.25.8 and ṚV 10.25.1.

<sup>104</sup> Recoverable from *pāda* a (*marútaḥ*).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. also ṚV 10.149.5 and ṚV 4.37.3.

- (31) *sám gachadhvam sám vadadhvam*  
 LP come.IMPV.PRS.2PL LP speak.IMPV.PRS.2PL  
*sám vo mánāmsi jānatām*  
 LP 2PL.GEN thought(N).NOM.PL agree.IMPV.PRS.3PL.MID  
*deva bhāgám yáthā pūrve*  
 god.NOM.PL portion.ACC like previous.NOM.PL  
*samjānānā upāsate*  
 agree.PTCP.PRS.NOM.PL.MID approach.PRS.3PL.MID  
 ‘Come together, speak together; together let your thoughts agree, just as the gods of long ago,  
 coming to an agreement together, reverently approach their sacrificial portion.’  
 (ṚV 10.191.2)

In the interrupted *iva* clauses presented by Hale (2010) and also found in the corpus, it is not clear how a verb that, although occurring within the standard, is clearly constructed with the comparee can prove the original presence of a predicate in these clauses. As for the cases in which the verb can be constructed either with the standard or with the comparee, the situation is simply ambiguous and there is nothing that tells us that the verb belonged with the standard.

Only when the verb is clearly constructed with the standard, as in examples (29) and (30) above with *ná*, can we hypothesize that ellipsis, which in the vast majority of cases affected the verb in the standard, in these cases affected the verb in the comparee. We could therefore interpret these cases as remnants of a stage in which both the comparee and the standard could contain a verb and in which either of the two verbs could be elided, not necessarily the one in the standard. As we will see in Sections 7.2.2 and 7.3.1, this hypothesis is supported by the fact that in coordination Vedic allows both rightward and leftward gapping. Interestingly, there are no such occurrences with *iva*, although those with *ná* are also very few.

#### 7.2.1.4 Discontinuous standards as cases of dislocation

Let us now consider question c) and see whether discontinuous standards can be explained in other ways. One way of doing so is not to focus on the verb as a “remnant” within the standard, but to think of the element following the verb as a dislocated element.

Starting from simple similes (Table 6), in some cases the displaced element functions as a secondary predicate. Secondary predicates are participant-oriented expressions describing a state or condition of a referent that overlaps with the temporal frame set by the main predicate (cf. Schultze-Berndt and Himmelmann 2004; Himmelmann and Schultze-Berndt 2005). Differently from attributes







Another example is the one presented in (35), where the compound adjective *ágopāh* accepts both an attributive reading ‘without a herdsman’ and one as a secondary predicate ‘(when) it lacks a herdsman’. In example (36), *pářišiktam* invites a reading as a secondary predicate: here, it is said that the ‘gleaming udder of the cow’ (a metonymy for milk which is mixed with soma) is purified like the ‘stalk of the plant’ (itself a metonymy for soma) *when* it is ‘poured in circle’. Indeed, in the ṚV the pressed soma drops are said to be poured upon the strainer of sheep’s wool (e.g., ṚV 9.63.19) and to pass over it in order to remove impurity (e.g., ṚV 9.69.9; cf. also Macdonell 1897: 106).

- (35) *sá*                      *yó*                      *ví*                      *ásthād*                      *abhí*                      *dákṣad*  
 3SG.NOM                      REL.NOM                      LP                      stand.AOR.3SG                      LP                      burn.PTCP.AOR.NOM  
*urvīm*  
 broad.ACC.F  
*paśúr*                                      *ná*                      *eti*                                      *suvayúr*                                      *ágopāh*  
 livestock.NOM                      like                      go.PRS.3SG                      by\_himself.NOM.SG                      without\_herdsman.NOM  
 ‘He who has spread out, burning the broad (earth), like livestock without a herdsman he goes seeking his own way.’  
(ṚV 2.4.7ab)

- (36) *śúci*                                      *údho*                                      *aṛṇan*                                      *ná*                      *gávām*  
 gleaming.ACC.N                      udder(N).ACC                      drill.IMPF.3SG                      like                      cow(F).GEN.PL  
*ándho*                                      *ná*                      *pūtám*                                      *pári-šiktam*                                      *amśóḥ*  
 stalk(N).ACC                      like                      purify.PPP.ACC.N                      LP-pour.PPP.ACC.N                      plant.GEN  
 ‘He drilled, seemingly, the gleaming udder of the cows, which was purified like the stalk of the plant poured in circles [=soma].’  
(ṚV 4.1.19cd)

Observing that most of the secondary predicates that occur in sentence-initial or sentence-final position are complex secondary predicates, Casaretto (2020: 30) suggests that heaviness might be a factor in the preference for edge-placement.<sup>108</sup> Apart from *sanáye hiyānáḥ* example (34), this is not

<sup>108</sup> More precisely, on the right edge, there are 6 instances with a simple depictive and 24 with a complex depictive; on the left edge, there are 4 simple depictives against 14 complex ones (Casaretto 2020: 30). On the role of heaviness in Vedic word order see also Reinöhl (2020).

the case of secondary predicates belonging to standards of a simile.<sup>109</sup> A possible explanation for their edge-placement is that the latter iconically signals that the secondary predicate does not predicate an eventuality of the standard alone but is semantically and formally applicable also to the comparee. In other words, the fact of ‘being without a herdsman’ (*ágopāḥ*) in example (35) does not only cause the flock to go seeking its own way but the fire as well, which, not being constrained within the boundaries of the sacrificial ground, ‘spreads out burning the broad (earth; *pāda a*)’; note that ṚV 2.4.7 is in fact a naturalistic description of the wildfire as different from the sacrificial fire. Similarly, the fact of being ‘poured in circle’ (*pāriṣiktam*) in example (36) does not only apply to the purification of soma but also to that of milk, which is in fact poured with soma in the same cup.<sup>110</sup>

If this analysis is correct, that is, that sentence-final secondary elements are meant to apply to both the standard and the comparee, it opens the way for us to interpret other displaced elements that do not function as secondary predicates. These are found both in simple and, especially, in double similes presented in Table 7.

Take for instance example (28), repeated here in full as (37). In line with the rest of the hymn, which praises the weapons of battle through a series of riddles, this verse presents a riddling definition of the two bow-ends and names them overtly only in *pāda d*. Particularly striking is the description of the subjects as tender mothers which contrasts sharply with the violence of battle. In *pāda b*, the locative *upásthe* ‘in (her) lap’, usually interpreted with the standard of the simile, is postposed after the verb. However, it turns out that the displaced element can be read not only with the standard, where it is understood literally, but also with the comparee: here, *upásthe* stands metaphorically for the bow which is held parallel to the ground when positioning the arrow and which dips down like a

<sup>109</sup> One case where heaviness may have played a role in the edge-placement of an element of the standard is ṚV 10.29.8cd, where the relative clause in *pāda d*, placed after the verb *ā ... tiṣṭha* ‘mount!’, seems to modify the standard *rátham* ‘chariot’.

- i. *ā smā rátham ná p̄tanāsu tiṣṭha*  
*yám bhadráyā suatī codáyāse*

‘Mount upon the hosts like a chariot that you will spur on with auspicious benevolence.’ (ṚV 10.29.8cd)

<sup>110</sup> In these two examples, *ná* occurs exceptionally also after a verb, namely *asvadayan* ‘has sweetened’ in (25) and *atr̄ṇan* ‘he drilled’ in (26) (as we have seen in Chapter 6.1.3.3, this position will be typical of *iva* in prose texts and is already attested in the ṚV). After the two verbs, *ná* functions as an adaptor attenuating the lexical meaning of the expression: that is, it signals the metaphoric reading of *asvadayan* ‘he sweetens’ as referred to the action of Agni on the ground and probably attenuates the meaning of the whole expression *śúci údho atr̄ṇan ... gávām* ‘he drilled the gleaming udder of the cows’ as referred to the cow’s milk mixed with soma. Since at least *ágopāḥ* in (25) is to be read metaphorically with the comparee Agni, the presence of the adaptor in the same verse might corroborates the interpretation suggested above for these dislocated elements. As we shall see in Chapter 8.3, adaptors are often employed to mark the figurative reading of an expression.

lap. Roughly, we could translate ‘let them carry (the arrow) in (their) lap as a mother does a child in her lap’.<sup>111</sup>

- (37) *té*                      *ācārantī*                                      *sámanā*                      *iva*    *yóṣā*  
 3PL.NOM.F    go.PTCP.PRS.NOM.DU.F                      assembly(N).ACC.PL    like    maiden(F).NOM.PL  
*mātá*                      *iva*    *putrám*                                      ***bibhrtām***                      *upásthe*  
 mother(F).NOM                      like    son.ACC                                      carry.IMPV.PRS.2DU    lap(N).LOC  
 ‘The two faring forth to the melees, like a maiden to (festive) gatherings – let them (the two bow-ends, *áṛtnī* in *pāda* d) carry (the arrow) as a mother does a child in her lap. [Let them pierce our rivals when the two find each other: these bow-ends here when they spring apart (against) the enemies.]’

(ṚV 6.75.4ab)

Example (38), dedicated to Soma, is another instance of what we could call argument sharing between standard and comparee. In *pāda* b, the locative *ājau* ‘in a contest’ should be read literally with the standard *átyāsaḥ ná* ‘like a steed’ but could also stand metaphorically for the journey of the soma to the vessels, which is frequently described in terms of a horserace. Similarly, in example (39), the locative *nadīṣu* ‘in the rivers’ can be read with the standard *ásvaḥ* ‘horses’, but also with the comparee Soma who, as already mentioned, is mixed with waters after being purified in the sheep’s fleece.

- (38) *araśmāno*                      *yé*                      *arathā*                                      *áyuktā*  
 reinless.NOM.PL                      REL.NOM.PL    chariotless.NOM.PL.M                      non-yoked.NOM.PL  
*átyāso*                      *ná*    ***sasṛjānāsa***                                      *ājau*  
 steed.NOM.PL    like    let\_loose.PTCP.PF.NOM.PL                      contest.LOC  
*eté*                                      *śukrāso*                                      *dhanuvanti*    *sómā*  
 DEM.NOM.PL                      gleaming.NOM.PL                      run.PRS.3PL    soma.NOM.PL  
 ‘Though without reins, without chariot, not yoked, having been let loose like steeds in a contest, these gleaming soma-drinks run.’

(ṚV 9.97.20ab)

- (39) *nṛbhir*                      *dhūtáḥ*                                      *sutó*                                      *ásnair*  
 man.INST.PL    rinse.PPP.NOM                      press.PPP.NOM                      stone.INST.PL

<sup>111</sup> As reported by Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*), Maurer (1986: 308) considers the simile in b “a bit irregular, since, strictly speaking, it is not the bow-ends that hold the arrow, but the bowstring.” Interpreting *upásthe* as belonging both to the standard and to the comparee helps us understand that it is in fact the “lap” of the two bow-end that holds the arrow.

<i>ávyo</i>	<i>váraiḥ</i>			<i>páripūtaḥ</i>
sheep.GEN	fleece.INST.PL			purify.PPP.NOM
<i>ásvo</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>niktó</i>	<i>nadíṣu</i>	
horse.NOM	like	wash.PPP.NOM	river.LOC.PL	

‘Rinsed by men, pressed by stones, purified by the sheep’s fleece, washed like a horse in the rivers [... we have made it sweet for you].’

(ṚV 8.2.2)

As is clear from the last three examples, the dislocated element is often in the locative case. Other examples are *údhani* ‘in the udder’, which in ṚV 9.69.1b refers both to the cow’s udder to which the calf is directed for feeding in the standard and to the vessel to which Soma is released in the comparee.<sup>112</sup> The same element *údhani* occurs in ṚV 2.34.6, where the accusative *dhenúm* ‘giving milk’/‘milk-cow’ is also dislocated; here, if taken as syntactically depending on the standard *ásvām* ‘mare’, *dhenúm údhani* seems to refer simultaneously to the standard and to the covert comparee ‘the pressing’ (*sávana-*, recoverable from the preceding *pāda*), which can indeed be ‘giving milk in her udder’.

In some cases, such as (40) below, it is not clear in which way the displaced locative could also be interpreted with the comparee.<sup>113</sup> These cases suggest that other factors, and more precisely metrical and formulaic factors, may have contributed to the dislocation of one or more elements of the standard. Suffice it to say that, out of 15 occurrences of the locative *údhani* in the ṚV, 14 are found at the end of the *pāda*; moreover, out of 25 occurrences of the locative *ājaiú*, 12 are in final position, as in (40), and prosodic similarity could have determined edge-placement of the accusative dual *sícau* ‘two seams’ in ṚV 10.75.4.

(40)	<i>tuvám</i>	<i>apó</i>	<i>yád</i>	<i>dha</i>	<i>vṛtrám</i>	<i>jaghanvám̐</i>
	2SG.NOM	water(F).ACC.PL	when	PTC	Vṛtra.ACC	smash.PTCP.PF.NOM

<sup>112</sup> The first *pāda* of ṚV 6.69.1 has *matíḥ* ‘thought’ as overt subject and the last has *sómaḥ* ‘soma’. The intervening *pādas* have only similes to which the missing subject is compared. The interpretation of *údhani* in *pāda* b fits better with Soma as a comparee, but the thought of the poet could also be released towards the “udder”. According to Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) both the thought and the soma are possible in b and c, and the double reading is deliberate.

<sup>113</sup> The verse refers to the myth of Indra’s slaying of Vṛtra. Vṛtra was a gigantic cobra, who was twisted around a mountain that enclosed the waters. Indra killed the serpent with his mace and smashed open the mountain, releasing the waters. While the rushing of waters into the Soma vessel is often associated with images of horseraces and contests, this image seems not to be attested for the waters released by Indra, so that *sártavaí ājaiú* ‘to run in a contest’ is assigned to the standard alone.

*átyāṁ*      *iva*      *prásyjah*                      *sártavai*      *ājai*  
 steed.ACC.PL   like      send\_forth.IMP.F.2SG                      run.DAT      context.LOC

‘When you sent forth the waters, like steeds to run in a contest—having smashed Vṛtra [...].’  
 (ṚV 3.32.6ab)

Finally, in ṚV 9.69.9 and ṚV 9.17.5 the displaced element expresses the goal (*sātm ácha* ‘to a win’ and *dívam* ‘to the sky’ respectively), while in ṚV 5.25.8 it expresses the source (*diváh* ‘from the sky’); thus, elements that express spatial meanings seem to be the most frequent in edge position.

From Tables 6 and 7 we still have to discuss those cases in which the head of the standard (deprel obl:manner or advcl:manner) follows the verb, instead of its dependents (Figure 37).

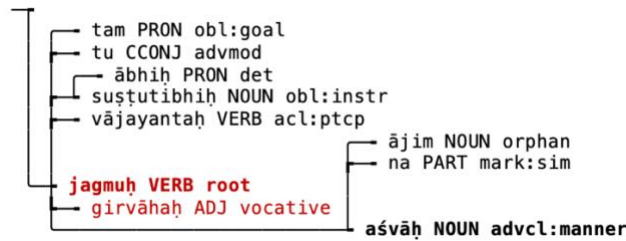


Figure 37. Udapi visualization of Query 4 for ṚV 6.24.6 (32).

In a couple of cases, the head of the standard seems to be displaced after the verb in order to create a pun. For example, in (41), the accusative *nimnám* seems at first to be constructed with the verb *yanti* ‘they go’ and the comparee *sutá sómāso* ‘pressed soma (juices)’, and only at the end of *pāda* it becomes clear that the true goal of the soma juices is *práyah* ‘satisfaction’, and that *nimnám* is part of the simile together with *sindhavaḥ*.

(41) *sutá*                      *indrāya*      *vāyáve*  
 press.PPP.NOM.PL      Indra.DAT      Vāyu.DAT  
*sómāso*                      *dádhi-āśiraḥ*  
 soma.NOM.PL              curd-mixing.NOM.PL  
*nimnám*                      *ná*      *yanti*                      *sindhavo*      *abhi*      *práyah*  
 deep(N).ACC              like      go.3PL                      river.NOM.PL      LP      satisfaction(N).ACC

‘The pressed soma drinks mixed with curds are for Indra and for Vāyu. Like rivers to the deep, they go to satisfaction.’

(ṚV 5.51.7)

In example (42), the accusative *ājīm* ‘to a contest’, which belongs to the standard, fits semantically the participle *vājáyanta* ‘seeking prize’ (in which case *ājīm* would be an apposition of the overt goal *tvā* ‘you’). Again, it seems at first that the comparee, seeking the prize, goes to a contest; this time, the pun is solved only after the verb and the vocative *girvāhah*, when it becomes clear that *ājīm* belongs to the simile together with *ásvāh* ‘horses’.

(42)	<i>tām</i>	<i>tvā</i>	<i>ābhiḥ</i>	<i>su-ṣṭutibhir</i>	
	as_such	2SG.ACC	DEM.INST.PL.F	good-praise(F).INST.PL	
	<i>vājáyanta</i>				
	seek_prize.PTCP.NOM.PL				
	<i>ājīm</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>jagmur</i>	<i>gir-vāho</i>	<i>ásvāh</i>
	prize.ACC	like	go.PF.3PL	song-vehicle.VOC	horse.NOM
	‘Along with these good praises, seeking the prize they (Indra’s abilities?) have (also) gone to you, like horses to a contest, o you whose vehicle is songs.’				

(ṚV 6.24.6)

Admittedly, these are only very tentative interpretations, and it is hard to say which factors might have caused the standard to be interrupted in these cases. However, the head of the standard occurs after the verb only six times, against about twenty-three cases in which another element is found in edge-position.

At the beginning of this section, we have seen that Hale (2010) also mentions cases in which the standard is interrupted not by the verb, but by the preverb alone. These are captured by the following queries, which also return all cases in which the standard is interrupted by any element different from the parameter.

- a) Queries 7 & 8 find all simple similes whose standard is interrupted by any element in the clause apart from the parameter;
- b) Queries 9 & 10 find all double and triple similes whose standard is interrupted by any element in the clause apart from the parameter;

The results of Queries 7 and 8 are provided in Table 8; Queries 9 and 10 yielded instead no results. Again, the table presents the relative order of i) the head of the standard (indicated by `obl : manner`), ii) of other elements which are part of the standard (indicated by `X`), iii) of the standard marker (indicated by `case` and `mark`), and iv) of the interrupting element (LP, REL, 2SG.ACC, OTHER). As

a whole, 8 standards of simple similes marked by *ná* are interrupted by elements different from the parameter, 4 standards marked by *iva*, and 3 by *yáthā*.

**Table 18.** Queries 7 & 8: simple similes whose STAND is interrupted by any other element (7x with *ná* as STM, 4x with *iva* as STM, 2x with *yáthā* as STM)

LP						
X	case	X	LP	obl:manner	RV	
<i>pitúh</i> .GEN (nmod)	<i>ná</i>	<i>jívreh</i> .GEN	<i>ví</i>	<i>védaḥ</i> .ACC	1.70.10	
<i>giréh</i> .GEN (nmod)	<i>iva</i>		<i>prá</i>	<i>rásāḥ</i> .NOM	8.49.2	
obl:manner	case	X	LP	X	RV	
<i>yahvāḥ</i> .NOM	<i>iva</i>		<i>prá</i>	<i>vayām</i> .ACC (obl:goal) <i>ujjihānāḥ</i> .NOM (acl:dpct)	5.1.1	
obl:manner	LP	case	X		RV	
<i>gāvah</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>dhenávaḥ</i>		9.68.1	
obl:manner	case	X	REL	X	RV	
<i>váyah</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>yé</i>	<i>śréñīḥ</i> .ACC (obl)	5.59.7	
<i>ásvā</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>yā</i>	<i>vājínā</i> .NOM (amod)	6.67.4	
obl:manner	case	X	2SG.ACC	X	RV	
<i>dhenúm</i> .ACC	<i>ná</i>		<i>tvā</i>	<i>suyávase</i> .LOC (nmod)	7.18.4	
<i>ásvam</i> .ACC	<i>ná</i>		<i>tvā</i>	<i>vājínam</i> .ACC (amod)	9.87.1	
<i>śísum</i> .ACC	<i>ná</i>		<i>tvā</i>	<i>jényam</i> .ACC (amod)	10.4.3	
X	case	X	OTHER	obl:manner	RV	
<i>anyásya</i> .GEN (nmod)	<i>iva</i>		<i>ihá</i>	<i>tanvā</i> .INST	2.35.13	
obl:manner	case	X	OTHER	X	RV	
<i>jényam</i> .ACC	<i>yathā</i>	<i>vājeṣu</i> .LOC (??)	<i>vipra</i> .VOC	<i>vājínam</i> .ACC (appos?)	1.130.6	
<i>ásvah</i> .NOM	<i>ná</i>		<i>své dáme ā</i>	<i>hemyāvān</i> .NOM (acl:attr)	4.2.8	
X	OTHER	X	obl:manner	X	case	RV
<i>pūrveṇa</i> .INST	<i>maghavan</i> .VOC	<i>padā</i> .INST	<i>ajāḥ</i>	<i>vayām</i>	<i>yathā</i>	10.134.6



Three standards in the corpus are interrupted by a preverb. As mentioned at the beginning of this section (example (13) repeated here as (43)), Hale (2010) sees the repetition of the preverb *prá* in R̥V 5.1.1cd as a trace of the original gapping structure of *iva* clauses.

- (43) *yahvā́*                      *iva*    ***prá***    *vayā́m*                      *ujjīhānāḥ*  
 young.NOM.PL            like    LP    branch(F).ACC            rise.PTCP.PRS.NOM.PL  
***prá***    *bhānávaḥ*                      *sisrate*                      *nākam*                      *ácha*  
 LP    beam.NOM.PL                      advance.PRS.2PL.MID            vault.ACC            LP  
 ‘Like young (birds) rising toward a branch, his radiant beams leap forth to heaven’s vault.’  
(R̥V 5.1.1cd)

In this example, however, *prá* is best taken with the participle *ujjīhānāḥ* ‘rising’. Although preverbs are usually unverbated with non-finite verbal forms, in case of multiple preverbs, the external preverb can be displaced (Zanchi 2019: 106; on the position of preverbs with participles, see Lowe 2015: 130). This might be the case with *prá ... ujjīhānāḥ* ‘rising forward to’, as a combination of the preverbs *prá* ‘forward’ and *úd* ‘up’ with the verb  $\sqrt{hā}$ - ‘to proceed, stride’.

By contrast, Hale’s hypothesis that a preverb interrupting the standard could be a trace of the original clausal nature of similes could indeed be proposed for example (44), whose standard is marked by *ná*. Differently from R̥V 5.1.1, there is no other verbal constituent in the standard that the preverb *ví* ‘separately, away’ could modify and the main verb *bharanta* is already modified by the *ví* in edge position.

- (44) ***ví***    *tvā́*                      *náraḥ*                      *purutrā́*                      *saparyan*  
 LP    2SG.ACC                      man.NOM.PL    in\_many\_places            serve.INJ.PRS.3PL  
*pitúr*                      *ná*    *jívrer*                      ***ví***    *védo*                      *bharanta*  
 father.GEN    like    aging.GEN    LP    property(N).ACC            bear.INJ.3P.MID  
 ‘Men serve you separately in many places. They bear (you) away separately as (sons bear away) the property of their aging father.’  
(R̥V 1.70.10)

Still, an alternative interpretation for this passage is offered by Proferes (2007: 48-49), who highlights the contrast between R̥V 1.70.10 and the preceding verse reported in (45). Within this hymn dedicated to Agni Vaiśvānara, the clan-fire ‘belonging to all men’, verse 9 describes the movement toward the unity of a single fire, which is contrasted with the separation of this fire into many, separately served

fires in verse 10.<sup>114</sup> The relationship and the semantic contrast between verses 9 and 10 is emphasized by the complementary verbs *bháranta/bharanta* beginning 9c and ending 10d respectively and, most importantly for us, by the *vi(...)*s: *bháranta ví(śve)... ví ... ví bharanta*. Thus, the occurrence of a second *ví* ‘separately, away’ within the standard in verse 10 could be interpreted as a way of emphasizing the notion of separation, in contrast with the notion of unity presented in verse 9.<sup>115</sup>

- (45) vs. 9 *góṣu práśastim váneṣu dhiṣe*  
***bháranta víśve balím súvar ṇaḥ***  
 vs. 10 *ví tvā náraḥ purutrā saparyan*  
*pitúr ná jivrer ví védo **bharanta***

‘You acquire a laud among the cows and the (fire)wood. All bear tribute to (you), our sun. They bear (you) away separately as (sons bear away) the property of their aging father.’

(ṚV 1.70.9-10)

Finally, the simile in (46) is especially complex due to the presence of the preverb *prá* ‘forth’ in the standard and edge-placement of the compound adjective *puru-bhójasah*.GEN ‘much nourishing’. While it is hard to find an explanation for the occurrence of the preverb within the standard clause, the position of *puru-bhójasah* might confirm the hypothesis that elements placed at the right edge are shared by standards and comparee. Indeed, the adjective fits perfectly both *girés*.GEN ‘mountain’ in the standard and *asya*.GEN ‘his’ (i.e. of Indra) in the comparee.

- (46) *girér*                      *iva prá rásā*                      *asya*                      *pinvire*  
 mountain.GEN              like LP juice.NOM.PL 3SG.GEN              swell.3PL.MID  
*dátrāṇi*                      *puru-bhójasah*  
 gift(N).NOM.PL              much-nourishing.GEN

‘Like the juices [=streams] of a much-nourishing mountain his gifts swell forth.’

(ṚV 8.49.2cd)

<sup>114</sup> According to Jamison and Brereton (2014) these climatic verses contain the compound members underlying the epithet Vaiśvānara, since in verse 9 it is said that *all* (*víśve*) bear tribute to the fire and in verse 10 *men* (*náraḥ*) serve him in many places.

<sup>115</sup> Note that the fact that the second hemistich of verse 10 has eleven instead of the ten syllables expected in the Dvipadā Virāj might suggest that the second *ví* was deliberately added and that it is not a remnant which was maintained for metrical reasons.

Hale’s observation that the verb is the only open-class lexical item that can interrupt the standard was confirmed by the corpus analysis. Other elements found within a standard are relative pronouns (RV 5.59.7 and 6.67.4) and clitic forms of the second-person pronoun (RV 7.18.4, 9.87.1, and 10.4.3). Exceptions are found in RV 2.35.13 with the adverb *ihá* ‘here’, in RV 1.130.6 with the vocative *vipra* ‘inspired (poet)’ and, perhaps, in RV 4.2.8 with the locative phrase *své dáma á* ‘in his own house’, whose interpretation is however much debated. Note that focus particles such as *íd* sometimes occur after the standard marker, especially after *iva*, to emphasize the similarity between standard and comparee (Coenen 2021: 227). Since these have scope on the standard marker, they are not included in Table 8.

#### 7.2.1.5 Summary

To sum up, in this section we have seen that Hale’s (2010) observations on the internal syntax of *iva* clauses also apply to standards marked by *ná* and, to a lesser extent, to those marked by *yáthā*. We have seen that, like *iva*, *ná* and *yáthā* can occur after the first, second, and third element of the standard, but that the postponement after the first element seems to be blocked in cases of discontinuous standards. When *iva* is the standard marker, the only open-class lexical item that interrupts the standard is the verb with its preverb; standards marked by *ná* can also be interrupted by the verb with a secondary predicate or by the verb and one of its adjuncts, whereas one standard marked by *yáthā* is interrupted by comparee, verb, and vocative.

As for the construction of the verb with either of the two elements of the simile, we have seen that in most cases the verb is clearly constructed with the comparee, despite being placed within the standard. Especially for *ná*, there are cases in which the verb can be constructed syntactically both with the comparee and with the standard, but this situation is attested only once for *iva* in the corpus. Finally, the verb is clearly constructed with five standards marked by *ná*, while the comparees lack a verb altogether. In three cases, *yáthā* occurs in a hybrid construction in which, as in clausal similes, one verb is clearly constructed with the standard and one with the comparee, but *yáthā* is placed after the second element of the standard as a clitic. Finally, there are no cases of standards marked by *iva* that are clearly constructed with the verb.

Since these data do not clearly point to the original presence of a verb in *iva* clauses, in this section I have tried to offer a new interpretation of discontinuous standards as standards in which one or more elements have been moved to the right edge, after the verb. In the case of simple similes, the element moved to the right edge often acts as a secondary predicate; although edge placement is one of the most common positions for secondary predicates in the RV, within similes this seems to have the function of making the secondary predicate being shared between standard and comparee. The

same applies to double similes, whose displaced element is often a spatial complement that can be read literally with the standard and metaphorically with the comparee. Some discontinuous standards do not fit this analysis and might be explained by considering other formulaic (cf. *sīcau* ‘two seams’ in ṚV 10.75.4) or pragmatic (cf. the puns in examples in (40) and (41)) factors. Finally, we have seen that the repetition of the same preverb in the standard and in the parameter can also be explained by other factors and that it does not necessarily suggest the original presence of a verb in standards introduced by *iva*.

The occurrence of a verb within the standard affects only a small part of the similes attested in the corpus and, apart from these cases, the internal syntax of *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* clauses is well known. The next section is devoted to the analysis of the external syntax of standards, that is, on the position of the standard with respect to the parameter.

### 7.2.2 External Syntax: word-order correlations

Typological studies on equative and similitive constructions have shown that the order STAND-PAR correlates with the OV order (Andersen 1983; Haspelmath’s 2017: 26 *Generalization 2*). For the language of the ṚV, Ryan and Gunkel (2015) have shown that, in metrically neutral contexts,<sup>116</sup> non-imperative finite verbs display OV order in 78% of cases (37 in total) and imperative forms in 77% of cases (22 in total), from which it follows that the STAND-PAR order is the expected order for this language.<sup>117</sup>

As shown by Table 19, the order STAND-PAR predicted by Haspelmath’s Generalization 2 is only partially confirmed by a quantitative analysis performed on the treebank (see Appendix 1 for the queries used in this study). Indeed, the table shows that, while the STAND-PAR order is the most frequent in Ṛgvedic similes (59%), the PAR-STAND one is by no means rare (40%).

<sup>116</sup> Ryan and Gunkel (2015) extracted all swappable bigrams from the ṚV, that is all bigrams in which both orders are metrically equivalent: e.g. *dháne hité* (7x) ~ *hité dháne* (2x) ‘when the stake is set’; *śárma yaccha* (8x) ~ *yaccha śárma* (0x) ‘extend shelter’.

<sup>117</sup> Ṛgvedic participles are less clearly final, but the sample is small, with only four types attested in swappable bigrams. They display OV order in 40% of cases (N = 10). In 13 out of 19 occurrences of VO order, the object is a complex noun phrase that would be syntactically discontinuous in OV order: compare for instance *bibhrad [vájraṃ vṛtrahánaṃ]* ‘carrying [mace Vṛtra-smashing]’ and *\*[vájraṃ...]bibhrad [...vṛtrahánaṃ]* ‘[mace...] carrying [...Vṛtra-smashing]’. According to Ryan and Gunkel (2015), this suggests that the poets may be choosing OV order over VO in order to avoid syntactically discontinuous noun phrases. Note that, among swappable O-V bigrams, continuity is at stake in 28 cases; of these, 25 cases are continuous as attested and discontinuous if swapped, thus confirming that continuity maybe well be a motivating factor for word order.

**Table 19.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in all similes.

ORDER	ABS. N.	%
STAND-PAR	511	<b>60%</b>
PAR-STAND	346	40%
TOTAL	857 <sup>118</sup>	

Vedic is often described as a language with free or pragmatic word order, in the sense of Thompson (1978), and the freedom observed in the relative order of standard and comparee is surely to be attributed to this feature of the language. Indeed, one could argue, with Mithun (1987: 281), that “forcing [languages with pragmatic word order] into the mold of any basic word order at all is at best descriptively unnecessary”.

Nevertheless, we might wonder which factors come into play in determining the choice of one order over the other and treebank annotation can help us to explore this issue.

#### 7.2.2.1 Gapping in the *ṚV*

A more refined query which distinguishes similes with ellipsis (e.g. ‘Agni is bright like the sun’, whose standards take the *deprels* *obl:manner* and *obl:grad*), from similes with gapping (e.g. ‘Thoughts lick Indra like mothers a calf’, whose standards take the label *advcl:manner*) yields the following results:

**Table 20.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in all similes with ellipsis and gapping.

ORDER	SIMILES WITH ELLIPSIS		SIMILES WITH GAPPING	
STAND-PAR	360	<b>62%</b>	151	<b>52%</b>
PAR-STAND	212	37%	134	47%
TOTAL	572		285	

As Table 20 shows, by selecting only similes with ellipsis, the STAND-PAR order increases slightly (62%). If, on the contrary, only similes with gapping are included in the query, the STAND-PAR percentage decreases to 52%.

A possible explanation for the slightly higher frequency of PAR-STAND order in similes with gapping may come from typological studies on gapping. Mallison and Blake (1981) and Gaeta and Luraghi (2001) have shown that in free word order languages such as Russian, Latin, and Ancient

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<sup>118</sup> From the overall corpus of 880 similes, 23 predicative constructions of the type “CPREE is like STAND” must be subtracted for they have no explicit parameter and are therefore not relevant for the analysis proposed in this section. Predicative similes can be retrieved with query 11 (see Appendix 1).

Greek, the specific order of gapping and the relative position of the contrasted constituents seem to depend on pragmatic, rather than strictly syntactic factors.<sup>119</sup> A preference for rightward gapping, i.e. elision of the verb in the second clause, as in (47)a, has been attributed to the tendency of language processing to favor anaphoric processes over cataphoric ones. This makes leftward gapping, as in (47)b, cross-linguistically more subject to restrictions with respect to verb position, relative order of the constituents, and type of verbs employed (Hudson 1989, Gaeta and Luraghi 2001: 108).

- (47) a. Rightward gapping: *Rose studies Greek and John Ø Latin.*  
 b. Leftward gapping: *\*Rose Ø Greek and John studies Latin.*

Gaeta and Luraghi (2001: 104-107) identify a series of restrictions that affect leftward gapping in Ancient Greek. In the first place, within the corpus employed for the study, leftward gapping occurs 29 times and is therefore much less frequent than rightward gapping, which is attested 106 times. More notably, the patterns found in leftward gapping are much more uniform. First, while the contrasted constituents can be organized in a chiasmic pattern order when gapping occurs to the right (cf. *ekeinōn.GEN toūs Nasamōnas.ACC ... toūs ágontas.ACC tōn Nasamōnōn.GEN* in (48)), they have the same order when gapping occurs to the left. Besides, while with rightward gapping the verb can occur in any position in the first clause, in leftward gapping it always follows the contrasted constituents in the last clause.<sup>120</sup> Finally, Gaeta and Luraghi found that verbs occurring with leftward gapping are also less varied. Very often the copula is gapped, or some verb with a similar meaning (e.g. *gígnomai* ‘to be, become, happen’); in other cases, the verb has nevertheless a low degree of rhematicity and does not carry new information.

- (48) *phōnēs*      *dè*      *oúte*      *ti*                      *tês*                      *ekeinōn*      *toūs*  
 voice(F).GEN   PTC      NEG      IND.ACC                      ART.GEN.F      DEM.GEN.PL      ART.ACC.PL

<sup>119</sup> Since Ross (1970), the direction of gapping has been connected with the underlying word order type of a language. More precisely, Ross argued that OV languages only admit leftward gapping, whereas VO languages may admit gapping in both directions. Further research on gapping has shown that the restrictions established by Ross (1970) on possible orders of gapping only hold for languages that belong to a rather rigid type. For instance, a rigid VO language like English only admits rightward gapping, while a rigid OV language such as Japanese only admits leftward gapping (Gaeta and Luraghi 2001: 93). Furthermore, according to Mallinson and Blake (1981:248–252), languages with free, or pragmatic word order allow gapping on both sides.

<sup>120</sup> The two generalizations presented above have only one exception in the corpus of Gaeta and Luraghi, namely Arist. *Metaph.* 987b 27–29, whose contrasted constituents have chiasmic order and whose verb occurs between two of the three contrasted constituents.

*ginōskein*    *Nasamōnas*                      *oúte*    *toùs*                      *ágontas*  
 know.INF.PRS Nasamonians.ACC.PL NEG    ART.ACC.PL    carry.PTCP.PRS.ACC.PL  
*tōn*                      *Nasamōnōn*  
 ART.GEN.PL    Nasamonians.GEN.PL

‘The Nasamonians did not know these men’s language nor did the escort know the language of the Nasamonians.’ (pattern: XSV SX) (Gaeta and Luraghi 2001: 98)

(Hdt. *Hist.* 2.32.6)

Treebank annotation allows investigating the order of gapping in Vedic as well. From a preliminary inquiry, it results that the typology of gapping in the ṚV resembles that of other IE languages like Ancient Greek and Latin in many respects, but that not all predictions are met to the same extent. Results obtained from the inquiry, which was conducted on the same corpus employed for the study of Ṛgvedic similes, are provided in Table 21; in the table, V stands for the verb, X for contrasted constituents of any kind; the latter can be the Subject and Object of the clause, but are more often other constituents.

**Table 21.** Pattern attested for rightward and leftward gapping in the ṚV.<sup>121</sup>

RIGHTWARD		LEFTWARD	
VXX XX (XX)	x4	XX XX XX VXX	x1
XVX XX (XX)	x6	(XX XX) XX XVX	x4
XXV XX (XX)	x12	(XX XX) XX XXV	x7
XXXV XXX	x2	LP-XX XXV	x1
LP-XXV XX	x2	XXX XXXV	x1
X-LP-XV XX XX	x1	X <sub>1</sub> X X <sub>2</sub> XXV ... X <sub>1</sub> X <sub>2</sub>	x1

<sup>121</sup> Cases of rightward and leftward gapping were extracted through Queries 23 and 24 respectively (see Appendix 1). Note that these queries also return cases of emphatic local particle, subject, or object repetition: see for instance examples i. and ii. with repetition of *sám* ‘with’ and *sáh* ‘he’ respectively. Since repetition is a clause-linking device, these cases in fact contain only one couple of contrasted constituents each (*góbhir* ‘with the cows’ and *adbhíḥ* ‘with the waters’ in i.; *adhvarán* ‘rites’ and *ṛtún* ‘ritual sequences’ in ii.); therefore, they are excluded from the analysis of gapping presented below. On the cohesive function of local particle repetition, see Dunkel (1979) and Klein (e.g. 1987, 2007, 2008, 2012); on repetition as a clause-linking device, see Viti (2008).

- i.    *sám*    *indur*                      *góbhir*                      *asarat*                      *sám*    *adbhíḥ*  
 LP    drop.NOM                      cow(F).INST.PL    flow.AOR.3SG    LP    water(F).INST.PL  
 ‘The drop has flowed together with the cows, with the waters.’ (ṚV 9.97.45d)
- ii.    *só*                      *adhvarán*                      *sá*                      *ṛtún*                      *kalpayāti*  
 3SG.NOM                      rite.ACC.PL                      3SG.NOM                      ritual\_sequence.ACC.PL    arrange.SUBJ.ACT.3SG  
 ‘He will arrange the rites, he the ritual sequences.’

TOTAL:	27	TOTAL:	15
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A problem with Vedic word order arises as a result of the existence of discontinuous constituents. This can be seen in example (49), where the constituents *tám no ... hávam* ‘this call of ours’ and *tán na ... vácaḥ* ‘this speech of ours’ are split: *havam* and *vacaḥ*, each functioning as the object of its clause, are found in sentence-final position after the verb, whereas their modifiers *tám no* and *tán na* (< *tám naḥ* due to *sandhi*) precede the subject of each clause. Thus, two of the contrasted constituents occur next to each other at the end of the sentence, a configuration that cannot be subsumed under any other pattern attested in leftward gapping.<sup>122</sup>

(49)	<i>tám</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>dyāvāpṛthivī</i>		
	DEM.ACC	1PL.GEN	Heaven_Earth(F).NOM.DU		
	<i>tán</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>āpa</i>		
	DEM.ACC.N	1PL.GEN	water(F).NOM.PL		
	<i>indraḥ</i>	<i>śṛṅvantu</i>	<i>marúto</i>	<i>havam</i>	<i>vacaḥ</i>
	Indra.NOM	hear.IMPV.3PL	Maruts.NOM	call.ACC	speech(N).ACC
	‘This call of ours let Heaven and Earth, this speech of ours let the waters, Indra, and the Maruts hear.’ (pattern: O <sub>1</sub> S O <sub>1</sub> SV ... O <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> )				
	(ṚV 10.37.6ab)				

Although the occurrences of gapping in the corpus are too sparse to allow for generalizations, we can nevertheless make some observations. In Vedic, as in Ancient Greek, examples of rightward gapping can occur for any position of the verb in the first clause, but here the pattern XXV XX, and not XVX XX, is the most frequently represented (12x). Notably, leftward gapping in the ṚV does not seem to be subject to strict restrictions with respect to the order of the verb: here too, the pattern with final verb (XX XXV, see example (50)) is the most frequent (7x), followed by the one with central verb (see, e.g., example (51)). The pattern with initial verb occurs only once, but in rightward gapping this is quite rare too, with only four attestations.

(50)	<i>sá</i>	<i>hí</i>	<i>kṣáyeṇa</i>	<i>kṣámiyasya</i>	<i>jánmanaḥ</i>
	3SG.NOM	PTC	dwelling.INST	earthly.GEN.N	race(N).GEN

<sup>122</sup> In two other cases (ṚV 8.2.13 and 8.2.23), contrasted constituents are split and intermingled with each other. In such cases, it does not seem possible to identify the position of a constituent with the position of its head because modifiers, rather than heads, are contrasted in these two gapped clauses.



*sāmrājjyena*                      *diviyásya*                      *cétati*  
 universal\_rule(N).INST      divine.GEN.N                      understand.PRS.3SG

‘For in consequence of his dwelling place he takes cognizance of the earthly race and, in consequence of his universal rule, of the heavenly.’ (pattern: X<sub>INST</sub>X<sub>GEN</sub> X<sub>INST</sub>X<sub>GEN</sub> V)

(ṚV 7.46.2ab)

(51) *kó*                      *vām*                      *śayutrā́*                      *vidhāvā*                      *iva*                      *deváram*  
 INT.NOM                      2DU.ACC                      to\_bed                      widow(F).NOM                      like                      brother-in-law.ACC  
*máryam*                      *ná*                      *yóṣā*                      *kṛṇute*                      *sadhásthā*                      *ā́*  
 youth.ACC                      like                      maiden(F).NOM                      make.3SG                      meeting(N).LOC                      LP

‘Who takes you to bed, like a widow her brother-in-law, or to a rendezvous like a maiden a dashing youth?’ (pattern: X<sub>LOC</sub>X<sub>STAND</sub> X<sub>STAND</sub>VX<sub>LOC</sub>)<sup>123</sup>

(ṚV 10.40.2cd)

Example (51) shows that a chiasmic disposition of the contrasted constituents is not limited to rightward gapping, as in Ancient Greek, but is also allowed with leftward gapping. Another example of chiasm in leftward gapping was given in Chapter 6.1.1.1, repeated here as (52).<sup>124</sup> Note that the chiasmic disposition found in this example is semantically motivated: here, indeed, the constituents in the second clause (*anyám.ACC* ‘another’ and *tvám.NOM* ‘you’) are coreferential with those in the first (*anyá.NOM* ‘another’ and *tvám.ACC* ‘you’), while their grammatical relations are reversed.

(52) *anyám*                      *ū*                      *śú*                      *tvám*                      *yamy*  
 another.ACC                      PTC                      PTC                      2SG.NOM                      Yamī.VOC  
*anyá*                      *u*                      *tvām*                      *pári*                      *ṣvajāte*  
 another.NOM.                      PTC                      2SG.ACC                      LP                      embrace.SUBJ.PRS.3SG

‘You (will embrace) another, Yamī, and another will embrace you.’ (pattern: XS SXV)

(ṚV 10.10.14ab)

Finally, only one verb among those found in leftward gapping is a copula (*babhūvitha.PF.2SG* ‘you are’ in ṚV 8.98.11b);<sup>125</sup> other verbs do not seem to differ from the kind of verbs found in rightward

<sup>123</sup> In this example, one of the contrasted constituents in each sentence is the standard of a simile: *vidhāveva deváram* ‘like a widow her brother-in-law’ and *máryam ná yóṣā* ‘like a maiden a dashing youth’. The two other contrasted constituents are the adverb *śayutrā́* ‘on or to a couch’ and the prepositional phrase *sadhásthā ā́* ‘to the meeting place’.

<sup>124</sup> Other occurrences are ṚV 1.51.4 (pattern: X<sub>1</sub>X<sub>2</sub> X<sub>2</sub>VX<sub>1</sub>), 5.85.2 (pattern: X<sub>1</sub>X X<sub>1</sub>X<sub>2</sub> X<sub>1</sub>X<sub>2</sub> VX<sub>2</sub>X<sub>1</sub>), and 10.2.7 (pattern: XS XS SXV).

<sup>125</sup> See query 25 in Appendix 1.

gapping. Compare for instance the following examples, in which the same verb  $\sqrt{dhā}$ - ‘place, put’ is omitted once in the first clauses (54) and once in the second clause (53):

- (53) *hṛtsú*                      *krátum*                      *váruṇo*                      *apsú*                      *agním*  
heart(N).LOC.PL              resolve.ACC              Varuṇa.NOM              water(F).LOC.PL              fire.ACC  
*diví*                      *súryam*                      ***adadhāt***                      *sómam*                      *ádrau*  
heaven.LOC              sun.ACC                      place.IMPV.3SG                      soma.ACC                      stone.LOC  
‘Varuṇa placed resolve in hearts, fire in waters, the sun in heaven, and soma on the stone.’  
(pattern: X<sub>LOC</sub>X<sub>ACC</sub> X<sub>LOC</sub> X<sub>ACC</sub> X<sub>LOC</sub> X<sub>ACC</sub>V X<sub>ACC</sub> X<sub>LOC</sub>)  
(ṚV 5.85.2cd)

- (54) *súrye*                      *jyótir*                      ***ádadhur***                      *māsi*                      *aktún*  
sun.LOC                      light(N).ACC                      place.PF.3SG                      mood.LOC                      night.ACC.PL  
‘They placed the light in the sun and the nights in the moon.’ (pattern: XXV XX)<sup>126</sup>  
(ṚV 10.12.7c)

A phenomenon which is linked to gapping is split coordination (on which see Mallinson and Blake 1981:240-243; Gaeta and Luraghi 2001: 91 on Ancient Greek). While gapping implies the leaving out of only one constituent, in split coordination all the constituents in the coordinate clause are left out, except for one. Example (55) is an instance of split coordination: here, the first clause contains the verb phrase *caná párā deyām* ‘I would not hand you over’ as well as the constituents *tvām* ‘you’ and *mahé śulkāya* ‘for great exchange gift’, whereas the following three clauses contain only one constituent each (the numerals *sahásrāya* ‘for a thousand’, *ayútāya* ‘for ten thousand’, *śatāya* ‘for hundred’); the repetition of *ná* functions as a clause-linking device.

- (55) *mahé*                      *caná*                      *tvām*                      *adrivaḥ*  
great.DAT.N              not\_even                      2SG.ACC                      stone\_possessor.VOC  
*pārā śulkāya*                      ***deeyām***  
away gift(N).DAT                      give.OPT.AOR.1SG  
*ná sahásrāya*                      *ná ayútāya*                      *vajrivo*  
NEG thousand.DAT.N                      NEG ten\_thousand.DAT.N                      mace\_possessor.VOC

<sup>126</sup> In this example, the verb occurs right in the middle of the sentence. The fact that it is omitted in the second conjunct is suggested by the fact that patterns with final verb (in this case: rightward gapping XXV XX) are more frequent than those with initial verb (in this case: leftward gapping XX VXX). The same consideration made me opt for XX XX XXV XX over XX XX XX VXX in example (54).

*ná śatāya śatā-magha*  
 NEG hundred.DAT.N hundred-reward.VOC

‘Not even for a great exchange gift would I hand you over, you possessor of the stone, not for a thousand, not for ten thousand, you possessor of the mace, not for a hundred, you of a hundred rewards.’

(ṚV 8.1.5)

Sometimes, verb ellipsis results in hybrid constructions, such as (56): here, the first clause contains the two nominal constituents *áśvamedhe* ‘with Aśvamedha’ and *suvīriyam* ‘abundance of heroes’, whereas the second clause contains the verb *dhārayatam* ‘keep’ and only one contrasted constituent, *kṣatráṃ* ‘dominion’.

(56) *indrāgnī śata-dāvani*  
 Indra\_Agni.VOC.DU hudred-giver.LOC  
*áśvamedhe suvīriyam*  
 Aśvamedha.LOC abundance\_of\_heroes(N).ACC  
*kṣatráṃ dhārayatam bṛhád*  
 dominion(N).ACC keep.IMPV.2DU lofty.ACC.N  
*diví sūryam iva ajáram*  
 heaven.LOC sun.NOM like unaging.ACC.N

‘O Indra and Agni, (keep) an abundance of heroes with Aśvamedha, the giver of a hundred (cattle), and keep (with him) dominion, lofty and unaging like the sun in heaven.’ (pattern: XX XV)

(ṚV 5.27.6)

### 7.2.2.2 Similes ad gapping

Since in similes the verb is always omitted in the STAND clause, we might ask whether double similes with PAR-STAND order present the same order of verb and constituents found in rightward gapping (e.g. *Thoughts lick Indra like mothers Ø a calf*), and if, on the contrary, similes with STAND-PAR order follow the patterns found in leftward gapping (e.g. *Like mothers Ø a calf, thoughts lick Indra*).<sup>127</sup> In order to do this, it is necessary to take also the position of CPREE into account. In such an analysis, the elements of the comparee will constitute the contrast points of the gapping construction, whereas

<sup>127</sup> Note that, according to this analysis, example (52) above features gapping in two directions, in that the first conjunct *anyám ū śú tvám* lacks a verb, as does the simile *libujeva vṛkṣám* ‘like a vine a tree’ at the closing of the hemistich.

the elements of the standard will be assimilated to the remnants.

*Similes and rightward gapping*

Table 22 reports the patterns attested in double (and triple) similes with PAR-STAND order. In Table 12, as in Table 13 below, STAND stands for the standard of the simile under discussion (retrieved by Queries 15 and 16 in Appendix 1), whereas STAND2 (STAND3, STAND4) stands for another simile in the sentence, regardless of its position with respect to STAND.

**Table 22.** Word order patterns in double similes with PAR-STAND order.

DOUBLE SIMILES WITH PAR-STAND ORDER		CORRESPONDING RIGHTWARD GAPPING PATTERNS
V-CPREE-STAND (-STAND2)	x21	VXX XX
CPREE-V-CPREE-STAND	x21	XVX XX
LP-CPREE-V-CPREE-STAND	x3	LP-XVX XX
CPREE-V-STAND	x40	XXV XX
CPREE-V-STAND-STAND2	x2	XXV XX XX
LP-CPREE-V-STAND	x16	LP-XXV XX
TOTAL:	103	
BI-DIRECTIONAL GAPPING PATTERN		
STAND2-V-CPREE-STAND	x1	XX VXX XX
CENTER EMBEDDING		
V-STAND-CPREE	x3	1x with null subj, 1x with null obj, 1x CPREE = relative clause
V-STAND-STAND2-CPREE	x1	null subj, CPREE = obj + infinitive
CPREE-V-STAND-CPREE	x1	pattern OVS OX X
LP-CPREE-V-STAND-CPREE	x1	pattern LP-SV SO O
TOTAL:	6	
NULL CPREE		
V-STAND	x12	
STAND2-V-STAND	x1	STAND2 = simple sim
STAND-V-STAND	x1	see Section 7.2.1
TOTAL:	14	
OTHER PATTERNS		
CPREE-STAND	x2	
LP-CPREE-STAND2-V-CPREE-STAND	x1	
CPREE-STAND2-V-STAND	x1	
STAND-V-STAND-CPREE	x2	see Section 7.2.1
CPREE-STAND-V-STAND	x1	see Section 7.2.1
LP-CPREE-STAND2-V-STAND2-STAND	x1	see Section 7.2.1
TOTAL:	8	
V CONSTRUCTED WITH STAND		CORRESPONDING LEFTWARD GAPPING PATTERNS
CPREE-V-STAND	x1	XX VXX
CPREE-STAND-V	x1	XX XXV
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>134</b>	

As is clear from the table, most double similes with PAR-STAND order (103 out of 134) have word order patterns that correspond to patterns found in rightward gapping (see Table 11 above). In the case of similes, however, we see that the initial position of the verb in the first clause is almost as often attested as the central position.<sup>128</sup> Clause-final position of the verb (patterns XXV XX and the like), on the other hand, remains the most attested one, with 58 occurrences. Examples (57) to (59) make the correspondence between double similes and gapping patterns explicit; they provide instances of rightward gapping with initial, central, and final position of the verb in the first clause, respectively. Note that, in all three examples, the contrasted constituents have a chiasmic disposition.

- (57) *hávāmahe*                      *tvā*                      *vayám*  
 invoke.PRS.1PL.MID              2SG.ACC              1PL.NOM  
 PAR                                      CPREE<sub>j</sub>              CPREE<sub>i</sub>  
*práyasvantaḥ*                                      *suté*                                      *sácā*  
 bringing\_offering.NOM.PL              press.PPP.LOC              with  
*putráso*                      *ná*                      *pitáram*                                      *vájasātaye*  
 son.NOM.PL                      like                      father.ACC                                      prize-winning(F).DAT  
 STAND<sub>i</sub>                                      STM                      STAND<sub>j</sub>  
 ‘Bringing you the pleasing offering when the soma is pressed, we invoke you like sons a father for the winning of prizes.’ (pattern: VOS ... SO) (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)  
(ṚV 1.130.1d-f)

- (58) *matáyah*                      *soma-pām*                      *urúm*  
 thought(f).NOM.PL              soma-drinker.ACC              broad.ACC  
 CPREE<sub>i</sub>  
*rihánti*                                      *śávasas*                                      *pátim*  
 lick.PRS.3PL                                      strength(N).GEN                                      lord.ACC  
 PAR    CPREE<sub>j</sub>  
*índram*                      *vatsám*                      *ná*                                      *mātáraḥ*  
 Indra.ACC                      calf.ACC                      like                                      mother(F).NOM.PL  
     STAND<sub>j</sub>                      STM                                      STAND<sub>i</sub>  
 ‘Thoughts lick the broad, soma-drinking lord of strength, Indra—like mothers a calf.’ (pattern: SOVO OS)  
(ṚV 3.41.5)

<sup>128</sup> For the computing, I have assimilated cases characterized by the pattern LP-CPREE-V-STAND to cases featuring the verb in central position. This results in 21 cases with initial verb and 24 with central verb.

(59) *devī*                      *yádi*    *táviṣī*                      *tvāṅṛdhā*                      *utáya*  
 divine.NOM.F              if            might(F).NOM              you\_strong.NOM.F            help(F).DAT

CPREE<sub>i</sub>

*índram*            *síṣakti*                      *uṣásam*                      *ná*    *súriyah*  
 Indra.ACC            accompany.PRS.3SG            dawn(F).ACC              like    sun.NOM  
 CPREE<sub>j</sub>            PAR                                      STAND<sub>j</sub>                      STM    STAND<sub>i</sub>

‘If his divine might, strong through you [=poet], accompanies Indra to help (him), as the sun accompanies the dawn [...].’ (pattern: SOV OS)

(ṚV 1.56.4ab)

Those presented in (57), (58), and (59) represent ideal examples of rightward gapping because they do not contain discontinuous constituents and because, in all three similes, two elements of the standard systematically contrast with two elements of the comparee. In many cases the analysis is made more problematic either by the presence of discontinuous constituents that make it difficult to assign a word order pattern to the example in question, or because the comparee has null arguments that make the contrast between comparee and standard asymmetrical – or because of both possibilities. Example (60) is a case in point for the verb in the comparee contains two discontinuous arguments, namely the subject *sá ... agniḥ* ‘he ... Agni’ and the path argument *áti durgāṇi víśvā ... duritāti* ‘across all difficult passages (and) across difficult transits’.

(60) *sá*                      *naḥ*                      *parśad*                      *áti*    *durgāṇi*  
 3SG.NOM              1PL.ACC              bring\_over.SUBJ.AOR.3SG    LP    hard-passage(N).ACC.PL  
*víśvā*  
 all.ACC.PL.N

*nāvā*              *iva*    *síndhu*                      *duritā*                      *ati*    *agniḥ*  
 boat(F).INST    like    river.ACC              hard-transit(N).ACC.PL            LP    Agni.NOM

‘He will carry us across all difficult passages, across difficult transits, as if with a boat across a river—Agni.’ (pattern: SX<sub>Path</sub>V X<sub>Instr</sub>X<sub>Path</sub> / SX<sub>Path</sub>V X<sub>Instr</sub>X<sub>Path</sub> X<sub>Path</sub>S)

(ṚV 1.99.1cd)

In order to assign the example to one of the patterns attested for gapping, we might decide to consider only the first element of each constituent, which would result in the pattern XXV XX; in this case, we could account for the proper noun *agniḥ* as a loose apposition to the pronoun *sá*. Alternatively, since preverb repetition represents a clause-linking device in Vedic, we could interpret example (60)

as an instance of double gapping on the right, with emphatic repetition of the subject. Following this interpretation, the sentence would have a pattern XVX XX XX and the following translation: ‘He will carry us across all difficult passage, as if with a boat across a river, Agni (will carry us) across difficult transits’. A further problem with this passage is that the subject *sá* (*agníḥ*) in the comparee is contrasted by the instrument *nāvā́* ‘with a boat’ in the standard, thus resulting in an asymmetric pattern.

The simile in (61) constitutes another problematic example. The sentence contains the verb  $\sqrt{\text{śri}}$ - ‘to cause to lean or rest on, fix on, fasten to’, which usually requires a locative argument; however, while this argument is explicitly realized by *sūriye* ‘on the sun’ in the standard clause, it is left unexpressed in the comparee. Although the null argument “on him” can be recovered from the linguistic and extralinguistic context – the hymn is dedicated to Agni, the sacrificial fire onto which the offerings are poured –, the pattern is incomplete: VS XS.

- (61) *úśrāyi*                      *yajñáh*                      *sūriye*                      *ná*      *cákṣuḥ*  
 fix.INJ.AOR3SG.PASS    sacrifice.NOM              sun.LOC                      like      eye(N).NOM

‘The sacrifice has been fixed (on him), like (a man’s) eye on the sun.’

(RV 6.11.5d)

According to the strict definition proposed by Gaeta and Luraghi (2001: 90), only cases where “the omitted constituent is the verb and there are at least two contrasting constituents in each clause” can be considered to be affected by gapping. This definition clearly excludes cases such as (61); however, an analysis according to the same categories employed for the study of gapping seems to be the most appropriate also for such cases in which the contrast is asymmetrical. In fact, since what interests us here is to understand which factors determine the position of the standard and since in the examples taken into consideration the standard always has at least two elements dependent on the omitted verb (that is, one *advcl:manner* and at least one *orphan*), the factors at stake seem to be related to issues of processing and anaphora, just as in the case of gapping *stricto sensu*.

Of the approximately 130 cases in which the standard of a double simile follows instead of preceding the parameter (PAR-STAND order), approximately 100 cases feature a word order pattern attested in rightward gapping. Therefore, we can hypothesize that in these cases the PAR-STAND order is determined by the preference in the languages with free or pragmatic word order for gapping on the right.

As can be seen from Table 22, the remaining 31 similes characterized by PAR-STAND order cannot be traced back to any of the patterns attested for rightward gapping. In these cases, the factors

that may have determined this order of constituents are varied and not always determinable. A couple of examples follow.

Example (62) was retrieved by the query because it contains a standard preceded by its parameter, but the latter is in turn preceded by another double standard: thus, in this case we have an instance of bi-directional gapping, also attested in coordination in Vedic as well as in other languages which can have both final and non-final verbs (for Ancient Greek, see the two examples provided by Gaeta and Luraghi 2001: 107-108).

- (62) *ápo ná síndhum abhí yát sa-mákṣaran*  
 water(F).NOM.PL like river.ACC LP when LP-flow.IMPF.3PL  
*sómāsa índraṁ kuliyá iva hradám*  
 soma.NOM.PL Indra.ACC brook(F).NOM.PL like pond.ACC  
 ‘When the soma juices have flowed together into Indra, like waters into a river, like brooks into a pond [...].’ (pattern: SX VSX SX)  
 (ṚV 10.43.7ab)

In similes belonging to the ‘center embedding’ section of Table 22, the standard occurs between the parameter and (one element of) the comparee. Among such cases, three are particularly problematic because the elements of the comparee and of the standard are intermingled with each other or with elements of the parameter. Take for instance example (63), the only case of LP-CPREE-V-STAND-CPREE pattern. Here, the subject *índraṁ*, belonging to the comparee, is detached from the subject *víprā* ‘inspired poets’ and from the verb *abhí anūṣata* ‘have roared’ with which it is constructed due to formulaic reasons: indeed, the sequence *índraṁ sómasya pītáye* ‘(to) Indra, to drink the soma’ occurs six times in the ṚV, always making up an eight-syllable *pāda*.<sup>129</sup>

- (63) *abhí víprā anūṣata*  
 LP inspired.NOM.PL.M roar.AOR.3PL.M  
*gávo vatsám ná mātáraḥ*  
 cow(F).NOM.PL calf.ACC like mother(F).NOM.PL  
*índraṁ sómasya pītáye*  
 Indra.ACC soma.GEN drinking(F).DAT  
 ‘The inspired poets have roared – like mother cows to their calf – to Indra, to drink the soma.’  
 (ṚV 9.12.2)

<sup>129</sup> Cf. for instance the simile in Figure 32 below, with vocative *indra* instead of accusative *índraṁ*.



In four cases (patterns V-STAND-CPREE and V-STAND-STAND2-CPREE), the parameter stands in sentence initial position. Such similes can be analyzed together with another group of similes characterized by null comparee and initial parameter (patterns V-STAND and STAND2-V-STAND), thus resulting in 17 similes with a sentence initial parameter.<sup>130</sup> In all these cases, the initial position of the verb can be explained by itsthetic function. Thetic sentences differ from categorical sentences in that their verb does not predicate something about the subject, but rather present an event, state, or situation which is viewed as a unitary proposition. In other words, thetic sentences are not pragmatically bipartite into topic (subject) and focus (predicate), but their subject and predicate form a single information unit (Sasse 1987: 568). For instance, the sentence *The telephone's ringing* does not predicate something about the telephone, but rather announces an event of sounding (cf. Lambrecht 1994: 143).

According to Viti (2008), theticity subsumes all factors that were traditionally identified as triggers of verb-initial order in early IE languages, namely imperatives, first-person performative predicates such as ‘I invoke’, short clauses occurring one after another, presentative clauses, main clauses following an adverbial clause, parenthetical clauses such as ‘X said’, and *yes-no* questions (see Klein 1991 on initial verbs in the R̥V). Some such factors are those that determine PAR-STAND order in our seventeen similes: this can be seen for instance in example (64), which contains a sentence initial imperative, and in example (65), where the initial verb *abhī prá dadrur* ‘they burst’, followed by the standard *jánayo ná gár̥bham* ‘as women (burst out) their embryo’, belongs to a series of short, verb initial sentences.

(64)	<i>prá</i>	<i>traya</i>	<i>sūro</i>	<i>ártham</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>pārám</i>
	LP	send.IMPV.PRS.2SG	sun(N).NOM	goal(N).ACC	like	further_shore(N).ACC
	<i>yé</i>	<i>asya</i>	<i>kāmam</i>	<i>jani-dhā</i>		<i>iva</i>
	REL.NOM.PL	3SG.GEN	desire.ACC.N	wife-provider.NOM.PL		like
	<i>gmán</i>					
	go.INJ.AOR.3PL					
	‘As the sun sends (each man) forth to his task, do you send forth, (like a boat) to the further shore, those who go, each to his own desire, as if going to the providers of wives.’					
	(R̥V 10.29.5ab)					

<sup>130</sup> In fifteen cases, the verb is found in absolute initial position, in one case it stands in pre-subject position, preceded by a temporal adverb (*sádā asi ranvó* ‘you are always delightful’ R̥V 10.11.5a), whereas in one case the parameter is a participial form which comes after a subordinated clause and before the main one (*akhhhalik̥tyā* ‘saying “akhhkala” /repeating syllables’ in R̥V 7.103.3c).

(65) vs. 4 **ákṣodayac** *chávasā kṣāma budhnám*

*váar ná vátas táviṣṭbhir índrah*

*dṛṣṭhāni+ aubhnād usámāna ójo*

**ávābhinat** *kakúbhaḥ párvatānām*

vs. 5 **abhí prá dadrur** *jánayo ná gárbham*

LP LP burstind.PF.3PL woman(F).NOM.PL like embyo.ACC

*ráthā iva prá yayuh sākām ádrayah*

**átarpayo** *visṣṭa ubjá ūrmín*

*tuvám vṛtām ariṇā indra síndhūn*

‘Indra made the earth shake to its bottom with his strength, as the wind does the water with its forces. He knotted up the strongholds, eager in his own strength; he cut down the peaks of the mountains.

**They burst**, as women burst out their embryo. Like chariots the stones went forth all at once. You satisfied (the waters) flowing widely, and you subdued their waves. You made the blocked rivers flow, Indra.’

(ṚV 4.19.4-5)

As shown by the English sentence *The telephone’s ringing* above, verbs of sounding are often used to exemplify the thetic function in studies of information structure; in example (66), the verb *próthad* ‘he has snorted’ describes the sound of fire (/Agni) when it breaks free of the fire-churning sticks.

(66) **próthad** *ásvo ná yávase aviṣyán*

snort.INJ.PRS.3SG horse.NOM like pasture(N).LOC eager.NOM

*yadá maháḥ saṁváraṇād ví ásthāt*

when great.ABL.N enclosure(N).ABL LP stand.AOR.3SG

‘He has snorted like a hungry horse in his pasture, when he has stood free of his great enclosure.’

(ṚV 7.3.2ab)

For completeness’ sake, I should make clear that theticity also explains the PAR-STAND order of examples characterized by rightward gapping such as (57), were the performative verb *hávāmahe* ‘we call’ is found in absolute initial position. In all examples represented by the pattern VXX XX in Table 22, theticity is responsible for the verb initial word order and, consequently, for the fact that the standard follows the parameter, instead of preceding it.

In five cases,<sup>131</sup> the parameter precedes the head of the standard (*advcl:manner*), but follows the orphaned element (section “OTHER PATTERNS”). A tentative explanation for this word order pattern was given in Section 7.2.1, which dealt with the interruption of the standard clause. Finally, two similes whose parameter is constructed with the standard and not with the comparee are in fact cases of leftward gapping; cf. example (67) (see fn. 104).

(67)	<i>ádhā</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>sakhyé</i>	<i>ándhaso</i>
	LP	2SG.GEN	fellowship(N).LOC	talk(N).GEN
	<i>rāṇan</i>		<i>gāvo</i>	<i>ná</i> <i>yāvase</i>
	take_pleasure.INJ.PRS.3PL		cow(F).NOM.PL	like pasture(N).LOC
	‘Then in the fellowship of your stalk (o Soma, we will take pleasure), as cows take pleasure in a pasture.’ (pattern: X VSX)			
	(ṚV 10.25.1c,e)			

### *Similes and leftward gapping*

Table 13 reports the patterns attested in double (and triple) similes characterized by STAND-PAR order. As can be seen from the table, 60 such similes out of 154 feature word order patterns attested in leftward gapping (see Table 21). As in the case of similes with PAR-STAND order presented above, here too the gapping pattern may be incomplete due to the presence of null arguments in the comparee, or of discontinuous constituents that make it difficult to determine their position. However, examples such as (68) and (69) should make the correspondence between similes with STAND-PAR order and left-gapped sentences clear:

(68)	<i>rātham</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>dur-gād</i>	<i>vasavaḥ</i>	<i>su-dānavo</i>
	chariot.ACC.SG	like	hard-way(N).ABL.SG	good.VOC.PL	good-gift.VOC.PL
	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>		
	<i>viśvasmān</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>ámhaso</i>	<i>níṣ</i>	<i>pipartana</i>
	all.ABL.SG.N	1PL.ACC	distress(N).ABL.SG	LP	bring_over.IMPV.PRS.2SG
		CPREE <sub>i</sub>	CPREE <sub>j</sub>	PAR-	-PAR
	‘Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.’				
	(pattern: OX OXV)				
	(ṚV 1.106.1-6cd)				

<sup>131</sup> These cases instantiate the patterns STAND-V-STAND, STAND-V-STAND-CPREE, CPREE-STAND-V-STAND, and LP-CPREE-STAND2-V-STAND2-STAND.

(69)	<i>gāva</i>	'va	<i>grāmam</i>	<i>yūyudhir</i>	'va	<i>ásvān</i>
	cow(F).NOM.PL	like	village.ACC	worrior.NOM.PL	like	horse.ACC.PL
	STAND <sub>i</sub>	STM	STAND <sub>j</sub>	...		
	<i>vāśrā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vatsám</i>	<i>sumánā</i>	<i>dúhānā</i>	
	bellowing.NOM.F	like	calf.ACC	benevolent.NOM.F	milker(F).NOM	
	<i>pátir</i>	'va	<i>jāyám</i>	<i>abhí no</i>	<i>ní etu</i>	
	husband.NOM	like	wife(F).ACC	LP	1PL.ACC	LP come.IMPV.3SG
				CPREE <sub>j</sub>	PAR-	-PAR
	<i>dhartā</i>	<i>diváh</i>	<i>savitā</i>	<i>viśvá-vārah</i>		
	supporter.NOM	heaven.GEN	Savitar.NOM	all-good.NOM		
	CPREE <sub>i</sub>					

'Like cows to the village, like a warrior to his horses, like a bellowing, benevolent milker to her calf, like a husband to his wife—let him come down to us, the supporter of heaven, Savitar bringing all desirable things.' (pattern: SX SX SX SX XVS)

(ṚV 10.149.4)

**Table 23.** Word order patterns in double similes with STAND-PAR order.

DOUBLE SIMILES WITH PAR-STAND ORDER		CORRESPONDING RIGHTWARD GAPPING PATTERNS
STAND-V-CPREE	x13	XX VXX
LP-STAND-V-CPREE	x5	LP XX VXX
STAND-STAND2-STAND3-V-CPREE	x1	XX XX XX VXX
STAND-CPREE-V-CPREE	x6	XX XVX
STAND-LP-CPREE-V-CPREE	x1	XX LP-XVX
LP-STAND-CPREE-V-CPREE	x1	LP XX XVX
STAND-CPREE-V	x24	XX XXV
LP-STAND-CPREE-V	x4	LP XX XXV
STAND-LP-CPREE-V	x1	XX LP-XX-V
STAND-CPREE-LP-CPREE-V	x1	XX X-LP-XV
STAND-STAND2-CPREE-V	x1	XX XX XXV
STAND-CPREE-V-CPREE-V	x1	V = discontinuous
TOTAL:	59	
CENTER EMBEDDING		
CPREE-STAND-V	x33	
LP-CPREE-STAND-V	x7	
CPREE-STAND-CPREE-V	x11	4x with discontinuous CPREE, 2x in which the second member is not a contrasted constituent
LP-CPREE-STAND-CPREE-V	x2	2x in which the second member is not a contrasted constituent
CPREE-STAND-V-STAND2	x1	STAND2 = double simile, bi-directional gapping

CPREE-STAND-STAND2-V	x2	1x with STAND2 = simple simile, null obj in CPREE; 1x with STAND2 = double simile
LP-CPREE-STAND-V-STAND2	x1	STAND2 = simple simile
LP-CPREE-STAND-STAND2-V	x1	STAND2 = simple simile
LP-CPREE-STAND-V-CPREE	x1	
CPREE-STAND-STAND2-V-CPREE	x1	STAND2 = simple simile
TOTAL:	60	
NULL CPREE		
STAND-V	x13	
STAND2-STAND-V	x3	STAND2 = simple simile
STAND-STAND2-V	x1	STAND2 = simple simile
LP-STAND-STAND2-V	x1	STAND2 = simple simile
STAND-V-STAND2	x1	STAND2 = double simile, bi-directional gapping
TOTAL:	19	
OTHER PATTERNS		
STAND-CPREE	x3	No verb
STAND2-CPREE-STAND-CPREE-V	x1	STAND2 = simple simile
CPREE-STAND-V-STAND	x4	See Section 7.2.1
STAND-V-STAND	x3	See Section 7.2.1
STAND-V-STAND-CPREE	x2	See Section 7.2.1
STAND-V-CPREE-STAND	x1	See Section 7.2.1
LP-CPREE-STAND-V-STAND-CPREE	x1	See Section 7.2.1
TOTAL:	15	
V CONSTRUCTED WITH STAND		CORRESPONDING RIGHTWARD GAPPING PATTERN
STAND-V-STAND-CPREE	x1	XVX XX
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>154</b>	

As we have seen for leftward gapping in coordination (Table 11), final position of the verb in the second clause (i.e., in the comparee) constitutes the most attested pattern, with 32 occurrences; initial verbs are also well attested (19 occurrences of ... V-CPREE), whereas verbs occur only eight times in central position (... CPREE-V-CPREE). The rarity of the latter pattern is due to the fact that comparees rarely consist of two overt constituents, as in (70), and more often contain only one overt element, which occur either before or after the parameter, as in (71):

- (70) *su-tīrthám*                                      *árvato*                                      *yathā*  
easy-ford(M/N).ACC                                      steed.ACC.PL                                      like  
*ánu no*                                      *neṣathā*                                      *su-gám*  
LP                                      1PL.ACC                                      lead.SUBJ.AOR.2PL                                      easy-way(N).ACC

‘You will lead us along an easy way like steeds to an easy ford.’ (pattern: XO LP-OVX)

(RV 8.47.11cd)



- (74) *sūryo*                      *raśmīm*                      *yáthā*                      *sjja*  
sun.NOM                      ray.ACC                      like                      let\_loose.IMPV.PRS.2SG  
‘Like the sun its ray, let loose (your rein).’

(ṚV 8.32.23a)

Now that we have explored word order correlations between double similes and gapping in coordination, we might ask which other factors come into play in determining the relative order of STAND and PAR. While the analysis of gapping structure was only relevant for double similes, considerations on other factors affecting word order can be extended to all kind of similes. We have already seen that theticity affects the ordering in that it makes the verb occur in first position. Example (75) provides an instance of simple simile whose parameter is a verb of sound emission and stands therefore in sentence-initial position.

- (75) *ákrān*                      *devó*                      *ná*                      *sūriyah*  
roar.AOR.2SG                      god.NOM                      like                      sun.NOM  
‘You have roared like the Sun-god.’

(ṚV 9.64.9c)

#### *Other factors involved in word order*

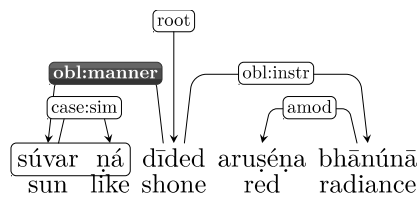
Another factor that may play a role in the relative ordering of STAND and PAR is the length of STAND. In Table 20, we have seen that similes with ellipsis present the STAND-PAR order more often than similes with gapping (62% vs. 52% of cases, respectively). In fact, similes with gapping have often longer standards than similes with ellipsis, in that the former consist of at least two elements (labeled *advcl:manner* and *orphan*), whereas the latter often consist of only one (*obl:manner* or *obl:grad*).

Table 24 shows the percentages of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders a) in all similes with ellipsis, b) in similes with ellipsis and simple standard, i.e. whose standard is composed of a single element, with no modifiers, and c) in similes with ellipsis and complex standard, i.e. whose standard is a complex noun phrase, containing adjectival, participial, or genitive modifiers.

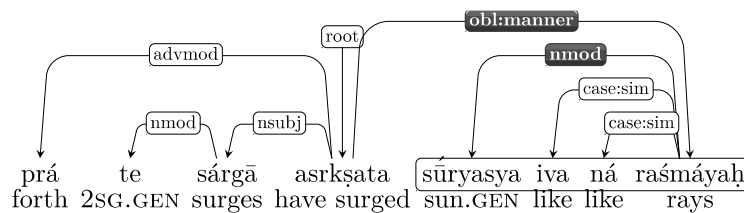
**Table 24.** Word order percentage for a) all similes with ellipsis, b) similes with ellipsis and simple STAND, c) similes with ellipsis and complex STAND.

ORDER	ALL		ELLIPSIS AND SIMPLE STAND		ELLIPSIS AND COMPLEX STAND	
STAND-PAR	359	<b>62%</b>	197	<b>68%</b>	163	<b>57%</b>
PAR-STAND	212	37%	91	31%	121	42%
TOTAL	571		288		284	

Figure 38 and Figure 39 provide instances of similes with ellipsis and simple standard and of similes with ellipsis and complex standard, respectively. As is clear from Table 24, the former tend to have STAND-PAR order more often than similes whose standard is complex (68% vs. 57%).

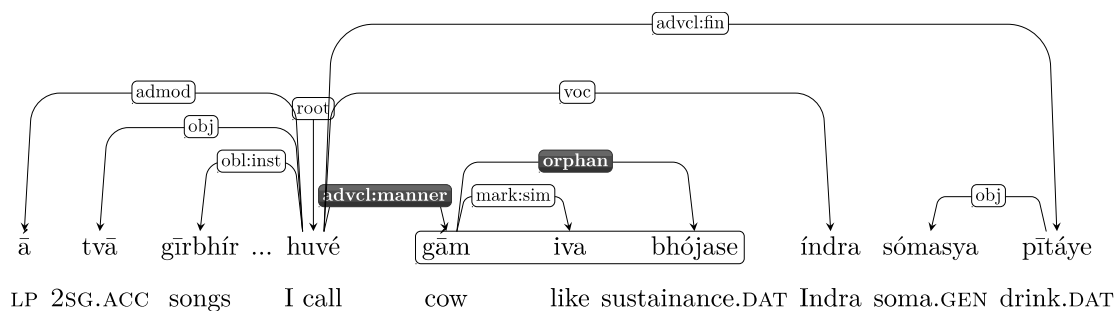


**Figure 38.** ‘Like the sun he has shone with red radiance.’ (RV 2.2.8b)



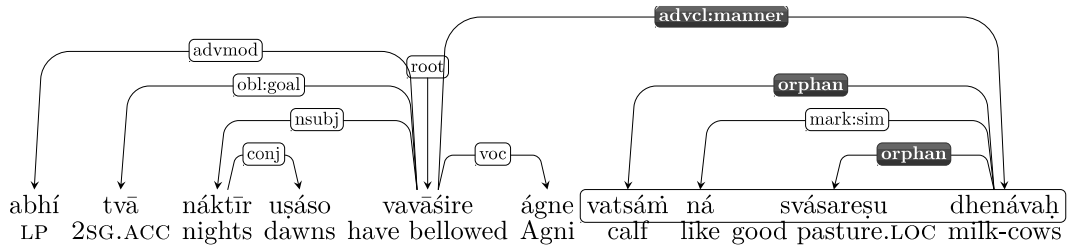
**Figure 39.** ‘Of you [...] the surges have surged forth, like the rays of the sun.’ (RV 9.64.7bc)

Turning to similes with gapping structure, we can consider simple standards all those standards consisting of a head (*advcl:manner*) and only one orphaned dependent (*orphan*), as in Figure 40; complex standard will have more than one dependent labeled with the relation *orphan*, as in Figure 41.



**Figure 40.** ‘I call you here with songs, [...], like a cow to give sustenance, and to drink of the soma, Indra.’ (RV 8.65.3b)





**Figure 41.** ‘Toward you have the nights and the dawns bellowed, o Agni, like milk-cows in good pastures to their calf.’ (ṚV 2.2.2ab)

Table 25 shows the percentages of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders a) in all similes with gapping, b) in similes with gapping and simple standard, and c) in similes with gapping and complex standard. As can be seen from the table, the STAND-PAR order occurs in 54% of cases of simple standards against 50% of complex standards; the difference in the behavior of simple and more complex standards is thus less pronounced than in the case of similes with ellipsis. As is known from the law of increasing constituents, longer constituents tend to occur after the verb; since standards of similes with ellipsis consist of a single constituent, they tend to occur after the parameter when they involve attributes and other modifiers. Standards of similes with gapping, on the other hand, consist of several constituents, corresponding to two or more arguments of the verb and their complexity does not seem to determine their position with respect to the parameter.

**Table 25.** Word order percentage for a) all similes with gapping, b) similes with gapping and simple STAND, c) similes with gapping and complex STAND.

ORDER	ALL		GAPPING AND SIMPLE STAND		GAPPING AND COMPLEX STAND	
STAND-PAR	151	55%	120	<b>54%</b>	31	<b>50%</b>
PAR-STAND	134	45%	100	45%	31	50%
TOTAL	285 <sup>132</sup>		220		62	

### 7.2.2.3 Summary

To conclude, in this section we have seen that, as predicted by Generalization 2 (Haspelmath et al. 2017), standards of Ṛgvedic similes tend to precede the parameter, but that the inverted order is also well attested, probably also due to this language pragmatic word order (the STAND-PAR order is observed in 60% of cases, against 40% of the PAR-STAND order; Table 19).

Considering similes with ellipsis separately from those with gapping, it appears that Generalization 2 holds for the former more than for the latter (62% vs. 52%; Table 20). In the case

<sup>132</sup> Again, the query returns slightly imprecise numbers: instead of 282, the sum of similes in column 2 and 3 should be 285 as in column one.

of similes with gapping, in fact, the two orders PAR-STAND and STAND-PAR occur in approximately equal measure. Regarding gapping in coordination, we have seen that languages with pragmatic word order, such as Ancient Greek and Latin, while allowing gapping in both directions, tend to prefer rightward gapping and to put restrictions on leftward gapping. From a preliminary analysis, it appears that, also in the language of the R̥V, gapping occurs more frequently on the right than on the left; however, restrictions observed for leftward gapping in other languages, for example as regards the position of the verb in the first clause or the types of admitted verbs, do not seem to be present in Vedic. Therefore, if the cross-linguistically observed preference for rightward gapping can explain why double standards occur more often in pre-parameter position, the lack of strict restrictions on leftward gapping can explain why the STAND-PAR order is still the most attested one (see Table 22 and Table 23 for word order patterns attested in similes with rightward and leftward gapping).

In other cases, double similes do not follow any of the patterns attested in coordination gapping; at times, the standard can be interrupted by the parameter, a possibility also attested in single similes and for which I have provided a tentative interpretation in Section 7.2.1.

In the remainder of the section, we have seen that at least two further factors are responsible for the high number of similes presenting the PAR-STAND order. The first factor is theticity and affects both similes with ellipsis and similes with gapping: as largely discussed in the literature, thetic sentences tend to have initial verbs because their structure is not pragmatically bi-partite into topic/subject and focus/predicate, but present subject and predicate as a single information unit. All such cases in which the parameter is sentence initial increase the percentage of similes featuring PAR-STAND order.

A last important factor determining the relative position of standard and parameter is the length of the standard and pertains similes with ellipsis more than similes with gapping. Indeed, we have seen that, when the standard of similes with ellipsis contains adjectival, participial, or genitive modifiers, it tends to occur after the standard more often than it does when it consists of a single noun phrase (42% and 31% respectively; Table 24). As shown by Table 25, the difference in behavior between simple and more complex standards of double similes is not as pronounced.

## 8. Similes in diachrony

After the synchronic description provided in Chapter 7, Chapter 8 takes a diachronic perspective on Ṛgvedic similes, asking whether and to which extent we can trace the development of constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva* and *yáthā/yathā* as they are attested in the ṚV. This means first asking how particles with different origins ended up introducing the same type of constructions (8.1), and second whether the development of *iva* from a standard marker of similitive constructions to a marker of approximation, as attested in Vedic prose, can be envisaged already in the ṚV (8.2).

### 8.1 Pre-ṚV: the origin of equative and similitive constructions

In Section 8.1.1, I will review the extant literature on the origin of equative and similitive constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*. For *ná* and *iva*, I will summarize the main hypotheses that have been proposed on their etymology and on their development into standard markers of phrasal comparison, reconsidering them on the base of cross-linguistic evidence. For *yáthā*, I will suggest a possible path of development from marker of clausal, literal comparison to marker of phrasal, generic/figurative comparison.

#### 8.1.1 The origin of constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*

##### *The origin of ná similes*

In Chapter 5.1, we have seen that the polysemy of the particle *ná* is not due to homophony but is the result of a semantic shift from negation to comparison. The direction of change is suggested by the fact that cognates of negative *ná* are found in most ancient IE languages. For instance, Hittite *natta*, Old Persian *na*, Latin *ne-(scio)*, *ne-(quis)*, Gothic *ni*, Old Church Slavic *ne*, Lithuanian *nè* all derive from PIE *\*ne*; from the zero grade *\*n̥* derive privative suffixes such as Sanskrit, Avestan, and Ancient Greek *a-/an-*, Latin *en-*, Gothic *un-* (EWAia, s.v.; LIPP: 546). The comparative value is only attested in a linguistic area which is contiguous to Indo-Iranian and comprises Slavic and Baltic languages, cf. Avestan *yaθa-nā* ‘as, like’, Old Church Slavic *ne-že*, *ne-že-li* ‘than’, *ne-bo* ‘or’, Serbo-Croatian *ne-go*, Lithuanian *nei* (Viti 2002: 72-73; Bartholomae 1904: 1249; Meillet 1934: 484-485; Vaillant 1977: 244; Fränkel 1962: 488-489; LIPP: 546).<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Besides the origin from the negative particle, two other etymologies have been advanced for comparative *ná*, which however have enjoyed less consensus. According to the etymology of Hillebrandt, also accepted by Delbrück (1897: 539-540), comparative *ná* would be an affirmative particle, cognate of the AG *naí*. According to Persson (1893: 199-260), instead, comparative *ná* may derive from the pronominal stem *\*no-/\*ne-*.

The traditional explanation for the origin of comparative *ná* from negative *ná* is that “CPREE is like STAND, although it is not STAND”. This argument was put forward by Böhlingk and Roth (PWG: *s.v.*), according to which, by assigning a predicate to a thing that is otherwise not appropriate to it, it makes sense to negate its material identity with another thing to which this predicate actually belongs. In this perspective, to say *Er wiehert wie ein Pferd* ‘he neighs like a horse’, is the same as saying *Er wiehert, obgleich er kein Pferd ist* ‘he neighs although he is not a horse’ or *Er wiehert, als wenn er ein Pferd wäre* ‘he neighs as if he were a horse’. Of the same idea are Whitney (1879: 413), Macdonell (1916: 236), Renou (1952: 380), Mayrhofer (EWAia: *s.v.*). Whitney takes the comparative function of *ná* to be a modification or adaptation of the negative one, which for instance for (1) could be explained as follows: ‘thus, [although, to be sure] not [precisely] a thirsty buffalo, drink!’.

(1) <i>sá</i>	<i>imám</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>stómam</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>gahi</i>
3SG.NOM	DEM.3SG.ACC	1PL.GEN	praise.ACC	LP	come.IMPV.2SG
<i>úpa</i>	<i>idám</i>	<i>sávanam</i>	<i>sutam</i>		
LP	DEM.3SG.ACC.N	pressing(N).ACC	press.PPP.ACC.N		
<i>gauró</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>tṛṣitáh</i>	<i>piba</i>		
buffalo.NOM	like	thirsty.NOM	drink.IMPV.2SG		

‘Come here to this praise of ours, up to this pressing here when it is pressed. Drink like a thirsty buffalo.’

(ṚV 1.16.5c)

Vine’s (1978) theory on the origin of similes introduced by *ná* is the result of a thorough investigation on the metrical distribution of comparative *ná* as opposed to negative *ná* in books I to VIII of the ṚV. The distribution of the two *ná* in trimeter and octosyllabic meters is the following:

- (2) a. Trimeter (*triṣṭubh* and *jagatī*)
- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| COMP: | # 1-2 <i>ná</i> ( <i>ná</i> ) ( <i>ná</i> ) 6 7 8 <i>ná</i> 10-11 (-12) #         |
| NEG:  | # <i>ná</i> 2 3 <i>ná</i> <i>ná</i> <i>ná</i> 7 <i>ná</i> <i>ná</i> 10-11 (-12) # |
- b. Octosyllabic (*gāyatrī*, *anuṣṭubh*, *pankti*, *mahāpankti*)
- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| COMP: | # 1-2 <i>ná</i> 4 <i>ná</i> 6-7-8 #         |
| NEG:  | # <i>ná</i> 2 3 <i>ná</i> <i>ná</i> 6-7-8 # |

As shown in (2), the position of *ná* in the verse is rather fixed. More specifically, the position of comparative *ná* is absolutely rigid in the closing, a portion which tends to show more regular metrical

features and to preserve archaic material. As a whole, the two particles appear in complementary distribution in the opening of trimeter as well as of octosyllabic meters. Thus, for instance, *ná* in slot 3 of all these meters must be a standard marker of comparative constructions. At the caesura of trimeters, however, there is a complete overlap of the two particles, and the same holds for slot 9 in the closing. According to Vine (1978: 181-183), the complete congruence of comparative and negative *ná* in slot 9 is of utmost importance for understanding the origin of the former from the latter. In contrast to the traditional theory on the origin of comparative *ná*, Vine provides with his theory an explanation for the metrical distribution of *ná*.

Vine suggests that comparative constructions introduced by *ná* may originate from coordinate negative constructions with ellipsis of the verb in the second conjunct. Indeed, he notes that if the first negative *ná* occurs in the opening or in the caesura of a trimeter verse (slots 1, 4/5, or 6), the second *ná* nearly always occupies slot 9, which is also the only slot comparative *ná* can occupy in the closing. Example (3) is an instance of a coordinate negative construction of this type:

(3) <i>ná</i>	<i>yám</i>	<i>járantī</i>	<i>śarádo</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>māsā</i>
NEG	REL.ACC	make_old.PRS.3PL	year.NOM.PL	NEG	month.NOM.PL
<b>#ná</b>	...	...	<b>ná</b>	10-11 #	

‘Whom neither years nor months make old.’ (Vine 1978: 181)

(RV 6.24.7a)

Vine argues that, in a coordinated construction such as (3), the referents of the two noun phrases *śarádo* ‘years’ and *māsā* ‘months’ must share some semantic feature that enable them to share the same predicate. Thus, in formal terms, one could say that a sequence like  $x$  (NEG-VP<sub>i</sub>) +  $y$  (NEG-VP<sub>i</sub>) was reanalyzed into an equivalence of  $x$  and  $y$  with respect to NEG-VP<sub>i</sub>. The very same process can be observed in coordinate negative constructions spanning two verses. Vine takes the sequence in (4) as an example of a bridging context (Heine 2002: 2; see Section 8.2.2), where the function of the last *ná* is ambiguous between negation (Jamison and Brereton 2014) and comparison (Witzel, Gotō, and Scarlata 2013):

(4) <i>ná</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>sumatáyo</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>rāyah</i>
NEG	3PL.NOM.N	Indra.VOC	favor(F).NOM.PL	NEG	rich.NOM.PL
<i>saṁcákṣe</i>	<i>pūrvā</i>	<i>uśáso</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>nūtnāḥ</i>	
enumerate.DAT	earlier.NOM.PL.F	dawn(F).NOM.PL	NEG/like	recent.NOM.PL.F	
<b>#ná</b>	...	...	<b>ná</b>	10-11#	

1. ‘Not your favors, O Indra, (and) not your riches, earlier and recent, are to be enumerated, (and) not the dawns (either).’<sup>134</sup> (Vine 1978: 182)

2. ‘Nicht sind deine Gnaden, nicht deine Gaben zu überschauen, genausowenig wie die vergangenen und jetzigen Morgenröten.’ (Witzel, Gotō, and Scarlata 2013)

(RV 7.18.20ab)

Thus, Vine (1978) explains the overlapping position of negative and comparative *ná* in slot 9 of the trimeter with the fact that it was the locus of diffusion of the new comparative construction. While this metrical congruence was preserved in this part of the *padā*, where metrical and phraseological patterns tend to be preserved, in other parts of the *padā* a differentiation begun which led to the complementary distribution presented above. Besides, comparative *ná* developed a semi-enclitic nature which further enabled disambiguation between the two competing constructions (Vine 1978: 183). This comports that, while negative *ná* continued to merge with a following vowel, *sandhi* ceased to apply to comparative *ná*. While it rests on a solid analysis of the metrical distribution of *ná* in the *pāda*, Vine’s hypothesis has the drawback of not including semantics in the argumentation. Indeed, while the syntactic development of the comparative reading from coordinate negative constructions is convincing, it is not clear how comparative *ná* may have spread to contexts with positive polarity.

Pinault (1985b) takes Vine’s analysis as a point of departure to investigate the question of the origin of comparative constructions introduced by *ná*. Instead of focusing on the metrical distribution of the two particles, Pinault focuses on their position in the sentence and notes that the only position where they overlap is the one in front of the predicate, as in example (5). Indeed, comparative *ná* occurs 140 times before a finite verb and 142 times before a predicative adjective.

(5) <i>asnātá</i>	<i>ápo</i>	<i>vṛṣabhó</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>veti</i>
not_swimming.NOM	water(F).ACC.PL	bull.NOM	like	LP	go.PRS.3SG

<sup>134</sup> Note that the two adjectives *pūrvā* ‘previous’ and *nūtnāḥ* ‘recent’ are both feminine and fit *uśáso* (f) ‘dawns’ better than *sumatáyo* (f) ‘favors’ and *rāyaḥ* (m) ‘riches’ (see Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*). Jamison’s interpretation of the passage, take the *ná ... ná ... ná* sequence to be entirely negative, rather than requiring the last to be a simile marker: ‘Neither your favors nor your riches, o Indra, can be entirely surveyed, through the previous dawns, nor through the current ones.’ For the passage to constitute a bridging context, *uśáso* should have the same semantic role in both the negative and in the comparative reading; instead, Jamison takes *uśáso* to be an accusative of extension ‘through the dawns’. Eventually, the most satisfying interpretation is the one by Scarlata (1999: 167), who takes the last *ná* as a standard marker: ‘Nicht sind deine Gnaden, nicht deine Gaben zu überschauen, genausowenig wie die vergangenen und jetzigen Morgenröten.’ (see below).

‘Although no swimmer, he pursues<sup>135</sup> the waters like a bull.’

(ṚV 10.4.5c)

Despite the abundance of examples in which comparative *ná* shares the same position as negative *ná* before the verb, Ṛgvedic poets have exploited this possible source of ambiguity very sparingly. In fact, Pinault (1985b: 117) argues that at the time of the flowering of Ṛgvedic poetry, the two constructions had already developed distinctive features that allowed them to occur next to each other without disturbing the intelligibility of the sentence.

According to Pinault (1985b: 120-122), Vine confuses the coordination of two subjects of the same predicate by means of particle repetition – which is also possible with particles different from *ná* (see Dunkel 1979: 55) –, with the comparison of two nouns that share some common feature. In Vine’s examples, the second *ná* in slot 9 acquires a comparative reading, whereas the first is almost always in verse- or sentence-initial position and remains negative. Pinault thus argues that the flaw in Vine’s theory consists in supposing that what is found in negative coordinate clauses could spread to affirmative ones. Moreover, Vine’s proposal is not convincing on the formal level. In example (4) provided in support of the theory, the third *ná* is clearly postponed to the standard of comparison *uṣásas* ‘dawns’, whereas the first two *ná*’s, which retain their negative meaning, stand in sentence-initial position and before the second conjunct (*ná ráyah*). Thus, *uṣásas ná* is already a clear case of comparison (‘like the dawns’) and cannot be the locus of the reanalysis. Finally, Pinault finds other examples of comparisons in negative clauses introduced by *iva* and yielding the same effect:

(6) <i>ásvasya</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>járato</i>		<i>vásniyasya</i>
horse.GEN	like	become_old.PTCP.PRS.GEN		for_sale.GEN
<i>ná</i>	<i>ahám</i>	<i>vindāmi</i>	<i>kitavásya</i>	<i>bhógam</i>
NEG	1SG.NOM	find.PRS.1SG	gambler.GEN	use.ACC

‘I find no more use for a gambler than for an old nag up for sale.’

(ṚV 10.34.3cd)

<sup>135</sup> As often happens, the poet here plays with the polysemy of the verb *pra ví* ‘to go forth’, but also ‘inseminate’. In this way, *asnātá* ‘although not a swimmer’ refers to the former meaning of the verb, whereas the reference to the bull realizes the latter. The image of a bull that inseminates the waters is a very frequent metaphor in the ṚV, in which *soma* is identified with a bull, waters with cows and the image of the ritual mixing of soma with water recalls sexual images (Jamison and Brereton 2020: 122). In Sanskrit rhetoric tradition, this type of pun is called *śleṣa* ‘connection’, ‘combination’.

Pinault considers a third hypothesis on the origin of equative and similative constructions introduced by *ná*, namely that they derive from comparisons of inequality with the same particle. In fact, the use of negation in comparison of inequality is a well-known tendency in IE languages: take for instance Italian *Maria è più intelligente di quanto non sia Carlo* ‘Maria is smarter than Carlo’. However, this use has only one attestation in the ṚV (7), with the particle *mā́* instead of *ná* due to the prohibitive context, and will not appear again until classical Sanskrit, where it remains a marginal and mostly formulaic strategy anyway (8).

(7) *yusmā́kam*      *astu*      *táviṣī*      *pánīyasī*  
 2PL.GEN      be.IMPV.3SG      might(F).NOM      wonderful.CDG.NOM.F  
*mā́*      *mártiyasya*      *māyínah*  
 NEG      mortal.GEN      skilled.GEN  
 ‘Yours be the might more to be admired, not (> than) that of the skilled<sup>136</sup> mortal.’

(ṚV 1.39.2cd)

(8) *mṛtam*      *śreyo*      *na*      *jīvitam*  
 death(N).NOM.SG      better.NOM.SG.N      NEG      life(N).NOM.SG  
 ‘Death is preferable to life.’

(Pinault 1985b: 125)

In comparisons of equality and inequality, *ná* occupies different positions with respect to the verb and to the standard: while we have seen that equative *ná* follows the standard, *ná* has the inverse order in Sanskrit comparison of inequality, as in example (8).

The purely theoretical hypothesis of *ná* as standard marker in comparisons of equality and inequality with a different syntactic position finds a parallel in the distribution of the particles *neĩ* and *néi* in Lithuanian. The negative particle *neĩ* (circumflex accent) is often employed in coordination with another negative particle and occurs also in comparative constructions of inequality; by contrast, *néi* (acute accent) seems to be limited to comparison of equality. According to the examples provided by the Lithuanian Academy Dictionary<sup>137</sup> (1970: VIII, 624), comparative *néi* is mostly found in formulaic or proverbial comparisons such as *piktas néi vélnas* ‘evil like the devil’ and constitutes an

<sup>136</sup> Jamison and Brereton (2014) translate the adjective *māyín* with ‘tricky’, instead of ‘skilled’, thus excluding a comparative reading: ‘Yours be the might more to be admired, not that of the tricky mortal.’ Note that, in both examples, the negative particle does not formally function as a standard marker and the comparative reading arises due to pragmatic inference.

<sup>137</sup> In Lithuanian: *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*.



archaism which tends to be substituted by other comparative particles like *kaĩp* and *lyg* (Kurschat 1876: 386). Pinault (1985b: 126) compares this development with the substitution of *ná* by *iva* and *yáthā* in Vedic prose and Classical Sanskrit.

Pinault sees the most striking parallelism between Ṛgvedic and Baltic as well as Slavic comparisons in the so-called negative parallelism. The similarity was already noted by Ludwig (1876-1888) in the commentary to his translation, but the idea had never been pursued further. The negative parallelism is a rhetorical device typical of Slavic and Baltic folk literature, like Russian *byliny* (Trautmann 1935), Lithuanian *dainos* (van der Meulen: 1907), and Latvian *dainas*. It has a tripartite structure, consisting of three sentences, the second of which presents a negation. By representing the subject of the sentence with S and the verb with V, the structure can be represented as in (9). Example (10) is an instance of negative parallelism taken from a Russian *bylina*.

- (9) a. S<sub>1</sub> V<sub>1</sub>  
 b. not S<sub>1</sub> V<sub>1</sub>  
 c. S<sub>2</sub> V<sub>2</sub>
- (10) a. *kak na etoj na berēze kukuška kukuēt*  
 like on DEM.PREP.F on birch(F).PREP cuckoo(F).NOM cry.3SG
- b. *ne kukuška kukuēt*  
 NEG cuckoo(F).NOM cry.3SG
- c. *ego mat' gorjuēt*  
 POSS.3SG.NOM mother(F).NOM moan.3SG
- ‘On this birch a cuckoo **cries**,  
 it is **not** a cuckoo that **cries**,  
 the mother of this one **moans**.’

(Pinault 1985b: 130)

Since the first part of the construction always refers to a traditional image, it can be omitted without compromising the understanding of the following parts. At this point, since the two predicates belong to the same semantic field or are even identical, the construction receives a comparative meaning, S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> being interpreted as standard and comparee respectively. The following is another example from a Russian *bylina*:

- (11) *ne sokol letal po podnebes'ju*  
 NEG hawk.NOM.SG fly.PST.SG along firmament(N).DAT

<i>molodec</i>	<i>chodil</i>	<i>po</i>	<i>berežku</i>
boy.NOM.SG	advance.PST.SG	along	shore.DAT

‘It is **not** a hawk that flies in the firmament,  
a boy **advances** on the shore.’

(Weiher 1972; in Pinault 1985b: 128)

In Latvian, the verb of the first clause is not repeated in the second but replaced by the verb ‘be’. Regarding these constructions, Pinault (1985b: 129) notes that the order of negation is synchronically marked, for in Slavic languages the simple negation has become proclitic and leans on the following verb. This is even clearer in a Baltic language like Lithuanian, where the negation attaches to the verb as a preverb. Comparative *ne*, on the contrary, precedes S<sub>1</sub>, negating only this one and not the entire sentence: it is not S<sub>1</sub> that realizes V.

Pinault finds some cases of negative parallelism in the R̥V by looking for comparisons that satisfy the following criteria: a) the comparison must precede the predicate, b) the expression must have the same meaning whether it is interpreted as comparative or negative. Finally, c) if *ná* is preceded by the standard, the comparison is likely to be a negative parallelism. Differently from the Slavic and Baltic parallels, however, ellipsis of the verb is the rule in Vedic negative parallelism. Example (12) is a case in point; here the verb is recoverable from the second element of the compound *dru-ṣád-* ‘sitting on wood’, which belongs to the same root  $\sqrt{sad-}$  as the main verb *asadad* ‘has taken his seat’.

(12)	<i>vér</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>dru-ṣác</i>	
	bird.NOM	NEG/like	wood-sitting.NOM	
	<i>camúvor</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>asadad</i>	<i>dháriḥ</i>
	cup(F).LOC.DU	LP	seat.AOR.3SG	tawny.NOM

1. ‘It is not a bird sitting in the wood, the tawny one (Soma) has taken his seat in the two cups.’

2. > ‘Like a bird sitting in the wood the tawny one (Soma) has taken his seat in the two cups.’

(Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(R̥V 9.72.5d)

According to Pinault, the form *vés* instead of *vís* for the nominative singular of ‘bird’ is indicative of the archaic nature of this passage. Another example is (13):

(13)	<i>śriyé</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>gá̇va</i>	<i>úpa</i>	<i>sómam</i>	<i>asthur</i>
	splendor.DAT	NEG/like	cow(F).NOM.PL	LP	soma.ACC	stay.AOR.3PL
	<i>índram</i>	<i>gíro</i>	<i>váruṇam</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>manīṣā̇ḥ</i>	
	Indra.ACC	song(F).NOM.PL	Varuna.ACC	1SG.GEN	thought(F).NOM.PL	

1. ‘Cows [=milk] do not approach soma for mixing, my hymns and inspired thoughts have approached Indra and Varuṇa for splendor.’

> 2. ‘As cows [=milk] approach soma for mixing, my hymns and inspired thoughts have approached Indra and Varuṇa for splendor.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 4.41.8cd)

As in other cases of comparison of this type, the ambiguity is enhanced by the polysemy of a term that can be construed with both clauses. In this case, the dative *śriyé* means ‘for mixing’ in the first clause and ‘for splendor in the second’.

Note, in passing, that although there is only sparse evidence for the existence of the negative parallelism in the ṚV, the employment of such rhetorical device to express comparison was not unknown to Sanskrit poets and scholars of poetics (*alaṃkāraśāstra*; see Chapter 4.1.1) writing in the Middle Ages. For instance, among thirty-two sub-types of similes (*upamā-*) individuated and discussed by Daṇḍin in his *Kāvyaḍarśa*, we find the following example:

- (14) a. *kiṃ padman antar-bhrāntāli kiṃ te lolêkṣaṇam mukham |*  
*mama dolāyatee cittam itīyam samśayôpamā ||*
- b. *na padmasyêndu-nigrāhyasyêndu-lajjā-karī dyutih |*  
*atas tvam-mukham evêdam ity asau nirṇayôpamā ||*
- c. ***na padmam mukham evêdam na bhṛṅgau cakṣuṣī ime |***  
*iti vispaṣṭa-sādrśyāt tattvākhyānôpamāiva sā ||*
- a. ‘Is this a lotus inhabited by a pair of restless bees?  
Or is it your face, containing a pair of playful eyes?  
My mind constantly wavers.  
– This is a comparison based on doubt (*samśayôpamā*)’
- b. ‘The luster of the lotus simply cannot shame the moon.  
For, after all, the moon has it defeated every evening.<sup>138</sup>  
This therefore must be nothing but your face.  
– That is a comparison based upon an inference (*nirṇayôpamā*)’

<sup>138</sup> The lotus closes as the moon rises.

- c. ‘This is **no** lotus (*padmaṃ*); it is a face (*mukham*) indeed.  
 These two are **no** bees (*bhṛṅgau*) but eyes (*cakṣuṣī*).  
 – It is a simile based on knowledge of reality (*tattvākhyānōpamā*) (coming) from clear  
 resemblance (*vispaṣṭa-sādr̥śyāt*)’ (adapted from Bronner 2007: 102)

(*Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.26-7, 36)

As is clear from the translation, each passage counts as a simile sub-type and is followed by a brief definition. The third passage contains two negative clauses, both followed by a positive affirmation. Daṇḍin names this type *tattvākhyānōpamā* ‘simile based on knowledge of reality’, but its structure can clearly be assimilated to the one of negative parallelism: in other words, this simile relies on knowledge that a face ‘is no lotus’, although it clearly looks like it. Furthermore, the whole sequence can be interpreted as an instance of complex negative parallelism.

After having established the existence of negative parallelism in the ṚV, Pinault (1985b) argues that not all comparisons must reflect such a construction. Rather, negative parallelism is but a relic of an archaic layer of Ṛgvedic diction and the comparative reading must have survived and spread to more recent layers thanks to the existence of two other comparative strategies, namely comparative compounds and analytic comparisons with an ablative standard. The influence of such strategies is suggested by recurring lexical material in comparisons with different forms, such as (15) and (16), already reported in Chapter 6.1.2.4 as examples (55) and (56). The reason for such influence may lie in the position of the standard and the parameter of comparison. The order S *ná* V is marked in Vedic, where *ná* has its natural position at the beginning of the clause. With such an order, as in its Slavic and Baltic cognates, *ná* does not negate the whole sentence, but the performance of the action by the standard, which is the prototypical agent of that action. Indeed, the same order of standard and parameter of comparison occurs in comparative compounds (*váta-jūta*- lit. ‘wind-swift’) and comparatives with an ablative standard (*manáso* ‘thought’ *jávīyas* ‘swifter’, ‘swifter than thought’).

- |      |                      |                       |                    |
|------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| (15) | <i>agní-bhrājaso</i> | <i>vidyúto</i>        | <i>gábhastiyoh</i> |
|      | fire-flash.NOM.PL    | lightning_bolt.NOM.PL | fist(M/F).LOC.DU   |
|      | STAND-PAR            | CPREE                 |                    |

‘Lightning bolts flashing like fire (are) in your fists.’

(ṚV 5.54.11c)

- |      |              |           |            |                 |                         |
|------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| (16) | <i>agnír</i> | <i>ná</i> | <i>yé</i>  | <i>bhrājasā</i> | <i>rukávakaśaso</i>     |
|      | Agni.NOM     | like      | REL.NOM.PL | flash(N).INST   | brilliant_breast.NOM.PL |

‘Who, with diamonds on their breasts, are like fire with their flash.’

(ṚV 10.78.2a)

In conclusion, Pinault (1985b) sees in an archaic rhetorical device, the negative parallelism, the most likely origin of comparative *ná*, whose expansion was favored by the marked word order shared with other comparative strategies.

*The origin of iva similes*

Regarding the origin of comparative constructions introduced by *iva*, two opposite hypotheses have been proposed. According to Pinault (1997: 360-361), *iva* did not express exemplary comparison with respect to a generic standard, as *ná* does, but originally had the function identified by Brereton (1982) in later Vedic prose texts: its principal function was to give an indefinite nuance to a word or phrase (‘somehow’, ‘to a certain extent’). Pinault recognizes this function in about 170 out of 1023 occurrences of *iva* in the ṚV, which he reports in full in his 2004 article. In its indefinite use, *iva* could refer to lexical categories other than nouns, such as adjectives, particles, preverbs, and verbs. Furthermore, the indefinite value extended sometimes to the entire sentence, in which case it can be translated as ‘it seems that, we would say that...’. Pinault suggests that when the scope of *iva* is a noun, the difference between approximation and equative function decreases and the transition to the latter starting from the former does not pose any difficulties. More precisely, the comparative function of *iva* might have developed from indefinite identifications such as (17)a, as soon as the context provided a term that was understood as the parameter of comparison; cf. examples (17)b and (17)c taken from Pinault (2004: 303):

- (17) a.    \*śyená       iva     (asti)  
          eagle.NOM   like    (be.PRS.3SG)  
          ‘He is some kind of eagle/an eagle to some extent’
- b.    śyená       iva     jávasā  
          eagle.NOM   like    swiftness.INST  
          ‘He is some kind of eagle by his swiftiness’,  
          cf. śyenásya jávasā ‘with an eagle’s swiftiness’ (ṚV 1.118.11a and 5.78.4c),  
          śyenó javásā ‘falcon ... with swiftiness’ (ṚV 4.27.1d)
- c.    \*śyená       iva        jūtáh  
          eagle.NOM   like        impel.PPP.NOM

‘He is provided with swiftness/swift like an eagle’, cf. *śyená-jūta-* ‘eagle-swift’ (RV 9.89.2c)

According to Pinault, the development of formulaic expressions of comparison bleached the distinction between *ná* and *iva* and the two particles became interchangeable in this function; in fact, we find *iva* in exemplary comparisons whenever the ending of the standard allows it (see Chapter 5.3).

Turning to the etymology, Pinault (2004) suggests that *iva*’s structure may be parallel to the one of other uninflected or weakly inflected morphemes such as indefinite contrastive pronoun *\*two-* and the reflexive *\*své-*. The former is reflected by Vedic *tva-* ‘the one (as opposed to another)’ and might derive from the combination of the demonstrative stem *\*to-* and the contrastive suffix *\*-ue* (Cardona 1978); the latter, reflected by Vedic *svá-*, may be a combination of the stem of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun *\*s-* and the contrastive suffix *\*-ue* (Cardona 1978: 4; Katz 1999: 98-99). Similarly, the particle *iva* (< *(H)i-ue*) may be related to the anaphoric stem *\*Hyó-*, used as relative pronoun (Vedic *yá-*, Avestan *ya-*, Ancient Greek *hó-*; EWAia), combined with the contrastive suffix *\*-ue*. According to this analysis, *iva*’s first element expressed anaphora, whereas the second marked the opposition. Accordingly, Pinault proposes the following reconstruction for the phrase *ásva iva* ‘like a horse’, where the particle *\*-ue* adds indefiniteness to the anaphoric reference:

- (18) a. *\*(H)ékwo-s Hyó-s* ‘which horse’  
b. *\*(H)ékwo-s Hi-ue* ‘which horse of some sort, some kind of horse’

(Pinault 2004: 304)

A more accepted etymology considers *iva* a reflex of a different combination, namely of the demonstrative stem *\*h<sub>1</sub>i-* and of the PIE disjunctive particle *\*ue* ‘or’ (KEWAia and EWAia s.v. *iva*). The former is attested in Vedic and Sanskrit demonstrative pronouns *ay-am*, *iy-am*, *i-d-am*, as well as in Latin *i-s*, *i-d*, among others. For the latter compare Sanskrit *vā* ‘or’, AG *é* ‘like’ from *\*ēf<sub>é</sub>*, Latin *-ve* ‘or’ and *c-eu* ‘like’.<sup>139</sup> Watkins (1973: 202-206) considers the Latin standard marker *ceu* a cognate of Vedic *iva*, and reconstructs it as a combination of the PIE particle *\*ké-* ‘this, here’ (Lat *-ce* ‘here’)

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<sup>139</sup> Since demonstrative pronouns, and especially proximal or person pronouns, make their referent accessible through deixis, Viti (2002: 70-71) considers Mayrhofer’s etymology of *iva* as further evidence for the function of individuation that she recognizes in the use of *iva* in opposition to *ná* (see Chapter 5.3 on the distribution of the two particles).

and *\*(h<sub>1</sub>)i-ue* ‘as’ (see also de Vaan 2008: 112)<sup>140</sup>. Like *iva*, Latin *ceu* introduces similitive construction, but is not very common, being used by epic and lyric poets such as Ennius, Virgil and Lucretius, as well as by some prose writers such as Pliny the Elder (Tarriño 2011: 407).<sup>141</sup> Cf. example (19):

- (19) *dixerat et tenuis fugit ceu fumus in auras*  
 say.PPF.3SG CONJ thin.NOM flee.PF.3SG like smoke.NOM in air(F).ACC.PL  
 ‘He spoke, and passed like smoke into thin air.’

(Virg. *Aen.* 5.740)

Accepting the above etymology, Viti (2002: 70-71) proposes the opposite direction to the one suggested by Pinault for the development of *iva*, namely from standard marker of similitive constructions to approximation marker. First, Viti suggests that the original function of *iva* should be looked for in the R̥V, and not in the later prose texts, in which comparative *ná* has disappeared. Second, the meaning attested in the Brāhmaṇas can easily derive from comparison of equality which, as a proposition of similarity and not of tautology, always entails a certain degree of approximation: therefore, the passage from ‘as’ to ‘so to speak’ would be the semantically most plausible.

The latter hypothesis finds support from studies on the development of comparison markers in IE and non-IE languages. König (2017) has shown that deictics are a common source of parameter and standard markers, as suggested, e.g., by German *so*. The following sentences make the development from the exophoric (20)a to the (20)b endophoric use of the manner deictic clear:

- (20) a. *Peter ist so groß* (+ gesture indicating height).  
 ‘Peter is as tall as that.’  
 b. *Peter ist so groß wie Paul (groß ist)*.  
 ‘Peter is as tall as Paul (is tall)’.

(König 2017: 156)

Constructions such as (20)b are very frequent in European languages, even if they look different due to loss of the exophoric use or reinforcement of forms. For instance, English has lost the exophoric use of

<sup>140</sup> With Watkins (1973), de Vaan (2008: 112) posits a development *\*keiwe* > *\*keiw* > *\*kew* > *ceu*. The development *\*eivV-* > *\*-īwV-* did not take place because of the early apocope of *\*-e*; for the same development, cf. *seu* with *sive*.

<sup>141</sup> Latin *ceu* usually introduces phrasal comparison; its employment as a subordinator (‘like when’) is probably a secondary development internal to Latin (LIPP: 767, fn. 26).

*so* (replaced by *like this/that*) and uses its reinforced form (*as < eal swa*) as comparative marker in affirmative sentences; however, the original basic manner deictic *so* is retained in negative contexts such as *Fred is not so tall as George* (König 2017: 156). Outside of the (Indo-)European domain, Nengone (Melanesian, New Caledonia) forms comparatives by combining lexical expression of similarity with basic deictics expressing proximity to the speaker, as in (21).

- (21) a. *Bone ci thadrere in-o-om ore puaka*  
 3SG IPFV snore be.like-PREP-DEIC ART pig  
 ‘He snores like a pig.’
- b. *Buic ci rue in-o-om ko ore hna acidan-on*  
 3PL IPFV do be.like-PREP-DEIC always ART PST habit-TR  
 ‘They are acting as is their habit.’

(König 2017: 156)

As we have seen in Chapter 6.1.2.5 on adjectives in *-vant*, Vedic deictics have a quite transparent formal make-up, in that the first element expresses the position of the referent with respect to the *origo*, while the second element expresses the relevant ontological dimension. For instance, while *i-yant-* is a degree adjective expressing proximal deixis, *tá-vant-* is likewise a degree adjective but expresses distal deixis. Thus, while it is clear that *i-va* expresses proximal deixis, the ontological dimension remains underspecified. Since the demonstrative stem *\*h<sub>1</sub>i-* is otherwise found in demonstrative pronouns and adjectives in Vedic, a tentative translation for the original value of the particle is ‘or this’. Other elements derived from the same demonstrative stem are the quotative particle *iti* ‘thus’, the focus particle *íd* with its derivative *itthā́*, and the adverb *itthám* ‘in this way’, which occurs only once in the RV (8.70.14). Furthermore, *\*h<sub>1</sub>i-* is found in the locative adverb *itás* ‘from here’ and in the temporal one *idā́* ‘now’. Although *iva* is never employed as a manner deictic meaning ‘so’ – a function usually attributed to *evá* – another tentative rendering of its original meaning may be ‘or thus’.

Regarding the disjunctive particle *\*ye* ‘or’ contained in *iva*, Stassen (1985: 58-65; 188-198) notes that in many languages there is a correlation between the expression of comparison of majority and the expression of temporal chaining, i.e. “the relation between two events, A and B, as overlapping, preceding or following each other” (Traugott 1975: 208). This can be seen from the fact



that, in particle comparatives,<sup>142</sup> particles employed as standard markers are often also employed in the marking of coordinate constructions of some type. For instance, the Javanese standard marker *karo* also functions as a conjunction or adverb which marks simultaneous and consecutive chain, while the Toba Batak comparative particle *asa* is also employed as a temporal adverb with the meaning ‘then’ (Stassen 1985: 189). In some languages, comparative particles are identical with disjunctive coordinators (‘or’): this is the case of Ancient Greek *ἢ* (Chantraine 1963: 152) and of Gothic *pau* (Benveniste 1948: 140). Stassen (1985: 62) reports usages of *weder* as standard marker in some Swiss and Middle High German dialects (Small 1923: 36); similarly, in several East Flemish and West Flemish dialects there is a comparative particle *of* which corresponds to disjunctive *of* in Standard Dutch and Standard Flemish (Bergmans 1982: 78).

Dunkel (LIPP: 767, fn. 26) rightly points out that Ancient Greek *ἢ* ‘than’ and English *or/nor* differ from Latin *ceu* in that the former mark the standard in comparisons of inequality, whereas the latter is employed in similitive constructions. Thus, the correlation between the expression of comparison of majority and the expression of chaining observed in other languages cannot be used as evidence for the disjunctive origin of Latin *ceu*, because languages encode comparison of majority and comparison of equality with different constructions. However, also in the case of Vedic *ná*, whose derivation from the negation is now generally accepted, we find parallelisms in other languages which involve comparison of inequality rather equative or similitive constructions: compare for instance the employment of *ná* as standard marker of Vedic similes with the types represented by the Lithuanian example in (22)a or the Italian one in (22)b:

(22) a. *T`ėvas vīs senėšnis ne-kaĩp sunùs.*

‘The father is always older than the son’.

(Kurschat 1876: 410)

b. *Gianni è pi`u grande che non pensassi.*

‘Gianni is bigger than I thought (lit. than I would not think)’

(Ramat 2002: 224)

Furthermore, parallels in other languages suggest that a correlation between the expression of similarity and the expression of disjunctive coordination is not impossible either. In East Futunan (Polynesian) the conjunction *pe* (*pēte* with singular pronouns) functions as the standard marker of

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<sup>142</sup> In his taxonomy of comparative expressions, Stassen (1985: 38ff., 45ff., 188-198) calls particle comparatives those constructions in which the standard is accompanied by a comparative particle that does not influence its case form; instead, the standard derives its grammatical function from that of the comparee.

similitive constructions, as in examples (23)a and (23)b. In this language, *pe* is also used as a disjunctive coordination marker (as well as a conditional marker), as shown in (24).

(23) Similitive constructions in East Futunan

a. *E sa'ele a ia sakinake pe se ne'a e masaki.*  
 NPST walk ABS 3SG maybe like NSPC person NPST sick  
 'It seems that he walks like someone who is sick.'

b. *E tugolo a Mikaele pe se puaka.*  
 NPST snore ABS Mikaele like NSPC pig  
 'Mikaele snores like a pig.'

(Moyse-Faurie 2019: 151)

(24) Disjunctive coordination in East Futunan

*Le'aise kau iloa pe e mālie pe e veli.*  
 NEG 1SG know if/or NPST good if/or NPST bad  
 'I do not know whether it is good or bad.'

(Moyse-Faurie 2019: 151)

In the expression of identity, East Futunan employs the verb *tatau* 'same' as parameter. Comparee and standard may be expressed in a single noun phrase (e.g. "both") or coordinated with the disjunctive conjunction *pe* 'or', as in (25):

(25) *E se tatau a ma'uga o Futuna pe ma'uga*  
 NPST NEG same ABS mountain POSS Futuna or mountain  
*o Falani.*  
 POSS France

'Mountains in Futuna do not look like mountains in France.' (Lit. the mountains of Futuna or the mountains of France are not identical)

(Moyse-Faurie 2019: 139)

In Section 8.3, we will see that the development from approximation marker to standard marker is not supported by studies on approximation in other languages. Instead, the hypothesis of an original deictic function of *iva* does not exclude that both the comparative and the adaptor functions developed from *iva*'s deictic function and independently from one another. However, in the same section we will see that textual evidence from the R̥V does not provide confirmation to this hypothesis and that

the direction of change from standard marker to adaptor is the most attested cross-linguistically; we will see that the latter development also finds confirmation in textual evidence, since possible bridging contexts can be detected already in the ṚV.

For the sake of completeness, I shall mention a more recent proposal for the etymology of *iva* found in Dunkel's *Lexikon der indogermanischen Partikeln und Pronominalstämme* (LIPP: 763, 766, with fn. 19, 21): according to this hypothesis, *iva* is considered as the reflex of a combination of two comparative particles, namely PIE *\*h<sub>2</sub>i-* 'if; as' (?) (346-348) and *\*(s)ua* 'like, as'.

More focused on the original syntax than on the semantics of constructions with *iva* are the observations put forward by Jamison (1982) and Hale (2010). In her article on case disharmony in Ṛgvedic similes, Jamison (1982: 254) argues that, given the great disparity of occurrences between phrasal and clausal similes (almost 2500 vs. less than 10 introduced by *yáthā*),<sup>143</sup> it is unlikely that the former derive from the latter through systematic ellipsis of the verb in the simile. If this were the case, one would expect to find exceptions where ellipsis has not occurred, especially where differences in person, number, tense, or mood between the verb in the simile and the one in the main clause would keep the two verbs from being identical to each other. According to Jamison, this applies not only to *iva*, but also to *ná*, thus implicitly discarding Vine's (1978) and Pinault's (1985b) hypotheses presented above.

Hale (2010) acknowledges that, synchronically, *iva* clauses are probably not best treated as involving gapping, which is generally optional, but that the interruption of some *iva* clauses suggests that they originally contained their own verb. However, in Chapter 7.2 we have seen that there are no clear cases in the ṚV in which an *iva* clause is clearly constructed with the verb, whereas some instances can be found for *ná*. Thus, treebank evidence confirms the hypothesis that standard introduced by *ná* originally contained a verb which, being often identical to the main clause predicate, was frequently elided; instead, the evidence points to a phrasal origin of standard introduced by *iva*.

### *The origin of yáthā similes*

Although there is no study dedicated to this, the origin of equative and similitive constructions introduced by *yáthā/yathā* is straightforward. As a subordinator, *yáthā* introduces comparative, temporal, final, causal, and content clauses with verbs of knowing and saying (Delbrück 1888: 592-596). Its structure, which combines the stem of the relative pronoun *\*H<sub>2</sub>io-* with the manner suffix -

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<sup>143</sup> Jamison seems to take only similes proper into account, i.e. figurative comparison. As we have seen in 6.2.2, the ṚV contains 48 *Adverbiale Modalsätze* introduced by the conjunction *yáthā*: of these, ca. ten require a figurative reading, whereas the remaining 38 encode what I have called historical comparison.



sacrifice to your own body, o well-born one.’

(ṚV 10.7.6cd)

Example (28) suggests that at some point the subordinate verb could be elided but that *yáthā* continued to precede the standard (cf. also ṚV 1.39.7). Note that, although we do find one example in the ṚV in which the two verbs of a comparative clause are identical in tense, mood, and person (cf. (29)), the subordinate verb must not be identical to the matrix verb for it to be elided. Indeed, sloppy identity is well attested in coordination ellipsis in Vedic (Krisch 2009). Most importantly, sloppy identity is also well attested in equative and simulative constructions introduced by *ná* and *iva* (Chapter 6.1.1.1), and these may have favored verb ellipsis in *adverbiale Modalsätze*.

- (28) *ádhā yáthā naḥ pitáraḥ párásaḥ*  
 then like 1PL.GEN father.NOM.P further.NOM.PL  
*pratnáso agna ṛtám āśuṣāṇāḥ*  
 of\_old.NOM.PL Agni.VOC truth(N).ACC pant.PTCP.NOM.PL.MID  
*śúci id ayan dīdhitim uktha-śásah*  
 blazing.ACC.N PTC come.SUBJ.PRS.3PL vision(F).ACC speech-reciting.NOM.PL  
 ‘Then like our further forefathers of old, panting over the truth, o Agni, those reciting solemn speech (now) will come to the blazing (udder of sacrifice [=Vala]), to visionary power.’

(ṚV 4.2.16a-c)

- (29) *yáthā kalām yáthā śaphám*  
 as sixteenth(F).ACC as eighth.ACC  
*yátha rṇám saṁnáyāmasi*  
 as debt(N).ACC bring\_back.PRS.1PL  
*evā duṣ-vápnīyam sárvam*  
 so bad-dream(N).ACC whole.ACC.N  
*āptiyé sám nayāmasi*  
 Āptya.DAT bring\_back.PRS.1PL  
 ‘Just as we bring back a sixteenth, then an eighth, then the (whole) debt, even so we bring the whole bad dream to Āptya.’

(ṚV 8.47.17ad)

Probably due to the influence of *iva* and *ná*, *yáthā* goes through a process of cliticization, leading to the order STAND-STM and eventually to the loss of word accent in final position of verse or *pāda*; cf.

(30)a with *yáthā* and (30)b with *yathā*:

- (30) a.     *devayánto*                             *yáthā*                     *matím*  
 god\_seeking.NOM.PL                     as                             thought(F).ACC  
*áchā vidád-vasum*                             *gírah*  
 LP     finding-good.ACC                     song(F).NOM.PL  
*mahām*                             *anūṣata*                             *śrutám*  
 great.ACC                             bellow.AOR.3PL.MID                     famous.ACC  
 ‘As those seeking the gods (bellow) their thought, the songs have bellowed to the finder of goods, great and famous.’

(ṚV 1.6.6)

- b.     *tám*                     *nemím*                             *ṛbhávo*                     *yathā*  
 as\_such                     felly(F).ACC                             craftman.NOM.PL                     as  
*ā*     *namasva*                             *sá-hūtibhiḥ*  
 LP     bend.IMPV.2SG.MID     common-invocation(F).INST.PL  
 ‘As craftsmen [Ṛbhus] (bend) the felly, bend here, [...], with the shared invocations.’

(ṚV 8.75.5ab)

### 8.1.2 Evidence from the treebank

In the previous section, I reviewed different theories on the origin of similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*, and brought forth arguments for or against a given hypothesis mostly based on cross-linguistic evidence. In this section, I will check whether quantitative evidence provided by the treebank can help us to confirm or reject said hypotheses on the origin of these constructions.<sup>144</sup>

#### *Evidence on the origin of ná similes*

Above, we have seen that there are two main hypotheses on the development of *ná* similes. According to Vine (1978), they derive from coordinate negative constructions with ellipsis of the verb in the second conjunct; according to Pinault (1985b), *ná*-similes stem from the so-called negative parallelism, i.e. a rhetorical device consisting of three sentences, the second of which presents a negation. In Vedic, we can reconstruct a reduced version of the negative parallelism, consisting of only two sentences (the negative one followed by the affirmative one) and with systematic ellipsis of the verb in the first sentence. Thus while, according to Vine (1978), similes introduced by *ná* originate from constructions in which the PAR (verb) preceded the STAND (as in example (4), repeated here as

<sup>144</sup> See Appendix 1, Queries 26 to 31, for queries employed in this analysis.

(31)), according to Pinault (1985b) they originate from constructions with the opposite order of STAND and PAR (cf. as in example (12) repeated here as (32)):

(31) Coordinate negative constructions: PAR-STAND

<i>ná</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>sumatáyo</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>rāyah</i>
NEG	3PL.NOM.N	Indra.VOC	favor(F).NOM.PL	NEG	rich.NOM.PL
<i>samcákṣe</i>	<i>pūrvā</i>	<i>uśáso</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>nūtnāḥ</i>	
enumerate.DAT.SG	earlier.NOM.PL.F	dawn(F).NOM.PL	NEG/like	recent.NOM.PL.F	
<b>#ná</b>	...	...	<b>ná</b>	10-11#	

‘Not your favors, O Indra, (and) not your riches, earlier and recent, are to be enumerated, (and) not the dawns (either).’ (Vine 1978: 182)

(ṚV 7.18.20ab)

(32) Negative parallelism: STAND-PAR

<i>vér</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>dru-śác</i>	
bird.NOM	NEG/like	wood-sitting.NOM	
<i>camúvor</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>asadad</i>	<i>dháriḥ</i>
cup(F).LOC.DU	LP	seat.AOR.3SG	tawny.NOM

1. ‘It is not a bird sitting in the wood, the tawny one (Soma) has taken his seat in the two cups.’

(ṚV 9.72.5d)

Besides a general preference for the STAND-PAR order observed for all similes and also predicted by Haspelmath and Buchholz’s Generalization 2, in Chapter 7.2.2, I suggested that two main syntactic<sup>145</sup> factors may be responsible for the relative order of STAND and PAR. Similes with ellipsis tend to have STAND-PAR order if the standard consists of only one element, whereas they tend to have PAR-STAND order if the standard has adjectival, participial, or genitive modifiers. Since their standard consists of at least two arguments of the verb, the higher incidence of the PAR-STAND order in similes with gapping may also be due to heaviness. However, here the preference for rightward gapping seems to play an important role too: as we have seen in Table 12 in that chapter, most similes with gapping and PAR-STAND order feature a word order pattern typical of rightward gapping. On the other hand, leftward gapping is less represented in the same type of similes with STAND-PAR order.

<sup>145</sup> These two syntactic factors operate in contexts that are not pragmatically marked. For example, we have seen that some cases of PAR-STAND order can be explained by thethetic nature of the sentence which leads the verb to stand in sentence initial position and consequently before the standard.

Observing the relative order of STAND and PAR separately for *ná* and *iva* similes, we gain some important insights. In the first place, Table 26 shows that *ná* similes feature STAND-PAR order slightly more often than *iva* similes (63% vs. 57%). Narrowing down the analysis to similes with ellipsis, Table 27 shows that similes introduced by *ná* have STAND-PAR order more frequently than those introduced by *iva* (68% vs. 60%). This difference is even more clear if we focus on similes with ellipsis and simple standard, i.e. whose standard is composed of a single element, with no modifiers: as shown by Table 28, the percentage of STAND-PAR order in the case of simple standards marked by *ná* reaches 78%, against 62% of simple standards marked by *iva*.

**Table 26.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in similes introduced by *ná* and *iva*.

STM	<i>ná</i> similes		<i>iva</i> similes	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
STAND-PAR	318	<b>63%</b>	165	<b>57%</b>
PAR-STAND	179	36%	123	42%
TOTAL	497		292	

**Table 27.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in *ná*- and *iva*- similes ellipsis.

STM	<i>ná</i> -similes		<i>iva</i> -similes	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
STAND-PAR	232	<b>68%</b>	111	<b>60%</b>
PAR-STAND	106	31%	75	40%
TOTAL	338		186	

**Table 28.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in *ná*- and *iva*- similes ellipsis and simple STAND.

STM	<i>ná</i> -similes		<i>iva</i> -similes	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
STAND-PAR	121	<b>78%</b>	62	<b>62%</b>
PAR-STAND	33	21%	38	38%
TOTAL	154		100	

On the other hand, no significant difference can be observed in similes with gapping, since *ná* and *iva* similes of this type feature STAND-PAR order in 54% and 52% of cases respectively (Table 29):

**Table 29.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in *ná*- and *iva*- similes gapping.

STM	<i>ná</i> -similes		<i>iva</i> -similes	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
STAND-PAR	89	<b>54%</b>	54	<b>52%</b>



PAR-STAND	75	45%	48	47%
TOTAL	164		102	

If we assume that, in the absence of other syntactic and pragmatic factors, similes tend to retain the original relative position of STAND and PAR, the fact that *ná* similes with ellipsis have a more marked preference for the STAND-PAR order than *iva* similes (68% vs. 60%; 78% vs. 62% in the case of simple standards) may constitute an important clue in favor of their origin from negative parallelism (Pinault 1985b). In fact, we have seen that similes with ellipsis are less subject to syntactic factors that determine the PAR-STAND order, such as heaviness of the standard and the preference for rightward gapping. Thus, the strong preference of simple *ná* similes for the STAND-PAR order may be a reflex of the position usually taken by negative *ná*, namely either clause-initial or pre-verbal; in the latter case, the resulting order would be exactly STAND-STM-PAR (verb), as in most similes introduced by *ná*.

The fact that the preference for the STAND-PAR order is less marked for *iva* similes (60% of origin cases; 62% with simple standard) may be due to its origin as a marker for phrasal comparison (see below), which does not tie the standard to any position with respect to the parameter. Finally, the fact that *ná* and *iva* similes behave in the same way in the presence of gapping would be due to the complexity of the standard in such constructions and to the preference, observed already several times, for rightward gapping.

#### *Evidence on the origin of iva similes*

In Chapter 7.2.1, we have seen that Queries 5 and 6 (Appendix 1) return five cases in which the verb is clearly constructed with a *ná* clause and three cases in which *yáthā* occurs in a hybrid construction, in that it behaves as a clitic, as in phrasal comparison, but the standard is constructed with a verb, as in clausal comparison. If we interpret such cases as remnants of a stage in which both the comparee and the standard could contain a verb, the lack of such evidence for *iva* may constitute a first clue provided by the treebank on the origin of *iva* similes. Indeed, it may be the case that a standard marked by *iva* is never constructed with a verb in the R̥V because *iva* has always introduced phrasal comparison.

If *iva* similes were always phrasal, we can assume that they originally had simpler standards (what we call similes with ellipsis) and that only later allowed gapping structure on the model of *ná* similes. Table 30 shows that *iva* and *ná* similes share roughly the same percentage of ellipsis and gapping structure in the corpus (35% and 32% respectively):

**Table 30.** Percentage of similes with ellipsis and gapping.

STM	<i>ná</i> -similes		<i>iva</i> -similes	
SIMILE TYPE	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
Ellipsis	338	68%	186	65%
Gapping	159	<b>32%</b>	102	<b>35%</b>
Total	497		288	

By dividing the corpus into the ten books that make up the R̥V, we can check whether older books (roughly from II to VII) differ from younger ones in the ratio of similes with ellipsis and with gapping introduced by *iva* and *ná*. Table 31 and Table 32 report the percentage of ellipsis and gapping structure in similes introduced by *iva* and *ná* respectively, throughout the ten books. Table 31 shows that gapping structure did indeed become more common for *iva* similes in younger books; although the percentage is not homogeneous in the Family Books as opposed to younger ones, a significant difference can be observed between, e.g., the 10% of similes with gapping in book V and the 44% in book I or the 47% in book X. Although some differences can be observed in Table 32 too, *ná* similes seem to follow a less clear trend: although book I has indeed the higher percentage of similes with gapping (42%), in book IX (26%) these are less frequent than they are in all other books (except book IV), and book IX (28%) is also surpassed by some of the oldest ones (namely book II, III, VII and VIII).

**Table 31.** Percentage of *iva* similes with ellipsis and with gapping.

Book	Similes with ellipsis		Similes with gapping	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
I	22	56%	17	<b>44%</b>
II	30	<b>75%</b>	10	25%
III	11	<b>73%</b>	4	27%
IV	7	<b>78%</b>	2	22%
V	18	<b>90%</b>	2	10%
VI	10	67%	5	33%
VII	9	71%	5	29%
VIII	25	62.5%	15	<b>31.5%</b>
IX	19	60%	13	<b>40%</b>
X	33	53%	29	<b>47%</b>
Total	184 <sup>146</sup>		102	

<sup>146</sup> Note that the sum of *iva* similes with ellipsis should be 186 as in Table 5, and not 184. The same holds for *ná* similes with ellipsis, which should amount to 338, instead of 335. These slightly imprecise numbers must be due to some errors in the conll-u file of the single books, which I was unfortunately unable to detect.

**Table 32.** Percentage of *ná* similes with ellipsis and with gapping.

Book	Similes with ellipsis		Similes with gapping	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
I	62	58%	45	<b>42%</b>
II	17	65%	9	35%
III	14	67%	7	33%
IV	15	75%	5	25%
V	13	72%	5	28%
VI	31	72%	12	28%
VII	27	64%	15	36%
VIII	28	66%	14	34%
IX	70	74%	25	26%
X	58	72%	22	28%
Total	335		159	

*Evidence on the origin of yáthā similes*

Differently from *ná* and *iva* similes, whose origin is disputed, we do not need quantitative evidence to confirm the emergence of *yáthā* similes from comparative clauses and the consequent cliticization of the subordinator. Furthermore, phrasal similes introduced by *yáthā/yathā* occur only 76 times in the RV and thus do not lend themselves to quantitative studies on word order. Nevertheless, it is worth commenting briefly on the relative order of STAND and PAR attested in these similes: more precisely, we can exploit our knowledge on the origin of *yáthā* similes to check whether conclusions reached on the origin of *ná* and *iva* similes based on word order do in fact hold.

Table 33 shows the percentage of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in *yáthā* similes of all types and then in *yáthā* similes with ellipsis and gapping. As is clear from the table, similes introduced by *yáthā* feature the PAR-STAND order more often than the STAND-PAR one and thus differ significantly from *ná* and *iva* similes. Narrowing down the analysis to similes with ellipsis and simple standard, the picture does not change either, since these present PAR-STAND order in 58% of cases (20 out of 34).

**Table 33.** N. of STAND-PAR and PAR-STAND orders in *yáthā* similes.

SIMILE TYPE	ALL		ELLIPSIS		GAPPING	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
STAND-PAR	30	39.47%	19	36%	11	46%
PAR-STAND	46	60.5%	33	63%	13	54%
TOTAL	76		52		24	

In the previous section, I have suggested that the marked preference of *ná* similes of the simplest type for the STAND-PAR order (78%) points to their origin from the negative parallelism, where the standard regularly preceded the non-elided verb. Accordingly, I have suggested that the greater freedom of simple *iva* clauses might be due to their phrasal origin, which did not tie the standard to any specific position with respect to the parameter.

Judging from Table 34, which provides the relative order of main and subordinate clause in comparative clauses, the same reasoning cannot be fully applied to *yáthā* similes. Indeed, although both orders are attested in clausal comparison, *yáthā* clauses occur more often before the main clause.

**Table 34.** Relative order of main and subordinate (*yáthā*) clause in all comparative clauses and in *Adverbiale Modalsätze*.

CLAUSE TYPE ORDER	ALL		ADVERBIALE	
	ABS. N.	%	ABS. N.	%
YÁTHĀ - MAIN	50	57.47%	35	73%
MAIN – YÁTHĀ	37	42.52%	13	27%
TOTAL	87		48	

Thus, we cannot say that the high rate of PAR-STAND order in *yáthā* similes is due to the word order patterns attested in the source constructions. However, looking more carefully at the data, two details emerge:

- a) while *yáthā* always occurs at the beginning of a clause or *pāda* when it functions as a subordinator, it tends to occur in the second half of the *pāda* when it functions as standard marker of phrasal comparison and in absolute final position of *pāda* when it is not accented.
- b) while subordinate clauses introduced by *yáthā* allow both orders, out of twelve *Weiterführende Modalsätze* of the type *yáthā vidé* ‘as is known’, eleven follow the main clause (order MAIN-YÁTHĀ).

These data suggest the following hypotheses:

- a) The cliticization of *yáthā* as a standard marker of phrasal comparison, preventing the particle from occurring in slots 1 and 2, must have determined a rearrangement of its position in the *pāda*.<sup>147</sup> Since *yáthā* fits slots 3 and 4 of most *pādas*, combinations of two-syllable standards with

<sup>147</sup> Like comparative *ná* entered complementary distribution with negative *ná* within the *pāda* (cf. Vine 1978), the cliticization of *yáthā* may have determined its placement in positions which are complementary to those occupied by

*yáthā* would be allowed in *pāda* opening; however, combinations of three-syllable standards with *yáthā* are problematic because neither dimeter nor trimeter verses allow a long vowel in slot 5 (cf. the regular closing of dimeter | ˘ – ˘ x and trimeters’ breaks | ˘ ˘ – or | ˘ ˘). In fact, out of 76 occurrences of phrasal *yáthā* similes, we find only one case in which *yáthā* follows a two-syllable standard in *pāda* opening, reported in (33). In all other cases, *yáthā* tends to select longer standards and thus to occur in *pāda* closing.

(33) trimeter (*triṣṭubh*)

<i>dravád</i>	<i>yáthā</i>	<i>sámabhṛtaṁ</i>	<i>viśvátaś</i>	<i>cid</i>
swift	as	assemble.PPP.ACC	from_every_side	PTC
#1 2	3 4			

<i>úpa</i>	<i>imám</i>	<i>yajñám</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>vahāta</i>	<i>índram</i>
LP	DEM.ACC	sacrifice.ACC	LP	bring.SUBJ.PRS.2DU	Indra.ACC

‘The two will bring Indra right here to this sacrifice assembled from every side, as if at a run.’

(RV 3.35.2cd)

- b) The formulaic nature of *Weiterführende Modalsätze*, which consist of *yáthā* and a short verbal form (*yáthā vidé* ‘as is known’ or *yáthā vidúḥ* ‘as they know’) and which always follow the main clause, may have contributed to the placement of *yáthā* similes to the end of the *pāda*. Considering that CPREE, PAR, and STAND tend to occur within the limit of the hemistich or *pāda* (see Chapter 7.1.4), the fact that *yáthā* similes select *pāda* final position explains why they are more likely to occur after the parameter.
- c) The last consideration takes the broader context of phrasal comparison into account. In the preceding sections, we have seen that, at least in the case of *iva*, similes with gapping increase in younger books, thus determining an increase in the percentage of PAR-STAND order. Since, in the RV, *yáthā* similes are at the beginning of their expansion, it is possible that they have extended the tendency of similes with gapping to occur after the parameter.

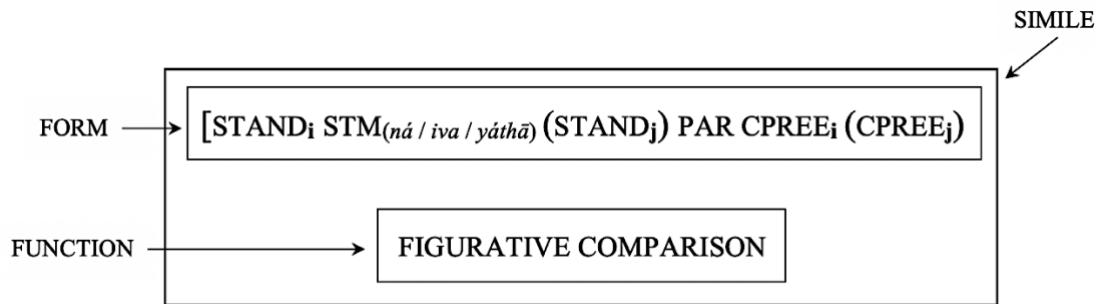
### 8.1.3 Summary: R̥gvedic similes as an instance of product-oriented schema

In Chapter 6.1.1.4, we have seen that R̥gvedic equative and similitive constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* (Type 1 “only equative standard marker”), despite employing different standard markers, constitute a coherent construction from the point of view of both syntax and semantics.

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*yáthā* within *Adverbiane Modalsätze* (which, as we have seen, constitute the most probable source construction for *yáthā* similes).

Owing to their specialization for figurative comparison, we have seen that they can be defined as similes in all respects and represented as in Figure 42:



**Figure 42.** Symbolic representation of Ṛgvedic similes.

However, from what we have seen in previous sections of this chapter, it follows that Ṛgvedic similes developed from very different source constructions. In Chapter 3.2, we have seen that the usage-based model in Cognitive Linguistics describes constructions such as Ṛgvedic similes as product-oriented schemas, as opposed to source-oriented schemas (Bybee and Thompson 1997; Croft and Cruse 2004). In product-oriented schemas there is a higher degree of structural coherence defining the result schema than its counterpart source schema(s). If we now look back at the different sources of Ṛgvedic similes, we can detect at least three main features shared by Ṛgvedic similes which are not present in all source constructions, namely:

- a) phrasal nature
- b) enclitic standard marker
- c) figurative meaning

On the base of the extant literature on the origin of similes (Section 8.1.1) and of quantitative evidence provided by the treebank (Section 8.1.2), we can try and reconstruct in which way different source constructions influenced each other and gave rise to the kind of constructions we observe in the ṚV.

Starting from *ná* similes, we have seen that syntactic, semantic, and quantitative considerations point to their origin from a reduced version of the rhetorical device known as negative parallelism (Pinault 1985b). This consisted of two sentences, the first of which presented a negation and a verb that, being identical or similar to the verb of the second sentence, could be elided. The structure can be schematized as: not S<sub>1</sub> (V<sub>1</sub>), S<sub>2</sub> V<sub>2</sub>. Thus, *ná* similes derive from a construction that was not phrasal in origin; furthermore, negative *ná* occupies either sentence-initial or pre-verbal position, and never behaves as a clitic.

As for its semantics, the subject of the first clause usually represents a prototype participant of the action expressed by the verb and thus negative parallelism lends itself to figurative readings. Furthermore, Pinault (1985b: 138-143) suggests that the comparative reading of *ná* must have spread thanks to the existence of two other comparative strategies that shared the STAND-(STM)-PAR order with negative parallelism: these are comparative compounds such as *vāta-jūta*- lit. ‘wind-swift’ and analytic comparisons with an ablative standard such as *manáso.ABL jāvīyas* ‘swifter than thought’ (1985b: 138-143). Comparative compounds are known cross-linguistically for their preference for generic comparisons (see Chapter 6.1.1.4; Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998) and, at least within the IE domain, idiomatic ablative comparatives are also often employed in this function (cf. the type Latin *melle dulcior* ‘sweeter than honey’).

Turning to similes introduced by *iva*, we have seen that the most frequently assumed etymology for this particle is a combination of the PIE deictic stem *\*h<sub>1</sub>i-* and the disjunctive particle *\*-ye* ‘or’. As for their syntax, evidence from the treebank suggests that *iva* always marked phrasal standards. Finally, taking *iva*’s deictic function seriously, we may tentatively assume that it originally marked standards with specific referents, instead of generic ones; note that Viti’s (2002) analysis of *iva* as selecting individuated standards would also support this hypothesis (Chapter 5.3). Thus, figurative meaning cannot be reconstructed for *iva* similes.

To conclude, *yáthā* similes clearly developed from subordinate clauses introduced by *yáthā*. More precisely, the syntax and semantics of the so-called *Adverbiale Modalsätze* suggest that these served as a source for the development of *yáthā* similes via ellipsis of the subordinate verb and cliticization of the subordinator. Thus, the source construction lacked both a phrasal nature and a clitic standard marker. Its semantics was also probably different from the one of the target constructions. Indeed, we have seen in Chapter 6.2.2 that, out of 48 *Adverbiale Modalsätze*, 38 encode comparison with a past event (what I have called historical comparison), and only 10 allow a figurative reading. Thus, I suggest that clausal comparison was preferably employed for literal or historical comparison, whereas figurative comparison was gradually becoming a prerogative of phrasal comparison.

The passages reported in examples (34) and (35) may constitute the evidence for the development of phrasal, generic/figurative comparison from clausal, historical comparison. Both passages are syntactically ambiguous between clausal and phrasal comparison and semantically ambiguous between historical and generic comparison. Example (34) can be interpreted as consisting of either one or two clauses. In the first case, mirrored by Geldner’s translation, *yáthā* introduces a comparative clause comparing the invitation directed to other poets to recite solemn speech (*śámsa ukthám*) with the praise recited in the past by the speaking person; accordingly, the noun *náraḥ* ‘men’

should be interpreted as a modifier of the 1<sup>st</sup> person subject of *cakṛmā* ‘we have made’. Alternatively, we may interpret the passage as two independent sentences, with Jamison and Brereton. According to this interpretation, *cakṛmā* is the main verb of the second sentence and *yáthā* introduces a phrasal comparison whose standard, *náraḥ* ‘men, heroes’, may be taken as referring to some gods or previous singers (see ‘Maruts’ in the translation), but also as having generic reference: ‘like superior men/heroes’.

(34)	<i>śámsa</i>	<i>id</i>	<i>ukthám</i>	<i>su-dānava</i>
	recite.IMPV.2SG	PTC	speech(N).ACC	good-gift.DAT
	<i>utá</i>	<i>dyukṣám</i>	<b><i>yáthā</i></b>	<b><i>náraḥ</i></b>
	CONJ	heavenly.ACC.N	like	man/hero.NOM.PL
	<i>cakṛmā</i>	<i>satyá-rādhase</i>		
	make.PF.1PL	real-generosity.DAT		

1. ‘Trage dem Freigebigen ein Loblied vor und zwar ein himmlisches, wie wir Männer es für den wahrhaft Freigebigen gedichtet haben.’ (Geldner 1951)

2. ‘(You yourself, o poet—) recite solemn speech to him of good gifts. And thus, like the superior men [=Maruts], we have made a heavenly (speech) for him whose generosity is real.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 7.31.2)

In example (35), the verb *dádat* is a short-vowel subjunctive of the root  $\sqrt{dā-}$  (‘whoever will give’) but can also be interpreted as a thematized injunctive, which in turn can be read with *vaidadaśvir* (‘as *vaidadaśvir* did’). In turn, the noun *vaidadaśvir* may be interpreted either as a proper name (‘Vaiśvadaśvi’ attested both in JB I.151 and in PB XIII.7.2 as the father of Purumīḍha and Taranta) or as a speaking name ‘finding/acquiring horses’ designating the patron (as the *vṛddhi* derivative of *\*vidád-aśva-*; cf. *vidád-vasu-*; Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*).<sup>148</sup>

(35)	<i>yó</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>dhenūnáam</i>	<i>śatám</i>
	REL.NOM	1SG.DAT	milk-cow(F).GEN.PL	hundred.ACC.N

<sup>148</sup> See Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) on the possibility of taking *purumīḥá-* in verse 9 and *tarantá-* in *pāda* c as proper names referring to Vaiśvadaśvi’s sons, or in their literal sense. In the context of the *dānastuti* lit. ‘praise of the gift’, i.e. the portion of the hymn in which the largesse of the patron is catalogued and glorified, *purumīḥá* ‘having many rewards’ would fit a description of the poet who has received his *dakṣiṇā* from his patron; *tarantá-*, a thematization of the present participle *tárant-*, could be interpreted as ‘overcoming, victorious’.



*vaidadaśvir*

Vaidadaśvi/finding\_horses.NOM

*yáthā dádat*

like give.SUBJ/INJ.PRS.3SG

*tarantá*

*iva*

*mamhánā*

victor.NOM

like

munificence(F).INST

‘Whoever will give me a hundred milk-cows as Vaidadaśvi [lit. the one finding horses] (did), (he is) like a victor in his munificence.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 5.61.10)

To sum up, *ná* and *iva* similes probably influenced each other, the former acquiring a phrasal nature and a clitic standard marker, the latter starting to be employed for figurative comparison (comparative compounds and comparatives with ablative standard, both of IE origin, certainly played a role in this process of reciprocal influence) and starting to feature gapping structure. In a second moment, comparative clauses introduced by *yáthā* gradually developed a phrasal variant on the model of *ná* and *iva* similes.

Table 35 summarizes the points above:

**Table 35.** Features of Ṛgvedic similes in the source constructions.

SOURCE CONSTRUCTION FEATURE	Negative parallelism	Comparison with <i>iva</i> (< deixis?)	<i>yáthā</i> clauses
Phrasal nature	–	+	–
Enclitic STM	–	+	–
Figurative meaning	+	– (?)	–/+

## 8.2 Post-ṚV: pragmaticalization of *iva* as an adaptor

In Chapters 5.4 and 6.1.3.3, I have anticipated that the main function of *iva* in Vedic prose is that of adaptor, i.e., of an approximation marker that flags the semantically loose use of a lexical expression, as in (36) (Prince et al. 1982: 93; Mihatsch 2009; Brereton 1982). Alternatively, *iva* can indicate the imprecise value of a numerical expression, in which case it is said to function as a rounder (cf. example (103) in Chapter 6).

(36) *sasṛjānāya*

create.ABS

*tama*

darkness(N).NOM

*iva*

like

*abhūd*

come\_to\_be.AOR.3SG

‘Having created (the Asuras), a kind of darkness has come to be.’ (Brereton 1982: 444)

(ŚB 11.1.6.9)

In Vedic studies, the employment of *iva* outside of equative and similitive constructions has been described as having an indefinite function, but the descriptions of the contexts of usage provided especially by Brereton (1982) for Vedic prose and by Pinault (2004) for the ṚV can be assimilated to what pragmatists call the approximative function. Just as adaptors, in Vedic prose *iva* can occur with different lexical classes (cf. example (37) with a verb) and with different discursive nuances. For instance, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (Ch. U.), Uddālaka tells Śvetaketu to examine the inside of a fig and to describe what he sees. The latter’s response is provided in (38), where *iva* functions as a moderator (‘quite’), i.e. as a scalar modifier which approximates an average range on a scale (Paradis 2000: 149).

- (37) *tasmād dakṣiṇam vedyantam adhispr̥śya iva āsīta*  
 therefore souther.ACC altar\_border.ACC touch.ABS like seat.OPT.3SG.MID  
 ‘Thereupon, after touching in some way the southern border of the altar, he should sit.’  
 (Brereton 1982: 446)  
 (ŚB 11.2.7.33)

- (38) *aṇvya iva imā dhānā*  
 fine.NOM.PL.F like DEM.NOM.PL.F seed(F).NOM.PL  
 ‘The quite fine seeds here.’ (Brereton 1982: 446)  
 (Ch.U. 6.12.1)

In an example from the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* (GB), a double *iva* signals the markedness of the preceding adjectives, which derives from their being in opposition to each other and to the expected conclusion: though the man is large and the distance is small, night travel is still frightening. As we shall see in the following section, adaptors often serve to signal marked expressions, such as figurative speech, and stylistic discrepancies.

- (39) *tasmād dhāpy etarhi bhūyān iva naktam sa yāvan mātram ivāpakramya bibheti*  
 ‘Therefore, even today, (although) **quite big**, he who travels even a **quite short** distance at night becomes afraid.’ (Brereton 1982: 447)  
 (GB 2.5.1)

In another passage from the Ch.U. 6, reported by Brereton (1982), Āruni tries to show his son Śvetaketu that different objects can be explained as combinations of three basic elements: heat, water, and food. Understanding this, the great householders from of old were able to recognize everything

that was presented to them. In (40), Āruni summarizes the insights of these householders. In the first three sentences, the particle *iva* follows the adjective indicating the color (*rohitam* ‘red’, *śuklam* ‘white’, *kṛṣṇam* ‘black’), marking it as not necessarily close to the prototype (see the ‘somehow’ in the translation); eventually, something could be *avijñātam iva* ‘somehow indistinguishable’, but the householders were nevertheless able to recognize it as the combination of the three elements. Note that the quotative particle *iti* ‘thus, so’ does not only follow the direct speech, but also the expression of the householders’ insight. This suggests that *iva* functions here as an attribution shield, indicating an indirect source of information.<sup>149</sup>

(40) yad u **rohitam** ivābhūd iti tejasas tad rūpam iti tad vidāṃcakuḥ /

yad u **śuklam** ivābhūd ity apāṃ rūpam iti tad vidāṃcakuḥ /

yad u **kṛṣṇam** ivābhūd ity annasya rūpam iti tad vidāṃcakuḥ //

yad v **avijñātam** ivābhūd ity etāsām eva devatānām samāsa iti tad vidāṃcakuḥ /

[‘The red appearance of a fire is, in fact, the appearance of heat, the white, that of water, and the black, that of food.’ ... It was, indeed, this that they knew, those extremely wealthy and immensely learned householders of old. ...]

When something was **somehow red**, they knew: “That is the appearance of heat”;

when something was **somehow white**, they knew: “That is the appearance of water”;

when something was **somehow black**, they knew: “That is the appearance of food”;

and when something was **somehow indistinct**, they knew: “That is a combination of these same three deities”.’ (adapted from Olivelle 1998)

(Ch.U. 6.4)

As we have seen in Chapter 6.1.3.3 and in more detail in Section 8.1 above, Pinault (2004) suggests that the indefinite function of *iva* as characterized by Brereton (1982) for Vedic prose can already be observed in the ṚV and that it was due to the special literary genre of this text that the indefinite usage was superseded by the much more frequent usage as standard marker.

In this section, I will try to pursue an alternative analysis and consider the adaptor function as developed from the one of simulative marker. This direction of change has already been suggested by Viti (2002: 71, fn. 16), who however did not explore it further. Support for this hypothesis comes from studies in pragmatics, which report a great number of independent parallel developments in other languages. Fleischman (1999) observes equivalent paths in Bislama, Russian, Swedish, Finnish,

<sup>149</sup> Brereton attributes a slightly different function to *iva* in this passage. According to him, the function of *iva* is to generalize on the basis of the specific examples given before: ‘any red appearance’ is a manifestation of heat, etc.

German, Japanese, Lahu, and Hebrew (also see Ziv 1998). Mihatsch (2009) provides a detailed analysis of the emergence of the adaptors French *comme*, Italian *come*, Spanish *como*, and Portuguese *como* ‘like’, all deriving from Latin *quomodo* ‘in which way’ probably through a Panromance development (Hernando Cuadrado 2002: 303, 325). A similar case is that of Latin *quam si* ‘as if’ (Menge 2005:2 837), today preserved in French *quasi*, Italian *quasi*, Spanish *casi* and Portuguese *quase*, all meaning ‘almost’. Outside of the Romance domain, consider also American English *like*.

In what follows, I will analyze the emergence of the approximative function of Vedic *iva* from a grammaticalization (or pragmaticalization) perspective (cf. Heine 2002; Hopper and Traugott 2003; Diewald 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Beijering 2012; Heine 2013, among many others). In Section 8.2.1, I will summarize the literature on approximation, devoting special attention to the sources that lead to the emergence of adaptors as well as to secondary functions that adaptors can develop. In Section 8.2.2, I will introduce Heine’s (2002) four-stage scenario of grammaticalization and present possible hypotheses on the development of *iva*’s comparative and approximating functions on the light of cross-linguistic evidence. In Section 8.3.3, I will consider the possibility that the two functions emerged independently from *iva*’s deictic function and argue that this hypothesis is not sufficiently supported by Ṛgvedic evidence. Finally, in Section 8.2.4, I will make a case for the development of the adaptor function from the comparative function. In my analysis, I will focus on bridging contexts that may have brought about this development and which are already observable within the ṚV; furthermore, I will reflect on the factors that might be responsible for the great expansion of this function in Vedic prose.

### 8.2.1 Approximation

In the domain of hedging, the taxonomy established by Prince et al. (1982) distinguishes between approximators and shields. This distinction reflects a fundamental difference as to the linguistic level they operate on: approximators modify the propositional content of an utterance as in (41), whereas shields operate on the pragmatic level by weakening the epistemic force of an utterance, as the plausibility shield *I think* in (42), or by indicating less reliable types of information sources (attribution shields such as *quotation marks*; Prince et al. 1982; Mihatsch 2009: 66):

(41) *His feet were sort of blue*

(42) *I think his feet were blue*

(Prince et al. 1982: 85)

Despite the validity of this distinction, many markers show ambiguous uses, and often approximator functions can arise as implicatures of shields and vice versa (see e.g. Kaltenböck 2010 on English *I think*).

As anticipated in Chapter 6.1.3.3, approximation markers are distinguished into adaptors and rounders on the base of whether they trigger loose readings of a lexical expression, as English *like* or *sort of*, or they indicate imprecise numerical values, as English *about* (Prince et al. 1982: 93). From a semantic point of view, it may seem descriptively sounder to subsume both uses under one and the same category, whose effect is to widen the extension of the modified item, be it a lexical meaning or a numeric value. The need for a single category would also be supported by the fact that many markers can be used both as rounders and as adaptors, such as Spanish *como*, English *like*, or French *genre*. On the other hand, the restriction of, e.g., Spanish *especie de* and French *espèce de* to the adaptor function and the one of, e.g., English *about* and French *vers* to the rounder function suggests that the distinction is cognitively and/or functionally sound. As showed by Mihatsch (2010), from a diachronic analysis it results that, for most markers, the two functions develop separately from different sources and can only converge due to further functional changes.

From a cognitive point of view, quantificational approximation is much simpler than lexical approximation. While rounders operate on a unidimensional scale, widening the boundaries above and below a value on a scale, adaptors operate on a multidimensional space and are less predictable. Only linguistic or extralinguistic context can determine which semantic features of the lexical item are maintained and which must be eliminated or loosened; furthermore, adaptors can simply mark a deviation from a prototype, as in (43), and not proper approximation:

(43) ... *a uno de los que iban, le quitaron el dinero no sabes que llevaban aquí **como** una cartera en la cintura ...*'

'and one of them who went, they stole him his money don't you know they wore here **like** a purse around the waist'

(Mihatsch 2010: 96)

The communicative uses of rounders are also less varied than those observed for adaptors. Indeed, rounders are mostly used to make informed guesses as to quantities or in situations in which providing the exact values would be too pedantic. Adaptors are found in similar uses, in that they help complying with the lack of knowledge about the exact classification of a referent and allow avoiding exaggerated terminological exactness (cf. Hyland 1998). However, a series of uses are restricted to adaptors, such as the creation of *ad hoc* categories and in situations with word-finding problems,

where a semantically similar, but more accessible item is used to replace a more appropriate but (momentarily) unavailable one (Mihatsch 2010: 97).

Diachronically, rounders and adaptors usually emerge from different sources. Typical sources for rounders are spatial expressions, such as spatial deictics metaphorically indicating a rough zone around a number on a scale, as in (44), or spatial prepositions such as French *vers*, English *around* or *about*, and Spanish *hacia* (for rounders in non-IE languages that follow this pattern see Hagège 1982: 36-37, 44).

(44) *Lá/ali/aí pelas 4 da tarde*

‘Approximately [lit: ‘there’] at about 4 p.m.’

(Mihatsch 2010: 99)

On the other hand, many adaptors, share a source based on the notion of resemblance. As we have seen above, this is the case of English *like* as well as French *comme*, Portuguese *como*, and Spanish *como* (marginally German *wie*), which all go back to standard markers of similitive comparison. One explanation for the comparative origin of adaptors is that similitives usually imply only a partial resemblance and thus contain themselves an approximation. As we shall see in detail below, when standard markers lose their syntactic and semantic relationality, they become modifiers of noun phrases, signaling their semantically loose use:

(45) *on voit **comme** une sorte de gros nid*

‘You can see like a sort of big nest.’

(Mihatsch 2010: 104)

Less common but semantically very similar is the emergence of adaptors from qualitative deictics (see Mihatsch 2010b), such as English *such*, *like that*, German *so*, French *comme c-a*, *tel*, Italian *così*, *tale*, Portuguese *assim*, *tal* and Spanish *así*, *tal*. All these items establish a relation of similarity between a comparee and a standard retrieved by situational deixis, by anaphorical relations to a preceding or following unit, or by reference to knowledge shared by speaker and hearer. As shown by example (46), qualitative deictics can be employed in cases of naming problems or when contextual information is needed in order to access the referent, perhaps accompanied by a gesture or pointing to an object:

(46) *J'aimerais une robe **comme ca**.*

'I'd like a dress like that.'

(Mihatsch 2010: 104)

The development from deictic to adaptor is made clear by example (47), reporting a request by a client in a bakery shop: while we could imagine a pointing gesture and thus interpret *so* deictically, the recorded answer "it's only available at noon" clearly suggests that an approximative interpretation is needed here, not a deictic one. The same is true for utterances with abstract nouns like *aura* in (48), where the adaptor *assim* lit. 'such' flags an incomplete linguistic description based on semantic similarity with the target:

(47) A: *Geben Sie mir **so'n** Streuselapfel*

'Give me such a crumbly apple/a crumbly apple like that'

B: *Das gibt's erst mittags, wissen Sie?*

'It's only available at noon, you know?'

(Lovik 1990: 122-123; in Mihatsch 2010: 104)

(48) *ah hhh mas havia **assim** uma aura que o envolvia*

'Ah but there was like (literally 'such') an aura that surrounded him.'

(Mihatsch 2010: 104)

Finally, a syntactically and semantically different path is the one leading from taxonomic nouns to adaptors, instantiated by English *sort of* and *kind of*, French *espèce de*, *genre de*, *sorte de*, Italian *specie di*, *tipo di*, Portuguese *espécie de*, *tipo de*, *gênero de*, Spanish *especie de* (see Mihatsch 2007 and Voghera 2013, 2017 for comparative studies and Mihatsch 2010: 105 for relevant literature). This type emerges from the use of taxonomic nouns in everyday situations, where classification criteria of marginal items may be not well known and lead to reinterpretation of the noun as a marker of vague comparison rather than subclassification.

Differently from those presented above, some paths are shared by both rounders and adaptors. Take for instance the following general extenders, corresponding to English *or something like this* (Overstreet 1999; Cheshire 2007):

(49) *j' avais euh quatorze ans **ou quelque chose comme ca***

'I was fourteen years old or something like that.'

(Mihatsch 2010: 108)

(50) *habría que construir una especie de cómo le diría yo? como de cobertizo o algo así*

‘One should build a kind of how shall I say like a shed or something like that.’

(Mihatsch 2010: 108)

While the rounders presented above do not develop other functions,<sup>150</sup> subsequent changes are very productive in the case of adaptors. A new function developed from adaptors is the one of signaling figurative speech, which derives from the fact that metaphors are also based on similarity, although across two conceptual domains. Take for instance example (51) from Italian, in which *come* flags a figurative reading:

(51) *i francesi hanno voluto come pagare un debito verso il loro poverissimo ciclismo*

‘The French wanted to like pay a dept toward their poor cyclism.’

(Mihatsch 2010: 111)

Related to the function of signaling inappropriateness of a word due to semantic deviation is the one of flagging changes in register. Furthermore, adaptors may be used as shields for pragmatic mitigation as in *Y’a comme un problème* ‘there is like a problem’ (Mihatsch 2009). In some languages such as Spanish and Portuguese, the same adaptors which have developed shield functions are also employed as rounders; compare for instance example (52) and (53):

(52) (...) *es un rollo o sea todo muy meca’nico venga esto no lo reconoce lo meto en el diccionario esto no sé qué esto hhh sabes? como muy monótono*

‘It’s a hassle, that is, everything is very mechanical. Come on, it does not recognize this one, I put it into the dictionary, that one whatever, that one you know? Like, very monotonous.’

(Mihatsch 2010: 112)

(53) *Haverá na cidade como dous mil judeus.*

‘In the city there must be like two thousand Jews.’

(Mihatsch 2010: 112)

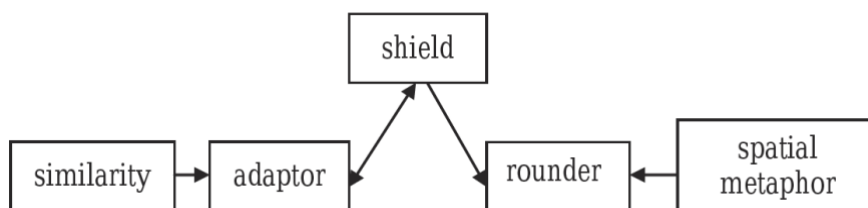
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<sup>150</sup> Certain rare uses of spatial prepositional expressions used as scalar adaptors with lexical items represent an exception. Cf. for instance French *proche de* in expressions such as *proche de l’obsession quoi* ‘close to the obsession that’ or English *about* in *about tired, about finished*.



According to Mihatsch (2010: 113), the transition of the adaptor towards the rounder function comes about precisely through the intermediate employment of the term as a shield which leads to syntactic flexibilization of the term and allows it to occur with quantifying expressions.

From the above considerations, Mihatsch proposes the following semantic map of approximation, a domain in which unidirectionality is the rule (e.g. from similarity to adaptor to rounder, from shield to rounder) and bidirectionality is the exception (between adaptors and shields):



**Figure 43.** A simplified semantic map of approximation (Mihatsch 2010: 117)

### 8.2.2 Two hypotheses on *iva*'s original function

In order to determine which path led *iva* to have the different functions attested in the RV and in Vedic prose, I will take into account the particle's most accepted etymology (for which see Section 8.1.1) and combine this piece of information with text evidence and evidence provided by cross-linguistic studies such as the one of Mihatsch (2010) summarized above. In tracing the possible changes that have occurred in the use of *iva*, I will employ the notions of bridging and switch context introduced by Heine (2002), and his subdivision of the grammaticalization *continuum* into four discrete stages. Whether the one from standard marker to adaptor constitutes a case of grammaticalization or of pragmaticalization is debated; since both processes lend themselves to similar analyses, I do not dwell on the issue here and refer to Mihatsch (2009: 66-69) for a thorough discussion and review of the literature.

Heine (2002: 2) distinguishes between two different kinds of context that play a role in the evolution of grammatical meaning:

- a) Bridging contexts (Evans and Wilkins 1998: 5) trigger an inferential mechanism that leads to replace the source meaning with another meaning, the target meaning, that offers a more plausible interpretation of a given utterance; in these contexts, the target meaning is the one which is most likely to be inferred, but an interpretation in terms of the source meaning cannot be ruled out.
- b) Switch contexts are incompatible with some salient property of the source meaning, so that the target meaning provides the only possible interpretation; however, unlike conventional meanings, meanings appearing in switch contexts are confined to such contexts.

While most context-induced inferences remain confined to bridging contexts (they have been variously described as “contextual meanings” or “pragmatic meanings”), those occurring in switch contexts may develop some frequency of use and may no longer be confined to a given context, thus turning into “normal” or “inherent”, or “conventionalized” meanings (cf. Hopper and Traugott 1993:73-4; Heine 2002: 3). Once a target meaning has become conventionalized, it can be used in new contexts and even occur side-by-side to the source meaning in the same clause.

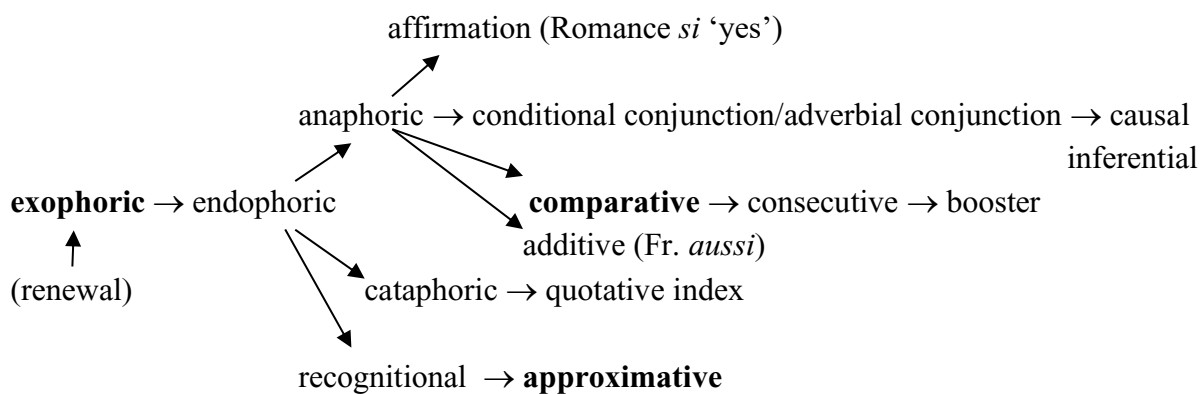
Although grammaticalization is better described as a *continuum* from source to target meaning, it can be conveniently described by means of a four-stage scenario, as the one summarized in Table 36:

**Table 36.** A four-stage scenario of grammaticalization (Heine 2002: 4).

Stage	Context	Resulting meaning
I Initial stage	Unconstrained	Source meaning
II Bridging context	There is a specific context giving rise to an inference in favor of a new meaning	Target meaning foregrounded
III Switch context	There is a new context which is incompatible with the source meaning	Source meaning backgrounded
IV Conventionalization	The target meaning no longer needs to be supported by the context that gave rise to it; it may be used in new contexts	Target meaning

In Section 8.1.1, we have seen that the most frequently assumed etymology for *iva* considers the particle to be the combination of the demonstrative stem *\*h<sub>1</sub>i-* and of the PIE disjunctive particle *\* $\upsilon$ e* ‘or’. Thus, the original meaning of the particle may be ‘or this’ (KEWAia and EWAia: *s.v.*).

Although this etymology differs from the one proposed by Pinault (2004), at first sight it does not rule out the possibility that the approximative function was the original one for *iva*. Indeed, demonstratives are a subset of deictic expressions and we have seen above that deictics expressing manner, quality, or degree are a common source for the emergence of adaptors (e.g. English *such*, *like that*, German *so*). On the other hand, we have seen in Section 8.1.1 that this etymology does not rule out the alternative hypothesis either, namely that *iva* was originally a standard marker. König (2017) suggests that the comparative and the approximative functions can emerge independently from one another, following different grammaticalization paths: as shown by Figure 44, the comparative function develops from the anaphoric/cataphoric function of deictics, whereas the approximative function emerges from what König calls their recognitional function.



**Figure 44.** Paths of grammaticalization taking demonstratives of manner and degree as source (König 2017).

On the other hand, we have also seen that adaptors often derive from standard markers of similitive constructions, as in the case e.g. of French *comme* and Italian *come* ‘like’. To the best of my knowledge, what is not attested is the opposite direction of change, namely from approximation marker to standard marker (recall that Mihatsch’s semantic map of approximation is characterized by unidirectionality). Thus, we are left with two possibilities as for the development of the different functions of *iva*:

- a) The comparative function and the approximative one emerged independently from one another, from the anaphoric/cataphoric and recognitional function of the deictic;
- b) The approximative function, and more precisely the adaptor function, developed from the comparative function.

### 8.2.3 From general extender to adaptor

Let us consider the hypothesis that *iva*’s comparative and approximative functions emerged independently from one another. The particle’s formal and especially semantic make-up resembles the one found in disjunctive general extenders like English *or something like this/that*, German *oder so*, or Spanish *o algo así*, which also contain a disjunctive marker in correspondence with *-va* < \**ue* ‘or’ found in *iva* (Overstreet 1999: 3; Mihatsch 2010: 108).

General extenders (GE)<sup>151</sup> are a group of expressions characterized by a syntactic structure [CONJUNCTION + NON-SPECIFIC NP] (e.g. *and such, or something*), which occur at the end of a list, or at the end of a single phrase or a clause, to indicate the existence of additional referents (Overstreet

<sup>151</sup> There is great terminological variation in the definition of these forms, which are also called set marking tags (Dines 1980), generalized list completers (Jefferson 1990), extension particles (Dubois 1992), vague category identifiers (Channell 1994), extender tags (Carroll 2008).

1999: 3). In other words, GEs encode explicit reference to further Xs that share with the explicit elements a common context-dependent property P (Mauri and Sansò 2018a, 2018b). For instance, the Russian GE *i tak dalee* ‘and so on’ in (54) makes the hearer recall the category LARGE WORK VEHICLES, of which garbage trucks, locomotives, and excavators are representative members:

(54) *Na noute ljubit, čtob ja vključala video raznye na jut’jube, pro musornye mašiny, parovozy, èkskavatory i tak dalee.*

‘He (i.e. my child) wants me to play videos on YouTube showing garbage trucks, locomotives, excavators and so on.’

(Benigni 2018: 112)

The class of GEs can be divided into those beginning with a coordinating conjunction, called adjunctive GEs, and those beginning with a disjunctive conjunction, called disjunctive GEs; beside compositional expressions, Mauri and Sansò classify as GE also synthetic strategies like English *etcetera* (< Latin *et cetera*) or Dutch *enzovoorts* (< *en + zo + voorts*), which have undergone a process of univerbation (Lehmann 1995: 151-152). Benigni (2018), who provides a detailed discussion of the structural, semantic, and pragmatic properties of Russian GEs, shows that lexicalized syntactic patterns often evolve out of frequent compositional expressions, as in the case of *i vse takoe* ‘and so on’ (lit. ‘and all such’) from the more complex structure *i vse takoe proče*, lit. ‘all similar other (things)’; in turn, these may enter a process of grammaticalization which involves further phonetic reduction, univerbation (*i vsetakoe* in the case of *i vse takoe*), decategorization (e.g. lack of agreement), semantic bleaching (e.g. loss of the original similitive meaning) and pragmaticalization with the development of (inter)subjective functions. Likewise, Kim (2020) demonstrates that the Korean constructions *x-tunci y-tunci ha* ‘x-or y-or do’ and *x-kena y-kena ha* ‘id.’, which originally list options, have grammaticalized into GEs *x-tunci ha* ‘x-or do’ and *x-kena ha* ‘id.’ implicating the vague category to which the one listed item belongs, and acquired new pragmatic functions such as approximation, epistemic uncertainty, tentativeness, polite hedging, and contemptuous stance. The developments described by Kim are comparable to those of English *x or something* and Japanese *x-tari suru* ‘x-or do’. The effect of grammaticalization is made clear by the following examples (note that *tunci* ‘or’ and *kena* ‘or’ are different from English *or* in that they require a main verb): while in (55) the construction *x-tunci y-tunci ha* takes two conjuncts and expresses two alternatives (*po-tunci tut-tunci* lit. ‘see-or hear-or’; *ha* ‘do’ functions as the main verb), in (56) the construction *x-tunci ha* combines with one single item (*nakse-lul ha-tunci ha* ‘scribble-or do’) and implicates a vague category of SCRIBBLING which includes drawings, graffiti, and other similar activities.

(55) Disjunctive sentence with *tunci* ‘or’

*po-tunci tut-tunci ha-n ke-eytayhay iyakiha-e-cwu-sey-yo*  
 see-or hear-or do-REL:PAST thing-about talk-CONN-give-HON-POL  
 ‘Please talk about things that you saw or heard.’

(56) Disjunctive general extender use of *tunci* ‘or’

*pyek-ey nakse-lul ha-tunci ha-yse-nun an-tway-yo*  
 wall-on scribble-ACC do-or do-CONN-TOP not-good-POL  
 ‘One should not do scribbling or something like that on the wall.’

(Kim 2020: 561)

Example (57) illustrates the use of *tunci* as a shield for pragmatic mitigation, and in particular, as a conventionalized tool for making suggestions: Hee is talking to Jin who has just bought a house and is planning to start a small business. Hee suggests that, in order to start a new business, Jin should get a second loan from the house and start the business with that money. Here, *tunci ha* ‘or do’ does not construct a vague category because Hee suggests a specific plan; rather, functioning as a speech act hedge, the GE has become a conventional strategy for suggesting a candidate solution in a non-imposing and polite way.

(57) Hee: *cip-ul yungca-lul pat-ase*  
 House-ACC loan-ACC receive-CONN

(0.2) *business-lul ha-tunci hay-ya-ci. [tto:*  
 business-ACC do-tunci do-should-CMT again  
 ‘one should do business with (second) loan on the house or something, again’

Jin: [*kuleh-ci-yo.*  
 be.that-CMT-POL  
 ‘right’

(Kim 2020: 573)

In order to test whether approximating *iva* could originally be a GE of the type ‘or so’/‘or (something like) this’, I will analyze examples commented and translated by Pinault (2004) and see whether they allow an interpretation of *iva* as a GE. In doing so, I will start from cases in which *iva* modifies a noun, since these are the most frequent ones; furthermore, if we hypothesize an original meaning ‘or (something like) this’, nouns should be the first lexical class to be modified by *iva*, which may then

be applied to other classes as it becomes grammaticalized. For each of the following examples, I will provide both Pinault’s (2004) translation of *iva* as an adaptor and the one by Jamison and Brereton (2014) and/or Geldner (1951) as a standard marker.

In the first example, already given as (99) in Chapter 6.1.3.3 and repeated here as (58), interpreting *iva* as an adaptor, with Pinault, seems to be the most sensible choice: here, in fact, a comparee for a hypothetical simile can be recovered neither from the linguistic context, nor from the formulaic system,<sup>152</sup> but only by constructing, somewhat forcibly, *sádman-* ‘seat, abode’ and *dhíra-* ‘clever’ both with the standard and with the comparee, as in the translation by Jamison and Brereton. Even if the approximating meaning is correct, there is no trace of a possible function of *iva* as a GE, for the term *sádman-* ‘seat’ represents already a basic-level category SEAT, rather than being a representative of this category; furthermore, as the hymn is uttered, the artifact has already been built, which excludes the possibility that *iva* extends the lists of artifacts being crafted. Since the verse is addressed to Agni, *iva* seems rather to have the function of flagging the metaphorical expression of the fireplace as a ‘seat’ or ‘abode’ that men have built for the god.

- (58) *sádma*      *iva*      *dhírāḥ*                      *sammāya*                      *cakruḥ*  
 seat(N).ACC    like    clever.NOM.PL                      together\_build.ABS    make.PF.3PL  
 1. ‘The clever ones made (for him, Agni) some kind of seat by building together.’ (Pinault 2004)  
 2. ‘Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
- (ṚV 1.67.10b)

The interpretation of *iva* as a marker of metaphorical meaning is even clearer in example (59). As in many All Gods hymns, in ṚV 3.55 gods are addressed by means of riddles and, in verse 15, Night and Dawn are described as ‘two kind of footmarks’ set inside the ritual fire/ground: clearly, if interpreted as an adaptor with Pinault, the function of *iva* is that of flagging the metaphor. Other functions seem to be ruled out: for instance, the vivid image of two footprints describing Night and

<sup>152</sup> The only simile that could support this interpretation is the one in i., where *rātham* ‘chariot’ could be the counterpart of *sádma* ‘seat’ in ṚV 1.67.10: here however, a comparee rendered with ‘them’ in the translation is recoverable from *bráhma* ‘sacred formulations’ in *pāda* a.

- ii. *vástreva bhadrá súkṛtā vasūyú / rātham ná dhírah suápā atakṣam*  
 ‘Like garments, lovely and well made, like a clever artisan a chariot have I fashioned them.’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 5.29.15cd)

Dawn makes it unlikely that the function of *iva* is that of recalling further elements belonging to their category (in fact, it is hard to say from the context which category this could be); likewise, intersubjective functions such as the one of signaling lack of commitment do not fit the passage.

- (59) *padé*                      *iva*    *nihite*                      *dasmé*                      *antás*  
 footmark.NOM.DU    like    place.PPP.NOM.DU    wonderful.LOC    inside  
*táyor*                      *anyád*                      *guhíyam*                      *āvír*                      *anyát*  
 3DU.GEN                      one.NOM                      concealed.NOM                      obvious                      one.NOM
1. ‘Two sorts of footmarks, Night and Day, are placed inside the wonderful one, of these one is concealed, the other is obvious.’ (Pinault 2004: 291)
2. ‘Like two footprints set down within the wondrous one [=Agni? ritual ground?], the one of the two is hidden, the other visible [=Night and Dawn].’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
- (ṚV 3.55.15)

Let us now consider example (60). First, it should be noted that this sentence does contain two explicit elements that can function as standard (*vṛtā́* ‘with company’/‘with a troop’) and as comparee (*bahúbhir vasavyais* ‘with many goods’) and therefore an interpretation of *iva* as a standard marker is at least syntactically possible. Secondly, the phraseology associated with Agni makes one prefer a specific translation of *vṛtā́* as ‘troop’ to a generic term such as ‘company’: in fact, epithets and periphrasis associated to Agni such as *vásu-pati-* ‘Lords of goods’ (ṚV 2.1.11, 2.6.4), *rāyó dhartā́ dharúṇo vásvo* ‘the supporter of wealth, the support of goods’ (ṚV 5.15.1d), and *agnír íše vásūnām* ‘Agni rules over goods’ (ṚV 1.127.7), fit the metaphor of the god accompanied by goods as if by a troop. Again, *iva* signals the figurative meaning of *vṛtā́* as a loose apposition of *bahúbhir vasavyais*: ‘after the one going with (his) troop, as it were, with many possessions’.

- (60) *vṛtā́*                      *iva*    *yántam*                      *bahúbhir*                      *vasavyais*  
 troop(F).INST                      like    go.PTCP.ACC                      many.INST.PL.N                      good(N).INST.PL  
*tuvé*                      *rayím*                      *jāgrvā́mso*                      *ánu*                      *gman*  
 2SG.LOC                      wealth.ACC    be\_watchful.PTCP.PF.NOM.PL.M    LP                      go.INJ.AOR.3PL
1. ‘After the one going with some kind of company, with many possessions, they went, watchful over the wealth near you.’ (Pinault 2004)
2. ‘The wakeful ones have followed (you) when you come with many goods as if with a troop, (and they follow) the wealth nearby you.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
- (ṚV 6.1.3)

In two cases, Pinault himself signals that *iva* flags the figurative meaning of an expression. Of these two cases, ṚV 4.5.8c is reported below as example (61), the other one is ṚV 3.45.3. In (61), the poet comes to know secret teachings that were under Agni’s protection when this is uncovered ‘like the “water” of the ruddy (cows)’. Since the verb *ápa vrán* ‘they uncovered’ has otherwise no overt object, Pinault interprets *usríyāṇām vār* ‘the water of the ruddy (cows)’ in this function and *iva* as a flag of the metaphoric meaning of *ápa*. The reference is clearly to the Vala myth: they uncover secret teachings as the light (here light = water = milk) of the cows (= dawns) that were enclosed in the Vala cave.

(61)	<i>pravāciyam</i>	<i>vācasah</i>	<i>kím</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>asyá</i>
	proclaim.GNDV.ACC.N	speech(N).GEN	what	1SG.DAT	DEM.GEN.N
	<i>gúhā</i>	<i>hitám</i>	<i>úpa</i>	<i>niñíg</i>	<i>vadanti</i>
	in_secret	place.PPP.ACC.N	LP	privately	say.PRS.3PL
	<i>yád</i>	<i>usríyāṇām</i>	<i>ápa</i>	<i>vār</i>	<i>iva</i>
	when	ruddy.GEN.PL.F	LP	water(N).ACC	like
					uncover.INJ.AOR.3PL

1. ‘When they have uncovered the kind of water of the dawn cow.’ (Pinault 2004)

2. ‘What (part) of this speech is to be proclaimed to me? They confide privately what was deposited in secret [=the track/word]— when<sup>153</sup> they have uncovered it like the “water” of the ruddy (cows).’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 4.5.8c)

In the following passage (62), reported by Pinault (2004: 292), *iva* actually seems to behave as a GE in that it encodes explicit reference to further Xs that share a common context-dependent property P with the explicit elements of a list.

(62)	<i>kṣatrāya</i>	<i>tvam</i>	<i>śrāvase</i>	<i>tvám</i>	<i>mahīyá</i>
	power.DAT	INDF	glory.DAT	INDF	great.DAT
	<i>iṣṭáye</i>	<i>tvám</i>	<i>ártham</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>tvám</i>
	conquest.DAT	INDF	goal.ACC	like	INDF
	<i>vísadrśā</i>	<i>jīvitā</i>	<i>abhipracákṣa</i>		<i>ityai</i>
	different.ACC.PL	life.ACC.PL	look.DAT		go.DAT

<sup>153</sup> Jamison and Brereton have ‘that’ instead of ‘when’, but I am inclined to interpret the subordinate introduced by *yát* in *pāda* c as a temporal clause: the poet comes to know the secret that was under the protection of Agni *when* they (the referent of the verb is unclear) uncovered it.



<i>uṣā́</i>	<i>ajīgar</i>	<i>bhīvanāni</i>	<i>viśvā</i>
Dawn.NOM	wake.AOR.3SG	creature.ACC.PL	all.ACC.PL

‘Dawn woke all the creatures up, urging this one to power, this one to glory, this one to a great conquest, this one to go to any (other) kind of goal, in order to look for the various ways of living.’ (Pinault 2004: 292)

(ṚV 1.113.6)

In this example, *iva* occurs in what Benigni (2018: 113) calls a generalizing GE: in this type of GE, the conjunction ‘and/or’ is followed by an indefinite generic NP, which is a hypernym of the elements contained in the list. Indeed, the list incorporating the three items *kṣatrā́*- ‘power’, *śrávas*- ‘glory’, and *iṣṭí*- ‘conquest’ is followed by the hypernym *ártham iva* ‘or any (other kind of) goal’. In this example, the list is constructed on the repetition of the indefinite pronoun *tva*- ‘one’, which contributes to the indefinite reading of the passage. Note, however, that this is the only case in which *iva* occurs at the end of a list.

The following passage is in fact more problematic: in (63), as in verses 7-9 of the same hymn, the poet mentions the gods and poets who have previously celebrated Indra and have been helped by him. Thus, according to Pinault, the employment of two *iva*’s in this passage anticipates the usage of double *iva* in prose with distributive force, as documented by Brereton (1982).

(63)	<i>kāṇvā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>bhṛgavaḥ</i>	<i>sūriyā</i>	<i>iva</i>
	Kaṇva.NOM.PL	like	Bhṛgu.NOM.PL	sun.NOM.PL	like
	<i>viśvam</i>	<i>id</i>	<i>dhītám</i>	<i>ānaśuḥ</i>	
	all.ACC.N	PTC	think.PPP.ACC.N	obtain.PF.3PL	

1. ‘The Kanvas to some extent, the Bhṛgus, the Sūryas to some other extent have obtained all that has been expected.’ (Pinault 2004)

2. ‘The Kanvas—like the Bhṛgus, (themselves) like suns—have attained everything conceivable.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 8.3.16ab)

However, this interpretation presents at least two difficulties, one of syntactic and one of semantic nature. Syntactically, if *iva* had a distributive function, we would expect to find it repeated after each element of the list. Most problematic is however the semantics of the listed elements for, while the ancient poets Kanvas and the mythical priests Bhṛgus are often mentioned in the ṚV and are likely beneficiaries of Indra’s favors, the god Sūrya is never addressed in the plural. Instead, the plural

*sūriyāḥ* (attested four times in the ṚV) always refers to the physical sun or, more likely, metonymically to its rays. Thus, the second *iva* is probably to be interpreted as the standard marker of the simile *bhṛgavaḥ sūriyā iva viśvam id dhītām ānaśuḥ* ‘like the suns, the Bhṛgus have obtained all that has been expected’; parallels to this simile can be found in a group of comparisons taking (*ā/abhi/āti/vi*) √*tan-* ‘to extend over / have control over’ and *upāri* √*sthā-* ‘stand above’ as parameter and a term for ‘sun’ as standard. As for the first occurrence of *iva*, the fact that both the Kanvas and the Bhṛgus seem to have benefitted of Indra’s favors may trigger an additive interpretation of the particle which, as we have seen in Chapter 6.1.3.1, is a common inference of similitive constructions.

In Chapter 6.1.3.3, we have also seen that, when *iva* occurs in predicative constructions, it is often hard to tell whether it functions as a standard marker of a broad-scope simile (i.e., a simile with no explicit parameter) or as an adaptor. In such cases, an approximative interpretation implies interpreting *iva* as a marker of figurative language. Beside example 0 provided in that chapter, take for instance example (64): here, *māyas* admits an alternative reading as ‘refreshment’, a meaning which fits well the following simile ‘like water for the thirsty’ and which is clearly metaphorical.<sup>154</sup>

(64)	<i>yāthā</i>	<i>pūurvebhyo</i>	<i>jaritṛbhya</i>	<i>indra</i>
	as/since	previous.DAT.PL	singer.DAT.PL	Indra.VOC
	<i>mayo</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>āpo</i>	<i>ná</i> <i>tṛṣyate</i>
	joy(N).NOM	like	water(F).NOM.PL	like thirsty.DAT

1. ‘As for the former singer, o Indra, you have been some kind of pleasure (*māya iva*) like waters (are a pleasure) for the thirsty one.’ (Pinault 2004)

2. ‘Just as for the previous singer, Indra, you became like joy, like water for the thirsty.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 1.175.6 = 1.176.6)

For reasons of space, I will limit myself to commenting on just one of the cases in which *iva* occurs after an adjective or participle. Since other examples provided by Pinault (2004) for this category are susceptible to the same or similar interpretations, (65) can be taken as representative of its category: in this example, *iva* signals the figurative meaning of the participle *jājhjatīr* ‘laughing’/‘giggling’, which is a synesthesia for the lightning flashes following the Maruts. The same function is found in ṚV 5.50.4cd, presented in Chapter 6.1.3.3 as example (100).

<sup>154</sup> For other issues related to this passage, see Chapter 6.2.2, example (139).

(65)	<i>ánv</i>	<i>enām̃</i>	<i>áha</i>	<i>vidyúto</i>
	LP	3PL.ACC	PTC	lightning(F).NOM
	<i>marúto</i>	<i>jájhjatīr</i>	<i>iva</i>	
	Marut.ACC.PL	giggling.NOM.F	like	

1. ‘After these ones, the Maruts, indeed (comes) the lightning, somehow laughing.’ (Pinault 2004)
2. ‘Following them (came) the lightning flashes – (following) the Maruts like giggling (girls).’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 5.52.6cd)

When it occurs after a verb, *iva* presents a more varied range of functions. For instance, in ṚV 1.103.7ab presented in Chapter 6.1.3.3 as example (102) and repeated here as (66), Indra’s slaying of Vṛtra is expressed by the clause *sasántam vājreṇā ábodhayaḥ áhim* ‘you awakened the sleeping serpent with the mace’. As suggested by Jamison (2007: 110-112; 2021: *ad loc.*), that the action in this clause is not to be taken literally is signaled by the presence of *iva* in the main clause, which introduces the heroic deed (*vīryam*) supposedly depicted in *pāda* b.

(66)	<i>tád</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vīryam</i>	<i>cakartha</i>
	3SG.ACC.N	Indra.VOC	LP	like	heroic_deed(N).ACC	do.PF.2SG
	<i>yát</i>	<i>sasántam</i>	<i>vājreṇā</i>	<i>ábodhayó</i>	<i>‘him</i>	
	REL.ACC.N	sleep.PTCP.ACC	mace.INST.SG	awake.IMP.2	serpent.ACC	

1. ‘You made quite a virile prowess, o Indra, that you wakened the sleeping serpent with your club.’ (Pinault 2004)
2. ‘This heroic deed you carried out, Indra—that/when you “awakened” the sleeping serpent with your mace, as it were.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 1.103.7ab)

In example (67), Indra is praised for his help in winning more territory for the devotees, but he seems to be withholding the wealth they expect. The poet’s reproach is, however, mitigated by *iva*, which functions as a speech act hedge.

(67)	<i>vāsáyasi</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vedhásas</i>	<i>tuvám</i>	<i>naḥ</i>
	cause_to_wait.2SG	like	adept.ACC.PL	2SG.GEN	1PL.ACC

*kadā na indra vācaso bubodhaḥ*  
 when 1PL.GEN Indra.VOC speech.GEN.SG notice.SUBJ.PF.2SG

‘You seem to be causing us, your ritual adepts, to bide our time. When will you take notice of our speech, Indra?’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)<sup>155</sup>

(ṚV 7.37.6ab)

Finally, *iva* also displays a wider set of functions when it occurs adjacent to an adverb. While with adverbs of manner it sometimes signals a figurative reading, it can also function as a moderator (in the sense of Parodis 2000), much like English *quite* or *rather*.<sup>156</sup> One instance of the latter use is (68):

(68) *śānair va śānakair iva ù*  
 slowly like slowly like PTC  
*indrāya indo pári srava*  
 Indra.DAT drop.VOC LP flow.IMPV.PRS.2SG

1. ‘O drop (of soma), flow around rather slowly, quite slowly for Indra.’ (Pinault 2004)

2. ‘Softly-like, ever so softly-like, o drop, flow around for Indra.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 8.91.3cd)

To sum up, *iva* displays a homogeneous function with nouns, whether they are arguments of the main verb, as in examples (58) to (61), or they appear in predicative constructions, as in (64), and it behaves similarly with adjectives (cf. example (65)). Indeed, in most cases in which *iva* accepts an interpretation as an adaptor, its function is to signal that the term is imprecise as it expresses the referent in a figurative way – usually by means of a metaphor, but in (65) we encountered a synesthesia. With verbs and adverbs, on the other hand, alongside the function of indicating a figurative reading of the preceding element, *iva* can function as a shield for pragmatic mitigation, as in example (67), or as a moderator, as in (68).

Among all the analyzed occurrences, the particle is attested only once at the end of a list, a position which would support its analysis as a GE. However, the presence of the noun *ārtha*- ‘goal’, which is a hypernym of the other elements included in the list, suggests an interpretation of the whole phrase *ārtham iva* as a generalizing GE; this leaves us with no attestations of *iva* alone in this function.

<sup>155</sup> Pinault provides no translation for this passage.

<sup>156</sup> For Vedic prose, Brereton (1982: 446) describes this function of *iva* after adjectives indicating quantity or size, and the same use is recognized by Pinault for combinations of adjectives with *iva* in the ṚV. However, all cases rendered in this way by Pinault also allow a comparative interpretation and I will not deal with them here.

Once we have discarded, at least on the basis of textual evidence, the hypothesis that approximating *iva* was originally a GE, we may ask whether the adaptor use derives from the *iva*'s deictic component. However, this hypothesis lacks support too because, while cross-linguistic evidence suggests that the development from deixis to approximation is frequent for manner deictics, *iva* is never employed with the meaning of 'so, in this way' and the relevant ontological dimension of *hi-* remains under-specified.

In addition, it should be noted that the etymology proposed here for *iva* is not universally accepted and the hypothesis of an independent development of the approximating function fails if other etymologies are taken into consideration that do not include a deictic component. Take for instance Dunkel's (LIPP) hypothesis provided in Section 8.1.1, according to which *iva* is the reflex of a combination of the two PIE comparative particles *\*h<sub>2</sub>i-* 'if; as' and *\*(s)ua* 'like, as'.

Finally, although the influence of comparative *ná* could have determined the expansion of comparative *iva* to the detriment of approximating *iva* within the ṚV, we must not forget that the one of adaptor constitutes but a residual function within this text. Its expansion in Vedic prose suggests rather that in the ṚV the adaptor meaning was not conventionalized yet, but only emerged within certain contexts (see the following Section).

#### 8.2.4 From standard marker to adaptor

Since we have no sound evidence that the approximative function was one of the original functions of *iva*, we are left with the second possibility as for the development of this particle: that is, we can test whether there is evidence in the ṚV that the adaptor function developed from the one of standard marker.

An important clue in this direction is provided by the very function of *iva* of reporting figurative speech. In fact, we have seen in Mihatsch (2010: 111) that this function usually develops from the semantic approximative use with metaphors. Indeed, just like lexical approximation, metaphors are based on similarity, although across two conceptual domains. However, we have seen that, in the ṚV, most cases in which *iva* accepts an approximating interpretation, usually rendered as 'as it were'/'gleichsam' by translators, have the function of signaling figurative language; on the contrary, other functions associated with adaptors, are only marginally attested. Now, considering that adaptors often derive from standard markers of similitive constructions,<sup>157</sup> and considering that Ṛgvedic similitive constructions are specialized for figurative comparison (Chapter 6.1.1.4), the

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<sup>157</sup> Since similitive comparison expresses qualitative similarity of processes and entities and, unlike equative comparison of quantity, is always approximative, the function of *iva* as marker of similitive comparison must be the source of the new adaptor function (cf. Mihatsch 2009: 70-71 on Romance adaptors).

passage from standard marker of similes to markers of figurative speech seems the most plausible development for *iva*. From there, it is a small step to a marker signaling the inappropriateness of a term, not only due to semantic deviations, but also due to the need of pragmatic mitigation, as for instance the need of softening an assertion that we have seen in example (67).

While this consideration accounts for the semantics of approximative *iva*, we still need to find possible bridging contexts that may account for the syntactic development. First, since Ṛgvedic similes are always phrasal, the development must have started from combinations of nouns with *iva*, and then have spread to other parts of speech; if combinations of *iva* with verbs and adverbs did indeed develop after those with nouns and (substantivized) adjectives, this would also explain why the former display a comparatively more varied range of functions.

In the comparative functions, *iva* behaves as an adposition in that it situates a trajector, the comparee, in relation to a landmark, the standard. The change occurring in the emergence of the approximative function consists in the loss of the relational function of *iva*: the comparee disappears, the standard introduced by *iva* remains, and *iva* becomes a modifier of the latter. At this point, it does no longer make sense to speak of a standard since there is no comparee, but of an NP modified by an adaptor.

As we have seen above, a bridging context should allow two interpretations – the adpositional as well as the modifying structure. As discussed above, the adaptor use is found most frequently with nouns (see Pinault 2004; Chapter 6.1.3.3), and therefore the bridging contexts must be predicative constructions comparing two NPs. However, as argued by Heine (2002: 85), often more than one possible bridging context can be detected. This is also true in the case of *iva*, for which four possible bridges exist:

1. Similitive constructions whose comparee is a referential null argument;
2. Mismatches in argument structure constructions of comparee and standard;
3. Predicative similitive constructions with or without copula;
4. Similitive constructions whose standard is a substantivized adjective.

#### *Bridging context 1*

In Chapter 6.1.3.3, we have seen that while Geldner (1951) as well as Jamison and Brereton (2014) tend to supply an overt comparee of what they consider to be a simile, Pinault refrains from such additions and interprets *iva* as an adaptor in all cases in which a comparee is not overtly expressed. In fact, many such cases can be interpreted as bridging contexts of the first type: these are similitive



Beside coordination, null objects can occur with participles or infinitives embedded into finite sentences, due to argument sharing: compare the participle *iyakṣáve* ‘for the one who seeks’ in (71) and the dative infinitive *pātavaí* (*pātavā́* due to *sandhi*) ‘to drink’ in (72), both with null object.

- (71) *dhánvann*                      *iva*    *pra-pā́*                      *asi*                      *tvám;*                      *agna*  
 desert(N).LOC                      like    first-drink(F).NOM    BE.2SG                      2SG.NOM                      Agni.VOC  
*iyakṣáve*                                      *pūráve*                       $\emptyset$ ;    *pratna*                      *rājan*  
 seeking\_to\_gain.DAT                      Pūru.NOM                      first.VOC                      king.VOC  
 ‘You are like the first drink in a wasteland, o Agni, for Pūru who seeks to attain (you), you age-old king.’

(ṚV 10.4.1cd)

- (72) *tám;*                      *te*                      *hinvanti*                      *tám;*                      *u*                      *te*                      *mṛjanti*  
 DEM.ACC                      2SG.DAT                      push.3PL                      DEM.ACC                      PTC                      2SG.DAT purify.PRS.3PL  
*adhvaryávo*                      *vṛṣabha*                       $\emptyset$ ;    *pātavā́*                      *u*  
 priest.NOM.PL                      bull.VOC                      drink.DAT                      PTC  
 ‘This one they push for you, this one the priests purify for you, o bull, to drink.’ (Keydana and Luraghi 2014: 123)

(ṚV 3.46.5cd)

Notably, referential null objects are also found under no special syntactic constraints depending on discourse conditions. In such cases, null objects typically refer back to previously mentioned constituents; these are most often subjects or objects but can also be other types of arguments or adjuncts (cf. the infinitival dative antecedent in (73)). Due to peculiarities of the textual genre of Ṛgvedic hymns, it is hard to establish which discourse-related conditions determine discourse null-anaphors (see Keydana 2009: 134-135; Dahl 2010); the only thing we can say with certainty is that discourse conditioned null objects always denote referents which belong to the common ground.

- (73) *marútvantam*                                      *havāmahe*  
 with\_Maruts.ACC                                      call.PRS.1PL.MID  
*índram*                      *ā́*                      *sómapītaye;*  
 Indra.ACC                      LP                      soma-drinking.DAT  
*sajúr*                      *gaṇéna*                       $\emptyset$ ;    *tṛmpatu*  
 together                      band.INST                      enjoy.IMPV.3SG



‘Indra with the Maruts we call hither for soma drinking. Together with [his] band he shall enjoy [the drinking].’ (Keydana and Luraghi 2014: 126)

(ṚV 1.23.7)

Interestingly, null objects are not restricted to anaphoric use in the ṚV, but are frequently used cataphorically, as in (74), or even refer to participants of the speech act, as in (75).

(74)	<i>ápa</i>	<i>jate</i>	$\emptyset_i$	<i>śúro</i>		<i>ástā</i>		<i>iva</i>	<i>śátrūn</i>
	LP	drive.3SG		champion.NOM		archer.NOM.SG		like	enemy.ACC.PL
		<i>bādhate</i>		<i>támo_i</i>		<i>ajiró</i>		<i>ná</i>	<i>vóḷhā</i>
		repel.3SG.MID		darkness(N).ACC		agile.NOM		like	driver.NOM

‘She drives away [the darkness] like a champion archer the enemies. She besieges the darkness like a deft driver.’ (adapted from Keydana and Luraghi 2014: 126)

(ṚV 6.64.3cd)

(75)	<i>sám</i>	<i>pūṣan</i>		<i>vidúṣā</i>		$\emptyset_i$		<i>naya</i>
	LP	Pūṣan.VOC		know.PTCP.PF.INST				lead.IMPV.PRS.2G
		<i>yó</i>		$\emptyset_i$	<i>áñjasā</i>			<i>anuśāsati</i>
		REL.NOM			straightaway			teach.SUBJ.PRS.3SG

‘O Pūṣan, bring [us] together with one who knows, who teaches [us] straightaway.’ (Keydana and Luraghi 2014: 126)

(ṚV 6.54.1ab)<sup>158</sup>

As already mentioned, Pinault attributes an approximative function to *iva* in all those cases where there is no parallelism between comparee and standard because an overt comparee is lacking altogether. In fact, in many cases the comparee represents a null argument of the verb, omitted due to the syntactic or discourse-related conditions seen above. Example (76) is an instance of null object due to argument sharing between the participle *śiśāsann* ‘wishing to win’ and the main verb *ápāvṛṇod* ‘(he) uncovered’. Taking *pādas* d and e outside of context, we are forced to interpret *vrajám gávām* ‘pen of cattle’ as the object of the participle *śiśāsann* ‘wishing to win’ and *iva* as a modifier of the object noun phrase: ‘wishing to win the pen of cattle, so to say’. However, taking the whole sentence into consideration, we find that the null object of *śiśāsann* can refer to the object of *ápāvṛṇod*, *iśah* ‘nourishments’, due to argument sharing; since the participle has now a direct object, *vrajám gávām* must be interpreted as the standard of a simile and *iva* as the standard marker.

<sup>158</sup> See Keydana (2009: 132) for a thorough discussion of this passage.

(76)	<i>vrajám</i>	<i>vajrí</i>	<i>gávām</i>	<i>iva</i>
	pen.ACC	mace_possessor.NOM	cow(F).GEN.PL	like
	<i>síṣāsann</i>	Ø	<i>āṅgiras-tamaḥ</i>	
	gain.DES.PTCP.PRS.NOM.SG.M		Āṅgiras-SDG.NOM.SG.M	
	<i>ápa avṛṇod</i>	<i>íṣaḥ</i>	<i>índraḥ</i>	
	LP (un)cover.IMPF.3SG	nourishment(F).ACC.PL	Indra.NOM	
	<i>párīvṛtā</i>			
	enclose.PPP.ACC.PL.F			
	<i>dvāra</i>	<i>íṣaḥ</i>	<i>párīvṛtāḥ</i>	
	door(F).ACC.PL	nourishment(F).ACC.PL	enclose.PPP.ACC.PL.F	

1. Source meaning: ‘[He found the depository of heaven, deposited in hiding, enveloped in the stone like the embryo of a bird (in an egg) – within the boundless stone.] The possessor of the mace, the best Āṅgiras, seeking to win (them) like a pen of cattle – Indra uncovered the nourishments that were enclosed – (opened) the doors to the nourishments that were enclosed.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: (*pādas* d to f) ‘The possessor of the mace, the best Āṅgiras, seeking to win a pen of cattle, as it were – Indra uncovered the nourishments that were enclosed.’<sup>159</sup>

(RV 1.130.3d-g)

Both analyses are possible from a syntactic as well as semantic point of view, provided that, if the target meaning is chosen, *iva* is interpreted as signaling the figurative meaning of the utterance. The verse narrates the myth of Indra’s liberation of the cows hidden in a cave known as Vala (see the Introduction to Part 3 for a discussion on the Vala myth): thus, if we analyze the ‘pen of cattle’ in *pāda* d as the object of the participle, we will have to understand it as standing metaphorically – and somewhat ironically – for the Vala cave.<sup>160</sup> Since the syntactic as well as semantic context of the verse allows two interpretations – the adpositional as well as the modifying function of *iva* – we can consider it to be a bridging context for the development of the approximative function from the comparative one. What is more, two factors make the target meaning the one which is most likely to be inferred: a) the missing correspondence in number between the singular standard *vrajám gávām* and the plural comparee *íṣaḥ*, and b) the striking correspondence between the Vala cave enclosing the cows and a cattle-pen: indeed only interpreting *vrajám gávām* as the object of *síṣāsann* makes

<sup>159</sup> This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004) but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

<sup>160</sup> Note that *is-* (*íṣaḥ* ‘nourishments’) also means ‘milk, milk drink’, and must stand metonymically for the cows providing milk.

Vala and the cattle-pen be coreferent, whereas the source meaning would make the cattle-pen be compared to the nourishments.

More often, the comparee represents a null argument which anaphorically or cataphorically refers to other mentioned constituents (discourse-related null argument). One example of anaphoric use is provided in (77); other examples are ṚV 1.127.4de, ṚV 4.5.8c, ṚV 9.112.3, among many others. If we consider *pāda* c of example (77) out of its context, we cannot but interpret *gopā* ‘herdsman’ and *yūthā paśváḥ* ‘flocks of livestock’ as the subject and object of *vī unoti* ‘urges’; consequently, *iva* should be interpreted as a modifier of *yūthā*: ‘the herdsman has urged some kind of flocks of livestock’. Taking the whole verse into consideration, it becomes clear that the verb *vī unoti* lacks both subject and object and that their antecedents are *índraḥ* ‘Indra’ and *ráthāya* ‘for (his) chariot’ in *pāda* a, respectively. Instead, *gopā* ‘herdsman’ and *yūthā paśváḥ* ‘flocks of livestock’ constitute the standard of the simile introduced by the standard marker *iva*.

(77)	<i>índroḥ</i>	<i>ráthāyaḥ</i>	<i>pravátam</i>		<i>kṛṇoti</i> ...	
	Indra.NOM	chariot.DAT	slope.ACC		make.3SG	
	<i>yūthā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>paśvó</i>	<i>Øḥ</i> <i>Øḥ</i>	<i>vī unoti</i>	<i>gopā</i>
	flock.ACC.PL	like	cattle.GEN	LP	urge.PRS.3SG	herdsman.NOM
	<i>áriṣṭo</i>	<i>yāti</i>	<i>prathamáḥ</i>	<i>síṣāsan</i>		
	invulnerable.NOM	drive.3SG	first.NOM	win.DES.PTCP.NOM		

1. Source meaning: ‘Indra makes an easy slope for his chariot [...]. Like a herdsman the flocks of livestock, he (Indra, *índro* in *pāda* a) urges (his chariot, *rátha-* in *pāda* a).<sup>161</sup> Invulnerable, he drives as the first to seek winnings.’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: (*pāda* c) ‘The herdsman urges the flocks of livestock, as it were.’<sup>162</sup>

(ṚV 5.31.1)

Again, while both interpretations are syntactically possible, the latter makes only sense if we interpret *iva* as signaling the figurative meaning of the utterance: in this case, the metaphor maps the herdsman onto Indra and the flocks onto the chariot. Considering the wide use of metaphors made in the ṚV, neither the interpretation of *pāda* c as a simile nor the one as a metaphor can be excluded; however, two factors make one favor the former interpretation. These are a) the presence of possible antecedents of the null arguments in the preceding *pādas*, and b) the kind of mapping triggered by

<sup>161</sup> The translation of *pāda* c is mine. Jamison and Brereton have: ‘Like a herdsman separating the flocks of livestock, he keeps (his chariot) separate (from the others).’

<sup>162</sup> This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004) but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

the metaphorical reading: although metaphors are ubiquitous in the ṚV, the mapping described above is acceptable for a simile, as it represents an image mapping for the act of ‘urging’/‘impelling’ a chariot or a flock, but less acceptable for a metaphor, as the gods are usually assimilated to herdsmen for their protective function towards men, not in relation to their chariot (see Chapters 3 and 4 for the difference between metaphor and simile and Chapter 9 for a thorough description of the kinds of mapping attested in Ṛgvedic similes).

In example (78), the target meaning is foregrounded because the only available antecedent for the subject of *aśata*.3PL ‘(they) have reached’, *krátum*.SG ‘resolve’, does not agree in number with the verb: this triggers a reinterpretation of *hradám* ‘lake’ and *kulyā* ‘brooks/rivers’ respectively as goal and subject of the verb and of *iva* as a flag of their figurative meaning:

(78)	<i>gambhīrām</i>	<i>udadhīm̐r</i>	<i>iva</i>		
	deep.ACC	pool.ACC.PL	like		
	<i>krátum</i>	<i>puśyasi</i>	<i>gā</i>	<i>iva</i>	
	resolve.ACC.SG	foster.2SG	cow.ACC.PL	like	
	<i>prá</i>	<i>sugopā yávasam</i>		<i>dhenávo</i>	<i>yathā</i>
	LP	with_good_herdsmen.NOM.PL		cow.NOM.PL	like
	<i>hradám</i>	<i>kulyā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>aśata</i>	
	lake.ACC	brook.NOM.PL	like	reach.AOR.3PL.MID	

1. Source meaning: ‘Your resolve, deep like pools—you foster it, like cows. As milk-cows with a good herdsman reach pasturage, as brooks reach a lake, (so your resolves) have reached fulfillment.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘As milk-cows provided with a good herdsman (reach) the pasture, some kind of streams have reached the sea.’ (Pinault 2004)

(ṚV 3.45.3)

Example (79) is an instance of the cataphoric use of null objects within similes. This time, the passage is complicated by several syntactic and semantic difficulties,<sup>163</sup> but the ambiguity regarding the use of *iva* should be clear. As in the examples seen above, *yūthā iva* may either be analyzed as the object

<sup>163</sup> Two points are relevant here: starting from the main verb, Geldner takes *á* √*khyā*- as meaning ‘count’, but Renau points out that this sense is not found earlier than the ŚB. Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) points to the parallel passage *sám yó yūthéva jánimāni cáṣṭe* ‘who surveys the tribes (of men), like herds’ (ṚV 7.60.3), where the verb *sám* √*cakṣ*- ‘look over, observe’ strongly suggests an interpretation as ‘watch over’ also for the verb in (79). That passage also suggests taking *jánima* in b as the object of *á* *akhyat* and as counterpart of the standard *yūthā*. See Oldenberg (1907), and Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) for a detailed discussion.

of the main verb *ā akhyad* ‘(he) has watched over’, or as the standard of a simile; in the latter case, the verb must be interpreted as having a null object which cataphorically refers to the genitive *devānām* ‘of the gods’ in the following *pāda*.<sup>164</sup>

(79)	<i>ā</i>	<i>yūthā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>kṣumāti</i>	<i>paśvó</i>	<i>Ōi</i>	<i>akhyad</i>
	LP	herd(N).ACC.PL	like	cattle_rich.LOC	livestock.GEN		watch.AOR.3SG
	<i>devānāmī</i>	<i>yáj</i>		<i>jánima</i>	<i>ánti</i>		<i>ugra</i>
	god.GEN.PL	REL.NOM.N		race(N).ACC	nearby		strong.VOC

1. Source meaning: ‘He [=Agni?] watched over them like (a herdsman) the herds of livestock in a cattle-rich (pasture) – watched over the race of gods that was nearby, o strong one.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘He has considered somehow herds of cattle at home of a man rich in cattle, when the generations of gods were near (him), o mighty one.’ (Pinault 2004)

(RV 4.2.18ab)

Now that we have found possible bridging contexts that may have favored the development of the approximating function of *iva* from the comparative one, we should see whether the RV contains instances of the so-called switch contexts. As we have seen in Section 8.2.2, switch contexts are incompatible with some salient property of the source meaning, so that the target meaning provides the only possible interpretation; however, unlike conventional meanings, meanings appearing in switch contexts are confined to such contexts. One instance of a possible switch context is provided by a passage that we have encountered a couple of times already, repeated here as (80). As we have seen in Section 8.2.3, if we want to interpret *dhīrāḥ* ‘clever (artisans)’ and *sádma* ‘seat’ as making up the standard of a simile, we will notice that neither the linguistic context, nor the formulaic system provide a suitable antecedent for the null subject and object of the verb *cakruḥ* ‘they fashioned’; thus, we would have to construct, somewhat forcibly, *dhīrāḥ* and *sádma* both with the standard and with the comparee, as in the translation by Jamison and Brereton. The lack of available antecedents for the

<sup>164</sup> As showed by Keydana (2009) and Keydana and Luraghi (2012), null objects do not necessarily refer to subjects or objects but can also refer to other constituents. Taking the genitive *devānām* ‘of the gods’ as referent of the null object allows preserving the parallelism between the plural standard (*yūthā* ‘flocks’) and the plural comparee. However, the whole phrase *devānāmi jánima* ‘the generation of the gods’ or even *devānām yáj jánima ánti* ‘the generation of the gods the was nearby’ could be taken as antecedent. Note that in verses 3 and 4 the poet asked Agni to bring only a selection of gods to the sacrifice and the ‘generation of the gods that was nearby’ could refer to the gods that come to the sacrifice.

null arguments makes the passage incompatible with the source meaning (comparative *iva*), so that the approximative meaning suggested by Pinault provides the only possible interpretation.

(80)	<i>cítir</i>	<i>apáam</i>	<i>dáme</i>	<i>viśváyuh</i>
	bright.NOM	water.GEN.PL	house.LOC	whole_life.NOM
	<i>sádma</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>dhīrāḥ</i>	<i>sammāya cakruḥ</i>
	seat.ACC	like	clever.NOM.PL	measure.ABS make.PF.3PL

1. \*Source meaning: ‘(He is) the bright apparition in the house of the waters through his whole lifetime. Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: (*pāda* b) ‘The clever ones made (for him, Agni) some kind of seat by building together.’ (Pinault 2004)

### *Bridging context 2*

A second bridging context can be recognized in similes that present mismatches in the argument structure of standard and comparee. *Pāda* c in (81) is a case in point: we can either interpret *vājam iva* as the standard and standard marker of a simile ‘as if to a prize’ or as the goal of the verb *asarat* ‘has flowed’. The former option entails constructing the verb  $\sqrt{sy}$ - ‘to flow’ absolutely in the comparee and with a goal argument in the standard; mismatches in argument structure constructions are well attested in Ṛgvedic similes introduced not only by *iva*, but also by *ná* and *yāthā/yathā*, which makes the comparative meaning of *iva* in this example syntactically and semantically possible.<sup>165</sup> On the other hand, the latter option entails interpreting *vājam* metaphorically as the goal of Soma; this is also a possible reading, for in book IX the mixing of the soma juice with water and then with milk is often presented metaphorically as a racing horse or a chariot running towards a prize (see Chapter 9.3.1).

<sup>165</sup> Note that the full simile is found in ṚV 9.62.16; according to Pinault, this is due to the formulaic system, but does not entail that the one in ṚV 9.37.5 is also a simile.

iii. *pávamānaḥ sutó nṛbhiḥ*  
*sómo vājam ivāsarat*  
*amúṣu śákmanāsádam*

‘Purifying himself, pressed by men, Soma has flowed, as if to a prize (*vājam iva*), to sit in the cups, through his mastery.’

(81)	<i>sá</i>	<i>vṛtra-há</i>	<i>vṛṣā</i>	<i>sutó</i>
	3SG.NOM	Vṛtra-smasher.NOM	bull.NOM.SG	press.PPP.NOM
	<i>varivo-víd</i>		<i>ádābhīyaḥ</i>	
	wide_space-finder.NOM		undecivable.NOM	
	<i>sómo</i>	<i>vājam</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>asarat</i>
	Soma.NOM	prize.ACC	like	flow.AOR.3SG

1. Source meaning: ‘He, the Vṛtra-smasher, the bull, finding the wide realm when pressed, undeceivable – Soma has flowed as if to a prize.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘The soma has run towards some kind of prize.’ (Pinault 2004)

(RV 9.37.5c)

Similarly to the preceding example, in (82) we can analyze *padā* ‘by foot’ as the only element constituting the standard of a simile introduced by *iva*, as in standard translations; alternatively, we can interpret it as an adjunct of the verb *ā gáchasi* ‘you come here’, in which case *iva* functions as an adaptor: ‘come here along the slope of your intentions by foot, as it were’. Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) suggests that ‘along the slope of your intentions’ (*pravátā ... krátūnām*) means that the journey to the sacrifice is an easy one for Indra because it is in accord with his intentions; if this is true, *padā iva* could suggest that the journey is so easy that it can be undertaken on foot. Alternatively, after a verse in which the poet calls on Indra to come here (vs. 4), the reference to going ‘by foot’ in verse 5 might suggest that Indra is tarrying on his journey and thus constitute a poet’s mild reproach to the god.<sup>166</sup> Although both readings of *iva* are syntactically and semantically possible, the one as adaptor would be the preferred one if this verse is meant to reproach the god for his delay: indeed, as we have seen in example (67), *iva* can take the function of a shield for pragmatic mitigation and be employed to mitigate a reproach. Finally, given that the whole sentence is metaphoric (cf. ‘along the slope of your intentions’) reading *iva* as a marker of figurative speech offers a more plausible interpretation of the whole passage.

(82)	<i>pravátā</i>	<i>hí</i>	<i>krátūnaam</i>	
	slope(F).INST	PTC	intention.GEN.PL	
	<i>ā</i>	<i>hā</i>	<i>padā</i>	<i>iva</i>
	LP	PTC	foot(N).INST	like
	<i>ābhakṣi</i>		<i>sūriye</i>	<i>sácā</i>
	receive.AOR.1SG.MID		sun.LOC	with

<sup>166</sup> Finally, in verse 6, the poets announces that Indra has arrived with both high spirits and equipment.

1. Source meaning: ‘For [through the days]<sup>167</sup> you (Indra) come here along the slope of your intentions, as if by foot. I have taken my share in company with the sun(rise).’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014) / ‘Denn du kommst nach dem Zug deiner Gedanken als wäre er dein Fuß. Ich habe meinen Anteil an der aufgehenden Sonne bekommen.’ (Geldner 1951)

2. Target meaning: For [through the days] you (Indra) come here along the slope of your intentions by foot, as it were. I have taken my share in company with the sun(rise).<sup>168</sup>

(ṚV 4.31.5)

### *Bridging context 3*

A third bridging context can be recognized in copula constructions of the type NP<sub>CPREE</sub> *is like* NP<sub>STAND</sub> that are ambiguous between the two readings. In section 8.2.3, we have seen that example (64) allows both a comparative and an approximative reading of *iva*. Another example is (83): as shown by the two translations, *pāda* a can be interpreted either as a predicative similitive construction of the type CPREE *is like* STAND, or as the approximation of a predicational copula construction (Brook-Rose 1958; Sullivan 2013; see Chapter 3.4.2).<sup>169</sup> In either case, the passage has a figurative meaning in that the ‘place’ or ‘abode of the dawns’ probably refers to a place rich of cattle. Dawn’s radiant beams are indeed described as herds of cattle (cf. ṚV 4.52.2-4) and the goddess Dawn is called the mother of kine (cf. ṚV 4.52.2, 7.77.2). Furthermore, the following *pādas* refer to possessors of livestock (*kṣumántaḥ*) assembled for the praise of the singer and to a prize (*vājāḥ*) that should approach the poet as a reward for his song: note that prizes often consist of cattle in the ṚV. Thus, if *iva* is read as a standard marker, the passage instantiates a broad-scope simile, i.e. a simile that does not specify the attribute or dimension relevant for mapping (see Chapter 4.1.3); instead, if *iva* is analyzed as an adaptor, the *pāda* instantiates a predicational metaphor and *iva* has the function of

<sup>167</sup> In *pāda* b, Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) reads *áhā* instead of *á hā*, and analyzes this sequence as *á* ‘here’ + *áhā*(N).ACC.PL ‘days’. The reason for doing so is that this is one of only two supposed examples of the particle *ha* with long vowel (the other one, ṚV 5.41.7 also follows *á* and can be analyzed in the same way). Jamison argues that the *ā*-final version of *ha* is *ghā* and that, while *ha* occurs only once elsewhere after the preverb *á* (ṚV 8.9.18 *á hāyám*), *ghā* is found commonly after *á* (cf. ṚV 1.30.8, 1.48.5, etc.). Note that, accepting van Nooten and Holland (1994) reading of the passage as reported in example (82), ‘through the days’ should be removed from the translation.

<sup>168</sup> This passage is not translated by Pinault but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

<sup>169</sup> The term “predicational” in Predicational copula construction is not the same as “predicative” that we employ for similes of the type *X is like Y* or in general for construction involving nominal predicate and optionally a copula. A Predicational copula construction is a kind of predicative construction involving a copula, which is different from Specificational copula constructions which specify role-value mappings (e.g. *The department chair is Linda*) and Identificational copula constructions which express identity between two entities (e.g. *The woman on the balcony is Linda*).



signaling figurative speech. In Chapter 4.1, we have seen that the difference between broad-scope similes and predicational metaphors is very subtle and that there is much disagreement in the literature as to its nature.

- (83) *iyám*            *sā́*            *bhūyā*            *uśásām*            *iva*    *kṣā́*  
 DEM.NOM.F    3SG.NOM.F    earth(F).NOM    dawn(F).GEN.PL    like    abode(F).NOM
1. Source meaning: ‘Might this earth here be like (the place) of the dawns. [When the possessors (*kṣumántaḥ*) of livestock (*vājāḥ*) have assembled here with their strength, desiring to partake of the praise of this singer, let the powerful prizes approach us.]’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: ‘Might this here be the abode of the dawns, as it were.’ (my translation)<sup>170</sup>  
 (ṚV 10.31.5a)

Recall that Pinault (2004: 303) sees predicational copula constructions such as the one above as the point of departure for the development of the comparative function of *iva* from the approximative one. In his view, the development took place as soon as the context provided a term that was understood as the parameter of comparison: cf. the reconstructed development \**śyená iva (asti)* ‘he is some kind of eagle’ > *śyená iva jávasā* ‘he is some kind of eagle by his swiftness’ > \**śyená iva jūtáḥ* ‘he is swift like an eagle’ (Section 8.1.1). The fact that the approximative value is not shared by any example of the competing particle *ná* is taken by Pinault as evidence for the hypothesis that the approximative value of *iva* preceded the comparative one. First, it must be noted that such constructions are not especially frequent, and we find only around twenty instances with *iva*.<sup>171</sup> Note however that, although less frequently, we do find cases of nominal similes introduced by *ná*, as shown by example (84).

- (84) *svānó*                            *rátho*                            *ná*    *vājayúḥ*  
 sound.NOM                            chariot.NOM                            like    prize\_seeking.NOM
- ‘(Their, of Agni’s flames) sound (is) like a chariot chasing the prize of victory’.

<sup>170</sup> This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004), but listed among examples of *iva* occurring within copula constructions.

<sup>171</sup> With the verb  $\sqrt{as}$ - ‘be’, we find: ṚV 1.29.1ab, 1.164.37ab, 2.41.16cd, 6.58.1ab, 8.20.20a (??), 10.4.1cd, and 10.94.10c. With the verb  $\sqrt{bhū}$  ‘be, become’: ṚV 1.175.6a-c (= 1.176.6), 8.1.13ab, 10.31.5ab, 10.33.3d. Furthermore, Pinault (2004) reports the following cases without copula, although some allow interpretations different from the predicative one: ṚV 1.59.4a (?), 1.122.1c, 1.124.7 (?), 1.128.1de.

The fact that *ná* occurs less often in nominal similes may be due to its origin from negative parallelism, in which the parameter is usually explicitly mentioned. This does not necessarily mean that *iva* occurs more often in nominal similes because these represent the bridging contexts from its approximative function to its comparative one, but simply that *ná* is less likely to occur in such comparative constructions due to its origin. As we shall see at the end of this section, *ná* is involved in other possible bridging contexts just like *iva* is.

Predicative similes can take substantivized adjectives as standards; when these occur in copula constructions, an interpretation of the adjective as a quality of the subject is preferred over a comparison between a standard and a comparee. At this point, *iva* likely loses its relational function and becomes a modifier of the adjectival predicate.

- (85) *yác cid dhí satya somapā*  
 when PTC PTC true.VOC soma-drinker.VOC  
*anāśastā iva smāsi*  
 hopeless.NOM.PL like be.PRS.1PL  
*ā tú na indra śamsaya*  
 LP PTC 1PL.DAT Indra.VOC wish.IMPV.2SG  
*góṣu áśveṣu śubhrīṣu*  
 cow(F).LOC.PL horse.LOC.PL resplendent.LOC.PL  
*sahásreṣu tuvī-magha*  
 thousand.LOC.PL.N poeuerfully-generous.VOC

1. Source meaning: ‘Wenn wir auch wie Hoffnungslose sind, du bewährter Somatrinker, so mach uns doch Hoffnung auf tausend schmucke Kühe und Rosse, o freigebiger Indra!’ (Geldner 1951)

2. Target meaning: ‘Even when we are devoid of hope, as it were, o you true drinker of soma, give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o powerfully generous Indra.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)<sup>172</sup>

(ṚV 1.29.1ab)

- (86) *dévitame sárasvati*  
 goddess.SUP.VOC Sarasvatī.VOC

<sup>172</sup> This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004), but listed among examples of *iva* occurring within copula constructions.

<i>apraśastā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>smasi</i>	
unlauded.NOM.PL	like	be.PRS.1PL	
<i>práśastim</i>	<i>amba</i>	<i>nas</i>	<i>kṛdhi</i>
laud.ACC	mother.VOC	1PL.DAT	make.IMPV.2SG

1. Source meaning: ‘O best goddess, Sarasvatī – we are like ones unlauded: make a laud for us, mother.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘Best Mother, best of Rivers, best of Goddesses, Sarasvati, we are, as ’twere, of no repute and dear Mother, give thou us renew.’ (Griffith 1889)<sup>173</sup>

(ṚV 2.41.16b-d)

#### *Bridging context 4*

Linked to the bridging context presented above, we find a fourth kind of bridging context represented by similes whose standard is a substantivized adjective as in (87) or a participle as in (88) (cf. also the hapax *jájhjatīr*.PTCP.PRS.NOM.SG.F ‘laughing’ in example (65), Section 8.2.3).

(87)	<i>vāśrā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vidyún</i>	<i>mimāti</i>
	bawling.NOM	like	lightning.NOM	bellow.PRS.3SG

1. Source meaning: ‘Like a bawling (cow) the lightning bellows.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘The lightning bellows, as if bawling.’ (my translation)

(ṚV 1.38.8a)

(88)	<i>uśāsā-náktā</i>	<i>vidúṣī</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vísvam</i>
	dawn-night(F).NOM.DU	know.PTCP.PF.NOM .F	like	all.ACC.N
	<i>ā</i>	<i>hā</i>	<i>vahato</i>	<i>mártiyāya</i>
	LP	PTC	convey.PRS.2DU	mortal.DAT
				<i>yajñám</i>
				sacrifice.ACC

1. Source meaning: ‘Night and Dawn, like ones who know all, through the days convey the sacrifice here for the mortal.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘Dawn and Night, knowing to some extent everything, convey the sacrifice for the mortal.’ (Pinault 2004)

(ṚV 5.41.7cd)

<sup>173</sup> This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004), but listed among examples of *iva* occurring within copula constructions.

This last bridging context may have opened the way to adjectives and participles in attributive position and to verbs. Cf. (89), where the presence of the standard marker *ná* following the standard *paśúm* ‘piece of cattle’ forces an interpretation of *iva* as a modifier of the participle *naṣṭám* in attributive position. Cf. also (90), where *émi prasphuránn* could be taken as a single predicate modified by *iva*:

(89)	<i>kṛṣṇiyāya</i> ...	<i>nāsatiyā</i>	<i>śácībhiḥ</i>		
	Kṛṣṇiya.DAT	Nāsatyas.VOC.DU	power.INST.PL		
	<i>paśúm</i>	<i>ná</i>	<b><i>naṣṭám</i></b>	<b><i>iva</i></b>	<i>dárśanāya</i>
	animal.ACC	like	lost.ACC	like	seing.DAT
	<i>viṣṇāpívam</i>	<i>dadathur</i>	<i>viśvakāya</i>		
	Viṣṇāpū.ACC	give.PF.3PL	Viśvaka.DAT		

1. Source meaning: ‘To Viśvaka Kṛṣṇiya [...] o Nāsatyas, you gave by your powers Viṣṇāpū to be seen (once more), like a lost animal.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘... who has been somehow lost like a head of cattle.’ (Pinault 2004)

(ṚV 1.116.23)

(90)	<i>yád</i>	<b><i>émi</i></b>	<b><i>prasphuránn</i></b>	<b><i>iva</i></b>	
	if	go.PRS.1SG	tremble.PTCP.NOM	like	
	<i>dṛ́tir</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>dhmātó</i>	<i>adrivah</i>	<i>mṛṛlā́</i>
	bag.NOM	like	blow.PPP.NOM	with_stone.VOC	have_mercy.IMPV.2SG

1. Source meaning: ‘Wenn ich wie ein Schlotternder gehe, wie ein Schlauch aufgebläht ...’ (Geldner 1951)

2. Target meaning: ‘If I go kicking, as it were, inflated like a water-skin, o master of the pressing stones, be merciful!’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 7.89.2)

#### *The spread of iva’s approximative function in Vedic prose*

To sum up, several bridging contexts can be detected in the ṚV that may have favored the development of *iva*’s adaptor function from the comparative one, but only one clear switch context. The latter is represented by cases in which neither the linguistic context, nor the discourse universe provide referents for a null comparee, which triggers a reanalysis of the standard as the argument of the verb and of *iva* as its modifier (cf. Table 37).

**Table 37.** Development of the adaptor function according to Heine’s four-stage scenario (2002: 4).

Stage	Example	Resulting meaning
I Initial stage	<i>yūthā<sup>á</sup><sub>j</sub> iva paśváḥ paśupā<sup>á</sup><sub>i</sub> ... asmām<sup>á</sup><sub>j</sub> indrābhí ā vavṛtsuva<sub>i</sub></i>  ‘Like a herdsman to his flocks of livestock, o Indra, turn here to us.’ (ṚV 6.19.3cd)	Source meaning
II Bridging context	<i>índro<sub>i</sub> ráthāya<sub>j</sub> pravátam kṛnoti yám adhyásthān maghāvā vājayántam yūthā<sup>á</sup> iva paśvó Ø<sub>i</sub> Ø<sub>j</sub> ví unoti gopā<sup>á</sup></i>  ‘Like a herdsman the flocks of livestock, he (Indra, <i>índro</i> ) urges (his chariot, <i>ráthāya</i> ).’ / ‘The herdsman urges the flocks of livestock, <u>as it were</u> .’ (ṚV 5.31.1a-c)	Target meaning foregrounded
III Switch context	<i>sádma iva dhīrāḥ sammāya cakruḥ</i>  ‘The clever ones made (for him, Agni) <u>some kind of seat</u> by building together.’ / ‘Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely.’ (ṚV 1.67.10b)	Source meaning backgrounded
IV Conventionalization	<i>iva</i> following adjectives in attributive position, verbs, adverbs, numerals (rounder function)	Target meaning

Interestingly, in most cases in which a simile’s comparee constitutes a null argument of the verb, this is a discourse-related null argument and not a syntactically determined one (due to coordination or argument sharing between a participle and the main verb). The fact that discourse-related null arguments refer anaphorically or cataphorically to other elements mentioned in the text or to discourse participants makes evident the importance of context in the preservation of the source meaning. Indeed, if the context is not considered, only the target meaning can provide an adequate interpretation of the passage.

These considerations open the possibility that, while the conventionalization of the adaptor use can be ascribed to Vedic in general, the high frequency of this function in Vedic prose is to be attributed to the massive employment of Ṛgvedic quotes in these texts and to the conventions that regulate their employment. Exegetical prose texts such as the Brāhmaṇas frequently refer to the ṚV when discussing aspects of the Vedic ritual. In many cases, references to the ṚV consist of truncated verbatim quotes, reporting only the first few words of the cited passage followed by the quotative particle *iti* ‘thus, so’ and thus lack a coherent syntax (see e.g. Apte 1939). Often, the citation of a

single *pāda* serves as a proxy for the whole hymn, indicating that this hymn must be recited while performing a ritual act.

Take for instance example (92) from the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (AB), an ancillary text of the ṚV: the passage quotes the first text line of the Ṛgvedic hymn 2.39, reported in (91), to indicate that this hymn must be recited while performing the Pravargya offering. Afterwards, three pairs of standards and standard markers (*akṣī iva* ‘like eyes’, *nāsā iva* ‘like noses’, and *kārṇāv iva* ‘like ears’) from the same hymn are reported in isolation from their context, in order to explain why the hymn is appropriate for the ritual. Since the other elements of the similitive constructions, i.e. parameter and comparee, are not reported, in these pairs *iva* might be interpreted as a modifier of the preceding noun, instead as of a simile’s standard marker.

(91) a. *grāvāṇā iva tad id arthaṃ jarethe*  
stone.NOM.DU like 3SG.ACC PTC goal.ACC awaken.2DU  
‘Like pressing stones, you two awaken to just this purpose.’ (ṚV 2.39.1a)

b. *akṣī iva cākṣuṣā yātam arvāk*  
eye.NOM.DU like sight.INST journey.IMPV.2DU here  
‘(Endowed) with sight like eyes, journey here this way.’ (ṚV 2.39.5b)

c. *nāsā iva nas tanīvo rakṣitārā*  
nose.NOM.DU like 1PL.GEN body.GEN protector.NOM.DU

d. *kārṇāv iva suśrūtā bhūtam asmé*  
ear.NOM.DU like good\_hearer.NOM.DU be.IMPV.2DU 1PL.DAT  
‘Guardians of our body like noses, like ears be good hearers for us.’ (ṚV 2.39.5cd)

(92) *grāvāṇā iva tad id arthaṃ jarethe iti sūktam*  
QUOT hymn.NOM

*akṣī iva karṇāv iva nāsā iva iti*

QUOT

*aṅgasamākhyāyam eva asmīṃs tad indriyāṇi dadhāti //*  
naming\_limbs verily DEM.LOC.SG thus sense.ACC.PL put.PRS.3SG

“‘Like the two pressing-stones for the one purpose ye sing’ is a hymn; by enumerating the members in “‘Like the two eyes, like the two ears, like the two nostrils”, verily thus he places the senses in it.’ (Keith 1920)

(AB 1.21.11)

Example (95) reports another passage from the AB. This passage quotes the first *pāda* of a series of Rigvedic hymns in order to indicate that those hymns are to be recited during the sacrifice. Incidentally, the first *pāda* of ṚV 9.104 and of ṚV 9.105, reported in (93) and (94) respectively, contain a simile's standard and standard marker that are quoted in (95) independently from their parameter and comparee.

- (93) *sám ī vatsám ná mātṛbhiḥ*  
 LP PTC calf.ACC like mother.INST.PL  
*srjātā gayasādhanam*  
 send.IMPV.2PL house\_guiding.ACC  
 ‘Send (him) like a calf to join with his mothers—him who brings success to the household.’  
 (ṚV 9.104.2ab)

- (94) *sám vatsá iva mātṛbhir*  
 LP calf.NOM like mother.INST.PL  
*īndur hinvānó ajyate*  
 drop.NOM impel.PTCP.NOM.PASS anoint.3SG.PRS.PASS  
 ‘Like a calf, being impelled to join with his mothers, the drop is driven [/anointed].’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)  
 (ṚV 9.105.2ab)

- (95) *atha uttaram // ... sam ī vatsam na mātṛbhiḥ sam vatsa iva mātṛbhir ...*  
 then further.ACC  
*ekaviṃśatir abhirūpā yad yajñe*  
 twenty-one appropriate.NOM.PL REL.NOM.N sacrifice.LOC  
*'bhirūpam tat samṛddham //*  
 appropriate.NOM.N 3SG.NOM.N perfect.NOM.N  
 ‘Then comes the second (section). [...] “Like a calf with the mothers”, “With the mothers like a calf” [...] are twenty-one appropriate (verses), that which in the sacrifice is appropriate is perfect.’ (Keith 1920)  
 (AB 1.22.1)

These examples suggest that the practice of citing similes' standards and standard markers in isolation not only from the broader linguistic and extra-linguistic context, but also from their more immediate context consisting of parameter and comparee, may be responsible for the high frequency of *iva*'s adaptor function in Vedic prose to the detriment of its use as a standard marker. This is not to say that

the conventionalization of *iva* is an exclusively literary phenomenon,<sup>174</sup> but that literary reasons might have played a role in the conventionalization of the adaptor use in Vedic prose and eventually caused it to become *iva*'s most common function in these texts. From the literature (see e.g. Brereton 1982), it seems indeed that the comparative function got back to being the most attested for *iva* in Classical Sanskrit. If this is true, it provides further evidence that the expansion of the adaptor use in Vedic prose is linked to the literary genre of these texts. However, given the vastness of middle and late Vedic literature as well as of classical literature, these impressionistic observations would need to be verified on corpora.

### *Approximating ná?*

To conclude this section, a peculiarity of some Ṛgvedic similes should be mentioned as further evidence for the development of the adaptor use from the comparative one. Unlike Vedic prose, in which only *iva* is found in the adaptor function, the ṚV provides examples of bridging contexts in which *ná* is employed as standard marker, instead of *iva*. Take for instance example (96), where both *iva* and *ná* partake in Bridging context 1. Note that in this case, the null object 'hymn' of the verbs *úpa á akaram* 'I have driven toward' and *vṛṇīṣvá* 'choose' is retrievable from the discourse context: in the closing of a hymn, as in the case of (96), the poet often summarizes his homage to the god by renewing the offer of the hymn just concluded.

(96)	<i>úpa</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>gā́</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>akaram</i>
	LP	2SG.ACC	cow.ACC.PL	like	LP	do.AOR.1SG
	<i>vṛṇīṣvá</i>		<i>duhitar</i>		<i>divaḥ</i>	
	choose.IMPV.2SG.MID		daughter.VOC		sky.GEN	
	<i>rā́tri</i>	<i>stóman</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>jigyúṣe</i>		
	Night.VOC	praise_song.ACC	like	victor.DAT		

1. Source meaning: 'Right up to you have I driven (this hymn), like cows (to their pen). Choose it, o Daughter of Heaven, o Night—like a praise song for a victor.' (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: 'Right up to you have I driven these cows, so to say. Choose, o Daughter of Heaven, o Night, this praise song for a victor, so to say.'

(ṚV 10.127.8)

<sup>174</sup> Indeed, since nominal clauses and zero objects can also be present in everyday language (to which, however, we have no access), the bridging contexts observed in the ṚV are not necessarily linked to literary language.



In some cases, neither linguistic context nor discourse participants provide an overt comparee for the simile: as we have seen for *iva*, this makes the bridging context into a switch context incompatible with the source meaning. In example (97), we find no available subject for the verb *vivyacuḥ* ‘(they) envelop) other than *samudrāsah* ‘the seas’: thus, we must interpret *ná* as modifying *samudrāsah*, probably signaling that it does not refer literally to the seas, but rather figuratively to the waters which are mixed with Soma (cf. Jamison and Brereton 2014 suggestion that the null subject “they” refers to the water).

- (97) *samudrāso ná sávanāni vivyacuḥ*  
 sea.NOM.PL like pressing(N).ACC.PL envelope.PF.3PL
1. \*Source meaning: ‘[It purifies itself—the stream of Soma, who has the gaze of men. With truth he summons the gods from heaven. With the roar of Bṛhaspati he has flashed forth.] Like seas they [=the waters?] envelop the pressings.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: (*pāda* d) ‘The seas envelop the pressings, as it were.’ (my translation)
- (ṚV 9.80.1c)

Example (98) constitutes a similar case: unless we supply an object “journey” (cf. Jamison and Brereton 2014), the only available object for the verb *śāsān* ‘they will direct’ (*chāsān* due to *sandhi*) is *vahatúm*. If this is true, the meaning of *vahatúm* must be interpreted as approximated by the particle *ná*.

- (98) *tád i it sadhástham abhí cāru dīdhaya*  
 dem.ACC.N PTC seat(N).ACC LP dear.ACC.N consider.PF.1SG  
*gāvo yác chāsān vahatúm*  
 cow(F).NOM REL.ACC.N direct.SUBJ.PRS.3PL procession.ACC  
*ná dhenávaḥ*  
 like milker.NOM.PL.F
1. \*Source meaning: ‘Just this dear seat do I ponder, to which the milk-cows will direct (their journey) like a bridal procession’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: (*pāda* b) ‘To which the milk-cows will direct (their) bridal procession, so to say.’
- (ṚV 10.32.4ab)

In example (99), *ná* occurs in Bridging context 2. Indeed, the adjective *śivābhir* ‘kind’ and the participle *smáyamānābhir* ‘smiling’ can be either read as modifying an understood standard ‘girls’/‘female’, or as an instrumental adjunct of the verb *áḡāt* ‘he has come’. In the latter case, *śivābhir ... smáyamānābhir* stands metaphorically for the lighting flashes of the thundercloud (the ‘bull’ in *pāda* b) and *ná* functions as an adaptor flagging the figurative meaning of the expression.<sup>175</sup>

(99)	<i>ā</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>suparṇā</i>	<i>aminantaṃ</i>	<i>évaiḥ</i>
	LP	2SG.GEN	fine-feather.NOM.PL	change.IMPF.3PL.MID	way.INST.PL
	<i>kṛṣṇó</i>		<i>nonāva</i>	<i>vṛṣabhó</i>	<i>yádi idám</i>
	black.NOM		bellow.INTENS.PF.3SG	bull.NOM	if DEM.NOM.N
	<i>śivābhir</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>smáyamānābhir</i>	<i>áḡāt</i>	
	kind.INST.PL.F	like	smile.PTCP.PF.INST.PL.F	come.AOR.3SG	
	<i>pátanti</i>	<i>miha</i>	<i>stanáyanti</i>	<i>abhrá</i>	
	fly.PRS.3PL	mist(F).NOM.PL	thunder.PRS.3PL	cloud(N).NOM.PL	

1. Source meaning: ‘Your fine-feathered [lightning flashes] zigzagged along their ways. The black bull keeps bellowing. If he is really here, he has come here with his (lightning flashes) like kindly, smiling (girls). The mists fly; the clouds thunder.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: (*pāda* c) ‘He has come with his kind, smiling girls, as it were.’ (my translation)

(ṚV 1.79.2)

While describing Bridging context 3, consisting in predicative similitive constructions, I have mentioned that, although more rarely than *iva*, *ná* is also found in this context (cf. example (84)). Finally, the particle *ná* is also found in Bridging context 4, featuring a substantivized adjective or participle as standard. This is the case of the participle *kṛṇvānó* in (100):

(100)	<i>janáyañ</i>	<i>jyótir</i>	<i>mandánā</i>	<i>avīvaśad</i>
	beget.PTCP.PRS.NOM	light.ACC	delighting.ACC.PL.F	bellow.AOR.3SG
	<i>gāḥ</i>	<i>kṛṇvānó</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>nirṇíjam</i>
	cow(F).ACC.PL	make.PTCP.PRS.NOM.MID	like	adornment.ACC

<sup>175</sup> According to Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*), the smiling females of *pāda* c must be the lightning flashes (so also Geldner’s translation); this interpretation is supported by *vidyútaḥ ... jájjhatīr iva* ‘lightning flashes ... like giggling (girls).’ in ṚV 5.52.6. Oldenberg (1897) suggests that these females are the rain showers, while Witzel and Gōto (2007) suggest tentatively the dawns. The subject of *áḡāt* is the black bull of *pāda* b, which stands metaphorically for the thundercloud.

1. Source meaning: ‘[Clothing himself in the waters, he (Soma) rushes around the cask, the drop being propelled by the pressers.] Begetting the light, he has made the delighting cows bellow, as one making the cows into his fresh garment.’ (adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: ‘He has made the delighting cows bellow, making the cows into his fresh garment, as it were.’

(ṚV 9.107.26cd)

The latter example makes clear how participial standards may have favored the extension of the adaptor use with verbs: here, the target meaning offers the most suitable interpretation for the passage, for it is not clear what the referent of the standard ‘one making the cows into his fresh garment’ could be. In some cases, such as (101), *ná* occurs after a finite verb, thus excluding the source meaning:

(101) *agnih śociśmāṁ atasāni uṣṇán*  
 Agni.NOM shining.NOM shrub.ACC.PL burn.PTCP.PRS.NOM  
*kṛṣṇávyathir asvadayan ná bhūma*  
 having\_black\_path.NOM sweeten.IMPF.3SG like ground.ACC  
 ‘Agni, enflamed, scorching the brushwood, with his black wayward course, has “sweetened,” as it were, the ground.’

(ṚV 2.4.7ab)

The above examples suggest that *ná* could also be developing into an adaptor in the ṚV. Besides its rarity in Bridging context 2 which, as we have seen above, may be due to its origin and its combinatorial features, the lower incidence of approximating *ná* in the ṚV must be explained by its decreasing productivity; this must have caused cases of approximating *ná* to remain isolated in the ṚV and to disappear in Vedic prose, where the particle is only employed as a negation. As for *yáthā*, although it also occurs in some possible bridging contexts,<sup>176</sup> its 76 occurrences prevent us to make hypotheses about its development as an adaptor, at least in the ṚV. However, we know that this did not happen in Vedic prose either, where *yáthā* is primarily employed as a subordinating conjunction (also for clausal comparison) and secondarily as a standard marker of phrasal similes.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. for instance ṚV 1.130.6c-e, where *yáthā* seems to occur in Bridging context 1 with a syntactically determined null object (due to argument sharing). In ṚV 9.32.5, the particle occurs in what looks like Bridging context 2, since it marks an instrumental standard that has no counterpart in the comparee.

### 8.2.5 Summary

After a brief introduction on the domain of approximation (8.2.1), in this section I have reconsidered the main hypotheses on the original function of *iva* on the light of cross-linguistic evidence. Starting from the possible etymology of *iva* as a reflex of the combination of the demonstrative stem *\*hii-* and of the PIE disjunctive particle *\*ue* ‘or’, in Section 8.2.2 I have considered the possibility that the comparative and the approximating functions emerged independently from *iva*’s deictic function.

More precisely, I suggested that the adaptor function might have developed from the employment of *iva* as a disjunctive GE with the meaning ‘or (something like) this’, ‘or so’ and argued that this hypothesis is not sufficiently supported by Ṛgvedic evidence (Section 8.2.3). Indeed, no example seems to fit the function of GEs of indicating the existence of additional referents belonging to a given category. Rather, in most cases in which *iva* allows an approximating reading, it seems to flag the figurative reading of the preceding noun or of the whole expression; more rarely, it behaves as a shield for pragmatic mitigation (with verbs) or as a moderator (with adverbs).

In Section 8.2.4, I made a case for the development of the adaptor function from the comparative one. Semantically, I have shown that the specialization of Ṛgvedic similitive constructions for figurative comparison constitutes a crucial clue in this direction; syntactically, *iva* loses its function of situating the comparee with respect to the standard (source meaning) and becomes a modifier of the latter (target meaning). This development can be traced already in the ṚV, where at least four bridging contexts can be detected. Focusing on Bridging context 1, we have seen that linguistic and extralinguistic context are crucial for recovering the referent of null arguments which may constitute a simile’s comparee. Therefore, I have suggested that the high frequency of the adaptor function in Vedic prose may have been favored by the practice of quoting Ṛgvedic passages in isolation from their context: in support of this hypothesis, we have seen two passages in which a simile’s standard and the standard marker are quoted independently of their parameter and comparee and in which this could have led to an interpretation of *iva* as a modifier of the previous noun phrase. Finally, in support of the tendency of standard markers to develop into adaptors, I have shown that *ná* also partake in the different bridging contexts but that these have remained isolated cases in the ṚV due to the decreasing productivity of comparative *ná* and to its disappearance in Vedic prose.

## Part 3

### Part 3. Introduction

Similes are ubiquitous in the ṚV as well as in classical Sanskrit literature. The wide use of similes is one of the features of Ṛgvedic style that seems to represent a break from the stylistic parameters of the poetic tradition from which Ṛgvedic practice emerged. The *Avesta* contains very few similes – none in the Old Avestan *Gāthās*<sup>177</sup> – and the so-called “Homeric simile” of Ancient Greek epic is structurally very different from the Sanskrit simile.<sup>178</sup>

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the literature abounds in contributions about the syntax of similes (Bergaigne 1887, Jamison 1982), about their origin (Vine 1978, Pinault 1985), or about the distribution of the two main comparative particles *ná* and *iva* (Pinault 1997a, 1997b, Viti 2002), but a systematic study of the discursive functions of similes has not yet been carried out. In fact, their ubiquity makes it difficult to determine criteria for their employment: they occur in almost each of the 1028 hymns that make up the RV, sometimes grouped in sections, at other times scattered throughout the hymn, more rarely in every single *pāda*.

In introducing the reader to the poetics of the ṚV, Jamison and Brereton (2020: 166) devote some attention to similes. They note that, in this text, “the procedures of sacrifice, the exploits of the gods, the activities of men, and the elements and functioning of the cosmos are constantly presented in images of something else, images based on similarity and parallelism”. On the formal level, this “web” of equivalences (*bandhus*) that, according to Vedic belief, structure the universe, take the form of similes: explicit comparisons situating an entity in relation to another.

In this second part of the work, I will focus on the kinds of similes attested in the ṚV (Chapter 9), analyzing the kinds of mappings that they trigger (9.1), their interaction with other figurative expressions (9.2), and their conventionality (9.3). In Chapter 10, I will focus on the discursive

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<sup>177</sup> Although the Avestan corpus is not comparable to the Ṛgvedic one by extension, considering the frequency of similes in the ṚV their absence in the Old Avestan *Gāthās* remains significant.

<sup>178</sup> Many commentators have noted that Homeric similes are “close” to the audience for they evoke a domestic, rather than heroic, reality (see, e.g., Coffey 1957: 116; Shipp 1972: 212; Edwards 1991: 35-36). This thematic closeness to the audience has been related to the linguistic lateness of similes, or to their nontraditional nature, because their language seems to belong to the most recent stratum of Homeric composition. Shipp (1972: 212) noted that similes contain few archaisms and many linguistic innovations and concluded that the full development of Homeric similes “is later than the art of the narrative which it adorns”. For instance, while in Homer un-augmented verbs are more common than their augmented counterparts, verbs occurring in similes are with very few exceptions augmented (Chantraine 1958: 479-484); given that past tense verbs are obligatory augmented in classical Greek, the frequency with which augment is employed in Homeric similes is usually interpreted as evidence for their lateness (but see Bakker 2001 for an alternative analysis).

functions that similes take in the ṚV. In both chapters, I will employ notions borrowed from cognitive linguistics, such as Mental Space Theory, Blending Theory, and Frame Semantics introduced in Chapter 3.

Before going on to Chapters 9 and 10, the next section introduces the Vedic notions of poetic speech and sacred knowledge, the types of hymns we find in the collection, and some compositional principles. This introduction will serve to better understand the cultural context that produced the types of similes introduced in Chapter 9 and to place the similes in their textual and extra-textual context, in order to investigate their function in Chapter 10.

### **1. The power of the poetic word**

A study of similes presupposes a basic knowledge of the cultural milieu of the text in which they occur. As we have seen in the introduction to this work, the ṚV is a large collection of hymns (*sūktas* ‘well-spoken (speech)’), most of which praise a god or gods and explicitly or implicitly request goods and services in return for this praise. This exchange often takes place during the sacrifice in which the gods partake either because they are part of the sacrificial paraphernalia (like Agni, the fire god, and Soma, the drink of a sacred plant), or because they have come as invited guests.

The praise of divine powers and deeds has the purpose to persuade the gods to employ these same powers for the benefit of the devotees. Indeed, one of the dominant social ideologies underlying the text is a system of reciprocity and exchange: believers made sacrifices and composed praise hymns to the gods, who in turn bestowed solicited gifts upon their worshippers, consisting of wealth, especially in livestock and gold, military victories, glory, abundance, and male progeny (Elizarenkova 1995: 11; on the hymn as a gift, cf. also Macedo 2010).

But the importance of ritual and poetic word goes beyond the mere request of favors from the gods and results from the structure of the Vedic mental universe, which consists of a web of identifications or equivalences among elements in the ritual realm, in the cosmic realm, and in the realm of the everyday. In this model, regular rituals are believed to guarantee order in the universe, recreating the cosmos and preventing its disintegration at the end of each cycle.

Parallel to ritual, the poetic word is equally capable of making things happen. Besides the function of praise as flattery to inspire a counter-gift, praises selecting a god’s particular deed or attribute suggest a model for the behaviors and attitudes that the poet wants the gods to display to his benefit. For instance, Indra’s victories over formidable enemies such as Vṛtra and Vala in the mythic past should be repeated in the present, as he defeats the foes that the poet’s patron is facing (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 137). What is more, it is thanks to the poets and their words that the gods acquire the strength which is necessary to undertake their enterprises and emerge victorious. A hymn

narrating Indra's great deeds enumerates the contribution that various characters have made to Indra's slaying of Vṛtra: the clan of the Anus fashioned Indra's chariot (*rátham*), the artisan god Tvaṣṭṛ his brilliant mace (*vájram*), but it was the poets that with their songs strengthened (*vṛdh-*) Indra to smash the serpent (1).<sup>179</sup> The same happens in (2), where the causal particle *hí* portrays the help of the poets (*brahma*) as a direct cause of Indra's action.

(1) *ánavas te rátham ásvāya takṣan*

*tváṣṭā vájram puruhūta dyumántam*

*brahmāṇa índram maháyanto arkair*

***ávardhayann áhaye hántavā u***

'The Anu people [= Vedic clan] fashioned a chariot for your horse; Tvaṣṭṛ (fashioned) the brilliant mace, o much invoked one. The formulators, magnifying Indra with their chants, strengthened him to smash the serpent.'

(RV 5.31.4)

(2) *itthā hí sóma in máde*

***brahmā cakāra vārdhanam***

*śáviṣṭha vajrin ójasā*

*pṛthivyā niḥ śasā áhim*

*árcann ánu svarājīyam*

'Because right at the time of the soma exhilaration the formulator created a strengthening (formulation) in the current style, o strongest mace-bearer, with your might you ordered the serpent forth from the earth.'

(RV 1.80.1)

The one of fortifying a god through singing is a recurring motif in the RV. It is said of the ancient poets as well as of the present ones, who ensure, through new songs, that the gods will repeat their exploits in the present:

(3) *anarvāṇam vṛṣabhám mandrájihvam*

*bṛhaspátim vardhayā **návyam** arkaiḥ*

*gāthānīyaḥ surúco yásya devā*

<sup>179</sup> Since Chapters 9 and 10 focus on semantics and pragmatics more than on syntax, from this point on I will stop glossing Vedic examples. When needed, I will provide glosses for single words in the running text; in the examples, parameters of similes and other relevant words are marked in bold, while similes' standards are in italics.



*āśṛṇvānti nāvamānasya mártāḥ*

‘With chants I will strengthen anew the unassailable bull of gladdening tongue, Bṛhaspati, the brightly shining leader of song to whom the gods and the mortals harken as he bellows.’

(ṚV 1.190.1)

The creative power of singing does not end in the strength to be given to the gods. As Brereton and Jamison (2020: 113) put it, “for Classical India discourse is full of speech acts”. This can be clearly seen in the numerous spells and charms of the AV. In most of these spells, a 1<sup>st</sup> person speaker makes statements like ‘I bind your mouth’, ‘I have just cured your disease’, ‘I have just made you love me’ which, accompanied by physical gestures and the use of potions or amulets, have effects by the very fact of their pronouncement.

The ṚV too is full of statements in the aorist of the immediate past. Many of these pronouncements concern actions that are apparently beyond the speaker’s control but have coercive force from a Ṛgvedic point of view. Take for instance example (4), in which the Sun has ‘just raised’ (*úd ... aśret*.IND.AOR.3SG; *úd gāḥ*.INJ.AOR.3SG) thanks to ‘these praise songs’ (*ebhí*.DEM.INST.PL *stómebhir*.INST.PL). Dedicating a hymn (and accompanying it with ritual procedures) to the god Sun at the time of his raising, the priests have caused the action to occur by means of their verbal formulation of that action.<sup>180</sup>

(4) *út sūriyo bṛhád arcīm̐ṣi aśret*

*purú víśvā jánima mānuṣāṇām ...*

*sá sūriya práti puró na úd gā*

*ebhí stómebhir etaśébhīr évaiḥ*

‘The Sun has raised up his flames aloft, (facing) all the many tribes of Manu’s sons. [...] O Sun, you have arisen in front facing us with these praise songs, with your coursers in their usual ways.’

(ṚV 7.62.1ab,2ab)

The importance of words goes beyond even the ability to make things happen. Words mirror reality in that they are the poets’ means to communicate the truths that they have received from the gods in the form of visions.

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<sup>180</sup> Note that the aorist is often used in ritual situations, in which the poet presents a sacrificial act as just completed or a hymn just composed (Jamison and Brereton 2014: 60). Furthermore, despite their past reference, 1<sup>st</sup> person aorist forms are in some cases used in performative sentences as the following: *úpa īm asṛkṣi*.IND.AOR.1SG.MID *vājayúr vacasyām* ‘Desiring the prize, I release it: my verbal skill.’ (ṚV 2.35.1a; Dahl 2008, 2010: 296).

At this point, we should consider in some detail the Vedic views of sacred knowledge. Although the name *ṛg-veda-* was given to the collection by later Indian classification, it is a convenient start: the term is a compound from *ṛc-* ‘hymn; verse’ and *veda-* ‘knowledge’ and means ‘knowledge (coming from) verses’ (Elizarenkova 1995: 14).<sup>181</sup>

The kind of knowledge referred to by the word *ṛg-veda-* is the knowledge that poets acceded through *dhī-*, a term variously translated as ‘thought, idea, intention, understanding, wisdom, intellect’ (MW: s.v.) and whose semantics reflects a whole set of ideas concerning the means used to understand the surrounding world and to influence the gods. According to Gonda (1963: 68-69), *dhī-* denoted an inner ‘vision’, an exceptional ability to recognize the truth. One word for truth is *ṛtá-*, which is often also rendered as ‘order’ or ‘cosmic order’: therefore, the truth revealed to the poet by the gods can be interpreted as knowledge about the various connections that holds between the different realms of the universe, the influences of divine forces, and man’s relationship to them.<sup>182</sup> This truth is hidden (*gúhya-*) from humans and revealed by the gods to the poet’s mind or heart (*mánas-*, *hṛd-*); cf. example (6):

(5) *bráhmā kṛṇoti váruṇo*

*gātuvidam̐ tám̐ īmahe*

*ví ūrṇoti hṛdā́ matim̐*

*náviyo jāyatām̐ ṛtám̐*

*vittám me asyá rodasī*

‘Varuṇa creates sacred formulations (*bráhmā*); we implore him as the finder of the way. He opens up the thought (*matim̐*) in our heart (*hṛdā́*). Let a newer truth (*ṛtám̐*) be born.’

(ṚV 1.105.15)

The duty of the Vedic *Ṛṣi* is then to transpose the vision revealed to him into words, thus transforming it into hymns or prayers. Watkins (1995: 88) points out the following formulaic expression employed in the *ṚV* to refer to the poetic formulation:

<sup>181</sup> The term *ṛc-*, in turn, is a feminine root-noun from the verb *arc-* ‘to shine, glitter; to glorify in song’ which suggests that the notion of a hymn was associated with the idea of light and brilliance, and thus with vision.

<sup>182</sup> As argued by Huizinga (1949: 105-106) in his *Homo Ludens*, the cosmic order (*ṛtá-*), decreed by the gods and maintained in being by ritual, is safeguarded by the poets’ knowledge of holy things and of their secret names. Since the spoken word has a direct influence on reality, priests/poets engage in competitions in such knowledge during sacred feasts. This kind of competition is mirrored in the so-called *Ṛgvedic* riddle hymns, such as many All Gods hymns or the famous and difficult *ṚV* 1.164.

(6) *satyó mántrah kavíastá ṛghāvān*

‘True is the powerful formula pronounced by the poet.’ (Watkins 1995: 88)

(ṚV 1.152.2b)

According to this verse, the poetic formula (*mántra-*) is veridical (*satyá-*) because it is fashioned and spoken (*-sastá*) by a true poet (*kaví*). The word *kaví* reflects an old IE word for the poet-seer and priest, whose cognates are Old Avestan *kauui*, a poet-priest, Greek (Hesychius) *koíēs* or *kóēs*, a priest of the mysteries of Samothrace, and Lydian *kaveś*, a kind of priest. The relation of these words to verbs such as Ancient Greek *koéō* ‘perceive’, German *schauen* ‘look’, and English *show* suggests that the priest/poet was thought of as the one “perceiving” divine knowledge, being inspired by muses or gods.

Being part of the ritual, the hymn ascends as offering to the gods, completing the circle of exchanges: the deity has granted the poet access to mystery and inspiration, and the poet composes a prayer-hymn in order to support and praise the deity (Elizarenkova 1995: 17).<sup>183</sup>

This notion of sacred knowledge is clearly visible in the Vala-myth and its interpretation as the etiological myth for the discovery of poetic language and inspiration (Watkins 1995: 72; Jackson 2014: 108). This myth narrates the liberation of the cows and dawns that hostile beings, the Panis, had hidden in a cave known as Vala. In some versions of the myth,<sup>184</sup> a group of poet-priests known as Aṅgirasas, by remembering (*manvata*) ‘the thrice-seven highest secret names of the cows’ (a “skaldic” expression for poetic language; cf. Geldner 1951), smash open the cave ‘with truth’ (*ṛténa* in ṚV 4.3.11a) contained in the words that they chant, and release the captive cows and dawns. Such truth is the knowledge that the cows are the dawns: the Vala story was associated with the Morning Pressing, which took place at dawn. In the Ṛgvedic period, the reward (*dakṣiṇā*) that priests received for performing the sacrificial rite often consisted in cattle and was given at the Morning Pressing (Jamison and Brereton 2020: 71). Therefore, cattle received by the priests at the Morning pressing

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<sup>183</sup> According to GWP, the word *ṛṣi-* means ‘singer of sacred songs; poet; a saint of ancient times’, and thus the *Ṛṣi* combined the functions of the poet, the reciter and the priest.

<sup>184</sup> According to other versions of the Vala-myth, it is Indra that smashes the cave open and releases the cows, accompanied by the Aṅgirasas. Remarkably, however, even Indra does not defeat the Panis by using his mace, but rather by using the power of the truth in the songs he chants (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 70). In this narrative, therefore, Indra is a priest-king rather than a warrior-king and in his role as priest-king, Indra is also called Bṛhaspati / Brahmanaspati ‘lord of the sacred formulation’ (see also Macdonell 1897: 103). Bṛhaspati is often Indra himself in the ṚV but can also sometimes be a separate divinity.

reflects the advent of dawns in the world and the (re)discovery of this truth is conceived as the discovery of poetic language and inspiration.

The form of these formulations is wholly dependent on tradition, that is, on the creations of the ancient, or earlier, *Ṛṣis*. The ability to ‘see’ the truth was believed to be genetically inherited from the ancestors (cf. example (7)) and indeed the families of *Ṛṣis* passed whole sets of hymns or even entire *maṇḍalas* ‘books’, lit. ‘(hymnic) cycles’ from generation to generation.

(7) *mahó rujāmi bandhútā vácobhis*

*tán mā pitúr gótamād ánv iyāya*

‘I can smite mightily with words because of (my) kindred; this has come to me from my father Gotama.’ (Elizarenkova 1995: 21)

(ṚV 4.4.11ab)

In addition to claiming his belonging to a tradition, the Vedic *Ṛṣi* emphasizes the novelty of his hymn, resulting in a continuous tension between tradition and innovation. Belonging to tradition ensures the poet the right degree of authority, while the novelty of the form is necessary to appeal to the gods. Take the following passage, where the poet’s idea of new hymn seems to consist in a formal improvement of the wisdom of truth (*medhām ṛtásya*) inherited from his father: the poet is beautifully decorating (*śubh-*) songs in the style of the Kanvas (*kaṇṇavát*), that is, of the family of bards to which he himself belongs (Elizarenkova 1995: 23).

(8) *ahám id dhí pitúṣ pári*

*medhām ṛtásya jagrábha*

*ahám sūrya ivājani ||*

*aám pratnéna mánmanā*

*gíraḥ śumbhāmi kaṇṇavát*

*yénéndraḥ śúṣmam id dadhé ||*

‘Because it is just I who have acquired the wisdom of truth from my father, I have been (re)born like the sun. I, like Kanva, beautify my songs with an age-old thought— just the one with which Indra acquired his unbridled force.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(ṚV 8.6.10-11)

Although the poet attributes his knowledge to divine inspiration, he knows in practice that it had to be acquired by decades of laborious training. This awareness was noted by Watkins (1995: 72) in passages such as (9):

(9) *idám me agne ...*

*áminate gurúm bhārám ná mánma*

*... dadhātha*

‘You have placed on me [...] this knowledge, o Agni, like a heavy burden.’

(ṚV 4.5.6ab)

In the ṚV, the act of poetic composition is described in terms of handicraft.<sup>185</sup> The creation of a poem is called *ápas-* ‘work’ and the process is referred to with generic verbs such as  $\sqrt{kr-}$  ‘make’,  $\sqrt{jan-}$  ‘to give birth to’,  $\sqrt{dhā-}$  ‘to set, fix’ but also verbs with a specialized meaning such as  $\sqrt{takṣ-}$  ‘form by cutting, trim (wood)’,  $\sqrt{va-/u-}$  ‘to weave’,  $\sqrt{tan-}$  ‘to draw (a thread, string)’ (Elizarenkova 1995: 24; Watkins 1995: 89). According to Campanile (1977: 36) handicraft is comparable to poetic composition because both are based on traditional inherited standards, and both allow innovations only to a limited extent.

The use of the verbs  $\sqrt{takṣ-}$  often triggers similes with artisans manufacturing chariots which, like songs, consist of different parts that must be put together (Durante 1976: 130-133; West 2007: 41-43). This verb occurs with a number of synonyms for ‘song’ or ‘poetic word’, namely *dhī-* (see above; ṚV 1.109.1d), *bráhman-* ‘sacred formulation’ (10), *mánman-* ‘poem’ (ṚV 2.19.8ab), *mántra-* ‘prayer’ (ṚV 7.7.6b), *stóma-* ‘praise song’ (ṚV 5.2.11b), *vácas-* ‘speech’ (11). Alternatively, the poet brings together (*sám*  $\sqrt{r-}$ ) a song as an axe brings together a chariot, he delivers (*sám*  $\sqrt{hi-}$ ) a praise-

<sup>185</sup> The IE motive of poetical composition as handicraft was early identified by the French Iranist James Darmesteter (1878), who compared the Avestan compound *vacas-tašti-* ‘hymn, strophe’ (lit. ‘utterance-crafting’), with Vedic *vácāmsi āśá ... takṣam* ‘with my mouth I have crafted these words’ and the Pindaric phrase *epéōn ... téktones* ‘crafters of words’ (Pind. *Pyth.* 3.113). Virtually any technology can function as a source domain for this metaphorical mapping: take for instance the archaic collocation Old Irish *faig ferb* ‘he wove words’ (*Amrae Choluimb Chille*), referring to weaving, as well as Ancient Greek *hyphainō hýmnon* ‘weave a song’ (Bacch. 5.9), *rhapsodós* ‘singer < ‘sewing songs’, Latin *textus* ‘tissue, connection’, or Vedic *arkám ... ūvuh* ‘they wove the song’ (Kölligan 2017: 38). Kölligan also argues for the origin of the Ancient Greek verb *hydēō* ‘call’ from the PIE root *\*Heu-* (cf. Vedic *váyati* ‘webt’) and thus for a semantic shift from ‘weave’ to ‘make poetry, (\*poetically) call, sing about’. Note also that the motive is not confined to IE (Watkins 1995: 14).

song like an artisan (*táṣṭā*) delivers a chariot to the person who commissioned it (RV 1.61.4).<sup>186</sup> Finally, like handicraft products, poetry must be adorned (*sám* √*añj-*), as in example (12).

- (10) *imá bráhmāni ...*  
*yā tákṣāma ráthām̐ iva*  
 ‘These prayers [...] which we have built like chariots.’ (West 2007: 42)  
 (RV 5.73.10)
- (11) *asmai ... vácāmsiy āsá ... takṣam*  
 ‘For him I have fashioned with my mouth these words.’  
 (RV 6.32.1d)
- (12) *apó ná dhīro mánasā suhástiyo*  
*gíraḥ sám añje vidátheṣu ābhúvah*  
 ‘As one clever in mind and with dexterous hands ornaments his work, I ornament the hymns standing ready at the rites.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)  
 (RV 1.64.1cd)

## 2. R̥gvedic Hymns: some organizing principles

### 2a. Praise and request in the R̥gvedic praise hymn

In Chapter 10, our unit of analysis will be the hymns of the R̥V which, from what we have said above, can be defined as communicative acts between humans and gods. In this kind of communicative acts, the addresser-worshipper calls upon the addressee-deity, who listens in silence. Therefore, R̥gvedic hymns are characterized by an orientation toward the addressee, which finds its formal expression in nominal vocatives and verbal imperatives. Jakobson (1981) called it the “poetry of the second person” because the addressee is completely dependent on the addresser (Elizarenkova 1995: 9).

There is no single template to which all R̥gvedic praise-hymns conform. As we have seen above, most hymns praise a god or gods in exchange for favors. One possible generalization is that requests to the gods tend to come toward the end of the hymn, whereas the earlier parts of the hymn tend to address other matters. However, the poets may decide to emphasize one element and to background or even ignore the others: in some hymns, for instance, the “praise” component seems to

<sup>186</sup> The collocation [FASHION – POETRY/SONG] is well attested in other ancient IE languages. Consider for instance the almost perfect parallelism between [vác- – √takṣ-] in example (11) and AG [épos – (para)tektainomai] (Hom. *Od.* 14.131; Massetti 2019: 193-194), as well as YAv. *vaca-taṣṭi-* ‘strophe’ (Y. 58.8).

be lacking altogether. Brereton and Jamison (2020: 127-140) provide a survey of the types of praise encountered in the hymns, divided into “praise” and “ask”.<sup>187</sup>

Praise can be divided into the two categories of praise of deeds and praise of attributes – both of which are regularly found interspersed in the same hymn. Praise of deeds especially involves mythology, but this does not function as a narrative principle as often as one might expect. First of all, Indra is the only god provided with a robust and varied mythology, which consists in a number of narratives about Indra’s overcoming of several enemies. The Vṛtra myth, in which Indra slays the serpent Vṛtra (“Obstacle”) that had been confining the waters, and the Vala myth, in which he opens up the cave named Vala that had been confining the cows, are the two main narratives with Indra as principal character. However, even these two very famous myths are only alluded to in the hymns, and do not make up a consistent narration. Stories are never told from the beginning to the end in the ṚV, but are simply alluded to, by mentioning the names of their characters, by formulas associated with the story (e.g., *áhann áhim* ‘he slew the serpent’ in the case of the Vṛtra myth), or by selecting one vivid episode from the narrative (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 128-129).

Despite its fragmentary nature, praise of divine deeds is far from rare in the ṚV and, continuing with Indra’s example, most of the hymns dedicated to him mention the Vṛtra and/or Vala exploits, and many of his other victories are also alluded to. Other gods have their definitory narration, such as the Aśvins’ daring rescues and healing of the sick and Agni’s concealment in the waters. Gods are also celebrated for their cosmogonic activities, such as the separation of two world-halves and the placing of the sun in the sky again by Indra, or by Mitra and Varuṇa. Finally, praise of deeds needs not be limited to mythological or cosmogonic deeds, but it can be directed to the activities of deified natural elements, such as the Maruts, the gods of the thunderstorm who bring the rain, Dawn and Savitar (‘the impeller’, representing the sun before sunrise) who awaken all creatures.

Praise of attributes is probably more pervasive in the ṚV than praise of deeds. Two very common types of intangible attributes are power and mental acuity (wisdom, insight, and discernment). On the other hand, praise of physical attributes varies considerably from god to god, because some Vedic gods lack a physical presence: take for instance divinities representing the social reality, such as Mitra (‘ally’/‘contract’) and Varuṇa (the guardian of *ṛtá*- ‘truth’). Gods of natural elements have the appearance of that element, though provided with anthropomorphic features. For

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<sup>187</sup> Compare this pattern with the one recognized in Ancient Greek hymns, which consist of *invocatio*, *pars epica*, and *precatio* (Ausfeld 1903: 505 ff., Furley 2010: 122 ff; cf. invocation, argument, and petition in Bremer 1981: 194-196). In this tripartite pattern, the *invocatio* involves naming and praising the deity, the *pars epica* recalls past divine aid and past sacrifices or other reasons why divine favor should be granted (in which case the term “argument” is more appropriate), and finally the *precatio* contains a petition on behalf of the community.

instance, the goddess Dawn (Uṣas) is depicted as a beautiful woman revealing her lovely body in the early light of day (cf., e.g., ṚV 5.80.4-6).

While praises of attributes such as those dedicated to Dawn constitute the more lyrical sections of the ṚV, requests to the gods usually come in a rather straightforward way. Ṛgvedic poets seem indeed to feel no need for indirect speech acts, and employ direct, 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular imperative: *daddhi* ‘give!’, *ava* ‘help’, *ā gahi* ‘come here!’. As a result, the request portion of a hymn, especially if it comes at the end of the hymn, is generally less poetically elaborate than the parts containing praises and descriptions (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 138-139). Sometimes, the poets use more deferential expressions and refer to their own hopes and desires in the optative mood (cf. ṚV 10.89.17 *vidyāma sumatīnām nāvānām* ‘might we know your new favors’) or make their requests more subtly. For instance, an expression like *rāyāḥ syāma rathyò* ‘may we be charioteers of wealth’ (ṚV 2.24.15) refrains from using imperatives and introduces the beloved image of the chariot (on which see Chapter 9.3.1).

## 2b. Structures and types of Ṛgvedic hymns

The type of praises just described can be embedded in various structures. Brereton’s and Jamison’s (2020: 140) approach to the interpretation and translation of the ṚV is to consider each hymn as a composition in its own right, rather than as a collection of loosely linked verses and to seek structure and coherence even when the hymn may seem to lack them. According to this view, it is possible to recognize thematic and formal criteria in the organization of a hymn.

Starting with thematic organization, the most common way to provide a hymn with a linear structure is to make it conform to the sacrificial model. This includes an invitation to the gods to attend the sacrifice, the divine journey toward the sacrificial ground and, eventually, the god’s epiphany. A hymn can contain all these elements or focus on one of them and elaborate on the theme. The progress through the sacrifice also serves frequently as organizational device and the organization can be quite strict, as in some hymns that follow an ordered series of oblations (cf. the Praūgaśāstra in 1.2–3, 2.41 or the Ṛtugrahas in 1.15, 2.36–37; Brereton and Jamison 2020: 141-142). More often the ritual progress of a hymn is less precise, as in the case of the dawn sacrifice: this is first signaled by the approach of the goddess Dawn, the rising of the sun and the kindling of the ritual fire, and then presents the gods who receive the offerings at the Morning Pressing and the distribution of the priestly gifts, or *dakṣiṇās*.

Turning to formal means of organization, repetition is one of the simplest and most effective ways to impose structure. It can be as straightforward as repeating the same word (cf. ṚV 7.35. where, in 13 verses out of 15, every *pāda* begins with the word *śám-* ‘luck, weal’) or more flexible (cf. the



first hymn of the ṚV, whose first five verses open with a form of *agni-* in four different grammatical cases). Repetition also appears at the end of verses in the form of refrains, or at the end of hymns as family signature (cf. the Gṛtsamada refrain of *maṇḍala* II ‘May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes’; for a thorough discussion of simplex and complex repetition in Ṛgvedic hymns, see Macedo 2010).

A different kind of repetition is found in the phenomenon of ring composition, which consists in repeating at the end, either verbatim or with some variation, the material found at the beginning of hymn or section. In fact, this kind of structure frequently demarcates smaller segments in a hymn and guides the interpretation of apparently sprawling hymns. If repetition of the outer verses defines and focuses on the center which contain the message of the hymn, the structure is called *omphalos* structure (see Jamison 2004; 2007: 80-89). Some examples of *omphalos* hymns are the famous cosmogonic hymn 10.129 (see Brereton 1999), dramatic presentations like the Vasiṣṭha-Varuṇa hymn 7.86, and hymns like 7.76 to Dawn, with a relatively conventional content.

Hymns are frequently structured as lists, with each item in the list occupying a single verse: in All Gods hymns, for example, each verse is dedicated to a different god. Less often, the list structure combines with riddles withholding the characters until late in the verse or hymn: cf. the so-called “weapon hymn” (ṚV 6.75), whose verses each describe a particular weapon of war, often in anthropomorphic and feminine terms, with the verse also containing the solution to the riddle.

Alternatively, hymns can be structured on numbers, as ṚV 2.39, which consists entirely of similes in which the Aśvins are compared to a series of paired items, or the Aśvin hymn ṚV 1.34 which, in contrast with the dual nature of these gods, is insistently dominated by the number ‘three’.

To conclude, some hymns are beyond the themes and structures dealt with so far. The so-called “philosophical” or “speculative” hymns reflect on the origin of cosmos (ṚV 10.129) or humankind (ṚV 10.90), on the performance of the ritual, and on the functions of poets and priests. Another famous genre is the *ākhyāna* or dialogue hymn, where a pair of speakers, generally divine or semi-divine, exchange verses with each other, often in an agonistic or lascivious way. See for instance the dialogue between the legendary seer Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā (ṚV 1.179), with Lopāmudrā urging her husband to stop work and have sex with her, or the dialogue between the nymph Urvaśī and her human husband Purūravas (ṚV 10.95, on which see Section 10.2.1).

Finally, some hymns were meant to accompany domestic rituals (later known as *grhya*) such as marriage or funeral; see for instance the funeral hymns in the Yama cycle (ṚV 10.14-18) and the wedding hymn ṚV 10.85. Both the funeral hymns and the wedding hymn have parallel versions in the AV. Of a different kind are a number of short hymns in the late tenth book, which consist of private spells of Atharvan style against potential threats or enemies or for the accomplishment of

pending actions: cf. the spell against miscarriage in RV 10.162 or for successful conception in RV 10.183 and 10.184.

## 9. Ṛgvedic similes: mappings and conventionality

In Chapter 4, we have seen that simile and metaphor differ in a number of respects. First, while metaphor is mainly a conceptual figure, simile is essentially a figure of speech consisting in an explicit form of comparison; however, unlike literal comparison, simile is figurative, making unexpected connections between literally unlike concepts. Second, while metaphor is characterized by syntactic flexibility and by implicitness in the expression of the relation between source and target domain, simile requires individuation of both domains and an explicit link between them; furthermore, like literal comparison, simile often contains a parameter which specifies the intended relation between source and target concepts. Third, while conceptual metaphors prompt open mappings, similes tend to highlight a single salient property in the two domains. Finally, as a consequence of their explicit nature, similes can only elaborate on previously mentioned referents or relations, and not introduce new ones. Therefore, similes are mainly employed for description and elaboration.

In their turn, similes consist of a varied set of expressions, which can be categorized based on the grammatical constructions that instantiate them, on the type of mapping that they trigger (essentially broad- vs. narrow-scope mapping), and on their degree of conventionality.

In this chapter, I will focus on similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* attested in the ṚV, analyzing the kind of mappings that they trigger (9.1), their interaction with other figurative expressions (9.2), and their conventionality (9.3).

An analysis of this type is necessary for two main reasons. From the point of view of Vedic studies, such analysis should show that tools taken from Cognitive Linguistics can be used in tandem with traditional philological practice for a profound understanding of the texts in question. In fact, an analysis of similes in terms of frames and mapping between them can help us to systematize our knowledge of these expressions in terms of form, meaning, and relationship with the cultural milieu that produced them. From the point of view of studies on figurative language, a corpus-based study such as this one should respond to the need, repeatedly reported in the literature (see e.g. Moder 2008), to rely less on researcher-generated examples and more on the evidence taken from real texts. In fact, as argued also by Israel et al. (2004) regarding the inter-translatibility of simile and metaphor, researcher-generated examples may be misleading and lead to conclusions that are not always consistent. A corpus study, on the other hand, allows us to analyze naturally occurring examples of similes and to study them in their discursive context.

## 9.1 Broad- and narrow-scope similes

In Chapter 4.1.3, we have seen that, integrating a discourse-based approach with aspects of Blending Theory, Moder (2008) introduced a distinction between narrow-scope and broad-scope similes, based on the scope of their mapping. Broad-scope similes cue extended mappings and typically need the so-called elaboration after the *like* clause to suggest the preferred mapping. See for instance example (22) in Chapter 4, repeated here as (14):

- (13) a. *The location of El Paso-Juarez on one of the world's super highways of dope smuggling, produces a reality which is like those 3-D pictures of Jesus.*  
b. *It changes, depending on your perspective.*

(Moder 2008: 315)

On the contrary, narrow-scope similes specify the attribute or dimension relevant for mapping and are therefore restricted in their interpretation, denoting resemblance or comparison (14). Thus, narrow-scope similes employ internal material in order to guide the correct mapping, whereas in broad-scope similes it is the context that elaborates the relational mapping in a specific way.

- (14) *Governor Engler stood smiling at the door like the proud father at a wedding reception.*

(Moder 2008: 312)

### 9.1.1 Broad-scope similes

As we have seen in Chapter 6.1.1.2, predicative similes of the type *A is like B* are quite rare in the R̥V. Out of a sample of about 500 similes that were manually analyzed for the kind of mapping that they trigger, only eighteen have this form. Of these, five similes involve a conventional mapping to father-and-son or mother-and-son relationships, such as *A is like a father to B*, and thus cannot be defined as having a broad scope. Among the remaining occurrences, some are broad-scope similes whose preferred mapping is suggested by the linguistic context or by world-knowledge about the standard of comparison. Example (15) contains an elaboration much like those discussed by Moder (2008). We probably lack knowledge of the extra-linguistic context that inspired the simile, but thanks to the elaboration *dāmanvanto adāmānaḥ* 'bindings without bonds' we can hypothesize that calves were tied with softer ropes so as not to harm their tender skin, or that the rope was long enough to allow them some movement (on this simile, see Chapter 10.2.3).

- (15) *śácīvatas te puruśāka śākā*  
*gávām iva srutāyaḥ saṃcāraṇīḥ*

*vatsānām ná tantáyas ta indra*  
*dāmanvanto adāmānaḥ sudāman*

‘The abilities that belong to you, the able one, o you of many abilities, are converging like streams of cattle. They (are) like cords for calves, Indra, binding without bonds, o you of good bonds [/gifts].’

(ṚV 6.24.4)

The simile in example (16) is paradoxical at first sight: Agni, the god of fire and fire itself, is compared to the first drink in the middle of a desert. The elaboration *iyakṣáve pūráve* ‘for Pūru who seeks to attain you’, however, suggests that what Agni and water in a wasteland have in common is that they are eagerly desired: the hemistich is part of the first verse of the hymn and immediately follows the invocation of the god. Finally, example (17) contrasts the unfathomable reactions of Varuṇa with those of the more reliable Mitra, but the simile comparing Mitra with ‘a signal-call to the gods’ becomes clearer only two verses later (vs. 8): there, the poet makes the hopeful assertion that Mitra, along with Aditi and Savitar, will in fact report the poet’s message to Varuṇa and declare him blameless.

(16) *prá te yakṣi prá ta iyarmi mánma*  
*bhúvo yáthā vándiyo no háveṣu*  
*dhánvann iva prapá asi tvám agna*  
*iyakṣáve pūráve pratna rājan*

‘You are like the first drink in a wasteland, o Agni, for Pūru who seeks to attain (you), you age-old king.’

(ṚV 10.4.1cd)

(17) *kīm svin no rájā jagrhe kád asya*  
*áti vratám cakṛmā kó ví veda*  
*mitrás cid dhí śmā juhurāṇó devāñ*  
*chlóko ná yātām ápi vájo ásti*

‘Why has king (Varuṇa) grasped [/complained about] us? What commandment of his have we transgressed? Who fully understands? For Mitra, even when angry [/moving crookedly], is like a signal-call (going) to the gods, also (like) the victory-prize of those driving (in chariots).’

(ṚV 10.12.5)

Sometimes, broad-scope similes are more difficult to spot because an element might be interpreted either as modifying the standard or as an attribute of the comparee, and in the latter case act as a parameter of comparison which guides the mapping. A case in point is example (18): Geldner (1951) takes *tānā* as a dual of the thematic stem *tāna-* modifying the dual *mitrā́* ‘two allies/Mitra (and Varuṇa)’, and translates it as ‘permanently allied’. Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) takes it as the instrumental singular of the root noun *tān-* indicating in this context the ‘(home) stretch’ of a racecourse. In Jamison’s interpretation, the simile has a broad-scope mapping with no elaboration to restrict it.

(18) *mitrā́ tānā ná rathiyā́*

*vāruṇo yás ca sukrātuḥ*

*sanāt sujātā́ tánayā dhṛtāvratā́*

1. Geldner (1951): ‘Die beiden sind dauernd verbündet wie zwei Wagenrosse, Mitra und der weise Varuna, die vor alters edelgeborenen leiblichen Söhne, die die Gebote aufrecht halten.’
2. Jamison and Brereton (2014): ‘They are like two charioteers along the (home) stretch (of a racecourse), the two allies [=mitras], Mitra and Varuṇa, who is of strong will, both well-born descendants from of old, whose commandments are upheld.’

(ṚV 8.25.2)

### 9.1.2 Narrow-scope similes

Narrow-scope similes mostly consist in single comparisons providing vivid examples of the kind of event depicted in the comparee. A very vivid image is for example the one contained in the following passage, from the famous frogs’ hymn ṚV 7.103. The simile describes an estivating frog that is caught by the arrival of the rain season as it lies (*śáyānam*) in a dried-out pond ‘like a dried leather bag’ (*dṛtiṃ ná śúṣkam*). When rain comes to them, the frogs start croaking all together and the noise (*vagnúr*) they make is compared with the ‘bellowing of cows with their calves’ (*gávām ná māyúr vatsínīnām*).

(19) *divyā́ āpo abhí yád enam áyan*

*dṛtiṃ ná śúṣkam sarasī́ śáyānam*

*gávām áha ná māyúr vatsínīnām*

*maṇḍúkānām vagnúr átrā́ sám eti*

‘When the heavenly waters have come to him, lying like a dried leather bag in the pond, like the bellow of cows with their calves, the call of the frogs comes together here.’

(ṚV 7.103.2)

Also due to the lack of a verb in the standard, narrow-scope similes usually provide immediate images. See for instance the series of similes in (20), especially those in *pādas* a and b, which describe Agni passing over (*āti eti*) the wide earth like a snake (*stegó ná*) and blowing like the wind (blows) away mist (*míham ná vāto*).

- (20) *stegó ná ksáam áti eti pṛthvīm*  
*míham ná vāto ví ha vāti bhūma*  
*mitró yátra váruṇo ajyámāno*  
*agnír váne ná ví ásṛṣṭa sókam*

‘Like a snake [?], he passes over the wide earth; as wind (blows) away mist, he blows across the land, where, being anointed as Mitra and as Varuṇa, like a fire in the forest, he has let loose his flame.’

(ṚV 10.31.5)

Sometimes the standard is enriched with details and goes beyond the boundaries of a dimeter as in (21)cd or occupies an entire trimeter as the *jagatī* in (22)a. The effect of the latter derives in part from details which do not map onto the target: the condition of a single woman who remains by her parents does not contribute to the hearer’s understanding of the poet imploring the god, but probably amplifies a feeling of expectation and of urgency because the woman is getting old and will soon no longer be suitable for marriage.

- (21) *śatānīkeva prá jigāti dhṛṣṇuyá*  
*hánti vṛtrāṇi dāśúṣe*  
*girér iva prá rāsā asya pinvire*  
*dátrāṇi purubhójasah*

‘Like (a missile) with a hundred facets he (Indra) advances boldly. He smashes obstacles for the pious man. Like the juices [=streams] of a much-nourishing mountain his gifts swell forth.’

(ṚV 8.49.2)

- (22) *amājúr iva pitaróh sácā satí*  
*samānād ā sadasas tvám iye bhágam*  
*kṛdhí praketaṁ úpa māsi ā bhara*  
*daddhí bhāgám tanúvo yéna māmáhaḥ*

‘Like a woman aging at home, remaining with her parents, from our common ritual seat, I beg you to be our Fortune. Make a visible sign, give us a measure, and bring it here. Give a portion to me myself by which you will show your readiness to give.’

(ṚV 2.17.7)

Double comparisons characterized by gapping structure (Chapter 6.1.1.1; Chapter 7.2.2) may also trigger a narrow-scope mapping. For instance, the relevant dimension of comparison in example (23) is the speed with which the milk used for the preparation of soma (here metonymically referred to as *gāvo* ‘cows’) has run toward (*abhí adhanviṣur*) the waters used in the same preparation: this movement is vividly compared to that of waters going along a slope (*āpo ná pravātā yatīh*).

(23) *abhí gāvo adhanviṣur*

*āpo ná pravātā yatīh*

‘The cows have run toward (them), like waters going along a slope.’

(ṚV 9.24.2ab)

Israel et al. (2004: 133) employ narrow-scope similes to illustrate the function of simile as a figure of description and elaboration. They argue that the images provided by such similes may evoke a complex cluster of properties, including both attributes like speed in (21)a and abundance in (21)cd, and relations like expectation in (22). Yet they serve a descriptive rather than conceptual function in that they do not prompt a structural mapping between source and target: it would be difficult to argue that there is a structural mapping being triggered between fire (*agnī*) and a snake (*stegó*) beyond their way of proceeding, and indeed no inference seems to be licensed beyond the specific quality evoked (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 145). Broad scope similes, on the other hand, appear to add structure to the target domain, as metaphors do. They may do this by explicit subsequent mapping using language consistent with both source and target domains (cf. ‘bindings without bonds’ above) or by projecting world knowledge or contextual knowledge into a blend with the source domain.

### 9.1.3 Analogical mapping

The distinction between broad- and narrow-scope similes does not exhaust the types of mappings that we can find in Ṛgvedic similes. In fact, similes characterized by gapping structure, that we have seen to be so numerous in the ṚV, develop what we could call an analogical mapping between the source and the target domain. Analogy may be defined as a matter of structural resemblance, rather than property resemblance as in narrow-scope similes: in other words, analogy is based on the target A



holding a structural relation to an element C that resembles the structural relation between the source B and a fourth element D (de Mendoza Ibáñez 2020: 25). What similes with gapping do is bring two or more elements of the source domain into the foreground and grammatically align them with elements of the target domain. With this alignment of structural relations within the two domains, the simile develops an analogical structure that maps relations both within and between source domain and target domain (Harding 2017: 19). Consider example (24):

(24) *ā yāḥ sūvar ná bhānūnā*

*citró vibhāti arcīṣā*

*añjānó ajárain abhí*

‘Who, like the sun with its radiance, shines forth bright with his flame, anointing himself with his own unaging (flames).’

(ṚV 2.8.4)

In this example, the comparison is between Agni (the ritual fire) and the sun, and the explicit parameter of comparison is the way they shine (*vibhāti*) with their flame and light respectively. Thus, the entities (Agni and sun), their physical attributes (*bhānūnā* ‘radiance’ and *arcīṣā* ‘flame’), and the shared parameter (shining) are the analogically aligned counterparts of the target domain and source domain.

Often, mapping of relations within and between the two domains occurs because the relationship that holds between two elements of the target is conceptualized in terms of the relationship between two elements of the source. In these cases, which are the most numerous in the corpus, the elements of the simile scaffold on top of other figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, and personification (Israel et al. 2004; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014). Similes whose parameter is based on metaphor or other figures will be the topic of the following section.

## 9.2 Similes and other figurative expressions

In a monograph on similes in Sanskrit literature, Gonda (1949) notes that in a number of similes the verb of the standard seems to have been transferred onto the comparee: in fact, in these cases the verb is used metaphorically, as shown in example (25) from the *Mahābhārata* and in (26) from the ṚV. The latter employs the terminology of weaving (*samvāyantī* from *sám* √*u-* ‘interweave’, *tántum tatām* ‘stretched thread’) to describe the preparation of sacrifice, as is usual in the ṚV, and describes Dawn and Night as *vayyā* ‘weavers’. Thus, the verb *sám* √*u-* is used literally with the standard, but metaphorically with the comparee.

(25) *vyadhamat pāṇḍavānīkam abhrānīva sadāgatih*  
 ‘He blew away (i.e. dispersed) the army of the Pāṇḍavas [...] as the wind the clouds.’ (Gonda 1949, §58)

(Mbh. 7.8)

(26) *sādhū āpāmsi sanātā na ukṣitē*  
*uṣāsānāktā vayīveva ranvitē*  
*tāntuṃ tatām saṃvāyanī samīcī*  
*yajñāsya péśaḥ sudūghe páyasvatī*

‘Strengthened of old for us, Dawn and Night, like happy weavers on target at their labors, jointly interweaving the stretched thread, the ornament of the sacrifice—the good milk-cows rich in milk.’

(RV 2.3.6)

In Chapter 3, we have seen that similes trigger different types of mapping than metaphor: while metaphors feature numerous, open cross-domain correspondences, non-predicative similes tend to highlight a specific salient property which applies to both domains.<sup>188</sup> Thus, similes are more like image metaphors, often mapping simple image structure. From this it follows that similes that are built on top of a metaphor cannot be analyzed in the same way as similes occurring alone.

Israel et al. (2004: 130-131) point out that, while simile and metaphor are conceptually and functionally distinct, they can and do operate in tandem. As we have said many times already, similes involve the individuation of two domains and the matching of shared properties across them; however, these matched properties may themselves be metaphorically structured. For instance, the comparison of wrath to water in (27) depends on the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS A HOT LIQUID IN A CONTAINER (Lakoff 1993: 241):

(27) *I will pour out my wrath like water.*

(Israel et al. 2004: 130-131)

Since so much of conceptual structure is in fact metaphorical, this sort of similes on top of conceptual metaphors is quite common. With respect to the figurativity of the parameter, we find at least two possible combinations:

<sup>188</sup> This difference in mapping can be observed in non-predicative metaphors and similes; recall that the difference between predicative metaphors and similes is, on the contrary, very subtle.

1. PAR must be read literally with both STAND and CPREE;  
 e.g. *stegó ná kṣáam áti eti pṛthvīm mīhaṁ ná vāto ví ha vāti bhūma*  
 ‘Like a snake [?], he passes over the wide earth; as wind (blows) away mist, he blows across the land.’ (ṚV 10.31.9)
2. PAR must be read literally with STAND, but takes a figurative meaning with CPREE;  
 e.g. *dhenúm ná tvā sūyāvase dúduḥṣann*  
 ‘Wishing to milk you like a milk-cow in good pasture.’ (ṚV 7.18.4)

If we focus on the frame evoked by the parameter, we note that similes of type 1 involve one single frame, whereas similes of type 2 involve two frames. Using integration networks (Fauconnier and Turner 2002; see Chapter 3.3) to represent the kind of mapping occurring in similes of different types should make the difference clear.

Frames represented in integration networks introduced in this chapter and in Chapter 10 are taken, when possible, from FrameNet (Ruppenhofer et al. 2016).<sup>189</sup> FrameNet is a lexical database of English containing examples of how words are used in actual texts. Based on Frame Semantics (Fillmore 1996, 1977ab, 1982, 1985; Fillmore and Baker 2001; see Chapter 3.1), FrameNet defines frames and annotate sentences to show how frame elements fit syntactically around the lexical unit that evokes the frame.<sup>190</sup> In the simplest case, the frame-evoking word is a verb, and the frame elements are its syntactic dependents. Take for instance the following example of the Apply\_heat frame (28), where *the boys* is the subject of the verb *grill*, *their catches* is the direct object, and *on an open fire* is a prepositional phrase depending on the verb (labels for the relevant frame elements are given in subscripts):

- (28) *The boys grill their catches on an open fire.*  
 [Cook the boys] ... GRILL [Food their catches] [Heating\_instrument on an open fire].

Besides verbs, lexical units can also be event nouns such as *retaliation* in the Revenge frame presented in (29), or as *asleep* in the Sleep frame in (30):

- (29) *This attack was conducted in retaliation for the U.S. bombing raid on Tripoli.*  
 [ Punishment This attack was conducted] [Support in] RETALIATION [ Injury for the U.S. bombing raid on Tripoli... ]

<sup>189</sup> <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/findrupal/>.

<sup>190</sup> <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/findrupal/WhatIsFrameNet>.

(30) *They were asleep for hours.*

[Sleeper They] [Copula were] ASLEEP [Duration for hours]

In my analysis, I represent different frames evoked by a simile’s parameter as the input spaces (IS) of an integration network. In each network, Input Space 1 (IS1) corresponds to the standard of the simile and Input Space 2 (IS2) corresponds to the simile’s comparee. In such cases where no relevant frame could be found in FrameNet, either because it was specific of Vedic or because it has not yet been annotated in the database, I relied on textual evidence for the identification of the relevant frame roles. One example is the Milking frame in Table 39, a frame which, although not unknown to English, certainly holds greater importance in the Vedic language and culture.

Table 38 shows the integration networks for a simile of type 1 (example (20), repeated here as (31)): in this example, the parameter *áti* √*i*- ‘pass over’ evokes the same frame, the Self\_motion frame, with both the standard *stégah* ‘snake’ and the comparee Agni. As we have seen for narrow-scope similes in the previous section, in this case the standard realizes a more salient frame element in the evoked frame: Input Space 1 maps the Manner element of the Self\_motion frame onto Input Space 2, that is, it maps the crawling of a snake onto the way fire proceeds over the land.

(31) *stegó ná kṣáam áti eti pṛthvīm*  
*mīham ná vāto ví ha vāti bhūma*

‘Like a snake [?], he passes over the wide earth; as wind (blows) away mist, he blows across the land.’

(RV 10.31.9ab)

**Table 38.** Integration network for similes of type 1 (RV 10.31.9)

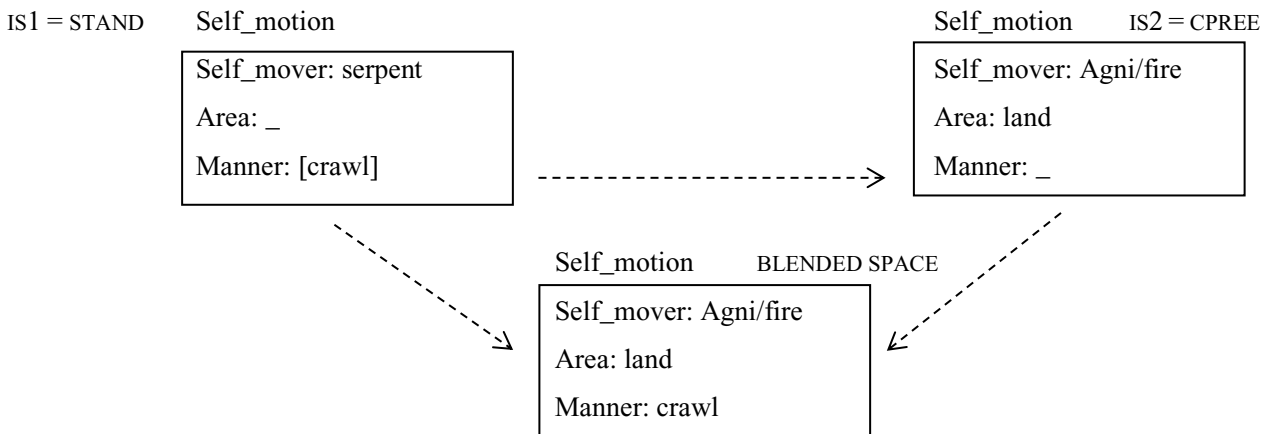


Table 39 shows the integration network for a simile of type 2, reported in example (32), *pāda* a. This time, the conceptual metaphor underlying the simile is responsible for the evocation of two different frames, namely the Milking and the Benefit frame. As shown by the network, systematic mappings hold between all frame elements of the two Input Spaces and are projected onto the Blended Space. The blend has emergent dynamics, which means that it can be “run”, while it maintains connections to the input spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 60).<sup>191</sup>

(32) *dhenúṁ ná tvā sūyāvase dūduḥṣann*

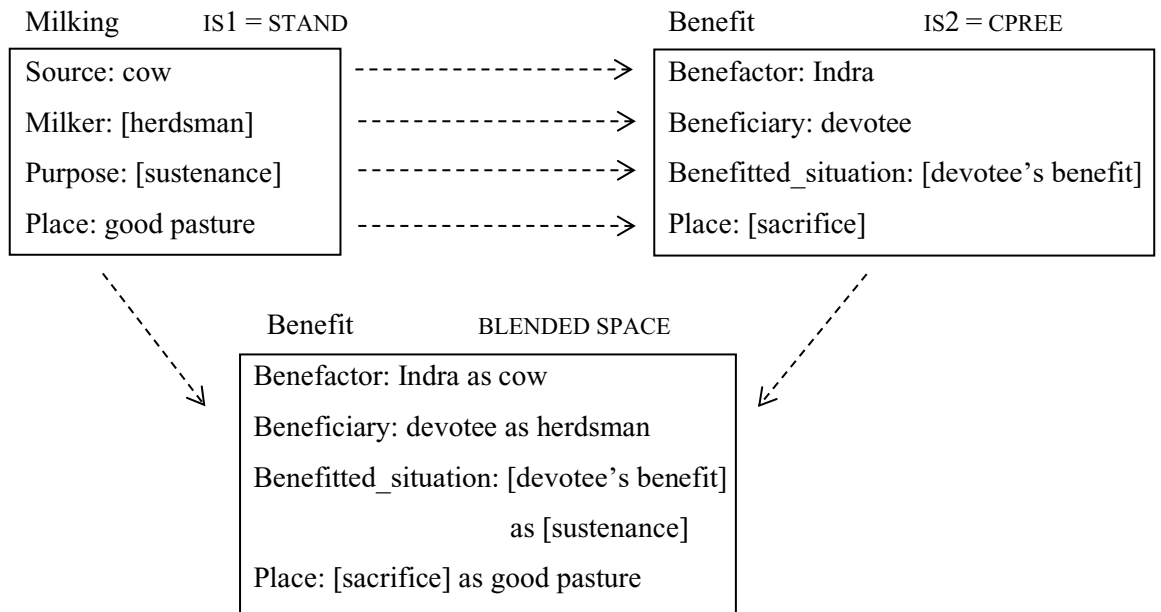
*úpa bráhmāṇi sasṛje vásiṣṭhaḥ*

*tuvám ín me gópatim víśva āha*

‘Wishing to milk you like a milk-cow in good pasture. I, Vasiṣṭha, have dispatched sacred formulations to you (Indra). Everyone says that you alone are my herdsman.’

(ṚV 7.18.4a-c)

**Table 39.** Integration network for similes of type 3 (ṚV 7.18.4)



<sup>191</sup> In ṚV 7.18, the blend is indeed “run” from verse 1 to 4. In verses 1 and 2, the poet establishes a connection between Indra and the cows, saying that in him ‘are the good milking cows, in you the horses, you are the best gainer of goods for one who serves the gods’; in verse 2, the poet goes on to ask Indra to ‘ornament our hymns with cows and horses’; finally, in verse 4 the relevant mapping between Indra and cows is made explicit by the verb *√duh-* ‘to milk’. In the following hemistich (*pāda* c), the perspective is reversed and, keeping the pastoral frame active, the poet now considers Indra his shepherd and himself a head of cattle. In this way, verse 4 presents Indra both as a source from which to benefit (*dhenúṁ ná* ‘like a cow’), and a protector who guides and protects men in their endeavors (like a *gópatim* ‘herdsman’). Note that ṚV 7.18 narrates the famous battle of the ten kings, in which King Sudās and his Bharata followers, with Indra on their side, defeat an alliance of ten kings; verses 1 to 4 ask for Indra’s help and gifts during the battle.

Note that the frame elements Milker and Purpose are not explicitly expressed in (32), but the evocation of a frame brings about the simultaneous evocation of all its elements (see Chapter 3.1). Since in the case of corpus languages we cannot rely simply on our world knowledge in order to know which frame roles are part of a frame, we must rely on phraseology. In this case, we know for instance that the frame evoked by the verb  $\sqrt{duh}$ - ‘to milk’ includes a human Milker because other similes, such as (33), make this element explicit (*go-dúhaḥ* lit. ‘cow-milker’). In (33), the Milking frame is evoked not by the verb of the simile ( $\sqrt{hu}$ - ‘to call’) but by a term instantiating the Milker role itself, and Milking seems to be the purpose of a Milker calling a cow who gives good milk (*su-dúghām*).<sup>192</sup> While for a core element such as the agent (in this case the Milker) relying on phraseology may seem superfluous,<sup>193</sup> for the so-called non-core elements, i.e. those elements that do not constitute an argument of the verb and are therefore not mandatory (Ruppenhofer et al. 2016: 23), this method gives good results. Take for example the simile in (34), where we see that cows are called in order to milk them and to get sustenance (*bhójase*; Purpose).

- (33) *yásya tvám indra stómeṣu cākāno*  
*vāje vājiñ chatakrato*  
*tám tvā vayám sudúghām iva godúho*  
***juhūmāsi** śravasyávaḥ*

‘In whose praises, Indra, you will take pleasure when the prize (is set), you prizewinner of a hundred resolves. Eager for fame, we call to you, as milkers call on a cow who gives good milk.’

(ṚV 8.52.4)

- (34) *ā tvā gīrbhír mahām urúm*  
***huvé gām iva bhójase***  
*indra sómasya pītāye*

‘I call you here with songs, you great and broad, like a cow to give sustenance, and to drink of the soma, Indra.’

<sup>192</sup> Cf. ṚV 6.45.7 ‘To the formulator whose vehicle is the sacred formulation (Indra), to the comrade worthy of verses do I call ( $\sqrt{hu}$ -) with my songs, as to a cow to be milked (*gām ná dohāse*).’

<sup>193</sup> In the case of  $\sqrt{duh}$ -, it is not even obvious that the frame includes a human Milker for the verb has two basic constructions, as in English: a causative one involving a human agent that makes the cow yield milk, and an anti-causative one involving just the cow and the milk (cf. Chapter 5.2; see also Jamison 1982). As for the roles, the root compound *go-dúh*- indicates the human milker, whereas the middle participle *dúhāna*- stands for the cow. Compare for instance the simile in (33), involving a *go-dúh*-, with the one in ṚV 10.149.4, involving a *dúhāna*: ‘Like a bellowing, benevolent milker to her calf (*vāśréva vatsám sumānā dúhānā*) let him come down to us’.

In Chapter 3.4.1, we have seen that image metaphors such as *hourglass waist* are motivated by different mechanisms than conceptual metaphors: they involve mapping specifically of image structure without involving any other structural mapping beyond the image similarity (Lakoff and Turner 1989; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 59-60). Example (35) contains a simile based on an image metaphor. The hemistich introduces a hymn dedicated to the rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī which flow parallel to each other. In this example, the verb  $\sqrt{hās}$ - ‘race’ is used to describe the flowing of the two rivers from the lap of the mountain as a competition between two mares<sup>194</sup> without bridle. The two rivers in their course share no other conceptual structure with the two mares competing with each other than the notion of speed, united perhaps to the image of a straight path that allows them to go faster. Therefore, there is no other mapping occurring beyond the image similarity.

(35) *prá párvatānām usatī upásthād*

*ásve iva vísite hásamāne ...*

*vípāṭ chutudrī páyasā javete*

‘Forth from the lap of the mountains, eager, racing with each other like two mares unloosed, resplendent, [...], the Vipāś and Śutudrī (rivers) speed with their milk (water).’

(RV 3.33.1)

Two other common figures on which similes rely are objectification (or reification) and personification. Objectification is an ontological metaphor which consists in reifying abstract concepts so as to offer a construal of our often agentive interaction with them (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 64). In (36), the simile identifies an abstract concept such as distress (*ámhas*-, whose basic meaning is ‘narrowness’) with a rope tied around a calf’s neck. Accordingly, freeing the worshippers from distress is compared to the act of removing the cord from the calf’s neck.

(36) *ápo sú myakṣa varuṇa bhiyásam*

*mát sámraḷ ṛtāvó 'nu mā grbhāya*

*dāmeva vatsād ví mumugdhi ámho*

*nahí tvád āré nimīśas canése*

<sup>194</sup> The two proper names *vípāś*- and *śutudrī*- are feminine.

‘Unfasten fear from me, o Varuṇa! Hold me close, o truth-possessing, universal king! Like a rope from a calf, untie confining straits (from me), for I cannot be away from you even for the blink of an eye.’

(ṚV 2.28. 6)

Personification can be seen as the flip side of objectification in that it consists in attributing volitional behavior to abstractions and thus to represent the ways in which they have an effect on the speaker. One example is found in the lament of a poet whose patron has died and who is burdened with worries. To account for his feeling of being overwhelmed, he says that various discomforts scorch (*sám tapanti*) him like cowives (*sapátnīr iva*) and that worries gnaw at him (*vī adanti*) like mice at their tails (*múṣo ná śiśná*).

(37) *sám mā tapanti abhītaḥ*  
*sapátnīr iva pársavaḥ*  
*nī bādhate ámatir nagnátā jásur*  
*vér ná vevīyate matīḥ*  
*múṣo ná śiśná vī adanti mādhiya*  
*stotāram te śatakrato*

‘They scorch me all about, like cowives, (like ailing) ribs. Inattention, nakedness, and exhaustion oppress me. Like mice their tails, the cares gnaw at me, your praiser, o you of a hundred resolves.’

(ṚV 10.33.2, 3ab)

Finally, a case like (38) can be explained as an example of simile built on synesthesia, that is the employment of vocabulary from one perceptual domain to describe phenomena in another perceptual domain, as in *sweet sound* or *sharp cheese* (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 60). In Vedic, the root  $\sqrt{arc}$ - can mean both ‘sing’ and ‘shine’, and the selection of one meaning over the other is not determined by composition with a preverb nor by specific morphological features (voice, aspect, etc.). Thus, when the verb is used intransitively,<sup>195</sup> its meaning can be ambiguous between ‘sing’ and ‘shine’, especially when it is referred to Dawn. Take for instance the simile in (38): while it is clear

<sup>195</sup> In the meanings ‘sing’ and ‘laud’, the verb takes two argument structures that are common to other verbs of honoring such as  $\sqrt{yaj}$ -,  $\sqrt{hu}$ -,  $\sqrt{stu}$ -,  $\sqrt{gar}$ -/gir-, and  $\sqrt{vand}$ -: either NomAccInstr, with the accusative of the lauded deity and the instrumental of means of lauding (e.g. ṚV 5.29.12), or NomAccDat, with the accusative of song and the dative of the lauded deity (e.g. ṚV 6.68.9).



that the root  $\sqrt{arc-}$  refers to female work-songs in the standard, it is ambiguous between ‘sing’ and ‘shine’ when referring to dawns in the comparee. The same happens with the derivative noun *arká-*, whose meaning is ambiguous between ‘song/hymn’ and ‘flash of lightning/gleam’ in some contexts like (39): in this passage about Bṛhaspati’s discovery of the cows that were entrapped in the Vala cave, *arkám* may either refer to the simultaneous discovery of poetry (see Introduction to Part 3) or may be interpreted as a gloss to *sūryam* ‘sun’, in the same way that *gám* ‘cow’ glosses *uṣásam* ‘dawn’ (Moncó Taracena 2004: 460).<sup>196</sup>

(38) *ārcanti nārīr apāso ná vistībhīh*  
*samānéna yójanenā parāvātaḥ*  
*iṣam váhantīḥ sukṛte sudānave*  
*viśvéd áha yájamānāya sunvaté*

‘They (the dawns) chant [/shine] like women busy with their labors, (coming always) along the same route from afar, conveying refreshment to the man of good action [=sacrificer], the man of good gifts, the man who sacrifices and presses soma all the days.’

(ṚV 1.92.3)

(39) *bṛhaspátir uṣásam sūriyam gám*  
*arkám viveda stanáyann iva dyaúḥ*

‘Bṛhaspati found the dawn, the sun, the cow, (found) the light [/chant] while he was thundering like heaven.’ (adapted from Moncó Taracena 2004: 460)

(ṚV 10.67.5)

Moncó Taracena (2004: 459) sees the ambiguity that arises in certain context as a strong argument against the hypothesis of two homonymous roots and argues that it constitutes a case of polysemy. Since the comparison with other IE languages suggest that ‘sing’ was the original meaning of the root  $\sqrt{arc-}$ , and since this is also the only meaning conserved in classical Sanskrit,<sup>197</sup> Moncó Taracena (2004: 461) suggests that the polysemy attested in the ṚV may be motivated by synesthesia and represent a poetic usage of the word which did not survive in later periods. This interpretation of sacred composition not only as perceptible by the ear (cf. *śrutyam bráhma* ‘formulation to be heard’ in ṚV 1.165.11), but also by the eye (cf. *stómam ... dīśīkam* ‘a praise song worthy to be seen’ in ṚV 1.27.10) is in line with the notion of knowledge as vision already presented in the introduction to Part

<sup>196</sup> Recall that the cows freed from the Vala cave are also referred to as dawns, which would be a further argument for interpreting *arkám* as ‘light’.

<sup>197</sup> In Classical Sanskrit, the verb was secondarily specialized in ‘honor, praise’.

3.<sup>198</sup> This direction of mapping from sound to sight is also in line with tendencies observed in synesthetic metaphor both in poetic (Ullmann 1959) and in ordinary (Williams 1976) language, namely that synesthetic transfers tend to move from lower to higher sensory modalities, as follows: touch → taste → smell → sound → sight.<sup>199</sup> Turning to our simile in (38), it seems reasonable to believe that the verb *arcanti* here evoked two distinct frames for the Vedic audience: the appearance of Dawn with her brightness as well as the work songs that gave rhythm to women’s work.

In many cases, similes evoke more complex mapping because the standard itself involves rich inferences that go beyond the specific frame evoked by the parameter. This is what happens with a family of around 120 similes that take cows or cows and their calves as standard. In the ṚV, cows entertain a series of correspondences with various entities of the natural, ritual, and human sphere, which are thoroughly listed by Jamison and Brereton (2020: 123-125). As we have seen in the case of the Vala-myth (introduction to Part 3), the first rays of light at dawn are homologized to cows. This association maps both physical and behavioral properties of cows onto those of dawn: cows are reddish in color like light at early morning, and they go out to pasture at dawn. Cows are also equated to waters: this happens in the description of storms (cf. ṚV 5.53.7 ‘The rivers have flowed forth like milk-cows.’), but especially with regard to the waters confined by the demon Vṛtra and released by Indra. In the great Indra-Vṛtra hymn ṚV 1.32, the waters released by Indra ‘like bellowing milk-cows, streaming out, went straight down to the sea’. Cows also have a ritual association, for the milk mixed with the soma juice is metonymically referred to as a herd of cows. Finally, we have seen a connection between cows and poetry in the Vala-myth and we find it in numerous other passages, both within (40) and outside similes (41). As suggested by Jackson (2014: 108), this identification of poetry with cows is ultimately a connection between poetry and wealth: cows stand metonymically for wealth, which in the ṚV has its major instance in cattle, and poetry is the means by which the poet ensures wealth for his patron and for himself.

(40) *ā tvā gīro rathīr iva*  
*āsthuh sutēsu girvaṇah*  
*abhi tvā sām anūṣata*

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<sup>198</sup> The one of poetry as perceptible by the eye is a common topic in Greek choral lyric, instantiated by expressions such as *phaennās opós* ‘shiny voice’ (Pind. *P.* 4.283) or *hýmnoi flégontai* ‘hymns burn’ (Bacch. *Pae* 4.80; Schmitt 1967; listed in Massetti 2019: 219 ff.). See also the related notion of ‘shining fame’ discussed in Barnes (2013) and instantiated, e.g., by *lámpei ... kléos* ‘flame shines’ (Pind. *O.* 1.23), *kléos dédorke* ‘id.’ (Pind. *O.* 1.95).

<sup>199</sup> In fact, Williams (1976) breaks the sense of sight into color and dimension and shows that dimension words may transfer to color or sound while color and sound words trade metaphors (see also Yu 2003: 21-22).

*indra vatsám ná mātárah*

‘Like a charioteer (his chariot), the songs have mounted you at the pressings, o you who long for songs. In unison they have bellowed to you, Indra, like mothers to their calf.’

(ṚV 8.95.1)

(41) *evā no agne amṛteṣu pūrvīya*  
*dhīs pīpāya bṛhāddiveṣu mānuṣā*  
*dúhānā dhenúr vṛjāneṣu kārāve*  
*tmánā śatīnam pururūpam iśāṇi*

‘In this way, o foremost Agni, (hymnic) vision swells for us among the immortals dwelling in lofty heaven through the human (lifespans)—(a vision like) a cow giving milk to the bard in the (ritual) enclosures, (bringing) by herself multiform (prizes) in hundreds at her impulsion.’

(ṚV 2.2.9)

This series of associations between cows and other entities is expressed linguistically by means of similes, but also by means of the so-called hypocatastasis. In his typology of figurative expressions, de Mendoza Ibáñez (2020: 23) defines hypocatastasis as a “referential use of metaphor whose source domain fully substitutes for the target domain, which remains implicit, on account of the ability of the former to provide the functional equivalent of an elaborate definite description of the latter”. As a well-known example, de Mendoza Ibáñez mentions the representation of the devil as a serpent in the *Genesis*. Going back to the ṚV, hypocatastasis is nothing but a cognitive definition of what is known as *bandhu* ‘bond, connection’, that is the systems of identifications which is so pervasive in Vedic culture.

The possibility of referring to different entities through words that stand for cow (*gó-* ‘cow’, *dhenú-* ‘milk-cow’, *vāśrá-* ‘the bowling one’, and *mātṛ-* in association with *vatsá-* ‘calf’) has the consequence of triggering very rich mappings even when the simile contains a simple image metaphor. We find an example in the first verse of ṚV 3.33, the hymn to the two rivers. After comparing the flow of Vipāś and Śutudrī to a race between two mares, *pāda* c compares their confluence (Figure 45) to two mother cows licking (*√rih-*) each other:

(42) *prá párvatānām úsatī upásthād*  
*ásve iva vísite hāsamāne*  
*gāveva śubhré mātārā rihāṇé*  
*vīpāṭ chutudrī páyasā javete*

‘Forth from the lap of the mountains, eager, racing with each other like two mares unloosed, resplendent, licking each other like mother cows (their calves), the Vipāś and Śutudrī (rivers) speed with their milk.’

(ṚV 3.33.1)

A culture based on livestock as the Vedic one was certainly familiar with the licking behavior of cows. Cows lick each other around the head and neck to show affection and establish social bonds, and this happens especially with cows that have recently given birth: thus, the image of two mother cows licking each other seems to fit perfectly for two swollen rivers that run parallel to each other and eventually merge.

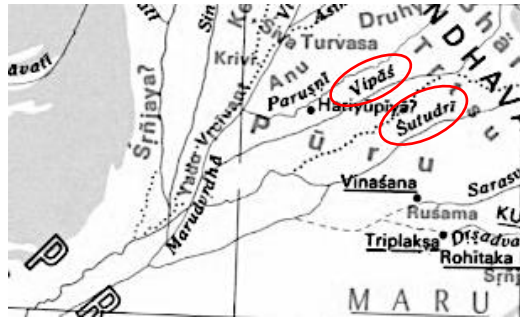


Figure 45. The course of the rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī (Schwartzberg Atlas 1992:13<sup>200</sup>)

As already noted, similes based on image metaphors like these would not normally involve rich inferencing. However, in other similes the verb  $\sqrt{rih}$ - ‘to lick’ takes a calf as object, thus suggesting that the calf might be part of the frame evoked by the simile in ṚV 3.33, too; take for instance the object *vatsām jātām* ‘newborn calf’ in example (43).

(43) *tuvām rihanti mātāro*  
*hārim pavitre adrúhaḥ*  
*vatsām jātām ná dhenāvah*  
*pāvamāna vidharmaṇi*

‘The mothers (waters), those without deceit, lick you, the tawny one, in the filter, as milk-cows do a new-born calf, o self-purifying one, at your expansion.’

(ṚV 9.100.7)

<sup>200</sup> <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=050>.

In fact, the topic of ṚV 3.33 allows us to see a connection between the affectionate behavior of two mother cows who lick the same calf and the affectionate behavior that the two rivers will show to the poet of this hymn (on which see Chapter 10.2.1). Note that the hymn contains several references to cows and that the poet makes explicit reference to the motherly behavior of Vipās and Śutudrī (44):

- (44) *áchā síndhum **mātṛtamām** ayāsaṃ  
vīpāśam urvīm̐ subhágām aganma  
yatsám iva mātárā samrihāné  
samānám yónim ánu saṃcárantī*

‘[Viśvāmitra:] I have driven to the most motherly river [=Śutudrī]; we have come to the broad, well-portioned Vipās – the two who are like mothers together licking their calf, proceeding together along the same womb [=riverbed].’

Finally, a more complex mapping may arise if, beside the parameter, other words are employed metaphorically within the comparee. Example (45) is a case in point:

- (45) ***prāvīvipad** vācā ūrmīm̐ ná síndhur  
gírah̐ sómah̐ pávamāno manīśāḥ  
antáḥ páśyan̐ vṛjánemāvarāṇi  
á tiṣṭhati vṛṣabhó góṣu jānán*

‘Like a river its wave, self-purifying Soma has sent the wave of speech pulsing forth, the hymns, the inspired thoughts. Looking within, he surmounts these communities here below, a bull among the cows, recognizing them.’

(ṚV 9.96.7)

This example was already introduced in Chapter 7.2.1.2 (example (20)), where we have seen that, although *ūrmīm̐* ‘wave’ belongs syntactically to the comparee, it must also be read with the standard. Now, the simile triggers two different mappings:

- a) in the ṚV, imbibed Soma inspires speech and poetic thought to the poets and poetical inspiration is conceptualized in terms of caused motion; for instance, Soma is said to ‘set in motion’ ( $\sqrt{ar-}$ ) speech in ṚV 6.47.3 and to ‘spur’ ( $\sqrt{hi-}$ ) it in ṚV 9.84.4 (Macdonell 1897: 109);

- b) speech is conceptualized as a liquid; this is a frequent topic in the ṚV, where songs reaching a god are compared to streams converging in the sea;<sup>201</sup>

As a result of the two mappings, in (45) Soma inspiring poetic speech is said to ‘send the wave of speech pulsing forth’ like rivers send forth their wave. Note that the blend between the different input spaces is reinforced by comparee and standard sharing the object *ūrmīm*, a phenomenon that we could call *formal blend* (Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 72).

### 9.3 Conventional and novel similes

In Chapter 4.2, I have introduced the distinction between conventional and novel similes. Moder (2008) was among the first to distinguish between conventional and novel similes on the basis of their frequency in a corpus. From her study, it emerges that broad-scope similes are often novel, whereas narrow-scope similes can be novel or conventional. Moder (2008: 306) also points out that the distinction between novel and conventional similes is not clear cut but forms a usage *continuum*. Any expression which occurs in the same meaning in multiple contexts can be considered to be conventional. Expressions which appear once should be checked against dictionaries and other corpora: if they do not appear in these other sources, they can be considered to be novel. An example of frequently recurring expression is *like sheep to slaughter*, which can be used in different context with the same meaning; a novel simile is *like a proud father at a wedding reception* in (46), used to describes Governor Engler’s way of standing smiling at the door:

- (46) But at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel this morning, Bush supporters were out in full force for a breakfast fund-raiser. Governor Engler stood smiling at the door ***like the proud father at a wedding reception***. Engler, however, shrugs off his yearlong effort.

(Moder 2008: 312)

For this study, I considered only Ṛgvedic similes, without checking whether an expression also occurs in the rest of Vedic literature. Furthermore, there are three characteristics of the Ṛgvedic corpus that cannot be overlooked when it comes to conventionality: a) when working with corpus languages, what is attested only once was not necessarily novel, but may simply not have been handed down to us; b) since the ṚV is a diachronic corpus, what was novel in one period may have become conventional at a later stage; conversely, what was conventional at an earlier stage may have been

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<sup>201</sup> Cf. ṚV 1.190.7, ṚV 6.36.3.

renewed in the following ones; c) the hymns of the ṚV are characterized by a very formulaic diction, which is a reflex of their originally oral nature: when it comes to similes, the notion of conventionality cannot be kept separate from the formulaic diction of the text.

Point a) does not deserve further elaboration but let us consider points b) and c) in more detail. As we have seen in Chapter 5.3, Pinault (1997a) takes the complementary distribution of the comparative particles *ná* and *iva* as a reflex of the two complementary principles of economy and extension. According to the principle of extension, every type of word, regardless of its length or ending, fits into the formulaic system of comparison in combination to either particle. Thanks to the principle of economy, only one form is available for expressing a given notion; take for instance the simile ‘like (a) (fighting) hero(es)’ in (47), which selects specific combinations of standard and standard marker, although other combinations (marked with \*) would have been equally possible:

(47) Simile ‘like (a) (fighting) hero(es)’:

NOM # *śúro ná yúdhyan* |  
*śúrā iva* |  
 never \*# *śúrā ná*  
 GEN *śúrasyeva* (< *śúrasya iva*) / *yúdhyataḥ*  
 never \*# *śúrasya ná yúdhyataḥ*

According to Pinault, younger generations of poets could create new variants of the formula, trying not to disrupt the established economy. Thus, what we get when looking at Ṛgvedic similes is a frozen picture of an evolving situation.

If we follow Moder’s (2008) definition of conventional simile as a simile that occurs with the same meaning in multiple contexts, *pitéva* (the *sandhied* form for *pitá*.NOM.SG *iva* ‘like a father’) certainly constitutes a good example. In the ṚV, it occurs fourteen times in the singular and four times in the dual (*pitáreva* = *pitárā iva*) and, whatever the parameter, it is used to describe the real or desired fatherly disposition of a god toward the devotee, as in (48) and (49):

(48) *pitéva naḥ śṛṇuhi hūyámānaḥ*  
 ‘Like a father, hear us when you are being called on.’

(ṚV 10.104.9d)

(49) *á daiviyā vṛṇīmahe ávāmsi*  
*bṛhaspátir no maha á sakhāyah*  
*yáthā bhávema mīlhuṣe ánāgā*

*yó no **dātā** parāvataḥ pitéva*

‘We choose divine help. Bṛhaspati holds himself ready for us here, o comrades, so that we might become without offense to the one who grants rewards, who is a giver to us from afar, like a father.’

(RV 7.97.2d)

As a consequence of the formulaic diction of the RV (see Chapter 5.4), however, similes tend to be distributed in what we could call formulaic networks, which include simple expressions, like *pitéva*, as well as more complex ones, and which allow for lexical and syntactic flexibility. This is exactly what we observe for the simile *pitéva*, which makes part of the series of similes involving ‘father and son’ identified by Pinault (1997a: 363) and presented in Chapter 5.3. The network is provided with some lexical and syntactic flexibility, for the word for son may be the thematic *putrá-* as well as the athematic *sūnú-* and nouns can come in different combination of cases. Furthermore, similes allow for extension, in that they may select both father and son as standard (cf. *pitéva sūnáve.DAT* ‘like a father to [his] son’) or add a new argument beside father or son (cf. *pitā putráṁ.ACC ná hástayoḥ.LOC.DU* ‘like a father his son in [his] hands’).

Looking at this series of similes, it becomes clear that the one between conventional and novel similes does not constitute a clear-cut distinction, but rather a *continuum*. To give some examples, *pitéva sūnáve.DAT* ‘like a father to his son’ (6x) can be considered conventional, just like *pitéva; putráyeva (putráya.DAT iva) pitárā.NOM.DU* ‘like parents their son’ (1x), on the contrary, introduces a variation in the lexical material (*putrá-* instead of *sunú-*) and modifies the plexity of the standard in accordance with that of the comparee (*pitárā.NOM.DU* instead of *pitā.NOM.SG*). Finally, a simile like *bṛhatīcino iva sūnáve ródasī* ‘like the two lofty world-halves for their son [=Agni]’, which also refers to a filial relationship between devotee and god, takes divine referents as standard and can be considered to be less conventional.

### 9.3.1 Networks of similes as the representation of complex events

A question that might arise at this point is what it means exactly that conventional similes have the same meaning in different contexts and whether this is only applicable to similes with identical standards (e.g. *pitéva*) or also to the other similes that make up the network (e.g. *pitéva sūnáve*). With regard to the ‘father and son’ group, Pinault observes that all similes belonging to this network are centered around some fundamental themes such as parental generosity, obedience, a father’s protection of his son, a son’s search for his father. Since, however, the present study on similes integrates a constructional approach with aspects of Blending Theory and Frame Semantics, the best



way to answer the first question is to also consider the other elements that make up the comparative construction, especially the parameter, and to see which frames such similes evoke. Furthermore, if we take conventionality to be a reflex of the formulaic diction that characterizes Ṛgvedic hymns, considering the entire comparative construction with its possible variants, and not just a series of standards expressed in a more or less regular meter reflects an idea of formulaicity that is more suited to the situation attested in the ṚV (cf. Chapter 5.4 on formulaicity in Ṛgvedic similes and in general).

In what follows, I will therefore analyze two networks of similes, including both their standard and their parameters in the analysis. I will argue that taking parameters into account helps detecting semantic connections holding between such similes that go beyond the lexical similarity. Indeed, the parameters of similes often encode subevents of complex events, which can be in turn subsumed under more complex frames.

### *The cow and calf network of similes*

Besides the ‘father and son’ series presented above, other networks of similes are those involving cow and calf, those involving a horse or a team of horses, or the sun as standard. The first network consists of 29 similes, which are also characterized by lexical and syntactic variation. Such similes may be considered part of a much larger network of 115 similes involving cow(s) alone, cows and their pen, a calf alone, and so on. Lexically, the cow is referred to by a relatively wide range of terms, such as *dhenú-* ‘milk cow’, *gó-* ‘cow’, *vāśrā-* ‘the bellowing one’, and *mātṛ-* ‘mother’, whereas the terms employed to refer to her baby are *vatsá-* ‘calf’, *śísu-* ‘baby’, and *pútra-* ‘son’. From the point of view of syntax, cow and calf can take different syntactic roles with respect to the parameter and accordingly come in different case forms (cf. *dhenúr.NOM ná vatsám.ACC* ‘like a milk-cow [her] calf’ and *vatsáso.NOM ná mātṛbhiḥ.INST.PL* ‘like calves with [their] mothers’). Finally, other elements may be added to the standard, as in the case of *vatsám.ACC ná svásareṣu.LOC.PL dhenáva.NOM* ‘like milk-cows in good pastures [their] calf’ (ṚV 8.88.1). A portion of the network, comprehending only double similes involving cow and calf is represented below in the form adopted by Pinault (1997a) for ‘father and son’ similes, which also accounts for their meter. One aspect that immediately catches the eye is that none of these standards occur more than three times with the same combination of lexical and syntactical features; more precisely, only *vatsám.ACC ná mātáraḥ.NOM* ‘like mothers a calf’ and *śísu.ACC in ná mātáro.NOM* ‘like mothers their baby’ have three occurrences, whereas all other combinations occur only once.

1. *dhenú-* ‘milk-cow’ *ná vatsá-* ‘calf’

# *dhenúr ná vatsám páyasā abhí* 10 11 12 #                      9.86.2cd

# *dhenúr ná vatsám / yávasasya pipyúṣī* #                      2.16.8ab

# 1 2 <i>vatsám</i> / <i>ná</i> / <i>svásareṣu dhenáva</i> #	2.2.2ab, 8.88.1cd
# 1 2 3 4   <i>sahávatsā ná dhenúḥ</i> #	1.32.9
# <i>vatsám jātám ná dhenávaḥ</i> #	9.100.7
# <i>vatsám gávo ná dhenávaḥ</i> #	6.45.28
# <i>abhí vatsám ná dhenávaḥ</i> #	9.13.7ab
2. <i>mātṛ-</i> ‘mother’, <i>vatsá-</i> ‘calf’	
# <i>vatsó ná mātúr</i>   6 7 8 9 <i>údhani</i> #	9.69.1b
# <i>vatsám iva mātārā</i> 8 9 10 11 #	3.33.3cd
# 1 2 <i>vatsám ná mātáraḥ</i> #	8.95.1, 3.41.5c, 6.45.25c
# 1 2 <i>vatsám ná mātṛbhiḥ</i> #	9.104.2a
# 1 <i>vatsá iva mātṛbhir</i> #	9.105.2a
# 1 <i>vatsáso ná mātṛbhiḥ</i> #	8.72.14b
# <i>gávo vatsám ná mātáraḥ</i> #	9.12.2b
# <i>vatsám ná mātā</i> 6 7 8 #	1.38.8b
# <i>vatsám ná pūrva āyuni</i> #	9.100.1cd
# <i>jātám</i> 3 4 5 ( <i>mātáraḥ</i> ) #	
3. <i>mātṛ-</i> ‘mother’, <i>śíśu-</i> ‘baby’	
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>śíśum ín ná mātáro</i> #	10.75.4a
# 1 2 <i>śíśum ná</i>   <i>mātārā</i> 9 10 11 #	7.2.5
# <i>sám mātṛbhir ná śíśur vāvaśānó</i> #	9.93.2
# 1 2 <i>śíśum ná mātārā</i> #	8.99.6
4. <i>gó-</i> ‘cow’, <i>vátsa-</i> ‘calf’	
# <i>vatsám gaúr iva</i> 6 7 8 #	10.145.6
# <i>vatsám gávo ná dhenávaḥ</i> #	6.45.28
5. <i>vāśrā_iva</i> ‘like a cow’ <i>vátsa-</i> ‘calf’	
# <i>vāśréva vatsám</i>   <i>sumánā dúhānā</i> #	10.149.4b
6. <i>dhenú-</i> ‘milk-cow’, <i>śíśu-</i> ‘baby’	
# <i>dhenúr ná śíśve</i>   <i>svásareṣu</i> 10 11 12 #	2.34.8
7. <i>gó-</i> ‘cow’, <i>śíśu-</i> ‘baby’	
# <i>śíśum ná gāvas</i> / <i>táruṇam</i> 9 10 11 #	1.186.7
8. <i>vāśra-</i> ‘bellowing (cow)’, <i>pútra-</i> ‘son’	
# <i>vāśrā putrám iva priyám</i> #	10.119.4

Similes belonging to the ‘cow and calf’ group take verbs belonging to different classes as parameter (Table 40). This suggests that such similes take part in different frames depending on the parameter with which they occur and that, as a consequence, they do not have the same meaning in different contexts as suggested by Moder (2008) for conventional similes.

**Table 40.** Verbs occurring in similes involving ‘cow and calf’.

DIRECTED MOTION	CALL, BELLOW TOWARD
$\sqrt{dhāv}$ - ‘run’	$\sqrt{nu}$ - ‘bellow’
<i>ānu prá</i> $\sqrt{dhāv}$ - ‘run forth after’	<i>abhí</i> $\sqrt{nu}$ - ‘bellow toward’
<i>abhí ní</i> $\sqrt{i}$ - ‘come down toward’	<i>abhí prá</i> $\sqrt{nu}$ - ‘bellow/call highly to’
$\sqrt{nakṣ}$ - ‘approach’, ‘come close to’	<i>abhí sám</i> $\sqrt{nu}$ - ‘bellow together to’
$\sqrt{arṣ}$ - ‘rush (toward)’	<i>abhí</i> $\sqrt{vāś}$ - ‘bellow toward’
<i>abhí ā</i> $\sqrt{vṛt}$ - ‘turn toward’	<i>vāśrá abhí</i> ‘bellowing to’
Ø <i>abhí</i> ‘toward’	( <i>vāśrá</i> ) ‘the bellowing one’
	( <i>sám</i> $\sqrt{vāś}$ -) ‘bellow together’
CAUSED MOTION	SOCIATIVE
$\sqrt{hi}$ - ‘impel’	$\sqrt{sac}$ - ‘accompany’
<i>úpa</i> $\sqrt{srj}$ - ‘release toward’	$\sqrt{śī}$ - ‘lie (next to)’
<i>sám</i> $\sqrt{srj}$ - ‘send together with’	<i>sám</i> $\sqrt{nas}$ - ‘pair off with’
LICK	SWELL
$\sqrt{rih}$ - ‘lick’	$\sqrt{pi}$ - ‘swell’
<i>sám</i> $\sqrt{rih}$ - ‘lick together’	

Similes in examples (50), (51), (52)a, and (52)b all have ‘cow and calf’ as standard: the first three similes have parameters that belong to different verb classes, while the parameters in (52)a and (52)b are both verbs of directed motion. Accordingly, similes in (50), (51), and (52)ab evoke different frames, whereas the two similes occurring with verbs of directed motion participate in the same frame.

In example (50), the Maruts – who in the R̥V are the embodiments of the thunderstorm, especially of the monsoon – swelling with rain (*iṣam* lit. ‘refreshment, drink’) are compared with a milk-cow swelling with milk. In both cases, this abundance is directed toward a beneficiary: these are the Maruts’ faithful devotee (i.e. *rātāhaviṣe* ‘the one who have bestowed oblation’) and the calves who will be breastfed as the cows come back from pasture. In this series of mappings triggered by the simile, the cow ‘in good pasture’ (*sv-ásareṣu*) are mapped onto the Maruts ‘of good drops’, or ‘of good gifts’ (*su-dānavaḥ*).

- (50)  $\sqrt{pi}$ - ‘swell’  
*yád yuñjáte marúto rukmávakṣaso*  
*ásvān rátheṣu bhága ā sudānavaḥ*  
*dhenúr ná śísve svásareṣu **pivate***  
*jánāya rātāhaviṣe mahīm iṣam*

‘When the Maruts with brilliants on their breasts yoke their own horses to the chariots for good fortune—they of good drops [/gifts]— as a milk-cow in good pastures swells for her young, they (make swell) great refreshment for the person who has bestowed oblations.’

(ṚV 2.34.8)

Example (51) compares the poets’ invocation to Indra to the bellowing of milk-cows in good pasture to their calves. The verb *abhí* √*nu*- ‘bellow to’ refers originally to the cow’s cry but can be employed with human and divine participants with the sense ‘pray highly to’. In this case, the locative adjunct *svásaresu* ‘in good pasture’ contained in the standard maps onto the instrumental *gīrbhír* ‘with hymns’ in the comparee.

(51) Emission verb *abhí* √*nu*- ‘bellow to’

*tām vo dasmám ṛtīśāham*

*vásor mandānám ándhasaḥ*

*abhí vatsám ná svásaresu dhenáva*

*índram gīrbhír navāmahe*

‘To him, the wondrous, vanquishing with his attack, becoming exhilarated from the good stalk, to Indra do we bellow with our hymns on your behalf, like milk-cows in good pastures to their calf.’

(ṚV 8.88.1)

Examples (52)a and (52)b describe motion events characterized by a different configuration of landmark and trajector. In (52)a, the trajector is represented by god Savitar moving toward humans. Savitar’s descent towards his devotees is compared to the return of different entities to their home or affections: cows to their village, a warrior to his horses, a husband to his wife and, again, a milk-cow to her calf. Although the parameter is represented by the motion verb *abhí ní* √*i*- ‘come down to’, we note the recurrent topic of the ‘bellowing’ cow (*vāśréva*) which is about to give milk (*dúhānā*). On his side, Savitar is invited to come down ‘bringing all desirable things’ (*viśvāvārah*).

In example (52)b, the god constitutes the landmark, towards which the poet’s songs are directed; in the standard, however, the relation between cow and calf remains unchanged and the former are described as approaching their baby, as in the previous example.

(52) a. Motion verb *abhí ní* √*i*- ‘come down toward’

*gāva 'va grāmam yūyudhir 'va ásvān*

*vāśréva vatsám sumánā dúhānā*

*pátir 'va jāyám abhí no ní etu*

*dhartā diváh savitā viśvāvārah*

‘Like cows to the village, like a warrior to his horses, like a bellowing, benevolent milker to her calf, like a husband to his wife—let him come down to us, the supporter of heaven, Savitar bringing all desirable things.’

(ṚV 10.149.4)

b. Motion verb  $\sqrt{nakṣ}$ - ‘approach’

*imā u tvā suté-sute*

*nákṣante girvaṇo girah*

*vatsám gávo ná dhenāvah*

‘These songs come near to you at every pressing, o you who long for songs, as milk-cows do their calf.’

(ṚV 6.45.28)

Examples (50) to (52)b should highlight a fundamental aspect of this network of similes: although different parameters evoke different frames (we could speak of Abundance or Expansion<sup>202</sup> frame for  $\sqrt{pi}$ -, of Communication\_noise<sup>203</sup> for *abhí*  $\sqrt{nu}$ -, and Arriving<sup>204</sup> for *abhí ní*  $\sqrt{i}$ - and  $\sqrt{nakṣ}$ -), all the evoked frames can be interpreted as parts of a bigger frame that we could call the Cow-calf relationship frame. In this frame, the main agent is always represented by the cow, whereas the calf instantiates the beneficiary (as in example (50)) or the goal of the action, as in the other examples.

The order with which I have presented the examples is not casual but is intended to highlight a certain chronological sequence that can be observed in the events. Indeed, while in (50) and (51) cows are said to be ‘in good pasture’ (*svásareṣu*), in (52)a the preverb *ní* suggests that they come ‘down’ from pastures to reach their calves. Furthermore, all examples refer not generically to cows (*gó*-), but to milk-cows (*dhenú*- lit. ‘the milking one’) that swell ( $\sqrt{pi}$ - in (50)), or give milk (*dúhānā* in (52)a).

<sup>202</sup> Abundance: <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/luIndex>;

Expansion: <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/frameIndex>.

<sup>203</sup> <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/frameIndex>.

<sup>204</sup> <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/luIndex>.

Adding example (53) to the list, the temporal sequence becomes clear: after having gone to pastures (*yávaseva gatvī*), cows swelling with milk (*páyasā*) go back to their calves in order to give milk (*duhīyad*).<sup>205</sup>

(53) √*duh*- ‘give milk’

*índrā yuvám varuṇā bhūtám asyá*

*dhiyáḥ pretārā vṛṣabhéva dhenóḥ*

*sá no **duhīyad** yávasā iva gatvī*

*sahásradhārā páyasā mahī gauḥ*

‘O Indra and Varuṇa—become the lovers of this insight, like bulls of a milk-cow. She should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams who has gone to the pastures.’

(ṚV 4.41.5)

The relationship between cow and calf consists of several characteristic actions (including swelling, bellowing, approaching the calves), each of which can be interpreted as a sub-event of a complex event that culminates with the cow feeding her calf.

Kövecses and Radden (1998: 51-52) include the relationship occurring between a complex event and its subevents<sup>206</sup> among metonymy-producing relationships, i.e., conceptual relationships which may give rise to metonymy. In fact, speakers often select “active-zone” subevents in order to refer to the whole event. A good example of this metonymic process was already provided by Lakoff (1987: 78-79): a question such as *How did you get to the party?* refers to a complex event but, in its most natural interpretation, it requests the addressee to select the most salient subevent. In English, the most salient subevent for ‘getting to the party’ is the central event of travelling accompanied by information on the means of transportation used; however, under certain conditions of relevance, the subevent *I have a car* may be chosen in order to refer for the whole event.

The relationship between event and subevent consists of two different types of metonymies depending on whether subevents occur in succession or simultaneously:

<sup>205</sup> Note, in passing, that textual evidence finds confirmation in the extra-linguistic reality: indeed, outside the modern farming system, calves naturally wean themselves around ten months and only then start going to pasture with adult cattle.

<sup>206</sup> Kövecses and Radden (1998) speak of *complex event ICM* (idealized cognitive model); on ICM, see Lakoff 1987. The *complex event ICM* belongs to the configuration called *whole ICM and its part(s)*, which subsumes different kind of whole-part relationships giving rise to metonymy.

- (54) a. SUCCESSIVE SUBEVENTS FOR COMPLEX EVENT  
 e.g. *They stood at the altar*: initial subevent for the whole wedding ceremony  
 e.g. *I have to grade hundreds of papers*: final subevent for the complex event of reading, correcting, and eventually grading students' papers
- b. CO-PRESENT SUBEVENTS FOR COMPLEX EVENT  
 e.g. *Mary speaks Spanish*: co-present with comprehension, reading and writing  
 (Kövecses and Radden 1998: 52)

Going back to our network of similes involving cow and calf, we can read the different events described in examples (50) to (52)b as “active-zone” subevents of a complex event (Table 41). Since cows are described as being ‘in good pastures’, we can assume an initial event a) ‘cows go to pasture’; afterwards, b) cows swells with milk for their calves, and c) move back towards them; in the meanwhile, d) they can bellow to their babies. Finally, e) cows give milk to their calves.

**Table 41.** Successive and co-present subevents of the complex event CALF FEEDING.

SUB EVENT	SUCCESSIVE/CO-PRESENT	Lexical Unit	Example
a) cows GO TO PASTURE	initial subevent	<i>svásareṣu</i>	(50), (51)
b) cows SWELL with milk	successive subevent	√ <i>pi-</i>	(50)
c) cows MOVE TOWARD calves	successive subevent	<i>abhí ní</i> √ <i>i-</i> ; √ <i>nakṣ-</i>	(52)a, (52)b
d) cows BELLOW to calves	co-present subevent	<i>abhí</i> √ <i>nu-</i>	(51)
e) cows GIVE MILK to calves	final subevent	√ <i>duh-</i>	(53)

In the system of mapping triggered by the similes, the moment of milking (final subevent) is mapped onto the reward given by the god to the devotee or onto praises that make the gods increase their power: that is, it represents some vital gain on the side of the beneficiary, be it milk, rain, or praises. Furthermore, it also applies to other situations depicted in the comparee. Take for instance example (55), which describes tributary rivers flowing into the Sindhu ‘like mothers to their young’. Similarly to what we have found in examples (51) and (52), here the motion verb *arṣanti* ‘they rush’ functions as the simile’s parameter, accompanied by the secondary predicate *vāśrā* ‘bellowing’. In this case, the final subevent of milking, to which a second simile *páyaseva dhenávaḥ* ‘like milk-cows with their milk’ makes explicit reference, is mapped onto the increase of the Sindhu’s flow thanks to the waters of its tributaries.

- (55) *abhí tvā sindho śísuṃ ín ná mātáro*  
*vāśrā arṣanti páyaseva dhenávaḥ*

*rājeva yúdhvā nayasi tvám it sícau*  
*yád āsām ágram pravátām inakṣasi*

‘To you, Sindhu, like mothers to their young, like milk-cows with their milk do they  
[=tributary rivers] rush bellowing.’

(RV 10.75.4ab)

The examples presented above never select the final subevent e), but only “active-zone” subevents that are mapped onto the gods swelling with goods (50), onto songs bellowing toward the gods (51), and so on. The event of milking is never represented because the reward of the god or the growth of the god thanks to the poets’ praises are only hoped for in the hymns but have not yet occurred. However, while the hymn selects one of the other subevents, the final subevent is always in the background: this is suggested for instance by the Maruts’ epithet *sudānavah* in (50), or by the adjective *viśvāvārah* ‘bringing all desirable things’ referred to Savitar in (52).

Although we may simply read all such actions as sub-frames of a bigger frame, the presence of a temporal sequence in the events is worth being noted, because it may mirror the cyclical nature of the actions represented in the comparees: like every day cows go to pasture and prepare to feed their calves, the action presented in the comparee should be repeated at every ritual.<sup>207</sup>

On a methodological level, this analysis allows us to formalize the *continuum* between conventional and novel similes: on the one hand, the most conventional similes will be those which, sharing a similar form, select different subevents of the same complex event. Halfway we will find those similes whose parameter describes an event that is not part of the complex event, but which

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<sup>207</sup> Note that the central subevents presented above all imply the cow’s recognition of her calf. This is a frequent motive in IE culture, where it stands for the preservation of the natural order of things. For instance, in the Hittite myth of Telipinu (on which see Chapter 4.3.1), chaos and devastation caused by the absence of the god are represented by the image of mothers not recognizing their babies (example i.); conversely, when the bee finds the hiding deity and brings him back to the other gods, order is restored, and cows recognize their calves again (example ii.; in both examples, GU<sub>4</sub> is the sumerogram for ‘cow’ and AMAR the one for ‘calf’). For a recent discussion of this myth and its IE parallels, see Ginevra (2019).

- i. UDU-*uš*=*za* SILA<sub>4</sub>-ŠU *mimaš* GU<sub>4</sub>=*ma* AMAR-ŠU *mimmaš*  
‘The ewe rejected her lamb. The cow rejected her calf.’

(KUB 17.10 + KBo 55.8 i 8-9)

- ii. *nu*=*za* *annaš* DUMU-ŠU *penništa* UDU-*uš* SILA<sub>4</sub>-ŠU *penništa* GU<sub>4</sub> AMAR-ŠU *penništa*  
‘The mother nurtured her child. The ewe nurtured her lamb. The cow nurtured her calf.’

(KUB 17.10 + KBo 55.8 iv 24-25)



belongs to the same complex frame. For instance, the verb  $\sqrt{rih}$ - ‘lick (together)’<sup>208</sup> occurs twice within ‘cow and calf’ similes. Take example (56):

(56) *tuvām rihanti mātāro*  
*hārim pavitre adrúhaḥ*  
*vatsām jātām ná dhenāvah*  
*pāvamāna vidharmaṇi*

‘The mothers (waters), those without deceit, lick you, the tawny one, in the filter, as milk-cows do a new-born calf, o self-purifying one, at your expansion.’

(ṚV 9.100.7)

In this example, waters mixing with soma are compared to mother cows licking their newborn calf. The participle *jātām* creates a bond between a ‘newborn’ calf and soma which, at the moment of mixing with the water into the wooden cup, has just been pressed and filtered. On their side, waters ‘lick’ soma as a sign of recognition and bond. Indeed, after a cow gives birth, she learns to recognize her newborn calf by sniffing and licking it. This bonding process takes place after the calf’s birth and therefore remains excluded from the complex event presented above, which instead occurs cyclically. However, the two events are connected because, in the process of licking her calf, the cow also commits to caring for it and protecting it. Furthermore, the subevents of calling or running towards her calf imply a recognition of the latter by the cow and are therefore closely linked with the initial bonding process. Thus, we may say that all these similes belong to a macro-frame Cow-calf\_relationship.

A simile describing a cow lying ( $\sqrt{śī}$ -) next to her calf may also belong to this frame, as is clear from example (57). However, this simile takes a different form, in that the standard consists of one single argument (*dhenúḥ* ‘milk-cow’) modified by the compound *sahá-vatsā* ‘with (her) calf’. The different syntactic configuration may be due to the fact that in the comparee Vṛtra, Dānu’s son and Indra’s most famous enemy, has been killed: thus, the attention shifts from the mother-child relationship to the mother alone.

(57) *\*nīcāvayā abhavad vṛtráputrā*  
*índro asyā áva vādhar jabhāra*  
*úttarā sūr ádharaḥ putrá āsīd*

<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, the compound verb *sām*  $\sqrt{rih}$ - ‘lick together, lick one another’, occurs once in ṚV 3.33.3 (see example (42) above). In this case, the two rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī are said to lick themselves ‘like mothers licking their young’.

*dānuḥ śaye saḥávatsā ná dhenúḥ*

‘The strength of Vṛtra’s mother ebbed; Indra bore his weapon down upon her. The mother was above; the son below: Dānu lies like a milk-cow with her calf.’

(ṚV 1.32.9)

Finally, the same verb can evoke a totally different frame, as in the case of example (58). Here, the verb √śī- ‘lie’ is used to compare the enemies lying on the ground (as in the previous example) to cows at slaughter. Given the novelty of this frame, the simile can be placed at the less conventional end of the network.

(58) *kārhi svit śá ta indra cetiyásad*  
*aghásya yád bhinádo rákṣa éṣat*  
*mitrakrúvo yác chásane ná gávah*  
*pṛthivyā āpṛg amuyā śáyante*

‘When will vengeance be yours, Indra, such that you will rend the demonic power of the evil one, which besets (us), and that those who bloody their allies will lie there like cows at slaughter, in the same way as (Vṛtra), embracer of the earth?’

(ṚV 10.89.14c)

To sum up, in this section I have suggested that the notion of conventional simile (Moder 2008) can be extended to similes involving similar standards but different parameters, as long as the latter form a coherent group. In the case of similes taking cow and calf as standard, we have seen that verbs belonging to different verb classes, and thus evoking different frames, can eventually be interpreted as “active zone” subevents of a complex event consisting in cows feeding their calves; in the comparee, this maps onto some increase on the side of the beneficiary, be it favorable climatic condition, material goods, praises, water, and so on. Other similes do not partake in the complex event CALF FEEDING but belong to the same macro-frame Cow-calf\_relationship. Finally, other similes evoke completely different frames. Thus, conventionality observed in the form of the standard is mirrored in the meaning conveyed by each simile in the network.

In the following section, I will apply the same analysis to similes involving a chariot.

### *The chariot network of similes*

Another series of very frequent similes takes chariots (*rátha-*), team steeds (*saptí-*), steeds (*átya-*), or horses (*aśva-*) as standards; often, the words for ‘steed’ and ‘horse’ are modified by the adjective

*ráthya-* ‘belonging to the chariot’ (cf. e.g. *sáptir ná ráthyo* ‘like a chariot span’ in RV 2.31.7d). A portion of the network, including only similes with *rátha-* as standard and consisting of 54 similes, is represented below. As is clear from the list, the group is characterized by lexical and syntactical flexibility: although the word for chariot remains stable, it can occur in different case forms (Nom *rátho*, *ráthā*, Acc. *rátham*, Loc. *ráthe*, Instr. Pl. *ráthair*), alone or accompanied by adjectives (*vājayú-* ‘prize-seeking’, *citrám* ‘brilliant’) and participles (e.g. *yātáḥ* ‘driving’, *hiyānáḥ* ‘being urged’, *vājayánto* ‘seeking the prize’). Furthermore, other elements can be included in the standard, such as the goal of the chariot (*vājam* ‘prize’, *sātīm ácha* ‘to a win’). In other cases, chariot makers are included in the standard, expressed by the words *táṣṭā* ‘artisan’ and *suápā* ‘id.’ (lit. ‘doing good work, skillful’), by a participle like *kránto* (*krántaḥ* ‘making’), or by a proper name like *bhṛgavo* ‘Bhṛgus’.

1. Nom (*rátho*.SG / *ráthā*.PL)

# <i>rátho ná yātáḥ</i>   6 7 8 9 10 #	1.141.8a
# <i>rátho ná vājam</i> / <i>sanīśyánn</i> 9 10 11 #	9.90.1b
# <i>rátho ná sásnir</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 #	3.15.5c
# <i>rátho ná rukmī</i> 6 7 8 9 10 #	1.66.6b
# <i>rátho ná mahé śávase yujānó</i> #	6.34.2c
# <i>rátho ná</i> 4 5 6 7 8 #	1.176.3c
# <i>rátho ná</i> 4 5   <i>sanáye hiyānáḥ</i> #	9.92.1b
# <i>rátho ná</i> 4 5   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	1.58.3c
# <i>rátha iva bhṛatī vibhváne kṛtā</i> #	6.61.13c
# <i>ráthā iva</i> 5   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	4.19.5b
# <i>ráthā iva</i>   5 6 7 <i>sātīm ácha</i> #	9.69.9b
# 1 2 <i>rátho ná</i> 6 7 8 #	8.84.1c, 8.19.8b
# 1 2 <i>rátho ná</i> / <i>bhuriṣāḷ</i> 9 10 11 #	9.88.2a
# 1 2 3 4 <i>ráthā iva</i> #	9.10.2, 9.10.1
# 1 2 3 4   5 6 7 8 <i>ráthā iva</i> #	7.74.6a
# 1 2 3 4 5 <i>rátho ná vājī</i> #	7.34.1b

2. Acc (*rátham*)

# <i>rátham ná durgād</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	1.106.1
# <i>rátham ná</i> 4 5 6 7 8 #	6.53.1, 10.143.1d
# <i>rátham ná citrám</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	3.2.15c
# <i>rátham ná gāvah</i>   6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	8.48.5b
# <i>ráthām iva</i> 5 6 7 8 #	8.12.3b
# <i>rátham iva</i>   5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 #	1.94.1b, 2.2.3ab

# <i>rátham ásvā ivāśávaḥ</i> #	10.119.3b
# <i>rátham 'váśvā   vājīna</i> 9 10 11 12 #	7.41.6d
# 1 2 <i>rátham ná   kúliśaḥ</i> 9 10 11 12 #	3.2.1d
# 1 2 <i>rátham ná   6 7 8 9 10 11 (12)</i> #	9.71.5a, 10.132.7b, 10.4.6d, 10.29.8c
# 1 2 3 4 <i>ráthāṃ iva</i> #	5.73.10c
# 1 2 3 4 5   6 7 8 <i>ráthāṃ iva</i> #	1.130.5b, 2.23.13cd

3. Loc (*ráthe*)

# <i>ráthe ná várma</i> 6 7 8 #	9.98.2b
# <i>ráthe ná pádam</i> 6 7 8 #	7.32.2d
# <i>hitā ná sáptayo ráthe</i> #	9.21.4c

4. chariot maker (Nom) + chariot (*rátham.ACC*)

# <i>rátham ná kránto ápasā bhurijor</i> #	4.2.14c
# <i>rátham ná dhīraḥ   suápā</i> 9 10 11 (12) #	1.130.6b, 5.29.15d, 5.2.11b
# <i>rátham ná táṣṭeva tátsināya</i> #	1.61.4b
# <i>rátham ná 4 5   karaṇā</i> 9 10 11 12 #	1.119.7b
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>bhṛgavo ná rátham</i> #	4.16.20b
# 1 2 3 4   <i>bhṛgavo ná rátham</i> #	10.39.14b

5. prize-seeking (*vājay-/vājayú-*) or prize-winning chariot (*rátha-*)

# <i>vājayató ráthāṃ iva</i> #	1.130.5c
# <i>vājayánto ráthā iva</i> #	9.67.17b
# <i>ráthair iva   5 6 7 vājayádbhiḥ</i> #	5.60.1c
# <i>ráthā iva 5 vājīnaḥ</i> #	9.22.1b
# 1 2 <i>rátho ná vājayúḥ</i> #	5.10.5d

6. prize seeker (*vājay-/vājayú-*) + chariot (*rátham.ACC*)

# <i>vājayánn iva 6 ráthān</i> #	2.8.1
# 1 2 3 4 5   <i>vājayúr ná rátham</i> #	2.20.1b

Similes belonging to the ‘chariot’ group take verbs belonging to different classes as parameter (Table 42) and therefore evoke different frames, as we have seen for the ‘cow and calf’ network.

**Table 42.** Verbs occurring in similes taking *rátha-* ‘chariot’ as standard.

CAUSED MOTION	MOTION / CHANGE OF POSITION
<i>prá √bhṛ-</i> ‘bring forward’	<i>√i-</i> ‘go’

<i>prá</i> √ <i>cuḍ</i> - ‘spur forward’	<i>prá</i> √ <i>yā</i> - ‘journey forwards’
√ <i>hi</i> - ‘spur’	√ <i>rñj</i> - ‘advance straight’
<i>prá</i> √ <i>hi</i> - ‘spur forward’	* <i>pári</i> √ <i>bhṛ</i> - ‘encompass’/‘travel around’
√ <i>srj</i> - ‘release’	√ <i>sthā</i> - (INJ.PRS) ‘mount’
√ <i>srj</i> - <i>achā</i> ‘release toward’	á √ <i>sthā</i> - (IMPV.PRS) ‘mount’
<i>pári</i> √ <i>srj</i> - ‘release around’	ádhi √ <i>sthā</i> - (IND.PF) ‘ascend, mount’
á √ <i>vah</i> - ‘carry toward / here’	PRAISE
<i>abhi</i> √ <i>vah</i> - ‘carry toward’	úpa √ <i>stu</i> - ‘praise’
* <i>niṣ</i> √ <i>par</i> - ‘lead out, rescue’	<i>upastútyā</i> ‘to be praised’
** <i>úd</i> √ <i>yam</i> - ‘lift up’	<i>anumádiya</i> ‘to be praised’
CREATION	<i>védiyam</i> ‘to be known’ > ‘very famous’
√ <i>kṛ</i> - ‘make’	COVER
√ <i>kṛ</i> - <i>návam</i> ‘make new’	** <i>abhi</i> √ <i>vṛt</i> - ‘cover, deck’
√ <i>takṣ</i> - ‘assemble’	** <i>pári</i> √ <i>vyā</i> - (REFL) ‘cover, deck’
<i>sám</i> √ <i>inv</i> - ‘to put together’	TIE
<i>sám</i> √ <i>hi</i> - ‘put together’	<i>sám</i> √ <i>nah</i> - ‘knot, tie together’
<i>sám</i> √ <i>mah</i> - ‘bring about’	√ <i>yuj</i> - ‘yoke’
<i>sám</i> √ <i>ar</i> - ‘bring about by joining’	PUT
( <i>sútaṣṭo</i> ) ‘well assembled’	á √ <i>dhā</i> - ‘put’
UNDO	POSSESSION
<i>ví</i> √ <i>varh</i> - ‘rip apart’	√ <i>naś</i> - ‘reach, obtain’
EMISSION	OTHER
√ <i>svan</i> - ‘resound’	* <i>darśatám</i> ‘lovely to see’
	<i>tveṣa</i> ‘impetuous’

As is clear from Table 42, standards containing the word *rátha*- most often occur with verbs of motion and, especially, of caused motion; verbs of creation (plus one verb of undoing) are also frequent in this group of similes, followed by expressions of praise and by verbs of covering and tying. Finally, we find one verb of putting, one of possession, and one emission verb.

As in the case of events encoded by ‘cow and calf’ standards, events described by standards including the chariot can be interpreted as subevents of a complex event. The complex event in question can be called CHARIOT COMPETITION. This is intended as a pivot term for two events of primary importance for Vedic culture: a) chariot races (*ājí*-<sup>209</sup>) and b) conquering expeditions (*gáviṣṭi*-lit. ‘desiring cattle’) held on war chariots (Mucciarelli 2017: 173). Table 43 reports the subevents selected by the various similes belonging to the network, the lexical units through which they are encoded, and some relevant examples. As is clear from the first column, and as will be clear from the examples below, all subevents are compatible with both the complex event of the ritual race and with

<sup>209</sup> The word *ājí*- will be employed later as a technical term for the ‘ritual race’, but in the ṚV it conveys the general meaning of ‘race’ or ‘battle’.

battle performed on chariots; for instance, both events culminate in the winning of prizes or booties and the word *vājam* in subevent i) can stand for both the prize of a race or for the battle booty. The only exception is represented perhaps by subevent h) since enemies' chariots are more likely to be ripped apart (*vi √varh-*) in a war context.

Note that the order of the subevents does not necessarily correspond to the one presented in the table; the only fixed points are the initial subevent a), which consists in the construction of the chariot, and the final subevent j), which consists in obtaining the victory prize and to which subevent i) can be added. While some events can be interpreted as taking place after one another, others can occur simultaneously to other subevents (see e.g. subevents b and g).

**Table 43.** Successive and co-present subevents of the complex event CHARIOT COMPETITION.

SUB EVENT	SUCCESSIVE/CO-PRESENT	Lexical Unit	Example
a) artisan BUILDS chariot	initial subevent	$\sqrt{kṛ-}$	(59)
b) prize-seekers PRAISE chariot	co-present subevent	$\acute{u}pa \sqrt{stu-}$ $anumádiya$	ṚV 2.8.1 ṚV 6.34.2
c) men YOKE chariot	successive subevent	$\sqrt{yuj-}$	ṚV 6.53.1
d) men IMPEL chariot	successive subevent	$\sqrt{hi-}$ $\sqrt{sṛj-}$	(60) (61)
f) chariot DRIVES forth	successive subevent	$prá \sqrt{ya-}$	(62)
e) horses CONVEY chariot	successive subevent	$\acute{a} \sqrt{vah-}$	(63)
g) chariot RESOUNDS	co-present subevent	$\sqrt{svan-}$	ṚV 9.10.1
h) enemies' chariots RIPPED APART	successive	$vi \sqrt{varh-}$	ṚV 2.23.13
i) chariot CONVEYS men to prize	successive subevent	$abhí \sqrt{vah-}$ $vājam$	(64) (53)
j) men OBTAIN prize	final subevent	$\sqrt{naś-}$	(65)

In what follows, I will provide some examples of similes involving the chariot and explain in which way the event selected by the standard can be interpreted as an “active zone” subevent of the complex CHARIOT COMPETITION. For each example, I will also explain the set of correspondences holding between standard and comparee.

The one of building a chariot (subevent a) is probably not the first action that comes to mind if we think of a chariot competition. However, let us consider example (59). The simile in *pādas* a and b is an instance of the conceptual metaphor POETIC COMPOSITION IS CRAFTSMANSHIP (see introduction to Part 3); indeed, the Āyus are said to have just composed a formulation for Indra like artisans fashion a chariot. The aim of their speech is made explicit in the following *pādas*, where the god is said to be adorned ( $\sqrt{sūmbh-}$ ) like a prize-seeking horse at the contests for prizes, like a steed for winning riches (*sātāye dhānā*). Thus, the speech in example (59) represents Indra's vehicle,

through which he will succeed in his enterprises. In the introduction to Part 3, we have seen that poetry is believed to increase the gods' power and to enable them to undertake their deeds.

(59) *imám te vácám vasūyánta āyávo*  
*rátham ná dhīrah suápā atakṣiṣuḥ*  
*sumnáya tvám atakṣiṣuḥ*  
*śumbhánto jéniyam yathā*  
*vājeṣu vipra vājīnam*  
*átyam iva śávase sātáye dhánā*  
*viśvā dhánāni sātáye*

‘This speech have the goods-seeking Āyus fashioned for you [Indra], like a clever artisan a chariot—they have fashioned you for favor, adorning (you), you inspired poet, like a thoroughbred, prize-seeking horse at the contests for prizes, like a steed for power, for winning riches—for winning all riches.’

(ṚV 1.130.6)

Beside supporting gods in their enterprises, poetry is compared to a chariot in the ṚV because, just as a chariot brings booty from war or prize from a race, poetry carries goods from the gods to humans.<sup>210</sup>

Subevent d) is most often selected by similes taking the soma juices as comparee. Take for instance example (60), in which the pressed soma juices running between the priest's hands are compared to propelled chariots. These similes are very frequent in book IX, dedicated to Soma Pāvamāna (‘self-purifying’) and entirely concerned with the soma sacrifice. Sometimes, the prize (*vājā*) is identified with the gods to which soma is offered, as in (61). Furthermore, besides being compared with chariots, soma juices poured into the wooden cups can be compared with team steeds in a race (cf. e.g. *hitó ná sáptir* ‘like a team spurred on’ in ṚV 9.70.10).

(60) *hinvánāso ráthā iva*  
*dadhanviré gábhastiyoh*  
*bhárāsaḥ kārīṇām iva*

‘Being propelled like chariots, they have run between the two hands (of the priest). Their takings are like those of decisive victors.’

(ṚV 9.10.2a)

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Jamison and Brereton (2020: 169), where the same argument is extended to sacrifice.

(61) *ásṛgran devávītaye*  
*vājayánto ráthā iva*

‘They have been released to pursue the gods, like chariots seeking the prize.’

(ṚV 9.67.17ab)

Example (62) selects subevent e) and describes soma juices on their way to the god comparing them to chariots proceeding (*prá* √*ya-*) to victory; this time, the victory (*sātīm*) is identified with Indra, ‘the best soma drinker’ (*soma-pātāmā*).<sup>211</sup>

(62) *eté sómāḥ pávamānāsa índram*  
*ráthā iva prá yayuḥ sātīm ácha*

‘These self-purifying soma juices have gone forth to Indra, like chariots to a win.’

(ṚV 9.69.9ab)

Alternatively, chariots may be depicted as being conveyed by horses (subevent f). In example (63), the Dawns are said to bring Bhaga with them, like horses convey a chariot. ṚV 7.41 is a hymn devoted to the acquisition of wealth; in this hymn, distribution of wealth is ascribed to Bhaga, the god of Fortune, whose name also means ‘portion’. Clearly, Bhaga is compared to a chariot because he, like a chariot, brings wealth to men; on the other hand, the Dawns are compared to horses conveying a chariot because their appearance determines the Morning Pressing and the distribution of the priestly gifts.

(63) *sám adhvarāya uśáso namanta*  
*dadhikráveva sūcaye padāya*  
*arvācīnám vasuvidam bhágam no*  
*átham 'váśvā vājína ā vahantu*

‘The Dawns (will) jointly bow in reverence to the ceremony, like Dadhikrāvan to the gleaming footprint [=sacrificial ground]. Like prizewinning horses a chariot let them convey the goods-finding Bhaga here in our direction.’

(ṚV 7.41.6d)

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<sup>211</sup> Note that the identification of Indra with the win is made even more explicit in this verse. Indeed, if the analysis of discontinuous standards proposed in Chapter 7.2.1.4 is correct, the dislocated element *sātīm ácha* ‘to a win’ can be interpreted as belonging both to the standard, where it represents the chariot’s goal, and to the comparee, where it functions as an apposition of *índram* ‘Indra’.



Finally, similes can select the final stages of the complex event (subevents i and j), as in examples (64) and (65). In (64), Agni is said to convey men to victory's prize because he, bringing the oblation to the gods through his smoke, ensures men the due reward. In example (65), Soma has obtained all things of value and is thus compared to a chariot that has won the contest. Note that, as in the case of similes involving cow and calf, the final subevent is hardly represented in the network, because victory's prize is wished for by the poets, but not yet obtained.

- (64) *áchidrā śárma jaritaḥ purúṇi*  
*devám áchā dđdiyānaḥ sumedhāḥ*  
*rátho ná sásnir **abhí vakṣi vājam***  
*ágne tuvám ródasī naḥ suméke*

Your shelters are many and unbreakable, o singer [=Agni?]. As one very wise, shining up to the gods, like a winning chariot convey (us) to victory's prize. Agni, (convey) us to the well-supported world-halves.

(RV 3.15.5c)

- (65) *eté víśvāni vāriyā*  
*pávamānāsa āśata*  
*hitā ná sáptayo ráthe*

'Diese Pavamana's haben alle begehrenswerten Preise erlangt wie die an den Wagen gelegten Gespanne.' (Geldner 1951)<sup>212</sup>

(RV 9.21.4c)

To sum up, similes whose standard involves a chariot (*rátha-*) can take verbs belonging to several different classes as parameter and thus evoke different frames. Nevertheless, events described by such verbs can all be interpreted as subevents of a complex event CHARIOT COMPETITION, be it a chariot race or a conquering expedition. Although each of the examples presented above selects a different subevent among those listed in Table 43, the whole complex event is always evoked thanks to the employment of shared phraseology, involving especially references to a prize or to victory. Such references may be found within the standard, as in the case of the goals *vājam* 'prize, booty', *sātim ácha* 'to a win, victory', and of the modifiers *vājayú-* 'prize-seeking' and *vājayánt-* 'seeking the

<sup>212</sup> As in other cases in the Soma hymns, *hitā-* is ambiguous, belonging either to  $\sqrt{dhā-}$ , hence 'placed', or to  $\sqrt{hi-}$ , hence 'impelled'. Both Geldner (1951) and Renou (1955) opt for 'placed', which works better with the Loc. *ráthe*. Jamison and Brereton (2014), on the other hand choose 'impelled': 'These self-purifying ones have obtained all things of value, when propelled like the team on a chariot.' (see also Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*).

prize’, or in other elements of the verse, as in the case of *sātáye dhánā* ‘for winning riches’ in example (59), or the second simile *bhárāsaḥ kārīṇām iva* ‘their takings are like those of decisive victors’ (60).

Some of the verbs listed in Table 42 refer to contexts other than chariot races which, using a Vedic term, can be subsumed under the complex frame *carátha*\_life (‘life on the move’; cf. Mucciarelli 2017). For instance, the verb of caused motion *níṣ* √*par-* ‘lead out, rescue’ evokes another frame frequently associated with the chariot in the ṚV. In the context of the semi-nomadic existence of the *carátha* life (‘moving’), the chariot provides more than an instrument for war and contests: as an instrument to move, it has the ability to ‘go through’, and in this sense, it helps men across difficulties (Mucciarelli 2017: 173). This use of *rátha-* is exemplified in (66), in which the poets ask several gods to help them through narrow straits (a metaphor for difficulties).

(66) *índram mitráṃ váruṇam agnīm ūtáye*  
*márutam śárdho áditim havāmahe*  
*rátham ná durgād vasavaḥ sudānavo*  
*vísvasmān no ámhaso níṣ pipartana*

‘Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, the Maruts’ troop, and Aditi do we call upon for help. – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.’

(ṚV 1.106.1)

To the same frame of the nomadic life belong similes taking cover verbs such as *abhí* √*vṛt-* ‘cover, deck’ and *pári* √*vyā-* ‘cover, deck’, whose standards describe men decking themselves within the chariot (cf. ṚV 9.98.2 and ṚV 1.176.3)

Finally, chariots are frequently associated to sun gods such as the Aśvins, Sūrya and Savitṛ, a connection that traces back to the IE imagery of the sun as a wheel carried through the sky by a horse (von Schroeder 1916: 65-69; Mucciarelli 2017: 174). The verb *úd* √*yam-* ‘lift up’ in example (67) most likely refers to the chariot belonging to one of such solar deities, which lifts him up to the sky in the morning. Similarly, ṚV 9.94.3 describes a chariot ‘encompassing’ (*pári* √*bṛh-*) ‘all worlds’ (*bhúvanāni vísvā*), just like the Sun’s chariot does. The adjective *darśatám* ‘lovely to see’ in (68) also probably refers to the Sun’s shimmering chariot (*rátham citráṃ*), since this god is himself said to be *darśatá-* in other passages.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>213</sup> Cf. ṚV 9.101.12; *dṛśé* ‘to be seen’ in ṚV 10.60.5 and ṚV 6.29.3. However, given the importance attributed by Vedic culture to the art of building chariots, we cannot exclude that *darśatám* generically refers to a well-built (*sútaṣṭo*, cf. ṚV 7.34.1) or well-decorated (cf. the verb √*śumbh-* in example (59)) chariot.

(67) *ún mā pītā́ ayāmsata*  
*rātham ásvā́ ivāsávaḥ*  
*kuvít sómasyā́pām íti*

‘The draughts have lifted me up, like swift horses a chariot. – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!’

(ṚV 10.119.3)

(68) *mandrāḿ hótāraḿ śúciḿ ádvayāvināḿ*  
*dāmūnasaḿ ukthīyaḿ viśvácarṣānim*  
*rāthaḿ ná citrāḿ vápuṣāya darśatām*  
*mānurhitāḿ sādāḿ id rāyá́ īmahe*

‘The delighting Hotar, the blazing one free of duplicity, the lord of the household, worthy of hymns and belonging to all lands, like the shimmering chariot [=the sun?], lovely to see for his beautiful form, the one placed by Manu, do we ever beseech for wealth.’

(ṚV 3.2.15c)

#### 9.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the kind of similes attested in the ṚV, analyzing the kind of mappings that they trigger (9.1), their interaction with other figurative expressions (9.2), and their conventionality (9.3).

In Section 9.1, we have seen that broad-scope similes cue extended mappings and sometimes contain an elaboration much like those discussed by Moder (2008) in order to suggest the preferred mapping. These similes are rarer in the ṚV than narrow-scope ones. Narrow-scope similes, presented in Section 9.2, mostly consist of single comparisons providing vivid examples of the kind of quality or event depicted in the comparee; sometimes, however, the standard is enriched with details and goes beyond the boundaries of a dimeter providing details which do not map onto the comparee. Double comparisons characterized by a gapping structure may also trigger a narrow-scope mapping, but they more often involve analogical mapping (Section 9.3) between source and target domain: analogy may be defined as a matter of structural resemblance, rather than property resemblance as in narrow-scope similes.

In Section 9.2, we have seen that, while simile and metaphor are conceptually and functionally distinct, they can operate in tandem. When similes are scaffolded on the top of other figurative expressions, the parameter must be read literally with the standard, but takes a figurative meaning with the comparee. In such cases, the simile evokes two frames and the mapping occurring between them can be represented by means of integration networks (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Frame representations can be taken from FrameNet (Ruppenhofer et al. 2016) or created from scratch when

they are specific to Vedic; in both cases, frame elements belonging to a given frame should be determined on the basis of textual evidence. In such similes, systematic mappings hold between all frame elements of the two Input Spaces and are projected onto the Blended Space; the blend has emergent dynamics, which means that it can be “run”, through several verses. Besides conceptual metaphor, similes can combine with other figurative expressions such as image metaphor, metonymy, and synesthesia.

Finally, in Section 9.3 I have explored the notion of conventional simile. We have seen that, according to Moder’s (2008) definition, any expression which occurs in the same meaning in multiple contexts can be considered to be conventional. Since hymns of the R̥V are characterized by a very formulaic diction, when it comes to similes, the notion of conventionality cannot be kept separated from the formulaic diction of the text. Although we find truly conventional similes such as *pitéva* ‘like a father’ (14x), similes tend to be distributed in formulaic networks, which includes simple and conventional expressions as well as more complex ones, which allow for lexical and syntactic flexibility. This makes one ask what it means exactly that conventional similes have the same meaning in different contexts and whether this is only applicable to similes with identical standards (e.g. *pitéva*) or also to the other similes that make up the network (e.g. *pitéva sūnáve*).

To answer his question, in Section 9.3.1, I analyzed two networks of similes and suggested that taking both standard and parameters into account helps individuating semantic connections holding between similes that go beyond the lexical similarity. More in detail, parameters of similes belonging to the same network often encode subevents of complex events (Kövecses and Radden 1998: 51-52), which in turn can be subsumed under more complex frames. Similes partaking in the same complex event belong to the conventional end of the conventionality *continuum*. If a simile’s parameter does not partake in the same complex event but can nevertheless be subsumed under the same complex frame, this simile occupies an intermediate position in the *continuum*; finally, if a simile evokes a completely different frame, it belongs to the less conventional end of the network.

## 10 The functions of Ṛgvedic similes

As recent literature has pointed out (cf. Moder 2008, 2010; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014; Romano 2017, among others), a study on similes cannot ignore the context in which they occur. The notion of context is understood here in a broad sense: by “context”, I mean both the narrowest linguistic context in which similes occur, taking a hymn – or portions of a hymn – as unit of analysis, but also the ensemble of hymns that make up the ṚV. Furthermore, following other studies on figurative language in ancient texts (cf. e.g. Di Biase-Dyson and Egg 2020), I take into account the cultural context that produced the hymns, with the set of beliefs about their religious function and the multimodal performance in which they took part: the Vedic ritual.

The chapter is structured as follows: in Section 10.1, I summarize the state of the art on the function of similes within the ṚV and in Sanskrit literature in general. In Section 10.2, I present three main functions that similes take in the ṚV, namely a descriptive (10.2.1), a performative (10.2.2), and a meta-poetic function (10.2.3). In each section, I describe the function through single examples, combining elements of Blending Theory and Frame Semantics with considerations on the cultural milieu sketched in the introduction to Part 3. Beside drawing on works by Oldenberg (1894 [1977]), Gonda (1949), and Sadovski (2009, 2012a, 2012b) presented in Section 10.1, in discussing similes’ performative function, I also employ Sweetser’s (2000) notion of performativity in terms of mental spaces. Furthermore, in each section I provide a thorough analysis of those hymns in which the function under discussion is better illustrated or more preeminently employed. This should illustrate how similes of a given kind can combine and add interesting narrative and stylistic effects to a hymn.

### 10.1 State of the Art

#### 10.1.1 Similes in Indian poetics

Since, as we said before, similes are the most frequent trope in the ṚV as well as in Sanskrit literature in general, it is not surprising that they have repeatedly been the object of interest in Sanskrit poetics (*alaṅkāraśāstra*).

The Sanskrit term for similes is *upamā-*, a root noun from *upa* √*mā-* ‘to measure one thing by another’, ‘compare’. The first definition of *upamā-* is found as early as Yāska’s *Nirukta* and in Pāṇini’s *sūtras*. Pāṇini (*Aṣṭhādhyāyī* 2.1.55.6 2.3.72 3.1.10) names the four elements of comparison: the subject of comparison (*upameya* lit. ‘to be compared’ or *upamita* lit. ‘compared’), the thing with which the subject is compared (*upamāna*), the common attribute (*sāmānya* or *samānadharmā*), and the grammatical marker of comparison (*sāmānyavacana* or *dyotaka*). In chapter 17 of Bharata’s

*Natyashastra*, an ancient treatise on performing arts (*nāṭya*, e.g. drama, dance, music), *upamās* are listed among the four main type of *alaṃkāras* ‘embellishments, figures of speech’:

(1) *upamā rūpakam caiva dīpakam yamakam tathā alaṃkāras tu vijñeyāś catvāro*

‘Simile, metaphor, “illuminator”, the kind of paronomasia called *yamaka* are to be understood as the four *alaṃkāra*.’ (Gonda 1949: 2)

(Nat. 17.40)

About *upamās*, the *Natyashastra* says: “when in a poetical composition anything is compared on the basis of some similarity, it is an instance of *upamā*. It relates to quality and form.”. After Bharata, whose definition of *upamā* was abandoned by other writers, the *alaṃkāra*-tradition may be said to originate in the works by Bāhama and Daṇḍin (Gerow 1977: 227). The poet and scholar Daṇḍin considers figurative or ‘crooked speech’ (*vakrokti*) what distinguishes poetry from science which, on the contrary, is characterized by factual description (*svabhāvokti*, lit. ‘speaking of things the way they are’). According to Daṇḍin, all *alaṃkāras* are instances of *vakrokti* and simile is the most prominent among them (in Chapter 4.1.1, we have seen that he considers simile the *bīja*- ‘seed’ of all figurative phenomena).

As we have seen in Chapter 4.1.1, Rudraṭa, the first systematist of *alaṃkāras*, accepts the fundamental character of simile, as do all other Indian scholars. He considers simile the cornerstone of figurativity because it adds poetry to statements by evoking a second and parallel universe beyond the immediate one (Gerow 1971: 36). According to Rudraṭa, the function of simile is to increase the perception of the predicate in the *upameya*; in this, it is more explicit than identification (*rūpaka*-) which, omitting the comparative marker, suggests an ontologic indistinguishability between the two entities compared. Furthermore, simile is more effective than metaphor (*utprekṣā*-, lit. ‘disregarding’, in that it does not mention the object of comparison), because the latter is often so common in language that it is deprived of all its poetic force. Finally, Rudraṭa compares the priority of simile in poetics to the crucial function of analogy (*upamāna*) in philosophical texts, because the latter makes the mind aware of similarities and differences in the elements of the discourse (Gerow 1971: 36-37).

Much later, the sixteenth century scholar Appayya Dīkṣita expresses the function of similes in poetry as follows:

(2) *upamāikā śailuṣi samprāptā citrabhūmikā-bhedān |*

*rañjayati kāvya-raṅge nṛtyantī tad-vidāṃ cetah ||*

‘Simile is the sole actress on the stage of poetry,

and yet she performs a vast variety of roles.

When she dances

she captivates the hearts

of those who know her secret.’ (Bronner 2007: 93)

(*Citramīmāṃsā*, pp. 33)

### 10.1.2 Sanskrit similes according to Western literature

In Western literature, the interest on Sanskrit similes began precisely with studies on Ṛgvedic similes. Hirzel’s *Gleichnisse und Metaphern im Rigveda* (1890) is a collection of similes occurring in the ṚV, arranged according to the domain to which their standards belong. The four chapters are dedicated to similes borrowed from the divine (*Götterwelt*), the mythical-historical, the human, and the domestic domain, and each chapter is divided into paragraphs containing similes that belong to specific elements of each domain (Agni, Aditi, etc. in the divine, Angiras, Atri, etc. in the mythical-historical domain, body parts, age, etc.).<sup>214</sup> Following the trends of that time, Hirzel starts from the assumption that figurative language is the mirror of the *Zeitgeist* of the poet or culture in question and studies similes from the point of view of the history of civilization. As he himself anticipates in the introduction, his work does not deal with similes in context and does not focus on the analysis of individual hymns but is interested in what we would call the source domains to which the standards belong.

Oldenberg dedicates a chapter of his *Die Religion des Veda* (1894 [1977]: 476-523) to sorcery and magical formulas in the most ancient Indian literature. According to Oldenberg, the similes which so frequently occur in magic formulas are no mere poetic ornament but contain a magical moment: the entities or events named in the comparison are intended to result in their counter-image in the situation at hand. Thus, in this kind of texts, the function of similes is to compare the effect to be achieved with processes from nature or the divine world in order to strengthen the power of the magic formula. Oldenberg provides translations of several such passages, which however correspond to different Vedic constructions:

(3) *yáthā sūryo nákṣatrāṇām udyáms téjāmsy ādadé |*

*evā strīṇāṃ ca puṃsāṃ ca dviṣatāṃ várca á dade*

‘Wie die aufgehende Sonne den Sternen ihren Glanz raubt, so raube ich allen Weibern und Männern, die mir feind sind, die Kraft.’

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<sup>214</sup> The work remained unfinished and some important domains, such as the natural and the animal one are missing.

(AVŚ 7.13.1)

(4) *ásadan gāvah sádané 'paptad vasatim váyah /  
āsthāne párvatā asthuḥ sthāmni vṛkkāv atiṣṭhipam*

‘Die Kühe haben sich niedergelassen an ihrem Resort; das Geflügel ist zum Nest geflogen; die Berge stehen fest an ihrer Stätte: ich habe die Niere feststehen gemacht an ihrem Ort.’

(AVŚ 7.96.1)

Thus, according to Oldenberg, the use of comparison in magic spell constitutes but an aspect of the belief behind the use of magic spells in general: that is, the belief that words carry the *Zauberkraft*. Just as it is generally believed that words can make things happen, so it is believed that comparing the expected result with some divine or natural element makes the former closer to the expectations. Oldenberg’s observations certainly highlight an important function of similes in the oldest texts of Indian literature. However, since Oldenberg’s work is concerned with the religion of the Vedas, considerations on comparisons take no more than a couple of pages and do not dwell on other aspects of similes.

In his article *Über Vergleichen im Rigveda* (1927), Weller considers the abundance of metaphors and similes in the ṚV as a natural consequence of the fondness that Vedic culture has for paradox and for evocative, mysterious, mystical, and enigmatic language. In other words, metaphors and similes are the natural means of achieving an ambiguous mode of expression, which refers to earthly and divine things at the same time, which at times seems to point to events in the sacrificial domain, other times to those in divine world, and which often expresses two different thoughts within the same expression. In the ṚV, Weller sees the roots of *śleṣa* (‘connection, combination of meanings, pun’) which became so pervasive in classical poetry, and notes that in this text the ability of an expression to have multiple meanings was still felt as a proof of the magical power of words, instead of being a mere pun.

### 10.1.3 Gonda’s studies on Sanskrit similes

The first study entirely devoted to the function of similes in Vedic and Sanskrit literature is Gonda’s *Remarks on similes in Sanskrit literature* (1949). In a previous work devoted to the meaning of *alaṃkāra*, Gonda (1939 [1975]) argued that this word, usually translated with ‘ornament’, in many early texts retained its original meaning of “making suitable, equal to, fit; adding strength to; making such as is required for, fitting a thing out in such a way that is answers its purpose, etc.”. More precisely, Gonda found that the word *alaṃkāra* is used in several passages to denote amulets and other magical objects that served to strengthen persons or things. Since such objects are often at the



same time ornaments, the word acquired this secondary meaning.<sup>215</sup> In his *Remarks on similes in Sanskrit literature*, Gonda asks the original meaning of *alamkāra* can be found also in poetic treatises, at least the earliest ones, when *alamkāraśāstra* was not yet an established discipline. To understand the meaning of *alamkāra* in the first texts on poetics, Gonda tries to understand the nature of the ‘figures of style’ that are denoted by this term. In a study on the style of AV I-VIII, Gonda (1938) had already shown that the use of repetitions and figures that contain repetitions such as homoioteleuton and alliteration are not only embellishments but have a true expressive value in the poetic *Sondersprache*. Applying the same question to the study of similes, Gonda asks whether in some text they have a function that makes them ‘fit for their purpose’ or if they are simple embellishments.

Instead of analyzing similes only in highly stylized and formal texts such as the ṚV or *kāvya* poetry of classical literature, Gonda suggests considering similes in the first place as a linguistic phenomenon and thus analyzing them in any kind of text that has been handed down to us. As a consequence, the function of similes must be studied in relation to the genre and style of the text or passage in question; furthermore, the study of similes requires knowledge of the culture that produced them, of the changing perspectives on similes over time (see also Patton 2008: 51).

Gonda restricts his analysis to similes introduced by the particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*, and correlative comparative clauses introduced by *yathā...evā* (*evam*) and *yathā...tathā* together,<sup>216</sup> leaving out comparative compounds. Similes are arranged in several classes according to their function, but the boundaries of such classes are often blurred and make it possible for a simile to belong to more than one class at the same time. The problem with a classification based on functions is that, although Gonda examines texts of all genres, differences between one genre and another must be grasped in the course of the discussion; furthermore, the analysis is almost always limited to the single simile and considerations concerning larger portions of discourse are rare.

In the following, I will report some of the functions identified by Gonda for Sanskrit similes. For instance, similes serve to express a concept that would require lengthy formulation if expressed otherwise: we all understand what it means that someone *is like a child to us*, and it would be much less economical to express it by other means. Similes can express something in a vague or inexact way, either because the situation requires no accuracy, or because of the speaker’s inability to be more precise, or even due to pragmatic mitigation. Sometimes, similes bring about a connection with facts that are familiar to both speaker and hearer: for instance, in AVŚ 10.8.14 Prajāpati bearing water

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<sup>215</sup> Gonda (1949: 1) specifies that in a culture such as the Vedic one, the functional aspect cannot be separated from the aesthetic one, as the latter is essential to ensure the former.

<sup>216</sup> Note that word accent is not noted in Classical Sanskrit.

aloft is compared with a female water-bearer having a vessel. In other cases, Gonda observes a connection between colloquial speech and *anschauliche Sprache* ‘descriptive and vivid language’. In some passages, on the other hand, a certain degree of artificiality can be supposed, as the similes are characterized by alliteration or are nonsensical.

While the functions identified above appear to be universally valid, other seem to be more typical of the culture that produced the texts or of a given literary genre. Taking up the discourse begun by Oldenberg, Gonda examines the role of similes in magic and rite, in which words play a crucial role. To know whether a simile had a ritual counterpart, we can rely on the *Kauśika-sūtra* (Kauś.), the oldest and most important ritual manual belonging to the Śaunaka school of the AV, which prescribes which mantras are to be recited in which ritual contexts. For instance, the penultimate verse of a spell against enemies recites:

(5) *té 'dharāñcaḥ prá plavantāṃ chinnā náur iva bāndhanāt |  
ná vaibādhápraṇuttānāṃ púnar asti nivártanam*

‘Let them float forth downward, like a boat severed from its mooring; of them, thrust forth by the expelling one, there is no returning again.’ (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

(AVŚ 3.6.1)

Kauś. 48.3 provides the details of the rite during which the spell was uttered: it prescribes that a man who wishes to get rid of a number of enemies has to put an equally large number of snares (*pāśa-*) in a little boat and then let it drift and sink. The same holds for AV 4.4. and AV 6.101 for recovery of virility. Both hymns read ‘make this member taut like a bow’ and Kauś. 40.15 prescribes: ‘he places a bow which is strung in his lap’. According to Gonda, such cases support the hypothesis that similes make the *Sondersprache* of the mantras fit to answer its purpose, because they are an essential part of it: without them, these formulas, incantations, and prayers would be *anarthakāḥ* ‘useless’.

While in the examples above it is the rite that provides the standard of comparison, in other cases it is an event or a phenomenon in nature or cosmos that constitutes the standard. Take for instance example (6) from the AVŚ, in which *urvārvá* is the fruit of the *karkaṭi*, a sort of cucumber: in this case, commentaries to the text identify the parallelism in the fact that the stem of this fruit becomes loosened of itself when it is ripe.<sup>217</sup>

<sup>217</sup> A further example is AV 6.8.1, with verb repetition, addressed to a woman whose love is to be won:

i. *yathā vṛkṣaṃ libujā samantaṃ pariśasvaje evā pari śvajasva māṃ*

‘As the *libujā* (a creeping plant) has completely embraced the tree, so do you embrace me.’

and then:

(6) *nír balāsaṃ balāsīnaḥ kṣiṇómi muṣkarám yathā |*  
*chinádmy asya bándhanaṃ mūlam urvārvá iva*

‘The *balāsa* of the sick man I destroy like a *muṣkará* (an insect); I cut its bond like the root of a gourd.’

(AVŚ 6.14.2)

Similarly, many similes find their motivation in the believe of a sympathy between processes of the living nature and the human body. A case in point is AVŚ 2.15, a charm against fear structured as a series of similes like the following:

(7) *yáthā dyáus ca pṛthiví ca ná bibhító ná ríṣyataḥ |*  
*evá me prāṇa má bibheḥ ||*  
*yáthāhaś ca rátrī ca ná bibhító ná ríṣyataḥ |*  
*evá me prāṇa má bibheḥ ||*

‘As both the heaven and the earth do not fear, are not harmed, so, my breath, fear not. As both the day and the night do not fear, so, my breath, fear not.’

(AVŚ 2.15.1-2)

From the ṚV, Gonda cites a verse from 5.78, a hymn to the Aśvins which in the last three verses contains an incantation to facilitate childbirth at the proper time:

(8) *yáthā vátah puṣkarínīm*  
*samiṅgáyati sarvátah*  
*evá te gárbha ejatu*  
*niraitu dásamāsiyah*

‘As the wind sways a lotus-pond in every direction, so let your unborn child stir. Let him in his tenth month come out.’

(ṚV 5.78.7)

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ii. *yathā māṃ kāmīny aso yathā man nāpagā asaḥ*

‘So that you may have desire of me, so that you may not be going away from me’

From the AVŚ, see also 6.139.5, 7.13.1, 10.6.33, 14.2.37. From the RV, see 10.10, a dialogue hymn between the two divine siblings Yama and Yamī. This hymn belongs to a cycle of funeral hymns and was therefore probably grounded in ritual.

Gonda (1949: 76-77) distinguishes similes whose standard is a natural element or phenomenon, like the ones presented above, from those whose standard is a god or a divine action. He argues that in passages such as AVŚ 4.12.7, at the end of a hymn whose aim was to heal a serious wound, divine skill is invoked in order to reach the aim: ‘as a Ṛbhu (a mythical artisan) the parts of a chariot, may it (the herb used to cure the wound) put together joint with joint’. Indeed, very often magical texts borrow similes from the domain of mythology in order to set ancient magic power in motion once more. For instance, AVŚ 2.27 is a charm for overcoming an adversary in public dispute by chewing the root of a plant. After verses 3 and 4 describe Indra putting the same plant on his harm in order to slay down the Asuras, verse 5 recites: ‘with it (the plant) I will overpower the foes, as Indra did the *sālāvṛkas*<sup>218</sup>’. Thus, the simile in verse 5 relates the power acquired by Indra by using the plant to the power that the disputant will acquire in order to overcome his adversary. In example (9), the poet relies on the effectiveness of an incantation (*brāhmaṇa-*) used by the mythical poets Atri, Kanva, Jamadagni, and Agastya to defeat the worms:

(9) *atrivád vaḥ krimayo hanmi kaṇvaváj jamadagnivát /  
agástyasya brāhmaṇā sám pinaṣmy ahám krimīn ||*

‘As Atri, as Kanva and Jamadagni, I slay you, worm, with the incantation of Agastya I crush the worms.’

(AVŚ 5.23.10)

Gonda specifies that not every mythological comparison has the same force and that some are more or less petrified similes. Elsewhere, mythology is a source of images that serves to praise a character and compare it with an ideal: for instance, in *Nala* 5.43, Nala and Damayantī are said to enjoy their honeymoon like Indra and Śacī.

Another function of similes is to explain more difficult concept to a greater public. Stories and parables rely on the principle of analogy to provide difficult messages recalling familiar facts and events from everyday life that may elucidate the subject matter. Gonda (1949: 85-88) provides examples from texts as ancient as the AV (10), the YV, and the *Brāhmaṇas*.

(10) *yáthā śevadhír nihito brāhmaṇānām táthā vaśā |  
tām etád acháyanti yásmín kásmimś ca jáyate ||*

‘As a deposited treasure, so of the Brāhmans is the cow. Accordingly they come onto her, in whosoever possession she is born. (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

<sup>218</sup> According to MW (*s.v.*), ‘a kind of wolf or hyena or jackal or similar animal.’

Many illustrative and didactic similes are also found in the Upanishads and some similes that explain the nature of the *ātman* ‘inner self’ are very famous: ‘as all the spokes are fastened in the nave and the circumference of the wheel, so all beings, all gods, are fastened in that *ātman*’ (BĀU 2.5.15). Sometimes, similes of this type can span several clauses, a feature which is otherwise rare in Sanskrit similes.<sup>219</sup> Not surprisingly, Dharmasāstras, treatises on duties, responsibilities, and ethics to oneself, to family and as a member of society, are also rich in elucidating similes, and so are also epic and *kāvya*.

In another paragraph (§53), Gonda describes similes that “make the mind of the hearer and reader linger and dwell on the subject”. Such use of similes may give rise to amplifications that are more independent from the comparee: take for instance (11) from the epic poem *Rāmayana*, where Sugrīva, because of his joy, has not noticed how the time passed and Tārā excuses him comparing him with Visvāmitra who remained ten thousand years by the Apsaras Ghritāchīs:

- (11) *prāptakālaṃ na jānīte viśvāmitro yathā munīḥ | ghṛtācyāṃ kila saṃsakto daśavarṣāṇi  
lakṣmaṇa | aho 'manyata dharmātmā viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ | sa hi prāptaṃ na jānīte kālaṃ  
kālavidāṃ varaḥ | viśvāmitro mahātejāḥ kiṃ punar yaḥ pṛthagjanaḥ*  
‘[By grief and care and exile tried, New to the bliss so long denied,] Like Visvāmitra once, alas, he marks not how the seasons pass. That saint ten thousand years remained, by sweet Ghritāchīs love enchained, and deemed those years, that flew away so lightly, but a single day. O, if those years unheeded flew by him who times and seasons knew, unequalled for his lofty mind. What marvel meaner eyes are blind?’

(*Rām.* 4.35.6 ff.)

This elaborate type of simile, which is so frequent in the Homeric poems, is however much rare in Sanskrit literature.

After listing some of the functions he recognizes for similes, Gonda dwells on the difference between *iva* and *yathā*. He suggests that to the syntactic difference, for which only *yathā* can introduce a subordinate clause, corresponds a difference in meaning. Whereas the semantic difference becomes more attenuated in post-Vedic literature, in the older texts *yathā* points to “essential or modal agreement or correspondence”, whereas *iva* points to a subjective resemblance. As we have seen in

<sup>219</sup> This is true especially in the case of Buddhist texts, whose similes are often broadly elaborated and made into real parables (Gonda 1949: 90-91 with fns).

detail in Chapter 8.3, this difference in meaning is probably due to the increasing employment of *iva* as an adaptor in Vedic prose.

Correlated to the topic of form are the observations that Gonda makes on the position of similes (§27). In the ṚV and in the AV, similes are often found at the beginning of a verse or sentence giving a peculiar stylistic value to the passage. For instance, they can function as riddles or as a prelude of what the author is going to say. Similes are also found at the beginning of verses that contain a command or request and many of the similes which stand at the beginning vehicle ideas that have a great emotional value (*Gefühlwert*) or occur in speech that is meant to be “vigorous” (Gonda 1949: 49). On the other hand, similes in sentence-final position may be due to the rule of the *wachsende Glieder*. Other times, they are found in the culminating point of a story or argument, often in groups. Similes can come in groups in the same passage and with the same comparee, because strong emotion causes repetition, or because the author wants to stress a concept. Otherwise, one can find accumulation of similes with different comparees: for instance, in ṚV 7 similes come in groups to express Uṣas’ beauty, in ṚV 1.43 to vividly describe Agni’s might, whereas in ṚV 1.130.1 they urge Indra to come to the sacrifice.

In his attempt to distinguish similes that are only aesthetic embellishments from those with other functions, Gonda (§48) stresses the idea that, once created and used frequently, similes can become conventional and lose their vividness, becoming “similes only in their outward appearance”. This happens when neither the speaker nor the hearer “sees” the image before them (cf. *he is as ugly as a monkey*) and, when they use them, they do not borrow standards from their own experience, but “live on the experience of their ancestors”. Similes are sometimes formulaic, in that they can be used in different texts and various circumstances. Especially short Vedic similes have become formulas expressing a familiar idea in a fixed form. For instance, *samudram iva sindhavaḥ* ‘like rivers to the sea’ is employed for Indra’s belly swelling up (ṚV 1.8.7) or his strength increasing with songs (ṚV 8.6.35). However, an author can make a conventional and “dead” simile live again, by adding some particulars or by changing its wording. Thus, we find an implicit distinction between novel and conventional similes (See Chapter 9.3).

Finally, Gonda problematizes the notion of simile as a figurative comparison. In §40 and *passim*, he points out that some similes may have not been felt as figurative, because they rely on actual identification between two entities: for instance, in (12), inspired thought (*manīṣām*) and ghee (*ghṛtām*) are both offerings because, like offerings, inspired thoughts are able to invigorate the gods.

- (12) *ā manīṣām antárikṣasya nṛbhyaḥ*  
*srucéva ghṛtām juhavāma vidmánā*

‘Let us pour an inspired thought with our know-how, like ghee with a ladle, for the men of the midspace.’

(ṚV 1.110.6)

In a similar way, in commenting the simile *samudrám iva síndhavaḥ* presented above, which can refer to Indra’s belly increasing with soma or to his strength growing with song, Gonda argues that being strengthened by songs and swelling up by soma are very kindred notions in Vedic culture, since they are almost identical in aim and effect.

Gonda deals again with similes in his 1960 monograph *Ellipsis, brachylogy and other forms of brevity in speech in the Ṛgveda*. He notes that, in Ṛgvedic similes, brachylogy is much more frequent than in other constructions.<sup>220</sup> It is often the case that one of the terms of the simile is omitted and the hearer must supply it from other complementary clauses (1960: 50). Take for instance example (13), where a locative must be supplied in the standard in order to understand the meaning of the simile; or the one in (14), where the object of the standard must be ‘rain’, as suggested by the parallel passage in (15):

(13) \**véer ná gárbham párivītam áśmani*

‘Hidden in the rock like the brood of thee bird (in the egg)’. (Gonda 1960: 50-51)

(ṚV 1.130.3)

(14) *mimīhī ślókam āśtye*  
*parjanya iva tatanaḥ*

‘Measure the song in your mouth, sustain it like Parjanya (the rain)’<sup>221</sup> (adapted from Gonda 1960: 51)

(ṚV 1.38.4)

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<sup>220</sup> By brachylogy, Gonda means a kind of “conciseness in speech which is characterized by the omission of one or more words which are essential to a logically correct or complete expression of thought or to the immediate understanding” and provides the following example from Hesiod: *kai de dià hrivoū boòs érkhetai, oudé min ískhei* ‘He goes even through an ox’s hide; it (viz. the ox’s hide) does not stop him’ (Hes. *Op.* 515). According to Gonda, the passage is not elliptical, because no part of a construction or phrase has been omitted; instead, there is no indication of subject change, so that the correct interpretation of the communication is left to the hearer.

<sup>221</sup> These *pādas* contain two punning verses: the imperative *mimīhī* can belong to  $\sqrt{mā}$ - ‘measure’ and  $\sqrt{mā}$ - ‘bellow’, while *tatanaḥ* can belong to  $\sqrt{tan}$ - ‘stretch out’ and  $\sqrt{tan}$ - ‘thunder’. In the first meaning, the verbs refer to the method of production of the song: to its meter in the case of  $\sqrt{mā}$ - ‘measure’ and to prolonging of a tone or note in the case of  $\sqrt{tan}$ - ‘stretch out’. The second meanings ‘bellow’ and ‘thunder’ refer instead to the sound of the songs. Therefore, J&B translate: Bellow [/measure] the call that is in your mouth. Like Parjanya, you will thunder [/stretch it out].

(15) *parjanya iva tatánad dhí vṛṣṭiyā*  
*sahásram ayútā dádat*

‘For like Parjanya with rain, he (king Citra) will thunder [/stretch forth] as he gives a thousand ten thousands.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

(RV 8.21.18.cd)

With reference to these examples, Gonda acknowledges that often one element of a comparison could suffice to make the hearer grasp the meaning of the simile; however, he sees this brachylogic style that often tests the audience’s ability to understand the message as a factor in the “mystic” and “esoteric” nature of the mantras.

#### 10.1.4 Effective similes in comparative perspective

Before moving on to the analysis of Ṛgvedic similes, it is worth recalling some contributions from the literature on other IE and non-IE cultures on the magical function of similes already identified by Oldenberg, Weller, and Gonda for the AV.

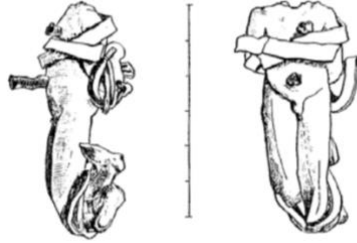
Curses and incantations including similes are variously called: cf. *simile curses* or *effective similes* in Semitic literature (Hillers 1983[2021]), *similia similibus formulae* in Faraone (1991), *persuasive analogies* in Gager (1992). Different kind of similes can be distinguished which occur within spells and incantations, depending on whether their recitation implies manipulation of objects or generally the existence of a concrete ritual, or no ritual at all. Similes of the former type occur in the incantations recited during the *maqlû* ‘burning’, the most important Akkadian ritual against witchcraft (Abusch 2015), a passage of which was already reported in Chapter 4.

In a series of studies (2009, 2012a, 2012b), Sadovski reconstructs the pragmatics of Atharvavedic ritual spells in genealogical comparison with Iranian, especially Avestan texts, but also in contrastive, typological comparison with their Greek, Graeco-Egyptian, and Graeco-Roman counterparts. In particular, Sadovski (2012a) analyzes a specific type of rituals, the binding spells-and-charms which he defines as a form of “ritual poetry in action”, i.e. of unity between the ritual words and the ritual actions.

Examples of these texts within the IE domain are, among others, Greek binding spells called *katádesmoi* and Latin *defixiones*, both words meaning ‘binding’, ‘binding (means)’. Outside of IE, we have Semitic (the already mentioned Akkadian *maqlû* incantations, Babylonian, Hebrew etc.) and Egyptian sources. Beside binding, such spells mention piercing and burying. References to such actions are not mere metaphors but have a clear practical dimension, the ritual acts being performed on figural representations of the object concerned. In Egypt and Greece, such figurines have survived



and confirm the descriptions that we find in texts: take for instance the decapitated lead figurine found in graves from the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens and going back to ca. 400 BC (Figure 46):



**Figure 46.** Decapitated lead figurine from Athens, first publ. in *Philologus* 61, 1902, 37 (from Sadovski 2012a: 336)

One example of binding spell from the AV is provided in (16) (cf. also examples cited from Oldenberg 1894 [1977] and Gonda 1949 above):

- (16) *ápāñcau ta ubháu bāhū́*  
*ápi nahyāmiy āsīyām |*  
*agnér devásya manyúnā*  
*téna te `vadhiṣaṃ havīḥ ||4||*  
*ápi nahyāmi te bāhū́*  
*ápi nahyāmy āsyām |*  
*agnér ghorásya manyúnā*  
*téna `vadhiṣaṃ havīḥ ||5||*

‘Turned back/behind are your two arms. I bind your mouth. With the wrath of god Agni I destroyed your oblation. I bind your arms, I bind your mouth. With the wrath of terrible Agni I destroyed your oblation.’ (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

(AVŚ 7.70.4-5)

Beside linguistic parallels with Ancient Greek and Egyptian spells,<sup>222</sup> we have no sculptural representation of the addressees of such spells. Sadovski reconstructs the employment of magic objects in Indo-Iranian by means of comparison with other cultures and by attentive analysis of the AV, of the Vedic ritual *sūtras*, of the YV, and of parallel Iranian sources. The Vedic notion of such objects is *kṛtyā́-*, attested in the *R̥gveda Khilāni*, AV, and YV (Caland 1900, Goudriaan 1986). For

<sup>222</sup> See for instance the parallelism between AVŚ 16.7, a piercing-and-destruction spell against a competitor, and a Greek spell from Attica directed against a rivalry in a lawsuit written and reported by Graf (1997: 122, 135).

instance, in Kauś. 39,7, the *krtyā-* is presented like an object (Goudriaan 1986) or specifically a doll or figurine (Caland 1900) to bury. The latter hypothesis is supported by Griffiths (2009: 259) in his commentary on AVP 7.1, who stresses the fact that in the wording of Kauś. 39, *sūtras* 13 and 14 clearly implies an object of human (or animal) shape, and so do stanzas like (17) against witchcraft and its practitioners:

(17) *yāṃ kalpáyanti vahatáu vadhūm iva visvárūpāṃ hástakṛtāṃ cikitsávaḥ |*  
*sārād etv ápa nudāma enām ||1||*

‘She whom the adepts (*cikitsú*) prepare, all-formed, hand-made, like a bride at a wedding—  
 let her go far off; we push her away.’ (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

(AVŚ 10.1.1)

In Indo-Iranian, Sadovski (2012a: 341) finds the same type of formulas and combinations of formulas as in Greek (see Faraone 1991b: 5; Gager 1992: 13). Besides the direct binding formula ‘I [am (herewith)] bind[ing] X/you!’, we find a series of formulas that appeal for supernatural assistance, like ‘Restrain X!’ or ‘May god A restrain B’, most often addressed to King Varuṇa or to the local king in the Vedas. Among possible formulations, Sadovski mentions the so-called persuasive analogies presented above, in which the sorcerer curses the target to acquire (negative) properties of the object mentioned in the spell. Other correspondences are found in amatory rituals for winning the love of a woman or man, or in *Trennungsauber* curses for unbinding lovers; the YV, especially in *Gṛhya-Sūtras*, provides evidence that human hair and nails were used in binding and/or for erotic magic (Lincoln 1977).

Sadovski (2012a: 348) considers the study of the form and structure of ritual texts attested in the AV and YV critical for our understanding of their ritual pragmatics, “especially for what concerns the question of ‘how to do things with words’ in Old Indo-Iranian liturgical practice”. In view of the following investigation, Sadovski’s work raises our awareness of the possible ritual actions behind some Vedic similes. At the same time, he reminds us that the performance of these actions can be delegated to a god and not to the officer (cf. ‘May god A restrain B’) not thereby diminishing the pragmatic force of such expressions.

From the above overview, it results that all the attempts of studying the function of similes focus either on their role within the passage in which they occur, or within the broader literary genre, but never take the hymn as a unit of analysis. Furthermore, the division into classes of similes based on the domain of their standard (Hirzel 1980) might be informative from the viewpoint of cultural studies

more than for linguistics ones, while classifications based on form are often inconsistent and those based on their function too fine grained and therefore make it difficult to draw conclusions.

## 10.2 Similes' three main functions

In what follows, I will present three main functions that similes take in the R̥V, namely a descriptive (10.2.1), a performative (10.2.2), and a meta-poetic function (10.2.3). In each section, after describing the function through single examples, I will provide a thorough analysis of those hymns in which the function under discussion is better illustrated or more preeminently employed. As we shall see, clusters of similes of a given kind can yield interesting narrative and stylistic effects to a hymn. As I anticipated above, this approach has not yet been programmatically applied in any monograph or dedicated article, and can only be found in the translators' commentaries on individual hymns. For example, Oldenberg himself (1907), but also Geldner (1951) and Renou (1955) are very attentive to this figure of speech in their commentaries; the same is certainly true for Jamison's (2021) recent commentary on Jamison and Brereton's (2014) translation.

One of the criteria for the analysis of similes will be the type of mapping that they trigger: roughly, whether they trigger narrow- or broad-scope mappings (see Chapter 9.1) and whether they include literal parameters or are scaffolded on image metaphor, conceptual metaphor, or other figurative expressions (see Chapter 9.2).

One last aspect of similes that we must take into account before starting the analysis is that mapping can take place at different levels of schematicity. Thus, while we can find similes involving representations of events which are as complex as frames, other do not elaborate many aspects of the scene and are rather skeletal. For instance, we have seen that Lakoff (1993: 222) groups the two conceptual metaphors LOVE IS A JOURNEY and A CAREER IS A JOURNEY under a more schematic metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and that this is in turn an instance of the so-called event structure metaphor ACTION IS DIRECTED MOTION (Chapter 3.4.1). This last metaphor relies on an even more schematic level of conceptualization of experience, namely the image schema PATH. Image schemas are skeletal structures representing a spatial configuration (e.g. verticality) or the various forces that affect a human body (e.g. pressure, gravity; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Clausner and Croft 1999). These very schematic structures interlace pervasive metaphoric mappings with other aspects of human experience: for instance, an orientational metaphor such as POWER IS UP derives from correlations between Up/Down and power, control, or authority that everyone experiences very early in his life (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 23-24). Since image schemas are structural commonalities which can be noticed between richer, more-filled-out frame structures, they can be said to be the bare bones of frames. This last consideration is needed because

similes involving more or less schematic metaphors are sometimes based on the same image schema. And since image schemas also underlie literal expressions, it is possible that a hymn has similes of different types, but all sharing the same skeletal representation of reality. The possibility of recognizing the same image schema within several similes will be useful especially for the analysis of similes within the context of the hymn to which they belong. We will see a concrete example in analyzing ṚV 6.24 to Indra (Section 10.2.3), whose similes are all motivated by the image schemas Center/Periphery and Up/Down.

Finally, with regard to the function of similes within a single hymn, I will make some considerations on the dedicand of the hymn, on the type of hymn in question and on the kind of “praise” it contains (Introduction to Part 3, Section 2a), as well as on its structuring criteria (Section 2a).

### 10.2.1 Similes’ descriptive function

As expected from the introduction of these figures provided in Chapter 4 and from the descriptions of Ṛgvedic similes in Chapter 9, similes serve primarily a descriptive function: they elaborate properties of a primary entity, the target, by matching them with corresponding properties in a secondary entity, the source (Israel et al. 2004: 133). Although they can map both attributes and relations, similes tend to function attributively because they cannot add conceptual structure to a target, nor introduce new discourse referents, but only elaborate on previously mentioned ones.

What is more, the phrasal nature of standards introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* tend to constrain the complexity of the source: although we do find more elaborate source spanning an entire trimeter verse, as in (19), they are usually expressed by one or two lexical items, as the one contained in example (18).

Although a descriptive (or depictive, according to Sweetser 2000: cf. Section 10.2.2) function can be recognized in all similes, this is most evident in those featuring a narrow-scope mapping (Chapter 9.1.2). These are usually characterized by a literal parameter, and thus by the evocation of one single frame; alternatively, they are based on an image metaphor and thus trigger mapping of image structure from source to target, rather than mapping of conceptual structure.

In the ṚV, descriptive similes are employed in praises of attributes, where they emphasize a god’s quality by comparing it to elements of nature and cosmos. One of the most common comparisons is certainly the one between Agni and the sun. For instance, in example (18) Agni’s radiance is said to gleam afar like the sun. Sometimes, similes employ ambiguous syntax that allows reading the same element with both the standard and the comparee: take for instance example (19), in which the dislocated element *aruṣéṇa bhā́mínā* ‘red radiance’ identifies the Sun’s radiance with

Agni's one, thus reducing the already subtle differences between the two elements and presenting Agni as the earthly counterpart of the sun (see Chapter 7.2.1.4 on dislocation within similes).

- (18) *prá-prāyám agnir bharatásya śṛṇve*  
*ví yát sūryo ná rócate bṛhád bhāḥ*

‘Farther and farther is this Agni of Bharata famed when his lofty radiance gleams afar like the sun.’

(ṚV 7.8.4ab)

- (19) *sá idhāná uṣáso rāmiyā ánu*  
*súvar ná dīded aruséna bhānínā*  
*hótrābhir agnir mánuṣaḥ suadhvaró*  
*rājā viśām átithiś cārur āyáve*

‘On being kindled through (all) the dawns and the nights, like the sun he has shone with red radiance. With the libations of Manu he conducts good ceremonies—the king of the clans, the guest dear to Āyu.’

(ṚV 2.2.8ab)

To the same Agni's hymn belongs the simile in (20), whose standard spans an entire trimeter. This simile maps more complex relations between source and target: not only Agni is said to shine like the sun, but his constantly being kindled through the nights is compared to the sun's cyclic course through the human lifespans. This reference to the Sun's course highlights other attributes of Agni besides its brilliance: like the rising and setting of the sun every day, Agni, being kindled every morning, accompanies men through their whole life. Note that, in this verse, the kenning *divá ... aratír* ‘the spoked wheel of heaven’, standing for the sun, confers an archaic flavor to this passage and highlights its higher register.

- (20) *divá ivéd aratír mānusā yugá*  
*kṣápo **bhaasi** puruvāra samyátaḥ*

‘As the spoked wheel of heaven [=sun] (does) through the human (life-) spans, through the successive nights you shine, o you of many favors.’

(ṚV 2.2.2cd)

Of course, Agni is not only compared to the sun. Example (21) describes the kindling of the fire at the arriving of Dawn (*ábodhi agniḥ* ‘Agni has awakened’). In *pāda* c, Agni's flames beaming forth

to the sky are compared to ‘young ones’ (*yahvā́*) rising toward a branch: while these entities are certainly birds, the adjective *yahvā́* also applies perfectly to the flames of a freshly lit fire.

(21) *ábodhi agníḥ samídhā jánānām*

*prāti dhenúm ivāyatīm uṣāsam*

*yahvā́ iva prá vayám ujñhānāh*

*prá bhānávaḥ sisrate nākam ácha*

‘Agni has awakened by the kindling wood of the peoples in response to Dawn, approaching like a milk-cow. Like young (birds) rising toward a branch, his radiant beams leap forth to heaven’s vault.’

(ṚV 5.1.1c)

Although most of the ṚV is couched in a very high-register language, it sometimes offers glimpses of more colloquial and even slangy expressions. For instance, when women’s speech is represented, it features a lower register, which makes use of diminutive morphology and rare or otherwise unattested words. Similarly, references to Vedic pastimes like dicing and horse-racing introduce technical terms and turns of phrase which were presumably closer to ordinary language. Besides being employed in praise of divine attributes and deeds, composed in a very high style, similes are also found in passages characterized by a more colloquial register, which they enrich with familiar images taken from everyday life.

Example (22) is a case in point. The verse belongs to the famous lament of a gambler, a monologue hymn describing a man addicted to dicing but unsuccessful at it. In (22), the gambler laments the toll his addiction takes on his personal life, causing him to be rejected by his mother and wife: in other words, everybody finds him as useless ‘as an old nag up for sale’. The simile is especially fit for the content of the hymn because, in order to describe the uselessness of a man worn-out by his addiction to dicing, it draws on material from another addictive pastime like horse racing; and what is more useless in a horse-race than an old horse? Note that the colloquial style is also manifest in syntax, for negative similes are otherwise very rare in the ṚV.

(22) *dvéṣṭi śvaśrūr ápa jāyā́ ruṇaddhi*

*ná nāthitó vindate marḍitāram*

*áśvasyeva járato vásniyasya*

*nāhám vindāmi kitavāsya bhógam*

‘Her mother-in-law [=my mother] hates me; my wife pushes me away. A man in distress finds no one to pity him. “I find no more use for a gambler than for an old nag up for sale,” (so they say).’

(ṚV 10.34.3cd)

Also *dānastutis* (lit. ‘praise of gifts’), i.e., brief sections occurring at the end of some hymns in which the poet praises his patron and his gifts, are often composed in a lower linguistic register, which contrasts with that of the rest of the hymn. Besides being characterized by “popular” phonological and morphological forms, they are often filled with puns and obscure terms. In example (23), the poet celebrates the ‘two brown ones’ that his patron has gifted to him, most probably referring to the breasts of a woman given to the poet as a reward for his hymn; indeed, women often form part of the reward along with livestock and gold. Befitting the general style of *dānastutis*, in (24) the poet compares them to ‘two tiny little girls on a post’, employing the childish image of two dolls for a truly non-innocent gift. Note the diminutive *kanīnaká-* and the otherwise unknown adjective *vidradhá-*, as well as the contrasts with the solemnity of the verb *prá śámsāmi* ‘I proclaim’ in the preceding verse (23) (Jamison and Brereton 2020: 178).

(23) *prá te babhrú vicakṣaṇa*

*śámsāmi goṣaṇo napāt*

*mābhyām gá ánu śísraṭhaḥ*

‘I solemnly proclaim the two brown ones of yours, o fargazing grandson of the Goṣan. But with the gift of these two, don’t slack off on the giving of cows!’

(ṚV 4.32.22)

(24) *kanīnakéva vidradhé*

*náve drupadé arbhaké*

*babhrú yāmeṣu śobhete*

‘Like two little baby-dolls on a post — the two new little ones, undressed— the two brown ones go in beauty on their travels.’

(ṚV 4.32.23)

In the following, I will present three hymns in which descriptive similes play a crucial role, either in the poet’s praise of the dedicand’s attributes (ṚV 1.124) or in the characterization of the hymns’ main characters (ṚV 10.95 and 3.33), in which case they contribute to the narrative development of the composition.

*ṚV 1.124 to Uṣas*

Uṣas “Dawn” is the most prominent female divinity in the ṚV. Twenty-one hymns are entirely dedicated to her, and she is also mentioned hundreds of times in the collection. Dawn participates very little in narrative mythology, and many of the passages dedicated to her are concerned with vivid depictions of the goddess, characterized by high poetic artistry and imagery. Dawn is mainly characterized by her femininity, being generally depicted as a beautiful young woman unveiling her body. Embodying the first light of day, she is gleaming, covered with bright ornaments, and sharply contraposed with her sister Night. Dispelling darkness and the fear of night, Dawn awakens everyone to their daily activities. She is regularly associated to wealth and distribution of wealth to the ritual participants because, in Ṛgvedic ritual, the *dakṣiṇās* were distributed during the rites performed at dawn. However, she also reminds men of the unstoppable passage of time and of generations of men who used to witness her arrival everyday but have now passed away (Macdonell 1897: 46-49; Jamison and Brereton 2014: 45-46).

ṚV 1.124 displays the usual themes of Dawn’s arrival draped in light, of Dawn as a beautiful young woman unveiling her body, of Dawn awakening humans and animals to their everyday business (see esp. vss. 1, 6, and 12). The themes of Dawn diminishing human lifespans and of Dawn granting wealth are found in verses 2 and 12-13 respectively. Another usual trope is that of the counterpoint between individual Dawn and the multitude of dawns that have preceded and will follow, presented in verses 2-3, 6, and 9.

The text of ṚV 1.124 is presented below:

<p>1a <i>uṣā uchāntī samidhāné agnā</i>  1b <i>udyān sūrya urviyā jyōtir aśret</i>  1c <i>devó no átra savitā nú ártham</i>  1d <i>prāsāvīd dvipát prá cátuṣpad ityai</i></p>	<p>1. Dawn as she dawns when the fire is being kindled; the sun as it rises— each has propped up its own light widely. God Savitar here and now has impelled forth our two-footed, forth our four-footed, each to go to its task.</p>
<p>2a <i>áminatī daiviyāni vratāni</i>  2b <i>praminatī manuṣīyā yugāni</i>  2c <i>īyūṣiṇām upamā śásvatīnām</i>  2d <i>āyatīnām prathamóṣā ví adyaut</i></p>	<p>2. Not belittling the divine commandments, but diminishing human (life-) spans, the last of those who, one by one, have gone, the first of those who come hither—Dawn has flashed forth.</p>
<p>3a <i>eṣā divó duhitā práty adarśi</i>  3b <i>jyōtir vásānā samanā purástāt</i>  3c <i>ṛtasya pānthām ánu eti sādhu</i>  3d <i>prajānatīva ná díśo mināti</i></p>	<p>3. This Daughter of Heaven has appeared opposite, dressed in light, in the same way (as the others), from the east. She follows along the path of truth, straight to the goal. <u>Like one who knows the way, she does not confound the directions.</u></p>
<p>4a <i>úpo adarśi śundhyúvo ná vákso</i>  4b <i>nodhá ivāvīr akṛta priyāṇi</i>  4c <i>admasán ná sasató bodháyanī</i>  4d <i>śásvattamāgāt púnar eyūṣiṇām</i></p>	<p>4. <u>She has appeared like the breast of a preening waterbird. Like a female elephant she has revealed her intimate parts. Wakening the sleeping like a fly, she has come as the latest of those who, one by one, have come here again (and again).</u></p>



<p>5a <i>pūrve árdhe rájaso aptiyásya</i>  5b <i>gávāṃ jánitrī akṛta prá ketúm</i>  5c <i>ví u prathate vitarāṃ várīya</i>  5d <i>óbhā pṛṇántī pitarór+ upásthā</i></p> <p>6a <i>evéd eṣā purutāmā dṛśé kām</i>  6b <i>nājāmiṃ ná pári vṛṇakti jānīm</i>  6c <i>arepāsā tanúvā śāśadānā</i>  6d <i>nārbhād īṣate ná mahó vibhātí</i></p> <p>7a <i>abhrātéva puṃsá eti pratīcī</i>  7b <i>gartārúg iva sanáye dhánānām</i>  7c <i>jāyéva pátya usatí suvāsā</i>  7d <i>uṣā hasréva ní riṇṭe ápsaḥ</i></p> <p>8a <i>svásā svásre jyāyasyai yónim āraig</i>  8b <i>ápaiṭi asyāḥ praticáksiyeva</i>  8c <i>viuchántī raśmibhiḥ sūriyasya</i>  8d <i>añjī añkte samanagá iva vrāḥ</i></p> <p>9a <i>āsám pūrvāsām áhasu svásṛṇām</i>  9b <i>áparā pūrvām abhi eti paścāt</i>  9c <i>tāḥ pratnaván návyasīr nūnám asmé</i>  9d <i>revád uchantu sudínā uṣāsaḥ</i></p> <p>10a <i>prá bodhayoṣaḥ pṛṇató maghoni</i>  10b <i>ábudhyamānāḥ paṇáyaḥ sasantu</i>  10c <i>revád ucha maghávadbhyo maghoni</i>  10d <i>revát stotré sūṅṛte jāráyantī</i></p> <p>11a <i>áveyám ásvaíd yuvatīḥ purástād</i>  11b <i>yuñkte gávāṃ aruṇānām ánīkam</i>  11c <i>ví nūnám uchād ásati prá ketúr</i>  11d <i>grhām-grham úpa tiṣṭhāte agniḥ</i></p> <p>12a <i>út te váyaś cid vasatér apaptan</i>  12b <i>náraś ca yé pitubhájo víuṣṭau</i>  12c <i>amá saté vahasi bhūri vāmám</i>  12d <i>úṣo devi dāsúṣe mártiyāya</i></p> <p>13a <i>ástoḍhuvam stomiyā bráhmaṇā me</i>  13b <i>ávīṛḍhadhvam usatír uṣāsaḥ</i>  13c <i>yusmákam devír ávasā sanema</i>  13d <i>sahasrīṇam ca śatīnam ca vājam</i></p>	<p>5. In the eastern half of the dusky realm that cannot be flown to, the begetter of cows has put forth her beacon. She spreads out further, more widely, filling both laps of her two parents [=Heaven and Earth].</p> <p>6. Just thus is she, the latest of many, to be seen. Neither the non-kin does she avoid, nor the kin. Exulting in her spotless body, neither from the small does she retreat, nor from the great, as she shines forth.</p> <p>7. <u>Like a brotherless (girl) she goes right up to men—like one mounting a chariot seat to win prizes</u> [/(display-)platform to gain property]. Like an eager wife, richly dressed, for her husband, Dawn, like a wanton, lets her breast spill over.</p> <p>8. The (one) sister has left the natal place to her older sister. <u>She goes away from her, like (a girl) to be gazed upon</u>. Dawning forth with the rays of the sun, <u>she smears unguent on herself, like (maidens) with a choice going to assemblies</u>.</p> <p>9. Day after day the latest of those earlier sisters advances from behind toward the earlier one. Let the newer ones now dawn richly for us as of old—the day-bright dawns.</p> <p>10. Awaken those who grant, bounteous Dawn; unawakening let the niggards sleep. Richly dawn for the bounteous ones, o bounteous one, richly for the praiser, o liberal-spirited one, as you rouse them.</p> <p>11. This young woman has whitened down from the east. She yokes the forefront of the ruddy cows. She will dawn forth now; her beacon will stand out. Agni will reverently come to house after house.</p> <p>12. The birds have also flown up from their dwelling and the men who partake of food, at your first flush. To the one who is at home you convey much of value, goddess Dawn, and to the pious mortal.</p> <p>13. You have been praised, praiseworthy ones, by my sacred formulation. You, eager (for it), have been strengthened, o Dawns. Goddesses, with your help may we win spoils in hundreds and thousands.</p>
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In two passages of the hymn, a cascade of similes contributes to renew and elaborate the conventional motives presented above. In verse 4, Dawn is compared to three different animals or their parts (for this interpretation, see Thieme (1965 [1971: 214–27]):

(25) *úpo adarśi śundhyúvo ná vákso*

*nodhā ivāvīr akṛta priyāṇi*

*admasān ná sasatō bodhāyanī*

*śaśvattamāgāt púnar eyúṣīṇām*

‘She has appeared like the breast of a preening waterbird. Like a female elephant she has revealed her intimate parts. Wakening the sleeping like a fly, she has come as the latest of those who, one by one, have come here again (and again).’

(ṚV 1.124.4)

In *pāda* a, Dawn appears like the breast of a waterbird who preens it. Indian commentators such Yāska and Sāyaṇa<sup>223</sup> gloss the word *śundhyú-* as ‘waterbird’, a gloss rendered by Geldenr as *Śundhyuvogel* ‘śundhyu-bird’. The noun is a substantivization of the adjective *śundhyú-* meaning ‘pure, shiny’; as a derivative of the present stem *śundha-* ‘purify’, the adjective can also mean ‘purifying (himself)’ or ‘preening (himself)’. According to Thieme (1965 [1971: 217]), waterbirds are called ‘the preening ones’ because of their habit of cleaning their plumage with the beak, by which they distribute the fat secreted by the glands beneath the feathers and make the plumage watertight.<sup>224</sup> In doing so, waterbirds stretch themselves up so that their chest becomes visible in their entirety: therefore, gleaming Dawn is said to appear ‘like the breast of a preening waterbird’.<sup>225</sup>

In *pāda* b, Dawn reveals her intimate parts (*priyāṇi*) like an elephant kneeling to drink. Following a note by Renou,<sup>226</sup> Thieme (1965[1971: 211-212]) interprets the nominative *nodhās*

<sup>223</sup> Yāska was an early Sanskrit grammarian (7<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century BCE), traditionally identified as the author of the *Nirukta*, a commentary on the *Nighantu*, that is a list of words found in the Vedas. *Nirukta* also gives the name to the discipline of ‘etymology’ (Coward 1990: 107).

<sup>224</sup> Note that, among other things (for which see Thieme 1965[1971]), this interpretation is supported by a simile in ṚV 10.95.9c, in which a group of Apsaras, nymphs of the waters, are said to preen ( $\sqrt{\text{śumbh-}}$ ) their bodies like waterbirds (*ātī-* ‘duck’; on ṚV 10.95, see the following section):

iii. *yád āsu mārto amṛtāsu nisprīk , sám kṣoṇībhiḥ · krátubhir ná pṛñkté |*  
*tā ātāyo ná tanvāḥ śumbhata svā , ásvāso ná krīlāyo dándaśānāḥ ||*

‘When a mortal, going to caress immortal women, mingles (with their bodies) amid their cries, as if by his intentions, like ducks they preen their own bodies, like horses playful and constantly nipping.’ (ṚV 10.95.9)

<sup>225</sup> As noted by Thieme, the wording also agrees with this interpretation and excludes any attempt to read *śundhyú-* as ‘courtesan’ with Renou (1955-1964). Indeed, in contrast to *úras-* ‘breast’, which is always said of the human breast, *vákṣas-* ‘breast, front side’ is used for both animals’ and humans’ breasts.

<sup>226</sup> Note that, despite this suggestion, Renou translates the term as ‘Nodhas’, i.e. as the proper name of a famous poet. The vocative *nodhas* in ṚV 1.64.1 suggests that the proper name is an *s*-stem, differently from the common noun *nodhā-* reconstructed by Thieme.

(*nodhā́* due to *sandhi*) as a compound having *nás-* ‘nose’ as first element and the root noun *dhā́-* ‘suckling’ as second element (with *\*nas-dhā́-* > *nodhā́-* due to *sandhi*) meaning ‘suckling with the nose’.<sup>227</sup> The substantivized adjective ‘the one who suckles with the nose’ certainly stands for the elephant, who is known to drink by sucking the water into its trunk and then spritzing it into its mouth. The comparison between Uṣas showing her intimate parts and an elephant drinking is explained by Thieme with the fact that female elephants have their ‘intimate parts’ under their tail and thus, when they bend over to drink, these parts become visible.

Finally, in *pādas* c and d Dawn wakens the sleeping like a fly, buzzing around again and again. Durga, a commentator of Yāska’s *Nirukta*, glosses the noun *admasád* (*admasán* due to *sandhi*), lit. ‘sitting (*√sad-*) on/at meal (*ádmán-*)’ as ‘fly’. That the compound was not lexicalized in this meaning is suggested by R̥gvedic passages in which it clearly refers to guests or meal companions, as the ‘superior men’ (i.e., priests) in (26):

(26) *dása rājānaḥ sámitā áyajyavaḥ*  
*sudásam indrāvaruṇā ná yuyudhuḥ*  
*satyā nṛṇām admasádām úpastutir*  
*devā eṣām abhavan deváhūtiṣu*

‘Gathered together but without a zeal to sacrifice, the ten kings gave no fight to Sudās, o Indra and Varuṇa. The invitatory praise of the superior men [=priests] sitting down to the [sacrificial] meal came true: at the call of these to the gods, the gods became present.’

However, in our Dawn hymn, reference to a fly is made clear by the parameter *sasató bodháyantī* ‘awakening the sleeping’.<sup>228</sup> Despite mirroring reality, the comparison may seem limping, for a fly that wakes the sleeper and stubbornly keeps coming back is felt to be unpleasant and intrusive, while the waking activity of Dawn is most welcome and desired. However, we have seen that Dawn does not only evoke positive associations and that, with her daily arising, she reminds men of the transience of their life. In fact, reference to the daily return of Dawn is found in *pāda* c *śásvattamā́ ... púnar eyúṣīṇām* ‘as the latest of those who, one by one, have come here again’, which could equally refer to flies stubbornly coming back to rest on the surface they have chosen.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *go-dhā́-* lit. ‘suckling cows’ (‘iguana’ or ‘alligator’), a meaning attested in post-R̥gvedic texts, and *payo-dhā́-* ‘suckling milk’ (R̥V 7.56.16)

<sup>228</sup> On the apparent lack of agreement of *admasád* with participle *bodháyantī* as well as with the adjective *śásvattamā́*, see Thieme (1965[1971: 222]).

To sum up, in comparing Dawn to three animals or parts of them, the poet employs three substantivized adjectives that point to a characteristic behavior of the animal in question, but which have no clear connection to the context of Dawn’s arrival: ‘the one preening herself’, ‘the one suckling with her nose’, ‘the one sitting on/by meal’. In each case, the relevant dimension of comparison is made clear by the parameter (respectively *úpa ... adarśi* ‘shows herself’, *avír akṛta priyāṇi* ‘revealed her intimate parts’, and *sasatō bodháyantī* ‘awakening the sleeping’), but the “speaking nouns” employed in place of common animal nouns adds visual details to the depiction of the goddess.<sup>229</sup>

In verses 7 and 8, the poet elaborates the usual theme of Dawn as a beautiful woman creating a series of portraits of female figures from ancient India. In 7a, reported in (27), Dawn is compared to a brotherless girl boldly approaching men: since in ancient India the brother was his sister’s matchmaker, a brotherless girl needed to take initiative and find a husband on herself (Geldner 1951; see also Schmidt 1987: 30-75). In 7b, the simile standard *gartārúk* (*gartārúg* due to *sandhi*) *ná sanáye* can be read either as ‘like one mounting ( $\sqrt{ruh-}$ ) a seat to win prizes’, presumably a chariot’s seat, or as referring to a woman ‘mounting a platform to gain property’, i.e. showing herself for money (Hillebrandt 1913 talks of a dancer or singer; see also Geldner 1951; Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*). Although similes involving winning chariots and charioteers are pervasive in the ṚV (cf. especially Chapter 9.3), the latter interpretation certainly suits better this verse focused on the depiction of Dawn as a woman. The last two similes (*pādas* cd) compare Dawn to a lustful (*hasrā́ iva*) wife richly dressed for her husband in the act of showing her breast.

(27) *abhrā́téva pumśá eti pratīcī́*  
*gartārúg iva sanáye dhánānām*  
*jāyéva pátya usatī́ suvāsā́*  
*uṣā́ hasréva ní riṅṅte ápsaḥ*

‘Like a brotherless (girl) she goes right up to men—like one mounting a chariot seat to win prizes [/(display-)platform to gain property]. Like an eager wife, richly dressed, for her husband, Dawn, like a wanton, lets her breast spill over.’

(ṚV 1.124.7)

<sup>229</sup> The fact that all three substantivized adjectives are also found in attributive function with other referents suggests that they were not lexicalized to refer to these three animals. As we have seen, a noun for ‘waterbird’ is found for instance in ṚV 10.95.9 (*ātī-*), and Classical Sanskrit also knows *haṃsī-* ‘female goose’; *hastinī-* ‘female elephant’ is already attested in the AV, and the ṚV has *máḥsikā-* for ‘fly’ (Thieme 1965[1971: 223]).

*Pāda* 8a, reported in (28), presents the motive of the sisters Night and Dawn following each other every day and *pāda* b presents Dawn going away from her sister ‘like one to be gazed upon’.<sup>230</sup> Jamison and Brereton (2014; see also Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*) interpret this simile as a reference to the display motif of the *svayamvara* (“self-choice”) marriage. The *svayamvara* was a method of contracting marriage characteristic of the Kṣatriya (warrior) class, particularly for the daughter of a king (Schmidt 1987, Lecture III: 76-109; Jamison 1999; Jamison 2001). According to the evidence deriving from classical Indian literature, when the girl in question reached marriageable age, her father invited suitors-kings and princes from various regions to his palace. Before she took her choice, the girl was announced among the assembled suitors and entered the assembly for all to see: the similes in 8b might refer to this moment of the ceremony (Jamison 1999, Jamison 2003: 42-44).

The interpretation of *pāda* 8b as referring to the *svayamvara* marriage is suggested to Jamison by *pādas* 8cd, in which Dawn is compared to *samanagā iva vrāḥ*: Jamison (2003), interprets the word *vrā-* as a reduced form of *\*varā-*, the feminine of *vará-* ‘chooser’, ‘suitor’ from the root  $\sqrt{vr}$ - ‘choose’. Accordingly, *vrā-* means ‘(female) chooser’, that is, the bride at a *svayamvara* wedding. Following this interpretation, *pāda* 8c compares Dawn smearing unguents on herself (where *añjī* ‘unguent’ stands for sun’s rays that adorn her) to girls ‘with a choice going to assemblies’, that is to girls making their choice of bridegroom at specially convened assemblies.

Jamison’s interpretation of the similes in 8b and 8d is interesting because it concludes the series of detailed female portraits begun in verse 7. However, following the interpretation proposed by other commentators, according to whom *vrāḥ* in 8d stands for ‘group’, the comparison of Dawn with a group of women smearing unguent on themselves for assemblies also befits the content of the two verses and does not exclude a reference to marriage.<sup>231</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Based on ṚV 1.113.1, Geldner suggests that the subject of 8a is Night, and her older sister is Dawn; on the contrary, Jamison takes it to be Dawn, who is going away from Night. The decisive word is *praticākṣya/ā* (the latter according to the *Pada-pāṭha* text), which can be either a gerund (-a) or a gerundive (-ā). Except for Oldenberg (1909), most commentators take it as a gerundive with the sense ‘to be seen again’ (e.g., Geldner’s ‘die man wiedersehen soll’). According to Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) this is not the standard meaning of *prāti*  $\sqrt{cakṣ}$ -, which simply means ‘gaze upon’. See also Macedo (2010: 137-138) for a thorough discussion on the ambiguous syntax of ṚV 1.113.1.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Geldner (1951), who refers to similar comparisons contained in ṚV 4.58.8a (*abhī pravanta sámaneva yóṣāḥ* ‘they [streams of ghee] float like lovely young women to [marriage] assemblies’), ṚV 4.58.9ab (*kanyā iva vahatúm ... añjī añjānā* ‘like maidens smearing on unguent to go to their wedding’), ṚV 7.2.5b (*sám agrúvo ná sámanesu añjan* ‘they jointly anoint like unwed girls in (marriage) assemblies’), ṚV 10.168.2 (*ā enam gachanti sámanam ná yóṣāḥ* ‘they [eddies of the wind] go to him [Vāyu], like girls to a festive gathering’).

(28) *svāsā svāsre jyāyasyai yónim āraig*

*ápaiti asyāḥ praticáksiyeva*

*viuchántī raśmibhiḥ sūriyasya*

*añjī añkte samanagá iva vráh*

1. ‘The (one) sister has left the natal place to her older sister. She goes away from her, like (a girl) to be gazed upon. Dawning forth with the rays of the sun, she smears unguent on herself, like (maidens) with a choice going to assemblies.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. ‘Die Schwester hat der älteren Schwester den Platz geräumt; sie geht von ihr wie eine, die man wiedersehen soll. Mit den Strahlen des Surya aufleuchtend legt sie sich Schminke auf wie Lockmädchen, die zum Feste gehen.’ (Geldner: 1951)

(ṚV 1.124.8)

To sum up, verses 7 and 8 present the typical motif of the Dawn as a beautiful young woman but elaborate and play on it through to a cascade of similes that describe female figures of ancient India. As in the case of similes in which Dawn is compared to female animals or parts of them (vs. 4), similes in verses 7 and 8 do not add conceptual structure to the target domain: in fact, apart from the fact of, e.g. going towards men, Dawn has little to do with a brotherless girl or a wife. Similarly, unguents and ornaments constitute an image metaphor for the Sun’s rays showing up with Dawn, but the goddess does not share many other qualities with a bride at a *svayamvara* wedding. Rather, these similes describe the arrival of Dawn, which is the main theme of the hymn, through scenes of everyday life that give an intimate flavor and vividness to the composition.

In some cases, similes are employed only with the main character of a hymn and assume a narrative function which sums to the descriptive function presented above. Examples of this phenomenon are found, for instance, in two famous dialogue hymns: ṚV 10.95, containing the dialogue between the king Pururāvas and the apsara Urvaśī, and ṚV 3.33 reporting the exchange between the poet Viśvāmitra and the rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī.

*ṚV 10.95 Pururāvas and Urvaśī*

This very famous hymn contains the dialogue between the Apsaras Urvaśī, a divine nymph, and her discarded mortal husband Purūravas. The content of the hymn, whose language is in many places hard to interpret, as well as its relationship with other versions of the story that have been handed down to us, have been much debated in the literature. ṚV 10.95 is often referred to as an *ākhyāna* hymn, a ‘narrative hymn’. According to Oldenberg (1885, 1909), the uniqueness of *ākhyāna* hymns is that they originally consisted of a mixture of prose and poetry, of which only the latter is preserved

in the ṚV. Thus, the extant text contains several unclear references that challenge the modern reader. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* XI.5.1 embeds several of the Ṛgvedic verses into a prose narrative, according to which the separation of the former lovers is the result of a curse and of the Gandharvas' will to have the nymph back.<sup>232</sup>

Instead of relying on the version handed down by the ŚB, Jamison and Brereton (2014) suggest interpreting the content of the hymn on the basis of the ṚV alone, taking into account the temporal precedence of the latter over the ŚB. What we get from the Ṛgvedic text is a radical portrait of an emotionally detached Urvaśī who, instead of depending on the Gandharvas' whims, deliberately decides to discard her mortal husband. Indeed, the version found in the ŚB may result from a creative misreading of verse 3, involving the bleating lambs robbed by the Gandharvas, the thunderstorm, and the provision that Urvaśī never see Purūravas naked, all of which results in Urvaśī's disappearance.

In analyzing this hymn, I will mainly follow Jamison and Brereton (2014) interpretation of the story, while providing alternative translations based on the ŚB version in the footnotes. The hymn begins with Purūravas demanding Urvaśī that they discuss what went wrong with their marriage (vs. 1), but she impatiently dismisses him (vs. 2): she has gone now 'like the foremost of dawns' (*uṣásām agriyéva*), she is as hard to attain 'as the wind' (*vāta iva*). In verse 3ab, the lack of a parameter for the three similes suggests that Purūravas goes on to compare the nymph with elusive objects: she has gone 'as an arrow from the quiver for glory (*iṣur ná śriyá iṣudhér*), a shot winning cows (*asanā goṣāḥ*), as a charge winning hundreds (*śatasā ná ráṃhiḥ*); 'she will keep flashing forth like (lightning)' (*vi davidyutan ná*),

With the simile in *pāda* 3b 'like a female sheep (makes) its bleating (manifest) (*úrā ná māyūṃ*) so are her tumultuous (tempests) manifest', Purūravas starts reminiscing about Urvaśī's good service as a wife (vs. 4), but she then provides her own version of her wifely life (vs. 5). The next verses (6-11) mainly concern the Apsarases to whom Urvaśī is now returning. While they attended the nymph when she gave birth to her and Purūravas's son, they kept themselves well away from Purūravas: 'always on the move' (*caranyúḥ*), they flowed 'like reddish salves' (*añjāyo aruṇāyo ná*, vs. 6), they shied away from him 'like a shy antelope' (*tarásantī ná bhujyús*), 'like horses that have brushed against a chariot' (*rathaspṛśo ná ásvāḥ*; vs. 8). Urvaśī implies that, instead of mulling over his

<sup>232</sup> According to ŚB XI.5.1, Urvaśī marries Purūravas on condition that she is never to see him naked. After four years of living together, the Gandharvas, demigods of the waters and companions of the Apsares, decide that the earthly stay of Urvaśī should come to an end. During the night, the Gandharvas steal two lambs that Urvaśī held tied to her bed. When Purūravas jumps off the bed naked to claim the two lambs, the Gandharvas cause a flash: Urvaśī sees her husband naked and disappears. Purūravas then begins to wander around the Kurukṣetra in search of the nymph. One day, he comes to a pond where Apsaras swim in the form of ducks. Among them there is also Urvaśī who, recognizing her ex-husband, reveals herself to him. At this point the dialogue reported by ṚV 10.95 begins.

physical attraction to the nymphs, Purūravas should have his mind on more manly matters such as military protection (vss. 7 and 11). Then, she attempts to dismiss Purūravas again (vs. 11), but he brings out the argument of the common child to keep her from leaving (vs. 12). She affirms to be willing to leave the son to his father and, in *pāda* 13c, she reiterates the invitation to Purūravas to leave (*pārehi āstaṃ* ‘go home’), taking up her first speech in vs. 2. In verse 14, Purūravas suggests that he may disappear or die, but Urvaśī talks him out of it (vss. 15-16). In verse 17, he tries again to make her stay (*nī vartasva* ‘turn back!’). The hymn ends with the gods’ address to Purūravas (vs. 18): since his connection with the immortal Apsaras has come to an end, Purūravas the mortal has a bound to death, and his progeny will sacrifice to the gods with an oblation, as mortals do.

The text of ṚV 10.95 is presented below:<sup>233</sup>

<p>1a <i>hayé jāye mānasā tīṣṭha ghore</i>  1b <i>vācāṃsi miśrā kṛṇavāvahai nū</i>  1c <i>nā nau māntrā ānuditāsa eté</i>  1d <i>māyas karan páratatare canāhan</i></p> <p>2a <i>kīm etā vācā kṛṇavā távāhám</i>  2b <i>prākramiṣam uśāsām agriyéva</i>  2c <i>púrūravaḥ púnar āstam párehi</i>  2d <i>durāpanā vāta ivāhám asmi</i></p> <p>3a <i>īsur ná śriyá īsudhér</i>  3b <i>asanā gosāh śatasā ná rāmhih</i>  3c <i>avīre krátau ví davidyutan ná</i>  3d <i>úrā ná māyúm citayanta dhúnayaḥ</i></p> <p>4a <i>sā vásu dádatī śvāsūrāya</i>  4b <i>vāya úṣo yádi vāṣṭy ántigrhāt</i>  4c <i>āstaṃ nanakṣe yásmiñ cākán</i>  4d <i>divā náktam śnathitā vaitaséna</i></p> <p>5a <i>triḥ sma máhnaḥ śnathayo vaitaséna</i>  5b <i>utá sma me áviyatyai pṛṇāsi</i>  5c <i>púrūravo ánu te kétam āyaṃ</i>  5d <i>rājā me vīra tanúvas tát āsīḥ</i></p> <p>6a <i>yā sujūrñih śráyaniḥ sumnāāpir</i>  6b <i>hradécaksur ná granthínī caranyúh</i>  6c <i>tā añjāyo arunāyo ná sasruḥ</i>  6d <i>śriyé gāvō ná dhenāvo ‘navanta</i></p>	<p>1. [Purūravas:] “Woe, wife! Thoughtfully—<b>stand still</b>, fearsome woman!— let us two now exchange words. These thoughts, if unuttered, will not bring us joy even on a distant day.”</p> <p>2. [Urvaśī:] “What shall I do with this speech of yours? I have marched forth, <u>like the foremost of the dawns</u>. Purūravas—go off home again. I am as hard to attain as the <u>wind</u>.”</p> <p>3. [Purūravas:] “... <u>as an arrow from the quiver for glory</u>,<sup>234</sup> a <u>shot winning cows, as a charge winning hundreds</u>. Under the will of no man, <u>she will keep flashing forth like (lightning)</u>; <u>like a female sheep its bleating</u>, so her tumultuous (tempests) became manifest.”<sup>235</sup></p> <p>4. [Purūravas:] “She was (always) imparting energy, a good thing, to her father-in-law—every dawn, whenever he wants it, from the house opposite. She attained a home in which she took pleasure; day and night she was pierced by my rod.”</p> <p>5. [Urvaśī:] “Three times a day you used to pierce me with your rod, and you ‘filled it up’ [=had an erection] for me, who did not seek it. Purūravas, I followed your will. You were then the king of my body, you ‘hero.’”</p> <p>6. [Purūravas:] “The beautifully glowing rank (of Apsaras), friends in good favor, <u>interlaced like a pond’s-eye</u> [=lotus], (always) on the move— these</p>
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<sup>233</sup> For a thorough description of structural devices employed in this hymn, see Thornton (2015: 311-34).

<sup>234</sup> Adapted from Jamison and Brereton (2014); see fn. 242.

<sup>235</sup> Adapted from Jamison and Brereton (2014); see fn. 243.



<p>7a <i>sám asmiñ jáyamāna āsata gná</i>  7b <i>utém avaradhan nadīyah svágūrtāḥ</i>  7c <i>mahé yát tvā purūravo rānāya</i>  7d <i>ávardhayan dasyuhátyāya deváh</i></p> <p>8a <i>sácā yád āsu jáhatīṣu átkam</i>  8b <i>ámānuṣīṣu mānuṣo niṣéve</i>  8c <i>ápa sma mát tarásantī ná bhujyús</i>  8d <i>tā atrasan rathasṙṣo ná ásvāh</i></p> <p>9a <i>yád āsu márto amítāsu nisṙṙk</i>  9b <i>sám kṣoñbhīḥ krátubhīr ná ṙṙnkté</i>  9c <i>tā átāyo ná tanvāḥ śumbhata svā</i>  9d <i>ásvāso ná krīlāyo dándaśānāḥ</i></p> <p>10a <i>vidyún ná · yá pátantī dávidyod</i>  10b <i>bhárantī me ápiyā kāmīyāni</i>  10c <i>jāniṣṭo apó náriyah sújātaḥ</i>  10d <i>ṙá úrvāṣī tirata dīrghám āyuh</i></p> <p>11a <i>jajñīṣá itthá gōṙṙthiyāya hí</i>  11b <i>dadhátha tát purūravo ma ójah</i>  11c <i>ásāsam tvā vidúṣī sásmin áhan</i>  11d <i>ná ma áṣṙṙṇoḥ kím abhúg vadāsi</i></p> <p>12a <i>kadā sūnūḥ pitāraṃ jātá ichāc</i>  12b <i>cakrán ná áṣru vartayad vijānán</i>  12c <i>kó dámpatī sámanasā ví yūyod</i>  12d <i>ádha yád agniḥ śvāsuresu dīdayat</i></p> <p>13a <i>ṙáti bravāṇi vartáyate áṣru</i>  13b <i>cakrán ná krandad ādhīye śiváyai</i>  13c <i>ṙá tát te hinavā yát te asmé</i>  13d <i>ṙārehi ástaṃ nahí mūra māṙaḥ</i></p>	<p><u>flowed like reddish salves; like milk-cows they bellowed for beauty.</u><sup>236</sup></p> <p>7. [Urvaṣī:] “When this one [=the son of Purūravas and Urvaṣī] was being born, the women were in attendance, and the rivers, gurgling to themselves, strengthened him, (just) as for great battle, for the smiting of Dasyus, the gods made you strong, Purūravas.”</p> <p>8. [Purūravas:] “When I, a human, drew near to those nonhuman women when they were taking off their robes, <u>like a shy antelope they shied away from me, like horses that have brushed against a chariot.</u>”</p> <p>9. [Urvaṣī:] “When a mortal, going to caress immortal women, mingles (with their bodies) amid their cries, as if by his intentions, <u>like ducks they preen their own bodies, like horses playful and constantly nipping.</u>”</p> <p>10. [Purūravas:] “She who in her flight <u>kept flashing like lightning</u>, the watery (maiden) bringing me the delights of love— (a son) belonging to men, nobly born, was born from the water— Urvaṣī extends Āyu his lifetime long.”</p> <p>11. [Urvaṣī:] “You were born just so: to afford protection. (But instead) you have exerted this force on me, Purūravas. I, knowing, instructed you on that very day. You did not listen to me. Why will you speak without profit?”</p> <p>12. [Purūravas:] “When will my begotten son seek his father? (When) will he let a tear roll like a wheel, on recognizing (him [=his father])? Who keeps apart a married couple joined in mind as long as the fire will (still) blaze in (the house of) the parents-in-law?”<sup>237</sup></p> <p>13. [Urvaṣī:] “I’ll give him an answer when he lets his tear roll. <u>Like a wheel he screeches for kindly care.</u> I will send it [=child] to you, that thing of yours</p>
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<sup>236</sup> See Geldner’s (1951) radically different translation: ‘Sujurni, Sreni, Sumnaapi wie Hradecaksus, Granthini, Caranyu, die sind wie die rötlichen Farben zerronnen; sie schreien um die Wette wie Milchkühe.’ However, in a note Geldner does not exclude Jamison’s and Brereton’s interpretation.

<sup>237</sup> Geldner (1951): ‘Wann wird der geborene Sohn seinen Vater suchen? Wie ein schreiendes Kind wird er Tränen vergießen, wann er Bescheid weiß. Wer trennt die einträchtigen Ehegatten, da bei den Schwiegereltern noch das Hausfeuer hell luchtet?’

<p>14a <i>sudevó adyá prapáted ánāvṛt</i>  14b <i>parāvátam paramám gántavá u</i>  14c <i>ádhā śáyīta nirṛter upásthe</i>  14d <i>ádhainam vṛkā rabhasáso adyúḥ</i></p> <p>15a <i>púrūravo má mṛthā má prá paptó</i>  15b <i>má tvā vṛkāso áśivāsa u kṣan</i>  15c <i>ná vai straiṇāni sakhiyāni santi</i>  15d <i>sālāvṛkāṇām hṛdayāni etā</i></p> <p>16a <i>yád vírūpā ácaram mártiyeṣu</i>  16b <i>ávasam rátrīḥ śarádas cátasrah</i>  16c <i>ghṛtásya stokám sakṛd áhna āśnām</i>  16d <i>tād evédám tāṭṛpāṇā carāmi</i></p> <p>17a <i>antarikṣaprāṇ rājaso vimānīm</i>  17b <i>úpa śikṣāmi urváśīm vásiṣṭhaḥ</i>  17c <i>úpa tvā rátrīḥ sukṛtásya tīṣṭhān</i>  17d <i>ní vartasva hṛdayam tapyate me</i></p> <p>18a <i>iti tvā devā imá āhur aiḷa</i>  18b <i>yáthem etád bhāvasi mṛtyúbandhuḥ</i>  18c <i>prajā te devān haviṣā yajāti</i>  18d <i>suvargá u tvám ápi mādayāse</i></p>	<p>that's with us. Go away home. For you will not attain me, you fool."<sup>238</sup></p> <p>14. [Purūravas:] "And if the gods' pet should fly away today, never to return, to go to the most distant distance ... Then he might lie in the lap of Dissolution. Then again the ravening wolves might eat him..."</p> <p>15. [Urvaśī:] "O Purūravas, don't die. Don't fly away. Don't let the unkindly wolves eat you. There exist no partnerships with women: they have hyenas' hearts."</p> <p>16. [Urvaśī:] "When in <b>different form</b> I roamed among mortals and spent the nights (with you?) for four autumns, once a day I ate a drop of ghee. Just from that I continue to be sated now."</p> <p>17. [Purūravas:] "<b>She who fills the midspace, who is the measurer of the dusky realm, Urvaśī</b>—I, the best (of men?), seek to bring her under my sway. Since the granting of a good deed will stand you in good stead, <b>turn back</b>: my heart is scorched."</p> <p>18. Thus these gods here say to you, Aiḷa [=Purūravas]: "As it (turned out) this way, you have a bond to death. Your progeny will sacrifice to the gods with an oblation, but you will also rejoice in heaven."</p>
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One thing that immediately catches the eye is that, in ṚV 10.95, similes are almost exclusively referred to Urvaśī and the other Apsarasas. More precisely, a cascade of similes seems to vividly depict Urvaśī's and the Apsarasas' elusiveness, by providing examples of unseizable natural elements (*uśásām agriyá* 'foremost of dawns', *vāta* 'wind', *vidyūn* 'lightning', *añjāyo aruṇāyo* 'reddish salves'<sup>239</sup>), animals (*tarásantī bhujyús* 'shy antelope'), or objects (*iṣuḥ* 'arrow', *asana* 'id.'). The resulting impression of rapidity and elusiveness contrasts with the first verse of the hymn, in which

<sup>238</sup> Geldner (1951): 'Ich will ihm Rede stehen, wenn er die Tränen rollen läßt. Wie ein schreiendes Kind wird er schreien nach der freundlichen Sorge der Mutter. Ich will dir schicken, was von dir bei uns ist. Geh nach Hause, denn mich wirst du nicht bekommen, du Tor!'

<sup>239</sup> Probably an image metaphor for the dawn's rays. Cf. example iv. and ṚV 1.124.8cd above (example (28)):

iv. *prāti ketávaḥ prathamá adṛśrann ı ūrdhvá asyā añjāyo ví śrayante /*  
*úšo arvácā bṛhatá ráthena , jyótiṣmatā vāmám asmábhya vakṣi //*

'The first beacons have been seen opposite; her unguents diffuse aloft. Dawn, with your lofty, light-filled chariot turned hither, convey to us a thing of value.' (ṚV 7.78.1)

Pururāvas begs Urvaśī to ‘stand still’ (*tīṣṭha*), and with his final request to turn back to earth (*nī vartasva*).

In addition to this stylistic effect, repeatedly comparing Urvaśī and the other Apsares to elements of the natural world, the poet stresses the fact that the two spouses belong to two different realms and thwarts Pururāvas’ desperate attempts to convince his wife to go back to him. Indeed, similes are only employed in passages that refer to the separation between the two spouses, whereas passages that narrate their life as a married couple make no use of similes; see especially verse 4, in which Pururāvas remembers their life together at that time before the separation, verse 5 in which Urvaśī reports her own view of her wifely duties, and verse 7, in which she remembers the moment she gave birth to their son, surrounded by the other nymphs. Thus, similes underline the hymn’s central message, namely the incompatibility of the worlds to which the two spouses belong. Note that the same message is conveyed by the contraposition between human/mortal and non-human/immortal in verses 8 and 9 (*ámānuṣīṣu mānuṣaḥ* ‘a man between non-human women’, *mártaḥ amṛtāsu* ‘mortal between immortal women’), by the description of Urvaśī as roaming in different forms (*vīrūpā*) among mortals (*mártiyeṣu*) in verse 16, as well as by her epithets *antarikṣapráṁ* ‘filler of the midspace’ and *rájaso vimānīm* ‘measurer of the dusky realm’ in verse 17. A further factor that contributes to emphasize Urvaśī’s detachment from her husband is the use she makes of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person verbs, against the 1<sup>st</sup> dual person chosen by Pururāvas. Take for instance verse 1, in which Pururāvas employs a 1<sup>st</sup> person dual verb in his invite to Urvaśī to exchange words (*vácāmsi miśrā kṛṇavāvahai*, lit. ‘let us now make mixed words’). Besides being a marked inflection in almost any context, starting a conversation with the 1<sup>st</sup> person dual is problematic if the interlocutor has deliberately estranged the speaker, as in the case of Urvaśī. Indeed, with her reply *kím etá vácá kṛṇavā távāhám* ‘what shall I do with this speech of yours?’, the nymph promptly repairs Pururāvas’ characterization of their interchange to reflect a more standard 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship and keep herself separate from the interlocutor (Thornton 2015: 314-315).

Before moving on to the analysis of the next hymn, it is worth noting that taking into account the function that similes have in ṚV 10.95 can help us to interpret the difficult verse 3. For this verse, as for several others in this dialogue, different translations have been proposed; Geldner’s (1951) and Hoffmann’ (1967: 200) rendering of the passage are reported in (29) together with that of Jamison and Brereton (2014).

- (29) *ísur ná śrivyá isudhér*  
*asaná gosáh śatasá ná rámhīh*  
*avíre krátāu ví davidyutan ná*

*úrā ná māyúm* citayanta dhúnayah

1. [Purūravas:] ‘... as an arrow from the quiver for glory, a shot winning cows, as a charge winning hundreds. Under the will of no man, she will keep flashing forth like (lightning); like a female sheep its bleating, so her tumultuous (tempests) became manifest.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)<sup>240</sup>

2. ‘Wie der Pfeilschuß um den Ehrenpreis aus dem Köcher, wie das Rennen, das Kühe gewinnt, Hundert gewinnt. - Nicht hat es in der Meinung, daß kein Mann da sei, geblitzt. Die Spielleute verstanden es wie ein Schaf zu blöken.’ (Geldner 1951)

3. ‘–Wie ein Pfeil zum Eherenpreis, ein Geschoß aus dem Köcher, wie ein kuhgewinnendes hundertgewinnendes Rennen –. Ohne daß in Mann, (ohne daß) Willenskraft vorhanden war, ha es nicht geblitz, – wie ein Lamm das Blöken haben (die Gandharven) sich lärmend vernehmen lassen.’ (Hoffmann 1967)

(ṚV 10.95.3)

All translators agree that the similes contained in *pādas* a and b, lacking an explicit parameter, continue the series started by Urvaśī in verse 2. For the interpretation of *pādas* c and d, on the other hand, translators rely on ŚB XI.5.1: following this version, they interpret *vī davidyutan* as a reference to the lightning that the Gandharvas sent in order to make Urvaśī see Purūravas naked, while the bleating sheep in *pāda* c refers to lambs stolen by them with the same purpose. However, beyond the undeniable difficulty of the passage, two aspects of this interpretation are particularly problematic. From a syntactic point of view, taking *vī davidyutan* as an intensive 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural injunctive form of *vī √dyut-* ‘flash forward’ forces us to consider *ná* a negative particle: however, we have seen several times already that negative *ná* is usually found in clause-initial position or before the verb.<sup>241</sup> This leaves us with two alternatives: a) interpreting *ná* as an adaptor as in Griffith’s (1890) ‘the lightning seemed to flash’, although this is a very rare function for *ná* (see Chapters 6.1.3.3, 8.2.4), or b) admitting that *ná* functions as a standard marker. In the latter case, the condensed structure of the simile requires interpreting *vī davidyutan.3PL.INJ* as the parameter and at the same time *davidyutan* as a substantivized participle ‘like the ever flashing one’, i.e., the lightning. Note that the whole simile does occur in verse 10, with the same verb and an explicit standard: *vidyún ná yá ... dávidyod* ‘(she) who kept flashing like lightning’. Reading *ná* as a standard marker has the advantage of continuing the series of similes begun in verse 2; however, while Jamison (1982) reads verse 3 as Purūravas’s

<sup>240</sup> See also Jamison (1982: 259 with n. 25), with reference to Insler’s interpretation.

<sup>241</sup> See Hoffmann (1967: 99-102) for examples of non-prohibitive, negated injunctives, i.e., injunctives negated by *ná* and not by *má*. In all examples in this long series, *ná* occurs either in clause-initial or pre-verbal position.

nostalgic reflection on Urvaśī's beauty and sexual passion, I am inclined to interpret *pādas* 3a to 3c as continuing the list of unseizable things began by Urvaśī's mention of the wind (cf. also Hoffmann 1967: 200). In other words, Purūravas laments her being unseizable like an arrow cast to reach glory<sup>242</sup> and cattle, or as lightning.<sup>243</sup>

Finally, Jamison (1982: 259, with n. 25) suggests that the verb *citayanta* in *pāda* d is construed differently with the comparee (intransitive 'to appear, become manifest') and with the standard (causative 'to make perceive'). Instead of supplying the Gandharvas as underlying subject on the basis of ŚB XI.5.1, since they do not figure anywhere else in the hymn, Jamison and Brereton (2014) read *dhúnayah* 'tumultuous' as a substantivized adjective referring to the nymph's cries – this time perhaps a reference to her 'wifely duties' described in verse 4.

Finally, verses 12 and 13 contain the only two similes in the hymn whose comparee is not Urvaśī, but her and Pururāvas' son Āyu. Again, translations differ in the interpretation of the similes reported in (30) and (31).

(30) *kadā sūnúḥ pitāraṃ jātá ichāc*  
*cakrān ná áśru vartayad vijānān*  
*kó dámpatī sámanasā ví yūyod*  
*ádha yád agniḥ śváśuresu dīdayat*

1. [Purūravas:] "When will my begotten son seek his father? (When) will he let a tear roll like a wheel, on recognizing (him [=his father])? Who keeps apart a married couple joined in mind as long as the fire will (still) blaze in (the house of) the parents-in-law?" (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. 'Wann wird der geborene Sohn seinen Vater suchen? Wie ein schreiendes Kind wird er Tränen vergießen, wann er Bescheid weiß. Wer trennt die einträchtigen Ehegatten, da bei den Schwiegereltern noch das Hausfeuer hell luchtet?' (Geldner 1951)

(ṚV 10.95.12)

(31) *prāti bravāṇi vartáyate áśru*  
*cakrān ná krandad ādhiye śivāyai*  
*prá tát te · hinavā yát te asmé*  
*párehi ástaṃ nahí mūra māpaḥ*

<sup>242</sup> For this reason, I changed Jamison and Brereton's translation of *śrīyé* as 'of beauty' into 'for glory'.

<sup>243</sup> This reading also offers a plausible interpretation of the locative *avīre krátāu* 'under the will of no man'. Cf., on the contrary, the complicated explanation provided by Geldner (1951) for this phrase.

1. [Urvaśī:] “I’ll give him an answer when he lets his tear roll. Like a wheel he screeches for kindly care. I will send it [=child] to you, that thing of yours that’s with us. Go away home. For you will not attain me, you fool.” (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

2. “Ich will ihm Rede stehen, wenn er die Tränen rollen läßt. Wie ein schreiendes Kind wird er schreien nach der freundlichen Sorge der Mutter. Ich will dir schicken, was von dir bei uns ist. Geh nach Hause, denn mich wirst du nicht bekommen, du Tor!” (Geldner 1951)

(ṚV 10.95.13)

Geldner follows Sāyaṇa in interpreting *cakrāt* (*cakrān* due to *sandhi*) as a haplologic form of *cakradān*, an aorist active participle of  $\sqrt{krand}$ - ‘neigh (of horses), make noise, cry’; in this case, the simile takes a ‘crying (child)’ as standard. Jamison and Brereton (2014), on the other hand, take *cakrān ná* as the *sandhi*ed form of *cakrām*.NOM.SG *ná* ‘like a wheel’. In addition to being simpler from a morphological point of view, the latter interpretation relies on the existence of a conventional simile *cakrām ná*  $\sqrt{vṛt}$ - ‘roll like a wheel’, such as the one in (32), with the same verb that we find in (30).

(32) *abhī na ā vavṛtsuva*

*cakrām ná vṛttām árvatah*

*niyúdbhiś carṣaṇīnāam*

‘Turn toward us here—like a chariot-wheel turned toward its steeds— with your teams of the separate peoples.’

(ṚV 4.31.4)

The simile involving *cakrá-* and  $\sqrt{krand}$ - in (31) is a novel one, but might be read as a reference to the soft cry of the child, which ‘creaks’ like a wheel.<sup>244</sup> At the same time, we cannot exclude that the presence of the verb  $\sqrt{krand}$ - in (31) evoked a crying baby (*cakradān* according to Geldner) as a standard: if this is the case, comparing the semi-divine son of Urvaśī and Pururāvas to a ‘crying child’, the simile would serve to underline his belonging to the human realm and to anticipate his return to his father.

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<sup>244</sup> Note that, in 13c, Urvaśī chillingly refers to her son in the neuter (cf. the demonstrative pronoun *tát* ‘it’ and the relative *yát* ‘that’).

ṚV 3.33 *Viśvāmitra and the Rivers*

This famous hymn was already introduced in Chapter 9.2: in that chapter, I reported the first verse of the hymn as an example of similes whose standard involves rich inferences that go beyond the specific frame evoked by the parameter. In the case of ṚV 3.33.1, we have seen that, in addition to representing their confluence, comparing the rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī with mother cows licking their calf evokes maternal images that fit the benevolent behavior of the two rivers towards the poet Viśvāmitra and his troop. The following analysis should make the connection clear.

After two opening verses describing the confluence of Vipāś and Śutudrī, the hymn contains a dialogue between these rivers and the poet Viśvāmitra, who begs them to stop in their course to allow the Bharata forces to cross (vss. 5, 9). In this verse, the rivers indirectly respond to Viśvāmitra’s request by asserting that they flow because of the gods’ will: Indra dug their riverbeds (cf. *yónim devákṛtam* ‘god-made womb’ in vs. 4) and, by smashing Vṛtra, removed the obstacles that kept them from flowing; Savitar makes them flow at his impulsion (Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*). After hearing Viśvāmitra praise Indra’s deeds (vs. 7), the rivers agree to stop their course, on the condition that their future fame will also be ensured in his poetry (vs. 8). In verse 12, the Bharatas are said to have crossed successfully, and the rivers are urged to refill with water and resume their course.

That the rivers temporarily stop their course thanks to the poet’s words (cf. 5a *rámadhvam me vácse somiyáya* ‘stop for my somiam speech’) constitutes another proof of the power that Vedic culture attributes to properly formulated speech to control the physical world. The final verse (13), composed in a different meter (*anuṣṭubh*), seems to request that some generic waters (*ápah*) let a bogged wagon pass; in light of the above considerations, verse 13 may be a magic spell exemplifying the power of words by applying Viśvāmitra’s mythical river crossing to a team in trouble at a ford (Jamison and Brereton 2014).

The text of ṚV 3.33 is presented below:

<p>1a <i>prá párvatānām úsatī upásthād</i>            1b <i>áśve iva vísite hāsamāne</i>            1c <i>gāveva śubhré mātārā rihāné</i>            1d <i>vípāṭ chutudrī páyasā javete</i></p>	<p>1. Forth from the lap of the mountains, eager, <u> racing with each other like two mares unloosed, resplendent, licking each other like mother cows</u> (their calves), the Vipāś and Śutudrī (rivers) speed with their <b>milk</b>.</p>
<p>2a <i>índreṣite prasavám bhikṣamāne</i>            2b <i>áchā samudrām rathíveva yāthaḥ</i>            2c <i>samārāṇé ūrmibhiḥ pínvamāne</i>            2d <i>anyá vām anyām āpi eti śubhre</i></p>	<p>2. Impelled by Indra as you long to take part in the forward thrust, <u>you drive like two charioteers</u> to the sea, clashing together, <b>swelling</b> with your waves, the one of you merges into the other – you resplendent ones.</p>
<p>3a <i>áchā síndhum mātṛtamām ayāsaṃ</i>            3b <i>vípāśam urvīm subhágām aganma</i>            3c <i>vatsám iva mātārā samrihāné</i></p>	<p>3. [Viśvāmitra:] I have driven to the <b>most motherly</b> river [=Śutudrī]; we have come to the broad, well-portioned Vipāś – the two who are like mothers</p>

<p>3d <i>samānām yónim ānu samcāranti</i></p> <p>4a <i>enā vayām páyasā pínvamānā</i>  4b <i>ānu yónim devákṛtam cārantīh</i>  4c <i>nā vārtave prasavāh sárgataktaḥ</i>  4d <i>kiṃyúr vípro nadiyo johavīti</i></p> <p>5a <i>rámadhvam me vácasa somiyāya</i>  5b <i>ítāvarīr úpa muhūrtám évaiḥ</i>  5c <i>prá sindhum áchā bṛhatī manīśā</i>  5d <i>avasyúr <u>ahve</u> kuśikásya sūnūh</i></p> <p>6a <i>índro asmāñ aradad vájrabāhur</i>  6b <i>ápāhan vṛtrám paridhīm nadīnām</i>  6c <i>devó anayat savitā supāñis</i>  6d <i>tásya vayām prasavé yāma urvīh</i></p> <p>7a <i>pravāciyaṃ śásvadhā vīriyaṃ tād</i>  7b <i>índrasya kárma yád áhiṃ vivṛścát</i>  7c <i>ví vájreṇa pariśádo jaghāna</i>  7d <i>áyann āpo áyanam ichámānāh</i></p> <p>8a <i>etád váco jaritar māpi mṛṣṭhā</i>  8b <i>ā yát te ghóśān úttarā yugāni</i>  8c <i>ukthéṣu kāro práti no juṣasva</i>  8d <i>mā no ní kaḥ puruṣatrá námas te</i></p> <p>9a <i>ó śú svasārah kārave śṛṇota</i>  9b <i>yayaú vo dūrād ánasā ráthena</i>  9c <i>ní śú namadhvam bhávata supārā</i>  9d <i>adhoakṣāḥ sindhavaḥ srotiyābhiḥ</i></p> <p>10a <i>ā te kāro śṛṇavāmā vácāmsi</i>  10b <i>yayātha dūrād ánasā ráthena</i>  10c <i>ní te <u>namśai pīpiyānéva yósā</u></i>  10d <i><u>máryāveva kaníyā śásvacai</u> te</i></p> <p>11a <i>yád aṅgá tvā bharatāḥ samtáreyur</i>  11b <i>gavyán grāma iṣitá indrajūtaḥ</i>  11c <i>árṣād áha prasavāh sárgatakta</i>  11d <i>ā vo vṛṇe sumatīm yajñiyānām</i></p> <p>12a <i>átāriṣur bharatā gavyávaḥ sám</i>  12b <i>ábhakta vípraḥ sumatīm nadīnām</i>  12c <i>prá pínvadhvam iṣáyantīh surādḥā</i>  12d <i>ā vakṣānāḥ pṛnádhvam yātá śíbham</i></p> <p>13a <i>úd va ūrmīh śámyā hantu</i>  13b <i>āpo yókrāṇi muñcata</i></p>	<p>together <u>licking their calf</u>, proceeding together along the same <b>womb</b> [=riverbed].</p> <p>4. [Rivers:] So we are—<b>swelling with milk</b>, proceeding along our god-made <b>womb</b>. Our forward thrust, launched in a surge, is not to be obstructed. Seeking what does the poet keep calling upon the rivers?</p> <p>5. [Viśvāmitra:] <b>Stop</b> for my somian speech, truthful ones, for an instant, in your travels. My lofty inspired thought (has gone) forth to the river: seeking help, have I, the son of Kuśika, called upon (you).</p> <p>6. [Rivers:] Indra with the mace in his arms dug us channels: he smashed away Vṛtra [/the obstacle] surrounding the rivers. God Savitar of the lovely hands led (us): at his forward thrust we journey widely.</p> <p>7. [Viśvāmitra:] This act of heroism is to be proclaimed ever anew, the deed of Indra when he hewed apart the serpent. He smashed apart the enclosures with his mace. The waters went seeking a way to go.</p> <p>8. [Rivers:] This <b>speech</b>, singer—do not forget it—so that later generations will hear it from you. Favor us in return <b>in your hymns</b>, bard: don't put us down among men. Homage to you.</p> <p>9. [Viśvāmitra:] Listen well to the bard, sisters. He has driven to you from afar with his wagon and chariot. Bow down; become easy to cross, staying below his axle(s) with your currents, you rivers.</p> <p>10. [Rivers:] We will listen to your words, bard. You have driven from afar with wagon and chariot. I [=one river] will bow down to you <u>like a young woman swollen</u> (with milk, to her infant), (while) I [=other river] will bend to you <u>like a maiden to her cavalier</u>.</p> <p>11. [Viśvāmitra:] When the Bharatas should really have crossed you entirely—the horde seeking cattle, propelled, sped by Indra— then certainly your forward thrust, launched in a surge, will rush (again). I wish for the favor of you who deserve the sacrifice.</p> <p>12. [Viśvāmitra:] The cattle-seeking Bharatas have entirely crossed; the poet has shared in the favor of the rivers. <b>Swell forth</b>, nurturing, very generous; fill your bellies; drive quickly.</p> <p>13. Let your wave push up the yoke-pins (cane); o waters, let loose the yoking cords. Let the two</p>
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13c <i>māduṣkṛtau vienasā</i>	inviolable (oxen), doing no ill, without offense, not
13d <i>aghniyaú súnam áratām</i>	come to naught.

In this hymn, similes mimic the movement of the two rivers, both in their course (vss. 1, 2, 3) and when they stop it in order to let the army cross (vs. 10). In verse 1, Vipās and Śutudrī race ‘like two mares unloosed’ (*ásve iva ... hāsamāne*), licking each other ‘like mother cows (their calves)’ (*gāveva ... mātārā*); in verse 2, they drive like two charioteers in the sea (*rathíyeva*), while in verse 3 Viśvāmitra addresses them as the two who, being ‘like mothers together licking their calf’ (*vatsám iva mātārā samrihāṇé*), proceed together along the same womb (riverbed). In verse 10, one river proclaims that she will bow down to Viśvāmitra and the Bharata forces ‘like a young woman swollen (with milk, to her infant)’ (*pīpiyānéva yóṣā*), while the other says that she will bend to them ‘like a maiden to her cavalier’ (*máryāyeva kanyā*).

Although the similes take different female and non-female entities as standard (mares, cows, charioteers, young mothers, and spouses), the comparison of the two rivers with mother cows in *pādas* 1c and 3c is reiterated throughout the hymn thanks to the occurrence of lexical items related to cows and motherhood: in *pāda* 1d, the rivers speed with their ‘milk’ (*páyasā*), in 2c they ‘swell’ (*pīnvamāne*) with their waves, in verse 3 they are described as the ‘most motherly’ (*subhágām*) rivers proceeding together in the same womb (*yónim*), and in *pādas* 4ab they are ‘swelling with milk’ (*páyasā pīnvamānā*). In verse 10, the young woman in the standard is also ‘swollen’ (*pīpyānā*), while in 12 the rivers are urged to ‘swell forth’ (*prá pīnvadhvam*), being ‘nurturing’ (*iṣáyantīḥ*). Finally, the Bharata forces are called the ‘horde seeking cattle’ (*gavyán grāma*) and ‘cattle-seeking Bharatas’ (*bharatā gavyávaḥ*). In these epithets, the participle *gavyán* ‘wishing for or desirous of cattle’ and the adjective *gavyú-* ‘id.’, both derivatives of *gó-* ‘cow’, certainly refers to war booty consisting of cattle and can therefore be paraphrased as ‘desirous of battle’; however, they cannot but evoke the motherly behavior that the rivers show to the Bharatas in letting them traverse their ‘womb’.<sup>245</sup>

### 10.2.2 Similes’ performative function

In the introduction to Part 3, we have seen that the hymns of the ṚV are part of the verbal dimension of a multimodal performance, namely the Vedic sacrifice. Although the range of themes addressed

<sup>245</sup> In addition to describing the main characters of the hymn in relation to their addresser, in ṚV 3.33 similes have what we may call a meta-poetic function (on which see Section 10.2.3 below). The central moment of the hymn is when the two rivers agree to stop their course and let the army cross as long as Viśvāmitra dedicates them a song worthy of a god (the phraseology of vs. 7 recalls the praise hymn *par excellence*, ṚV 1.32 to Indra). The descriptions contained in the similes, which in this hymn concern only the two rivers, might be interpreted as kind of praise poetry that the poet dedicates to the rivers in exchange for their favor.

by the hymns of the ṚV is very large, two themes are dominant in the text: ardent praises of the gods and their works, as well as reflections on the ability of mortals to make contact with and affect the divine and cosmic realms through sacrifice and praise. Indeed, most hymns praise a god or gods' attribute and deeds, and explicitly or implicitly request goods and services in return for this praise (Jamison and Brereton 2020: 127).

As we have seen in the Introduction to Part 3, praises of attributes and deeds are not simple locutionary acts, addressing statements to the gods or describing their features. Just as requests, praises are chiefly recited in order to yield a result: the worshippers attribute power or generosity to the gods because it is power or generosity that they wish to harness to their own ends. Thus, we might say that Ṛgvedic hymns are full of speech acts. Of course, this speech acts are only felicitous under accepted conventions in ritual contexts, which includes, among others, the necessary authority of the priest/poet,<sup>246</sup> set times and occasions,<sup>247</sup> places,<sup>248</sup> and precise wording.<sup>249</sup> An interesting work on

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<sup>246</sup> Almost all Ṛgvedic hymns were recited during the Soma Sacrifice. The ṚV provides unsystematic and rather enigmatic information on how this ritual looked like, but we can rely on the *brāhmaṇas* and on the *śrauta sūtras*, which describe the *śrauta* rituals of the middle Vedic period, for an approximation of the Ṛgvedic sacrifice. Regarding the participants in the ritual, these texts refer to a strict division of labor among four different priests (*ṛtvijṣ*): the Hotar recited Ṛgvedic passages, the Adhvaryu carried out the ritual actions and was associated with the Yajurveda, the Udgātar performed the ritual chants contained in the Sāmaveda, and the Brahman priest had the role of overseeing the rite and rectifying any ritual deficiencies. Finally, the Sacrificer (Yajamāna) arranged and payed for the sacrifice. The situation in the ṚV appears to have been more fluid since the composition of its hymns predates the separation into the four Vedas. The priestly titles Hotar, Adhvaryu, and Udgātar all appear in this text and the fact that term *brahmán* 'formulator' is mentioned among the seven priests of the soma ritual suggests that the poet was one of these priests. Finally, the kings mentioned in the *dānastuti* were probably the equivalent of the royal Sacrificer of the *śrauta* ritual (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 43-57).

<sup>247</sup> For instance, evidence from the ṚV suggests that the soma oblations were offered in the morning and at midday (the Third Pressing, which took place in the evening, was probably an innovation of particular circles, later adopted into the ecumenical ritual of the middle Vedic period). The recipients of the Morning Soma Pressing were Indra and Vāyu, the Wind, while the Midday Soma Pressing was directed to Indra or to Indra and the Maruts (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 48, 53). Besides the Soma Sacrifice, the ṚV mentions rituals that will form part of the later *gr̥hya* 'domestic' ritual system, primarily based on lifecycle events: birth, wedding, pregnancy, funeral.

<sup>248</sup> Due to the semi-nomadic nature of the Vedic society, the ritual ground on which Ṛgvedic rites took place was not a permanent built structure nor a piece of land permanently dedicated to that function. Rather, sacred ground was created before the ritual by laying out three ritual fires; of these, the sacrificial fire was established on the east end of the ground. As suggested by the RV, the preparation of the ritual ground also included the strewing of the sacred grass (*barhīś*) to make seats for the gods that took part in the sacrifice (Brereton and Jamison 2020: 52-57).

<sup>249</sup> In the RV, the frequency of some expressions referring to the ritual suggests that these were actual ritual formulas: for instance, the verb *prá √bhṛ-* 'bring forward' is often employed in hymn-initial position with words for 'praise', 'hymn', 'thought' and constitutes the poet's offering of his praise to the dedicand of the hymn; another very frequent formula is *pībendra sómam* 'drink the Soma, Indra!'.

this topic is Smith (2019): by examining the techniques by which Ṛgvedic hymns refer to themselves, their performer, their audience, and to the occasion of their performance, Smith theorizes a “performance grammar” (*adhiyajñā*) of the ṚV. He argues that, by examining the relationship between mythological narrative and performance grammars that frame them, we can better understand the purpose of performing a hymn.

In what follows, I will adopt Sweetser’s (2000) broad definition of performativity, in its turn taken from Searle (1969, 1979, 1983, 1989), in order to push this analysis of Ṛgvedic praises and requests as performative speech acts forward. Searle (1979: ch. 1) explains the difference between descriptive and performative in terms of direction of fit between Word and World. According to Searle, in descriptions, the word fits a real or imagined world. This means that descriptive statements or assertions have a truth value which depends on their fit with the world in question. On the other hand, prototypical performatives like *I declare you husband and wife* or directives such as *shut up!* can be successful or unsuccessful, felicitous or non-felicitous, but cannot be assigned a truth value, because they do not involve a fit of word to world. Since they are intended to bring about a state of affairs rather than describe one, 1<sup>st</sup> person forms of performative verbs, imperative and subjunctive have “world to word” fit (Sweetser 2000: 308-309).

Since the difference between descriptive and performative results in a difference of fit, Searle points out that a wide range of utterances are potentially performative as long as the background of social facts against which they become possible is satisfied. This latter condition determines the distinction between assertive and declarative speech acts: while the former merely commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition, declarative speech acts (e.g. *That’s an out!* uttered by an umpire) derive illocutionary force from an extra-linguistic institution and change reality in accordance with the content of that declaration (Searle 1969: ch. 2).<sup>250</sup> In practice, the distinction between the two types is often blurred, as shown for instance by the legal verdict: Searle (1979: 18-20) sees the legal verdict as a categorical overlapping of “assertive declarations” because, by declaring someone guilty, the judge makes them guilty and simultaneously commits to the truth of the proposition. Sweetser provides another very clear example of the blurred distinction between assertive and declarative speech acts: in Tolkien’s *The Two Towers* (1954: 189), the good wizard Gandalf breaks the traitor wizard Saruman’s staff by an utterance couched in a purely descriptive form: *Saruman, your staff is broken*. Statements like this have both directions of fit, in that their truth is ensured simply by the act of uttering them under appropriate circumstances.

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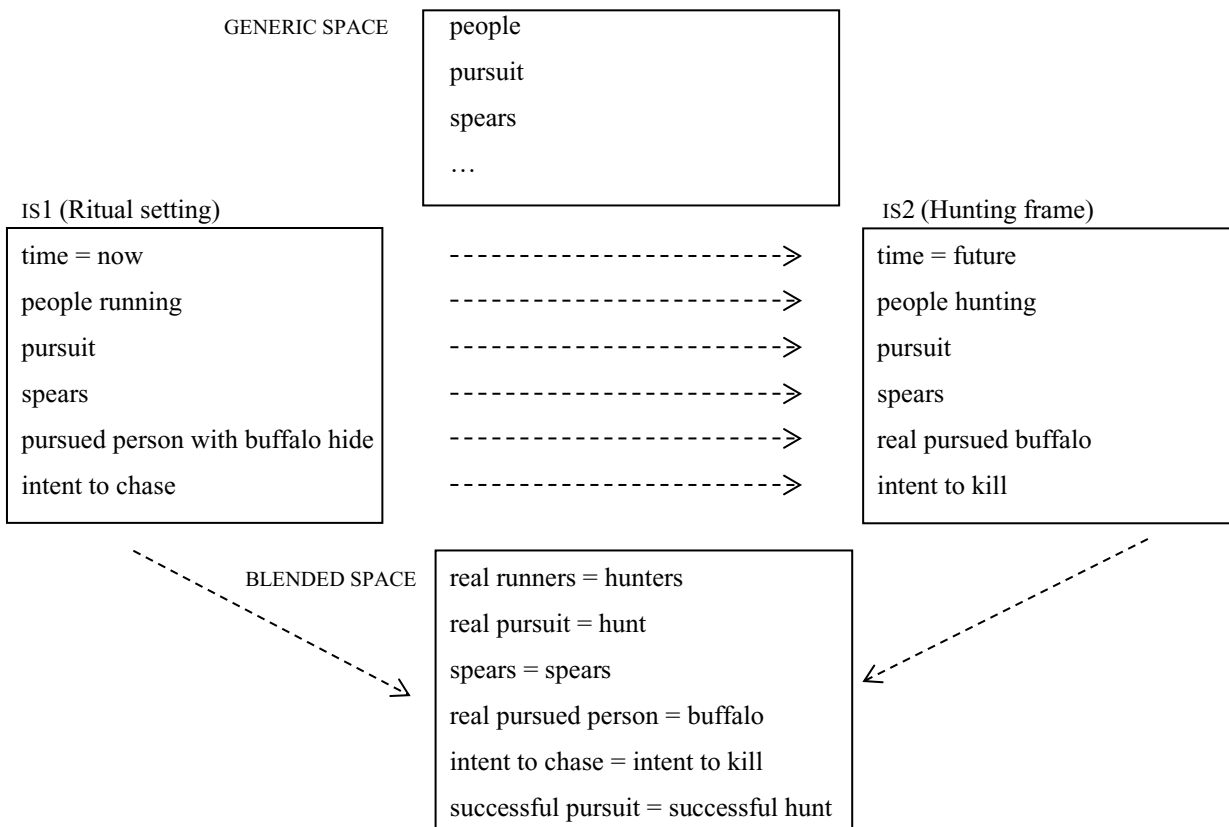
<sup>250</sup> That of an out in baseball is called an “institutional fact” by Searle and distinguished from a brute fact. For this reason, it can be brought into being by the right socially authorized speech act.

In order to analyze the performative function of a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic ritual representations, Sweetser takes on Searle's broad notion of performativity and makes use of Mental Space Theory (Fauconnier 1985, 1997; see also Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996; Chapter 3.1) as a general framework capable of describing the full range of performative phenomena, and also relies on Blending Theory (Fauconnier and Turner 1996, 1998, 2002, 2003; Chapter 3.3). Sweetser translates Searle's theory of direction of fit into a particular relation of fit between a mental space which is a representation, and the corresponding represented space. If the representation is taken as fitting the represented space, then the relation between the spaces is depictive or representational; if instead the represented space is causally influenced or changed by the representation, the relation between the spaces is performative.

According to Sweetser (2000: 311), much religious ritual seems to be both descriptive and performative in this sense. Non-linguistic examples are painting of buffalo hunts on a cave wall made by groups which were also buffalo hunters. If the paintings represent the success of hunters over the buffalo, they may be interpreted as a depictive record of a successful hunt, but they may also represent the attempt to magically bring about success in a future hunt. In this case, the painting is a literal representation employed performatively. Metonymy may also play a role in such representations. For example, one might try to bring about a successful hunt by enacting one ritually: in this case, one might well use metonymic links such as making the human actor playing the role of the animal wear clothes made of the skin or fur of the same animal.

Table 44 represents the complex blend involved in the ritual dance which enacts a successful buffalo hunt. The Input Space 1 (IS1) contains the ritual setting and participants, whereas the Input Space 2 (IS2) consists of a hunting scene and its participants. The blend is what the ritual really means for the participants: for them the person playing the role of the buffalo is a buffalo, and the people enacting the part of hunters are the hunters in the relevant future hunt.

**Table 44.** Integration network of a ritual dance enacting a buffalo hunt (adapted from Sweetser 2000: 320).



A more familiar example is the Christian communion service: the consumption of the blessed bread and wine can be seen as a metaphorical representation of an already extant spiritual union between human and divine, but it also certainly intends to causally bring about and renew this spiritual union. That, by this analysis, the performative causal force depends on the beliefs of the people making and interpreting the representations is made clear by one of the most basic differences between Catholic and Protestant theology. Catholicism holds that the consecration part of the ritual *This is my body* and *This is my blood* really transforms the eucharistic bread and wine into Christ's body, while most Protestant denominations see these phrases as metaphorically depictive, rather than performative (Sweetser 2000: 324).

Sweetser also points out that Jewish and Christian ritual words which claim to bless, glorify, or magnify God (cf. *You are blessed, you are glorious, or you are great*) are now felt as depictives by devotees since, by uttering them, they acknowledge God's blessedness, glory, and greatness. However, other traditions, including old IE ones, attribute a more performative interpretation to praises: the gods' power and greatness depends on the praises of worshippers, even while worshippers depend on gods for supernatural protection and support. This is the case of the Vedas, where the gods are literally made glorious or great by worshippers' depictions, as we have seen in the introduction to Part 3 (examples (1) and (2)) and as shown by (33):

(33) *agnīm ghr̥tēna vāyrdhuh stómebhir*

‘Agni ... have they increased with ghee and praise songs.’

(RV 5.14.6ab)

Summing up, crucial points in Sweetser’s argumentation are a) that descriptions can be used either depictively or performatively, and b) that ritual may involve metaphorical, metonymic and literal representation, which may in turn have depictive, performative, or both depictive and performative function. Furthermore, representations in ritual can be linguistic or nonlinguistic: they may consist of linguistic descriptions in the spoken text of the liturgy or in praise hymns, of symbols like the color of garments as in the case of brides’ white dresses, of physical objects such as bread and wine in the Eucharist, or actions such as eating or kneeling (2000: 315).

In what follows, I argue that applying Sweetser’s mental spaces analysis to the binding spells discussed by Sadovski (2012a) can also help us to understand the function of those similes that are not part of binding spells, i.e. most R̥gvedic similes.<sup>251</sup> As in the previous chapter, in this analysis the standard of the simile constitutes the Input Space 1, whereas the comparee represents the Input Space 2; the simile, as a whole, enables the blend between the two spaces.

From what we have said so far, if the simile in (5), repeated here as (34), had a ritual counterpart which consisted in putting a number of snakes in a little boat and then let it sink, we can interpret its standard as a metaphoric description with both a depictive and a performative function: while it describes the ritual actions performed in concomitance with the spell, it also creates a causal connections between the objects manipulated in the ritual with the target of the spell. This can be represented as the blending of two mental spaces (Table 45): the ritual setting with the sinking of a boat full of snakes (IS1) represented in the standard and the expulsion of enemies (IS2) represented in the comparee.

(34) *té 'dharãñcaḥ prá plavantāṃ chinnã náur iva bándhanāt |*

*ná vaibādhápraṇuttānāṃ púnar asti nivartanam*

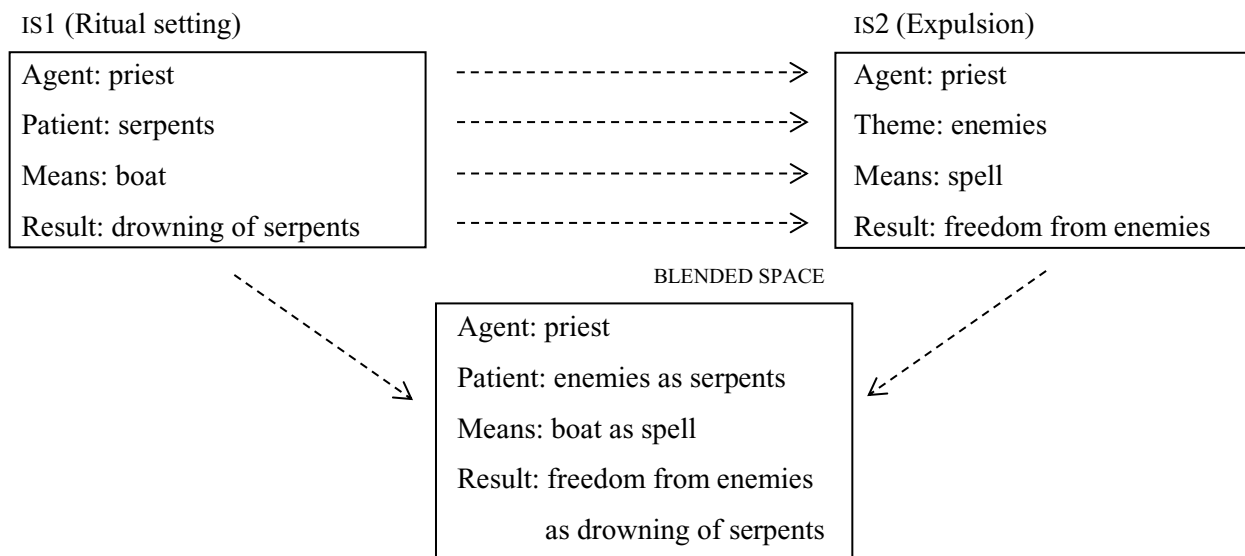
‘Let them float forth downward, like a boat severed from its mooring; of them, thrust forth by the expelling one, there is no returning again.’ (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

(AVŚ 3.6.7)

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<sup>251</sup> When possible, I will go on employing frames taken from FrameNet as Input Spaces of the integration networks.

**Table 45.** Integration network for AVŚ 3.6.1, example (34).



Although, as shown by Sadoski (2012), we can reconstruct that some Indo-Iranian binding formulas involved the simultaneous manipulation of objects or figurines, the same is not true for most similes found in the AV: this is either because we have no knowledge that an object was simultaneously manipulated (35), or because their standards refer to entities that are not under the sorcerer’s control (36).

(35) *prá te bhinadmi méhanam (urinator, dick) vātram veśantyā iva / evā te mūtram mucyatām bahīr bāl iti sarvakām ||*

‘I split up thy urinator, like the weir of a tank – so be thy urine released, out of thee, with a splash! all of it.’ (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

(AVŚ 1.3.7)

(36) *vīṣitam te vastibilām samudrāsyo dadhēr iva / evā te mūtram mucyatām bahīr bāl iti sarvakām ||*

‘Unfastened [be] thy bladder-orifice, like [that] of a water-holding sea - so be thy urine released, out of thee, with a splash! all of it.’ (Whitney and Lanman 1905)

(AVŚ 1.3.8)

As suggested by Gonda (1949), cases such as (35) constitute but a variant of those represented in (34), for here too the simile has the performative function of creating a causal connection between the standard and the target of the spell: just as the sorcerer may have control on the weir of a tank, so he can remove the disease which is causing the obstruction of urine. In the case of (36), beside vividly

describing the way urine should be released, a natural phenomenon serves as a model for the expected result.

In the ṚV we find very few spells and charms. One example is ṚV 10.145, which is uttered by a woman against her cowife for the affections of their joint husband, and which contains two similes in its sixth and last verse: ‘Let your mind run forth after me, like a cow after a calf, like water along its path’. We can nevertheless assume that in utterances such as (37), the function of similes does not change:

(37) *asmā́ id u stóman sām hinomi*

*rátham ná tásteva tátsināya*

*gíras ca gírvāhase suvṛktí*

*indrāya viśvaminvám médhirāya*

‘Just for this one (Indra) I put together praise—like a carpenter a chariot for the one whose gear it is— and hymns with a good twist for the one whose vehicle is hymns—for wise Indra (praise) that sets everything in motion.’

(ṚV 1.61.4)

The simile in (37) is an instantiation of the IE motive of poetry as handicraft discussed in the introduction to Part 3, and in fact relies on the conceptual metaphor FORMING WORDS IS SHAPING.<sup>252</sup> Like in examples (35) and (36), the standard of the simile is used performatively and creates a connection between the poet and a craftsman, his praise and a chariot, as well as between the addressed god and the client who ordered the chariot. Such identification may have the function of ensuring the positive result of the poet’s praise, an effect which is most visible from the analysis of the simile in (38), with similar standard and comparee.

(38) *evéd indrāya vṛṣabhāya vṛṣṇe*

*bráhma **akarma** bhṛgavo ná rátham*

*nū́ cid yáthā naḥ sakhiyā́ viyóśad*

*ásan na ugró avitá tanūpáḥ*

<sup>252</sup> [https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Metaphor:FORMING\\_WORDS\\_IS\\_SHAPING](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Metaphor:FORMING_WORDS_IS_SHAPING). In its turn, this metaphor is an entailment of the metaphor WORDS ARE CONTAINERS ([https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Metaphor:WORDS\\_ARE\\_CONTAINERS](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Metaphor:WORDS_ARE_CONTAINERS) )

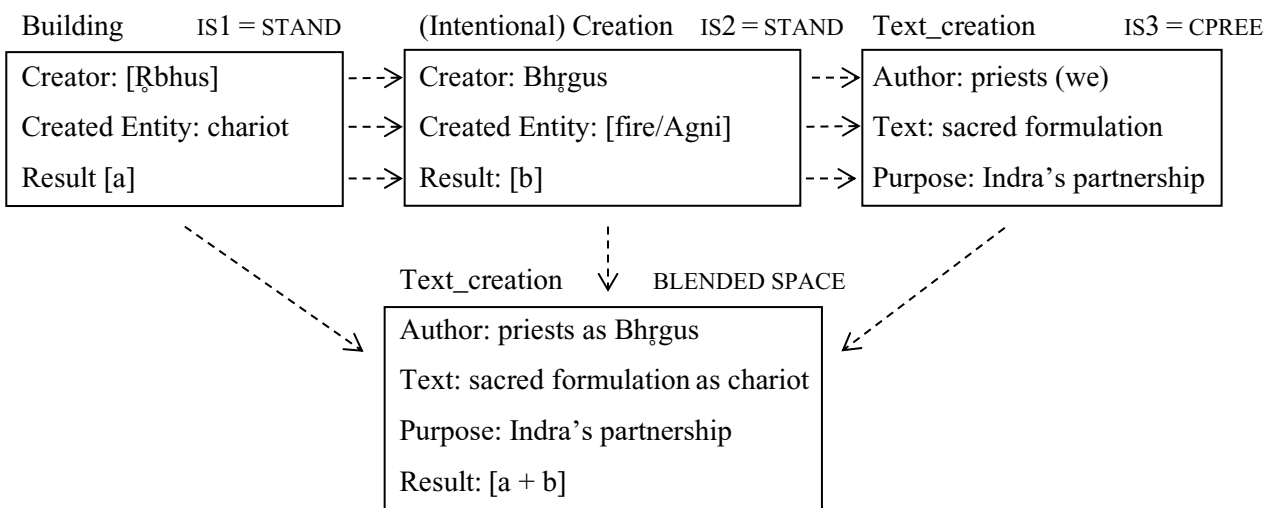


‘Just in this way we have made a sacred formulation for Indra, the bull-strong bull, as the Bhṛgus do a chariot, so that he will never keep us far away from his partnership, and he will be our powerful helper, the protector of our bodies.’

(ṚV 4.16.20)

The simile ‘as the Bhṛgus do a chariot’ in (38) implies a complex system of mapping yielding a blend with rich emergent structure. The Bhṛgus in the standard are no mythical craftsmen, as the Ṛbhus are. They are connected with the production (cf. ṚV 10.46.9) or kindling (cf. ṚV 10.122.5) of fire for the establishment of the sacrifice on earth and are thus regarded as mythical priests (cf. the *vát*-adverb *bhṛguvat* ‘like the Bhṛgus/‘like Bhṛgu’). The presence of the chariot in these similes and the fact that the hymns in which they occur (ṚV 4.16.20 and 10.39.14) are addressed to Indra and to the Ásvins suggests the interference of a simile ‘like the Ṛbhus a chariot’: the Ṛbhus are in fact divine craftsmen, praised for their skills and closely connected with Indra and with the Ásvins, having fashioned their steeds and chariot respectively (Macdonell 1897: 131-132).<sup>253</sup> The resulting similes merges the ability of the Bhṛgus, as mythical priests, to formulate praises and the ability of the Ṛbhus, as divine craftsmen, to fabricate chariots, and connects it with the ability of the poet to fashion a sacred formulation. Table 46 shows the structure emerging from the blend of the three spaces Building, Intentional Creation, and Text Creation (all sharing having Intentional Creation as Generic Space).

**Table 46.** Integration network for ṚV 4.16.20, example (38).



<sup>253</sup> For the Ṛbhus as creators of Indra’s steeds see e.g. ṚV 3.60.3, ṚV 4.35.7-9; for their creation of the Ásvins’ chariot see e.g. ṚV 1.20.3, ṚV 1.161.6, ṚV 10.39.12.

Note that the frame element Result is not explicitly expressed in (38) but, as we have seen in Chapter 9.2, the evocation of a frame brings about the simultaneous evocation of all its elements. The art of the Ṛbhus earned them Indra’s friendship and the status of gods (Result), as shown by example (39); the Bhṛgus illuminated Agni with praises (ṚV 10.122.5) and installed him among the sons of Manu so that he became easy to invoke for the peoples (ṚV 1.58.6).<sup>254</sup>

(39) *sám ṛbhúbhiḥ pibasva ratnadhébhiḥ*

*sákhīṃr yāṃ indra cakṛṣé sukṛtyā*

*yé devāso ábhavatā sukṛtyā*

*śyenā́ ivéd ádhi diví niṣedá*

‘(Indra) Drink together with the treasure-conferring Ṛbhus, whom you made your companions by their good work. You who became gods by your good work—settle down upon heaven like falcons!

(ṚV 4.35.7cd, 8ab)

As Table 46 shows, the simile blends the implicit Result of IS1 and IS2 with the explicit Purpose of IS3, thus ensuring that the poet’s sacred formulation will bring about enduring relationships between men and god(s). In other words, what links artifacts (e.g. *rátha-* ‘chariot’) and sacrifice is that they both creates a bond between their creators (the Ṛbhus and the Bhṛgus respectively) and the gods: thus, comparing themselves to these mythic characters, the poets wish that their praise (*stóma-*) will also gain them Indra’s partnership.

Another passage we can test this analysis on is (40) (already introduced as example (36) in Chapter 9.2):

(40) *ápo sú myakṣa varuṇa bhiyásam*

*mát sámraḷḷ ítāvó 'nu mā grbhāya*

*dāmeva vatsād ví mumugdhi ámho*

*nahí tvád āré nimíṣas canése*

<sup>254</sup> On the base of textual evidence, we could add a further frame element Manner, which maps from IS1 and IS2 to IS3. Indeed, the Manner in which the Ṛbhus fashion a chariot can be inferred by their epithets *su-hásta-* ‘deft-handed’ and *su-ápas-* ‘skillful’ (cf. ṚV 4.33); about the Bhṛgus we read instead that they perceive in the same way as the gods through their skills (*dákṣair* in ṚV 10.92.10d)<sup>254</sup> and that they begat Agni with their powers (*sáhobhiḥ* in ṚV 10.46.9).



(41) *iṣur ná dhānvan prāti dhīyate matir*  
*vatsó ná mātúr úpa sarji údhani*

‘Like an arrow on a bow, my thought is aimed. It is released like a calf to the udder of its mother.’

(ṚV 9.69.1ab)

Finally, the fact that the standard of a simile can have descriptive and performative function at the same time is made clear in similes that compare one god to another with respect to a given quality. For instance, ṚV 9.88 is structured by a series of similes, many of which involve comparison of Soma Pāvamana with other deities (see especially vss. 3-5, 7) and so implicitly attribute the powers and mythological deeds of the latter to Soma.

(42) *vāyúr ná yó niyútvām̐ iṣṭáyāmā*  
*nāsatyeva háva á śámbhaviṣṭhaḥ*  
*viśvāvāro dravinodā́ iva tmán*  
*pūśá iva dhījávano ‘si soma*

‘You, who like Vāyu with his team maintain your desired course, who like the Nāsatyas are most availing at a summons, who like the Treasure-Giver in person bring all desirable things – like Pūṣan you give speed to insight, o Soma.’

(ṚV 9.88.3)

Soma is indeed known for ‘following its course’ (book IX is rich of descriptions of Soma rushing through the filters and towards the wooden cup where it mixes with the waters); furthermore, since the sacrifice is centered on him, he is certainly most availing at summons, and gives speed to insights thanks to his exhilarating power. However, the passage presents all these qualities as prerogatives of other gods: the function of similes here is to create a connection between Soma and the other deities and attribute to him the quality that is typical of each god, which means to attribute that quality to him at its highest degree.

Regarding the examples above, some observations are in order. Similes occur with different types of verbs: prototypical performatives (*I fashion praise, I invoke, etc.*), directives (requests and orders), and descriptions which, as suggested by Sweetser (2000), can also be used performatively. More precisely, even when it comes to descriptions, these describe qualities that devotees would like to find in the gods to which their hymns are dedicated and can be thus interpreted as performative.

We can say that, in all these cases, similes participate in the performative character of the utterance: by explicitly comparing a target with a source, they transfer the qualities of the source to the target and collaborate in achieving the goal of the utterance. They are, in Sweetser (2000) terms, performatively employed descriptions, in that they make the represented space fit its representation.

In Chapters 4.2 and 9, we have seen that especially Israel et al. (2004) recognize a primarily descriptive function to similes. This analysis seems to preclude the possibility that similes carry a performative function. However, we have seen in Chapter 9.2 that similes are often scaffolded on top of other figurative expressions, above all metaphor. In fact, similes analyzed in this section are all based on conceptual metaphor, which is responsible for the systematic mapping between the two evoked frames and for the rich emergent structure of their blend – both corroborated by textual evidence. Similes described in Section 10.2.1, on the other hand, have literal parameters or parameters based on image metaphor and consequently the kind of mapping they trigger conforms to the limited or narrow-scope mapping described by Israel et al. (2004) as well as by Dancygier and Sweetser (2014), among others.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the existence of equations of the type *X is Y with respect to Z*, which could be valid candidates for the performative function that I have proposed for similes. ṚV 2.1 is structured by a series of equations, in which Agni is identified with other gods, with elements of the sacrifice, or of the cosmos. Take for instance verse 3, reported in (43):

(43) *tvám agna índro vṛṣabháh satám asi*  
*tuvám víṣṇur urugāyó namasíyah*  
*tuvám brahmá rayivid brahmaṇas pate*  
*tuvám vidhartaḥ sacase púramdhiyā*

‘You, Agni, as bull of beings, are Indra; you, wide-going, worthy of homage, are Viṣṇu. You, o lord of the sacred formulation, finder of wealth, are the Brahman [=Formulator]; you, o Apportioner, are accompanied by Plenitude.’

(ṚV 2.1.3)

Equations of this type are much rarer than similes in the ṚV and the motivation for preferring similes over equations could lie precisely in their form. Since similes are explicit comparisons and since comparison is an inherently asymmetric relationship between a compared entity and a standard, similes make the relationship between their element immediately clear: the source, which is the figurative element, depends on the target, which is autonomous (Sullivan 2013; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 133-137). The situation is different for copula constructions, which are varied in their

dependency-autonomy relations. For instance, Sullivan (2013: 136) points out that in Specificational copula constructions (Brooke-Rose 1958) that specify role-value mappings there is apparently little if any asymmetry of autonomy between role and value (cf. *The department chair is Linda* and *Linda is the department chair*).<sup>256</sup> The same holds for Identificational copula constructions, which express identity between two entities (*The woman on the balcony is Linda* vs. *Linda is the woman on the balcony*), but not for Predicational copula sentences which are not reversible: *Linda is an excellent teacher* could not be re-expressed as *\*An excellent teacher is Linda*. Equations such as *Agni is Indra* or *Indra is a bull* oscillate between the specificational and the identificational function and thus are less explicit in the asymmetry relation. Indeed, ṚV 2.1 employs these constructions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, which lends itself less to ambiguous reading.

Furthermore, since secondary predicates, or depictives (Himmelmann and Schultze-Bernt 2004), lack dedicated morphological or syntactic markers in Vedic, in some cases it is ambiguous what in an equation is the nominal predicate and what the secondary predicate (cf. Casaretto 2020 on secondary predication in Vedic; Chapter 7.2). Take for instance verse 7 of the same hymn, in which we could read ‘You, [...], as Bhaga are master of goods’ as well as ‘You, [...], as the master of goods, are Bhaga’.

(44) *tuvám agne draviṇodā aramkṛte*  
*uvám deváh savitā ratnadhā asi*  
*tuvám bhágo nṛpate vásva tīṣe*  
*tuvám paayúr dáme yás te ávidhat*

‘You, Agni, are Wealth-Giver to the preparer (of the offering); you, as the conferrer of treasure, are god Savitar. You, lord of men, as Bhaga [Fortune] are master of goods; you are a protector in the house of him who has done you honor.’

(ṚV 2.1.7)

To conclude, besides providing a unified account of Ṛgvedic similes and Atharvavedic persuasive analogies, Sweetser’s analysis in terms of mental spaces allows accounting for the function of constructions that encode historical rather than figurative comparison. As we have seen in Chapter 6, these are adverbs in *-vát* of the type *aṅgirasvād* ‘like the Aṅgirasas’/‘as at the time of the Aṅgirasas’, and comparative clauses introduced by *yáthā*, especially Hettrich’s (1988) *Adverbiale Modalsätze*.

Consider example (45):

<sup>256</sup> Here and in the following examples, both orders are equally grammatical, and the difference is one of information structure rather than specificational or identificational function.

(45) to Sarasvatī, by Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi

*bhadram id bhadraḥ kṛṇavat sárasvatī*

*ákavāri cetati vājínivatī*

*grṇāná jamadagnivat*

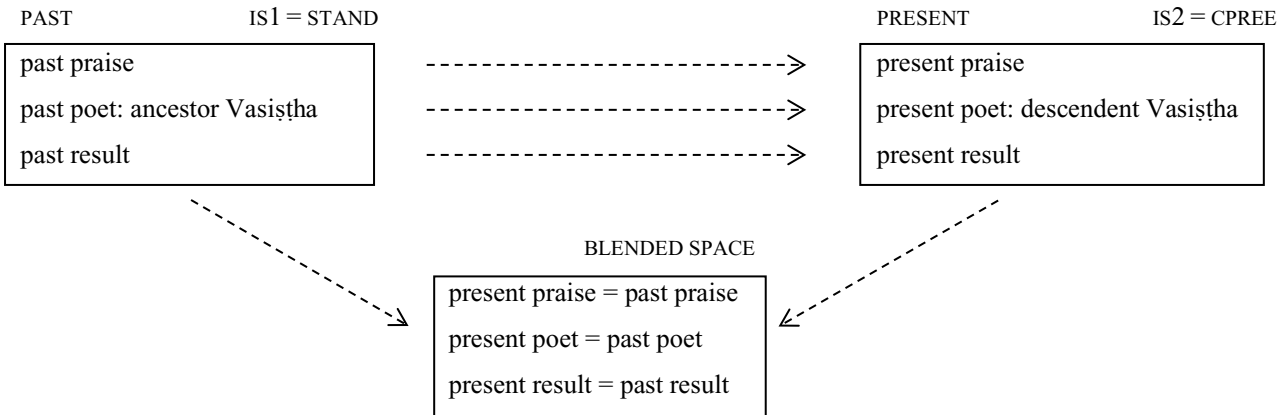
*stuvāná ca vasiṣṭhavát*

‘Good Sarasvatī will do good. She shows brightly as the unstinting one, rich in prize mares, while she is being hymned as she was by Jamadagni and she is being praised as she was by Vasiṣṭha.’<sup>257</sup>

(ṚV 7.96.3)

In (45), the adverbs *jamadagnivat* ‘as (by) Jamadagni’ and *vasiṣṭhavát* ‘as (by) Vasiṣṭha’ focus not on the manner in which Sarasvatī’s praise is being carried out, but on the fact that she was hymned and praised by other poets in the past: by referring to a time in which a prayer yielded a positive result, the comparison establishes a causal relation between the poet’s present hymn and a god’s reaction. In this case, the expected result is that ‘good Sarasvatī will do good’ (*pāda* a). The integration network in Table 48 shows the mapping between past (IS1) and present (IS2) evoked by *vasiṣṭhavát*:

**Table 47.** Integration network for ṚV 7.96.3, example (45).



In comparative clauses such as (46) the poet tries to have the addressed god perform a given action. The *yáthā* clause refers to past occasions on which the god performed the same action – in this case, has drunk the pressed soma – and, as in the case of *vát*-adverbs, establishes a relation between past and present that takes on causal nuances.

(46) *pibā vārdhasva táva ghā sutása*  
*indra sómāsaḥ prathamā utémé*  
*yáthā ápibaḥ pūrviyāṁ indra sómāṁ*  
*evá páhi pányo adyá návīyān*

‘Drink, become strong. Yours are the pressed soma drinks, Indra—the first ones and these here. Just as you drank the previous soma drinks, Indra, so take a drink today, as the one to be admired anew.’

(ṚV 3.36.3)

In what follows, I will analyze two hymns in order to show the use of comparisons that I have called performative in the larger context of the poem to which they belong. The first hymn is ṚV 2.16, dedicated to Indra and concerned that the god listen to the poet’s invocation and offer his favors in return. The second hymn is ṚV 3.17, a hymn focused on the comparison between the ancient and the present sacrificial fire, that is, between ancient and present Agni, and in which historical comparisons have a central function.

#### *ṚV 2.16 to Indra*

The hymn begins with the poet announcing his praise to Indra (vs. 1) and enumerating the god’s qualities (vs. 2) which can be surpassed by no other (vs. 3). In the middle verses (vss. 4-6), Indra is presented as the bull of the sacrifice and all the sacrificial paraphernalia are also depicted as bulls. In verse 7, the poet reiterates the statement made at verse 1 that he is sending his poetic formulation to Indra (7ab) and wishes that this will yield its results (7cd). Verse 8, which compares Indra to a cow, contrasts with the previous verses where the god was presented as a bull. However, presenting an image of Indra as a cow, verse 8 introduces the final verse (vs. 9), in which the poet compares the priestly gift he hopes to receive (*dakṣiṇā*) to a generous cow yielding milk.

The text of ṚV 2.16 is presented below:

1a <i>prá vah satām jyéṣṭhatamāya suṣṭutim</i> 1b <i>agnāv iva samidhāné havir bhare</i> 1c <i>indram ajuryām jaráyantam ukṣitām</i>	1. I carry forward your good praise, like an oblation into a fire being kindled, for him who is the most preeminent of beings: we call upon Indra for help—
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<p>1d <i>sanād yúvānam ávase havāmahe</i></p> <p>2a <i>yásmād índrād bṛhataḥ kíṃ caném r̥té</i>  2b <i>viśvāni asmin sámbhṛtádhi vīrīyā</i>  2c <i>jaṭhāre sómaṃ tanúvī sáho máho</i>  2d <i>háste vájram bháratī sīrśāni krátum</i></p> <p>3a <i>ná kṣoṇībhyām paribhúve ta indriyám</i>  3b <i>ná samudraih párvatair indra te ráthaḥ</i>  3c <i>ná te vájram ánu asnoti kás caná</i>  3d <i>yád āśúbhiḥ pátasi yójanā purí<sup>258</sup></i></p> <p>4a <i>viśve hí asmai yajatāya dhṛṣṇáve</i>  4b <i>krátum bháranti vṛṣabhāya sásate</i>  4c <i>vṛṣā yajasva haviṣā vidúṣtaraḥ</i>  4d <i>pibendra sómaṃ vṛṣabhéna bhānínā</i></p> <p>5a <i>vṛṣṇaḥ kósaḥ pavate mádhva ūrmír</i>  5b <i>vṛṣabhānnāya vṛṣabhāya pátave</i>  5c <i>vṛṣañādhvaryū vṛṣabhāso ádrayo</i>  5d <i>vṛṣañam sómaṃ vṛṣabhāya susvati</i></p> <p>6a <i>vṛṣā te vájra utá te vṛṣā rátho</i>  6b <i>vṛṣañā hári vṛṣabhāni áyudhā</i>  6c <i>vṛṣṇo mādasya vṛṣabha tvám tīṣa</i>  6d <i>indra sómasya vṛṣabhāsya tṛṇuhi</i></p> <p>7a <i>prá te nāvam ná sámāne vacasyúvam</i>  7b <i>bráhmaṇā yāmi sávaneṣu dādḥṣiḥ</i>  7c <i>kuvín no asyá vácaso nibódhiṣad</i>  7d <i>índram útsam ná vásunaḥ sicāmahe</i></p> <p>8a <i>purá sambādhād abhi á vavṛtsva no</i>  8b <i>dhenúr ná vatsám yávasasya pipvúṣī</i>  8c <i>sakṛt sú te sumatibhiḥ śatakrato</i>  8d <i>sám pátnībhir ná vṛṣano nasīmahi</i></p> <p>9a <i>nūnám sá te prāti váram jaritré</i>  9b <i>duhīyád indra dáksīṇā maghónī</i>  9c <i>síkṣā stotṛbhyo māti dhag bhágo no</i>  9d <i>bṛhád vadema vidáthe suvīrāḥ</i></p>	<p>himself unaging but causing to age, a full-grown youth from of old.</p> <p>2. Lofty Indra, without whom there is nothing, in him all facets of a hero are gathered: in his belly he carries the soma, in his body great strength, in his hand a mace, and in his head resolve.</p> <p>3. Your Indrian power cannot be encompassed by the twin battle cries [=heaven and earth], nor can your chariot by the seas and the mountains, o Indra. No one is equal to your mace when with your swift (horses) you fly through many leagues.</p> <p>4. Since all carry their resolve to him, the one worthy of the sacrifice, the daring one, to the bull following (that resolve), (so), as a bull who knows more, perform the sacrifice for yourself with the oblation: drink the soma, Indra, by means of the bull [=Agni], by means of his radiance.</p> <p>5. The vat of the bull [=soma], the wave of honey, purifies itself for the bull [=Indra], whose food is the bull, to drink it. The two Adhvaryus are bulls, and the pressing stones are bulls. They press soma the bull for the bull.</p> <p>6. Your mace is a bull and your chariot is a bull. Your two fallow bays are bulls, and your weapons are bulls. O bull, you are the master of the bull that is the exhilarating drink. Indra, take your fill of the bull soma.</p> <p>7. Within the assembly, (I send) forth to you my eloquent (formulation), like a boat, and through my poetic formulation I travel daringly among the soma-pressings. He will be aware of this speech of ours, will he not? We will draw upon Indra as upon a wellspring for what is good.</p> <p>8. Before distress (strikes), turn here toward us, like a cow, milk-swollen from the pasture, toward her calf. At once we would happily unite with your favors, o you of a hundred resolves, like bulls with their wives.</p> <p>9. Now should the generous priestly reward yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra. Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.</p>
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<sup>258</sup> Three comparisons, realized by two different comparative strategies.

Roughly, ṚV 2.16 can be segmented as follows: the hymn opens with the poet's intent to dedicate a hymn to Indra and with a praise of Indra's attributes (vss. 1-3) which extends to verse 4, where the god is also invited to the sacrifice. Verses 5 and 6 identify Indra, Soma, and all the sacrificial paraphernalia with a bull, thus stressing the need that this identification take place during the ritual. Verses 7 and 8 reiterate the invitation to the god to come to the sacrifice and *pādas* 8cd introduce the wish that Indra share his favors with the poet. Finally, this request is explicitly expressed in verse 9.

If, in reading this hymn, we focus our attention on similes, some interesting observations about the structure of the hymn emerge. The first simile recurs within a performative act: the poet's announcement that he is carrying forward a praise to Indra constitutes the beginning of the praise itself. The act of dedicating a praise to the deity is compared to the act of bringing an oblation onto a kindled fire.<sup>259</sup> This simile describes a communication act as an act of physical object transfer towards a goal: we can thus say that the simile is licensed by a variant of the conceptual metaphor COMMUNICATION IS EXCHANGE OF OBJECTS, that we could call COMMUNICATION IS CAUSED MOTION.<sup>260</sup> The presence of a conceptual metaphor prompts a structural mapping between the simile's source and target which can be represented in terms of mapping between frames and elements within them. In this case, the simile evokes the Cause\_motion frame and the Communication frame,<sup>261</sup> where Cause\_Motion is responsible for the emergent meaning, as shown by the integration network reproduced in Table 49:

(47) *prá vah satām jyéṣṭhatamāya suṣṭutīm*  
*agnāv iva samidhāné havír bhare*  
*índram ajuryám jaráyantam ukṣitām*  
*sanād yívānam ávase havāmahe*

<sup>259</sup> It is possible that this very ritual action was performed as the praise was being uttered, as suggests by Jamison and Brereton (2014), in which they see this first verse as an announcement of the sacrifice itself.

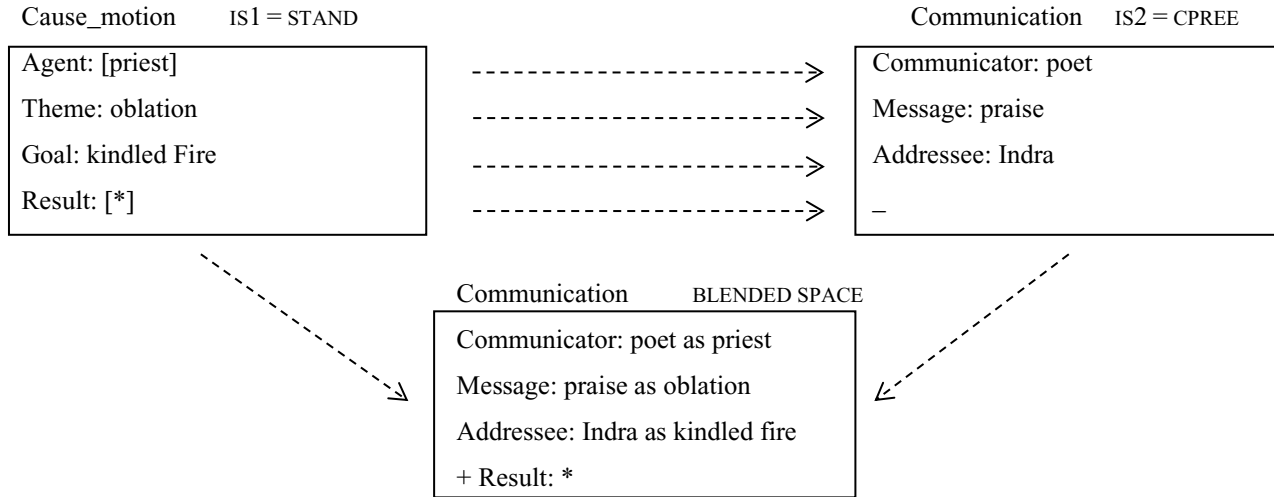
<sup>260</sup> The reason why, in the RV, communication is not conceptualized in terms of an exchange of objects between two animated participants, but as a caused motion towards an inanimate goal, can be found in the Ṛgvedic notion of prayer. With the help of a hymn, the poet sends his message to the deity, but this act of communication is often one-sided, and the god limits himself to hearken in silence. Jacobson (1985: 81-92) called communication acts of this kind 'poetics of the second person' since the addressee is completely dependent on the addresser. This orientation toward the addressee takes the form of vocatives and verbal imperatives and in the extreme rarity of gods' direct speech in the ṚV (Elizarenkova 1994: 9).

<sup>261</sup> <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/luIndex>

‘I carry forward your good praise, like an oblation into a fire being kindled, for him who is the most preeminent of beings: we call upon Indra for help—himself unaging but causing to age, a full-grown youth from of old.’

(ṚV 2.16.1)

**Table 49.** Integration network for ṚV 2.16.1, example (47).



Note that, as we have seen in several other cases already, the frame element Result is not explicitly expressed in ṚV 2.16.1. However, that the Result of bringing an oblation (*havís-*) onto a (kindled, *samidhāná-*) fire (*agní-*) is the strengthening ( $\sqrt{vṛdh-}$ ) of the fire itself is suggested by collocations such as the following:

(48) *náro yé ké ca asmád á*  
*vísvét té vāmá á siyuh*

***agním havíṣā vārdhantaḥ***

‘Whichever superior men are from among us, they should all be “in the money” when they make Agni increase with their oblation.’

(ṚV 10.20.8)

(49) *yajñéna vardhata jātávedasam*

***agním yajadhvam havíṣā tánā girá***

***samidhānám suprayásam súvarṇaram***

***dyukṣám hótāram vṛjáneṣu dhūrśadam***

‘With sacrifice increase Jātavedas; sacrifice to Agni with oblation, with song at length when he is kindled—(Agni) receiving pleasurable offerings, possessing solar glory, the heaven-ruling Hotar, sitting at the chariot-pole in the (ritual) enclosures.’

Placed at the beginning of the hymn, the simile can be read as having the function of guaranteeing the expected result: the strengthening of the addressed deity. Note also that the verb *prá* √*bhr̥*- occurs often in hymn-initial position with words for ‘praise’, ‘hymn’, ‘thought’ or similar, in which case it means ‘present’, as in (50). In passages like RV 2.16.1, both the spatial meaning ‘bring forward’ and the non-spatial meaning ‘present’ are evoked at the same time.

(50) *prá ū asmā úpastutim*

*bháratā yáj jújoṣati*

*ukthair índrasya máhinam*

*váyo vardhanti somino*

*bhadrá índrasya rātáyah*

‘Present a praise invocation to him so that he will find pleasure. By solemn recitations the providers of soma increase the great vitality of Indra. – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.’

(RV 8.62.1 to Indra)

Proceeding with the analysis of RV 2.16, verses 2 and 3 present Indra’s greatness as impossible to surpass. Verse 3 contains three superlatives realized as “reach” comparatives with negative polarity (see Chapter 6.1.2.3): *pādas* 3a and 3b employ a medio-passive form of the verb *pári* √*bhū*- ‘encompass, surpass’ as degree marker, whereas *pāda* 3c has a form of the verb *ánu* √*ás*- ‘reach’.

Through the repetition of the two words *vṛṣabhá*- ‘(the) vigorous (one)’/‘bull’ and *vṛṣa*- ‘id.’, verses 4 to 6 present Indra as the bull of the sacrifice and describe all other sacrificial elements also as bulls (51). The identification of Indra with a bull is a common one, and the god is praised in bullish terms in a number of passages, such as (52). It is important to note that, in this case, the identification is expressed by means of metaphors (or hypocatastasis; de Mendoza Ibáñez: 2020), rather than similes.

(51) vs. 4 *vísve hí asmai yajatāya dhṛṣṇáve*

*krátum bháranti vṛṣabhāya sásate*

*vṛṣā yajasva haviṣā vidúṣtarah*

*píbendra sómaṃ vṛṣabhéna bhāmínā*

vs. 5 *vṛṣṇah kósah pavate mádhva ūrmír*

*vṛṣabhānnāya vṛṣabhāya pátave*

*vṛṣaṇādhvaryū vṛṣabhāsō ádrayo*

*vṛṣaṇam sómam vṛṣabhāya suṣvati*

vs. 6 *vṛṣū te vājra utá te vṛṣū rátho*

*vṛṣaṇā hárī vṛṣabhāni áyudhā*

*vṛṣṇo mādasya vṛṣabha tvám īśīsa*

*indra sómasya vṛṣabhāsya tṛpṇuhi*

‘4. Since all carry their resolve to him, the one worthy of the sacrifice, the daring one, to the bull following (that resolve), (so), as a bull who knows more, perform the sacrifice for yourself with the oblation: drink the soma, Indra, by means of the bull [=Agni], by means of his radiance.

5. The vat of the bull [=soma], the wave of honey, purifies itself for the bull [=Indra], whose food is the bull, to drink it. The two Adhvaryus are bulls, and the pressing stones are bulls. They press soma the bull for the bull.

6. Your mace is a bull and your chariot is a bull. Your two fallow bays are bulls, and your weapons are bulls. O bull, you are the master of the bull that is the exhilarating drink. Indra, take your fill of the bull soma.’

(ṚV 2.16.4-6)

(52) *vṛṣāsi divó vṛṣabhāḥ pṛthivyā*

*vṛṣū síndhūnām vṛṣabhā stīyānām*

*vṛṣṇe ta índur vṛṣabha pīpāya*

*svādū rāso madhupéyo várāya*

‘You are the steer of heaven, the bull of earth, the steer of the rivers, the bull of the pools. O bull, for bullish you the drop has swelled, the sweet sap, the honeyed drink, to your liking’ (adapted from West 2007: 184)

(ṚV 6.44.21)

According to Macedo (2010: 108-110), this profusion of words meaning ‘bull’ and ‘male’ right in the center of the hymn responds to a clear purpose. Besides reflecting Indra’s manly and fertilizing power which makes everything around him share his nature, the repetition serves to link this central section to the verse 8, where the poet wishes to unite with Indra’s favors ‘like bulls (*vṛṣaṇah*) with their wives’. Thus, through the reference to ‘bulls’ in the simile, the poet expresses his desire to be as manly as Indra, that is, to be considered someone so close to the divinity as to participate in its characteristics.

Before turning to verse 8, in verse 7, the poet announces again his praise to Indra (53). This time, he compares his poetic formulation to a boat (*pādas* 7ab) and then Indra to a wellspring providing goods (*pāda* 7d). Applying frames semantics to the analysis of such similes, we see that in this case the Travel frame is mapped onto the Communication frame, yielding different inferences than those seen in (47). Cf. Table 50.

(53) *prá*<sup>262</sup> *te nāvam ná sámāne vacasyúvam*

*bráhmanā yāmi sávaneṣu dādhr̥ṣiḥ*

*kuvín no asyá vácaso nibódhiṣad*

*índram útsam ná vásunaḥ sicāmahe*

‘Within the context,<sup>263</sup> (I send) forth to you my eloquent (formulation), like a boat,<sup>264</sup> and through my poetic formulation I travel daringly among the soma-pressings. He will be aware of this speech of ours, will he not? We will draw upon Indra as upon a wellspring for what is good.’

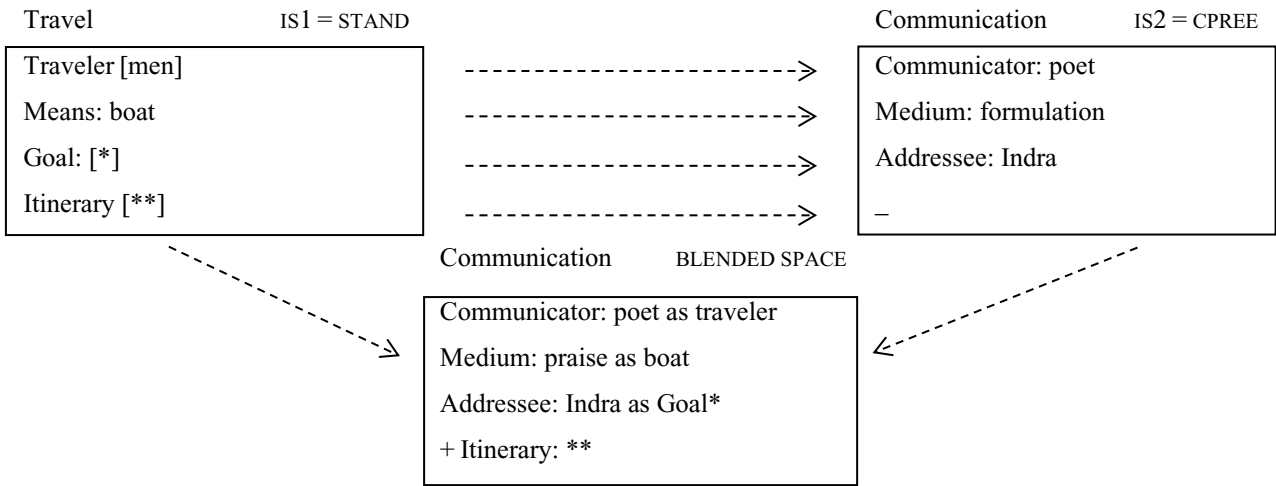
(ṚV 2.16.7)

<sup>262</sup> Preverbs without verbs are frequent in the RV. See Zeilfelder (1997) for a full account.

<sup>263</sup> Jamison & Brereton have ‘assembly’ here, but I follow Geldner’s (1951) interpretation of *sámāna-* as ‘context, competition’ (*Wettbewerb*). The reason for doing so is explained below..

<sup>264</sup> Note that Geldner takes *nāvam ... vacasyúvam* ‘boat of eloquence’ as object (*Schiff der Beredsamkeit*) and *ná* as an adaptor (*gleichsam*): ‘Ich rudere dir gleichsam das Schiff der Beredsamkeit in dem Wettbewerb zu’ (‘I row the ship of eloquence towards you, as it were, in the competition.’). Cf. also the translation by Witzel and Gōto (2013), with a null object and *nāvam ... vacasyúvam* ‘eloquent boat’ as standard: ‘Vor dich (bringe ich diese) wie ein Boot der Beredsamkeit im Wettbewerb, ich gehe tapfer zu den Somapressungen mit der Dichtung (*bráhman*).’ (‘To you (I bring this) like a boat of eloquence in competition, I bravely go to the soma presses with poetry.’). The latter interpretation yields the same integration network as the one by Jamison and Brereton (2014).

**Table 50.** Integration network for RV 2.16.7, example (53).



As we have seen for the Cause\_motion frame, the frame elements Goal and Itinerary of the Travel frame are not realized in *pāda* 7a. However, that these elements belong to the frame is suggested by the phraseology associated with *naú-* ‘boat’, which often involves the root  $\sqrt{pr}$ - ‘to bring, drive over’; the latter entails a goal and a path argument, although these are not usually explicitly expressed. Consider examples (54) and (55):

- (54) *ávavidham taugriyám apśú antár*  
*anārambhaṇé támasi práviddham*  
*cátasro nāvo jáṭhalasya júṣṭā*  
*úd aśvibhyām iṣitāḥ pārayanti*

‘The son of Tugra, thrust down within the waters, thrust forth into darkness that offered nothing to grab onto—the four welcome boats of paunchy (shape?), sent by the Aśvins, deliver him up [to safety].’

(RV 1.182.6)

- (55) *ráthāya nāvam utá no grhāya*  
*nítýāritrām padvátīm rāsi agne*  
*asmākaṁ vīrām utá no maghóno*  
*jánāmś ca yá pāráyāc chárma yá ca*

‘For our chariot and for our house, o Agni, give us a boat with built-in oars and a foot [=keel? rudder?], which will carry our heroes and our bounteous (patrons) and our peoples [to the further shore] and which (will be) our shelter.’

(RV 1.140.12)

At the textual level, the blend between the Travel and the Communication frame results in the latter taking an Itinerary element that it would not usually have. The locatives *sámāne* ‘at the context’ and *sávaneṣu* ‘among the soma-pressings’, that is the competition with other sacrificers, stand metaphorically for the path that the poet, thanks to his formulation, will have to travel to get Indra to *asyá vácaso nibódhiṣad* ‘be aware of our speech’.

In *pāda* d, Indra is compared to a wellspring of goods from which the poets draw.

(56) *īndram útsam ná vásunah sicāmahe*

‘We will draw upon Indra as upon a wellspring of goods.’<sup>265</sup>

(ṚV 2.16.7d)

The root  $\sqrt{sic}$ - ‘pour’ usually takes the accusative of the poured liquid, but can also take the accusative of the container (e.g. *avatá-* ‘fountain’ or *kóśa-* ‘container, vase’), in which case it means ‘empty’ a container or ‘draw’ liquid from it. The latter meaning is encoded by the middle voice of the verb, which presents the subject as affected in that he derives benefit from the action performed, i.e., the subject has the semantic role of beneficiary. Interestingly, ṚV 2.16.7 is the only passage in the ṚV in which  $\sqrt{sic}$ - is employed metaphorically with a god name as object.

Verse 8 takes a different turn and, in *pādas* a and b, compares Indra to a milk-swollen cow returning from pasture to her calf.

(57) *purá sambādhād abhí ā vavṛtsva no*  
*dhenúr ná vatsám yávasasya pipyúsī*  
*sakṛt sú te sumatībhiḥ śatakrato*  
*sám pátnībhir ná vṛsano nasīmahi*

‘Before distress (strikes), turn here toward us, like a cow, milk-swollen from the pasture, toward her calf. At once we would happily unite with your favors, o you of a hundred resolves, like bulls with their wives.’

(ṚV 2.16.8)

In Chapter 9.3, I suggested that similes involving cows and calves describe several characteristic actions of the mother-calf relationship (including swelling, bellowing, approaching the calves), each of which can be interpreted as a sub-event of a complex event that culminates with the cow milking

<sup>265</sup> Adapted from Jamison and Brereton (2014), who have ‘[...] upon a wellspring for what is good’. Cf. Witzel and Gōto (2013): ‘Gießen wir uns den Indra als eine Quelle der Güter aus!’ (‘Let us pour out Indra as a source of goods!’).



her calf. Thus, since the simile parameter *abhi á vavṛtsva* ‘turn here’ refers metonymically to the whole complex event, by asking Indra to pay attention to him and attend his sacrifice, the poet is implicitly asking the god to dispense his favors to him and his companions.

In fact, the request for favors becomes more explicit in the following simile (8cd), which compares the poet receiving Indra’s favors (*sumatībhiḥ*) to a bull (*vṛṣanaḥ*) uniting with his wives (*pātnībhir*), that is, with cows. While indeed the association of cows with favors, consisting of material and non-material goods, could be only inferred in *pādas* 8ab, it is made explicit by the formal and functional parallelism between *sumatībhiḥ* ‘with favors’ and *pātnībhir* ‘with wives’ in 8cd.

Finally, in verse 9ab, the process of association between cows and goods is completed with a metaphor conceptualizing the priestly gift (*dakṣiṇā*) as a cow yielding milk:

(58) *nūnāṃ sá te práti váraṃ jaritré*  
*duhīyád indra dáksīṇā maghónī*

‘Now should the generous priestly reward (*dakṣiṇā*) yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.’

(RV 2.16.9ab)

From the analysis presented above, it comes out that common and established associations are expressed by means of hypocatastasis (cf. the identification of Indra with bull, of goods with cows or cows’ milk), whereas similes, when based on a conceptual metaphor, have the function of visualizing the structural mapping underlying the metaphor and to enrich it.

Furthermore, similes seem to guide the reasoning behind the hymn: in verse 1, a parallelism is established between bringing an oblation onto a kindled fire and dedicating a praise to a god, both resulting in the strengthening of the goal/recipient. Said praise follows in verses 1cd, 2 and 3, which describe Indra’s power as surpassing heaven and earth, seas, and mountains. In verses 4 to 6, the praise gives its results, as suggested by the fact that Indra and all his attributes are presented as bulls, strong and powerful animals *par excellence*. In verse 7, the poet employs his sacred formulation as a boat to get across the prayers of other competing poets and earn Indra’s attention. Once there, the poet hopes that the strength given to Indra by praising him will be repaid by the god, from which the poet will draw ‘as from a spring’ (7cd). In verse 8, Indra is urged to turn toward the poet, ‘as a cow, milk-swollen, towards her calf’: Indra is indeed “swollen” with favors, which the poet and his patrons will join ‘as bulls uniting with their wives (cows)’ (8cd). The identification of Indra’s favors with a

cow's swelling with milk is completed in verse 9, in which it is said that the *dákṣiṇā* should 'yield her milk' ( $\sqrt{duh-}$ ) for the poet.

*ṚV 3.17 to Agni: the performative function of historical comparisons*

In the sacrificial system of the ṚV, oblations to the gods are made into the ritual fire. Therefore, god Agni, who is the personification of the ritual fire, is the messenger who conveys the gods to humans (e.g., ṚV 1.14.12, 3.6.9, 4.8.2, 7.11.5), and the Hotar priest (*hótṛ-*)<sup>266</sup> who brings humans' offerings to the gods (e.g., 1.1.1, 8.60.1, 10.7.5; Jamison and Brereton 2014: 37).

ṚV 3.17 invokes present Agni as the reappearance of the first Hotar who performed the sacrifice. The hymn stresses Agni's central role in the sacrifice by using different derivatives of the root  $\sqrt{yaj}$  'sacrifice' in four of its five verses;<sup>267</sup> verse 4, which has no derivative of  $\sqrt{yaj}$ , explicitly proclaims Agni the intermediary between gods and mortals (Jamison and Brereton 2014).

<p>a <i>samidhyámānaḥ prathamānu dhármā</i>  b <i>sám aktúbhir aiyate viśvāvārah</i>  c <i>śociśkešo ghytánirṇik pavākāḥ</i>  d <i>suyajñó agnir yajáthāya devān</i></p> <p>a <i>yáthāyajo hotráṃ agne pṛthivyā</i>  b <i>yáthā divó jātavedas cikivān</i>  c <i>evānéna haviśā yakṣi devān</i>  d <i>manuśvād yajñám prá tīremám adyá</i></p> <p>a <i>trīṇi āyūṃṣi táva jātavedas</i>  b <i>tisrá ājānīr uśasas te agne</i>  c <i>tābhir devānām ávo yakṣi vidvān</i>  d <i>áthā bhava yájamānāya sám yoh</i></p>	<p>1. Being kindled according to his first foundations, he who fulfills all wishes is anointed with unguents – he, the flame-haired, ghee-cloaked, purifying Agni, who makes the sacrifice good – in order to sacrifice to the gods.</p> <p>2. Just as you performed the sacrificial role of the Hotar of the Earth, o Agni, and just as you observantly (performed that) of the Heaven, Jātavedas, so sacrifice to the gods with this offering. Like at the time of Manu,<sup>268</sup> carry out this sacrifice today.</p> <p>3. Three lifetimes are yours, Jātavedas, and three dawns are your births, o Agni. By these (births) win the help of the gods by sacrifice as the knowing one, and then become luck and life for the sacrificer.</p>
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<sup>266</sup> In the RV, the Hotar is the priest who recites the hymns, and his name is secondarily associated with the root  $\sqrt{hū-}$  'call'. However, *hotṛ-* is originally an agent noun derived from the root  $\sqrt{hu-}$  'pour', and thus literally means 'the pourer'. This suggests that the ancient function of the Hotar was both to pour the offerings onto the ritual fire and to recite the hymns.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. *suyajñāḥ* 'who makes the sacrifice good'/'who receives good sacrifices' (see Elizarenkova 1995: 64) and *yajáthāya* 'in order to sacrifice' in verse 1; *āyajah* 'you performed sacrifice', *yakṣi* 'sacrifice!' (IMPV), *yajñám* 'sacrifice' (N) in verse 2; *yakṣi* and *yájamānāya* 'for the sacrificer' in verse 3; finally, *yājīyān* 'better sacrificer' and *yajā* 'carry forth the sacrifice' (IMPV) in verse 5 (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

<sup>268</sup> Adapted from Jamison and Brereton (2014) who have 'like Manu'. See Ludwig (1876: *ad loc.*): 'S. wie du des Manu opfer an sein zil geführt hast so auch füre unseres zum zil'. See also Pinault (1985b: 361) and Chapter 6.1.2.6 with comments on example (74).

<p>a <i>agnīm sudītīm sudṛśam grṇānto</i>  b <i>namasyāmas tvēḍiyam jātavedaḥ</i>  c <i>tuvām dūtām aratīm havyaavāham</i>  d <i>devā akṛṇvann amṛtasya nābhim</i></p> <p>a <i>yās tvād dhótā pūrvo agne yājīyān</i>  b <i>dvitā ca sātā svadhāyā ca sambhūḥ</i>  c <i>tāsyaṅnu dhārma prā yajā cikitvo</i>  d <i>átha no dhā adhvarām devāvītau</i></p>	<p>4. Singing to Agni, the one beautifully shining, beautifully appearing, we revere you who are to be invoked, Jātavedas. You have the gods made the messenger, the spoked wheel (of flames), the conveyor of oblations, and the navel of immortality.</p> <p>5. The Hotar, the better sacrificer before you, o Agni, who once again will take his seat and (be) the one who is good luck by his own will, according to his foundations, carry forth the sacrifice, o you who are observant, and set the rite in place for us in pursuit of the gods.</p>
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The whole hymn, and especially verses 1-2 and 5, is concerned with the parallelism between ancient and present Agni. In verse 1, present Agni is said to be kindled in order to sacrifice to the gods (*yajāthāya devān*) and his kindling takes place ‘according to his first foundations’ (*prathamā ānu dhārmā*), that is, according to the regulations set during the first sacrifice.

Verse 2ab contains two comparative *yāthā* clauses, followed by a correlative clause. In the two comparative clauses, the poet recalls Agni’s first sacrifices to the Earth (*hotrām pṛthivyāḥ*) and to Heaven (*[hotrām] divāḥ*), and in the main clause he asks him to perform again the sacrifice to the gods. In this passage, the temporal contrast between the imperfect *áyajah* ‘you sacrificed’ and the imperative *yakṣi* ‘sacrifice!’ is reinforced by the demonstrative *anēna* modifying *haviṣā* ‘with this offer’.

Verse 2 closes with a further historical comparison, this time expressed by the adverb *manuṣvād*. In constructions with *-vāt*, the standard (i.e., the referent of the noun that functions as base for the adverb) is usually to be understood in the same function as the subject of the clause. As we have seen in Chapter 6.1.2.6, however, in some cases the standard must be interpreted with an oblique case relationship. This is the case of *manuṣvād* in 2d: the poet is not asking Agni to carry out the sacrifice as Manu did, but to carry out the sacrifice like Agni himself did at the time of Manu. The legendary Manu (*mānu-* simply means ‘man’) was the first man and the one who first instituted the sacrifice, but his role does not overlap with Agni’s role as Hotar. The division of labor is clearly stated, for instance, in example (59): Manu instituted the sacrifice in that he was the first to install (*√dhā-*, PPP *hitā-*) the sacrificial fire; ancient Agni, on the other hand, is the first Hotar in that he sacrificed for Manu, just as he brings humans’ offerings to the gods in the present.

(59) *agne sukhātame ráthe*  
*devāṃ ṛlītá ā vaha*  
*ási hótā mánur-hitah*

‘O Agni, on the best-naved chariot convey the gods here when you are solemnly invoked. You are the Hotar, installed by Manu.’

(ṚV 1.13.4)

Thus, verse 2 condensates the hymn’s main theme of the relationship between ancient and present Agni by explicitly comparing ancient and present sacrifices. At the same time, it propitiates the good result of the present sacrifice by comparing it to the ritual performances *par excellence*: the sacrifices performed by Agni for Earth and Heaven of behalf of Manu, the first man and the one who first instituted the sacrifice.

Verse 3 is complicated because the key word, *ājānī*, is a Ṛgvedic hapax.<sup>269</sup> It could mean either ‘birth-giver’ or ‘birth’, in which case *uśásah* could be nominative plural, giving ‘the three dawns are your births or birth-givers’. As Geldner points out, in favor of the interpretation of *tisrá* as modifying the nominative *uśásah* (‘three dawns’) is the fact that three dawns also appear in ṚV 8.41.3. Since the hymn is concerned with the relation between the Agni of the past and the Agni of the present, the Agni’s three lifetimes and births in verse 3 may refer to Agni of the past, present, and future.

As mentioned above, verse 4, explicitly proclaims Agni the intermediary between gods and mortals and a source of life for both. Finally, in verse 5 the poet asks Agni to forward the sacrifice to the gods following the model of the best sacrificer before him: that is, the poet is asking present Agni to perform his sacrificial role of Hotar as ancient Agni did.

To sum up, the analysis of this brief hymn aimed to show the function of historical comparisons in the broader context of the hymn in which they occur. In the case of ṚV 3.17, by explicitly comparing ancient and present sacrifices, the two comparative clauses introduced by *yáthā* and the adverb *manuśvād* in verse 2 make sure that the kindled fire of verse 1 succeed in bringing the sacrifice to the god. While verse 1 only implicitly refers to the relation between ancient and present Agni through the prepositional phrase *prathamā ánu dhármā* ‘according to his first foundations’, the two comparative constructions in verse 2 establish the theme of the hymn. This is then elaborated in the three remaining verses, which less explicitly refer to past, present, and future Agni (vs. 3), to Agni’s eternal role as messenger of gods and humans (vs. 4), as well as to the ritual regulations established by ancient Agni (*tvád púrvo yájīyān* ‘the better sacrificer before you’), which the present Agni should follow in order to set the rite in place for humans in pursuit of the gods (vs. 5).

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<sup>269</sup> See Jamison and Brereton (2014) for a detailed discussion.

### 10.2.3 Similes' meta-poetic function

The tendency observed above of similes to highlight the central message of the hymn becomes particularly evident when the focus is on poetry. In fact, in a series of hymns, similes take words for 'praise song' (*stóma-*, *gír-*), 'poetic insight' (*dhí-*, *manīṣá-*, *mánman-*), or 'poetry' (*kávyā-*) as comparee. Take for instance example (60), from a hymn dedicated to Soma Pāvamana.

(60) *ádhi yád asmin vājínīva śúbha*

*spárdhante dhíyaḥ sūriye ná víśah*

*apó vṛṇānāḥ pavate kavīyán*

*vrajám ná paśuvárdhanāya mánma*

'When the insightful thoughts (*dhíyaḥ*) contend over him, like adornments upon a prizewinner, like the clans over the sun, choosing the waters, he purifies himself, poetically crafting a thought (*kavīyán ... mánma*) like a stable for the raising of livestock.'

(ṚV 9.94.1)

Some hymns rich in similes have the discovery of poetry as their theme. This is the case of ṚV 10.68, a hymn dedicated to Bṛhaspati ('lord of prayers') and presented in the following section. As we shall see, the hymn mostly consists of similes that describe the myth of Indra's liberation of the cows, where it is said that Bṛhaspati cleft Vala with prayers (vs. 8; cf. also ṚV 2.24.3 and Macdonell 1897: 106).

More often, hymns rich in similes are concerned with other aspects of poetry, such as the system of reciprocity and exchange between men and gods that we have seen in the introduction to Part 3, the process of poetic composition, or the power that derives to the poet from his knowledge of the truth. For instance, ṚV 9.94 introduced in (60) features a long series of similes, many of which exploit syntactic and semantic ambiguity to produce different meaning in the standard and in the comparee. This stylistic feature mirrors the hymn's main focus, which is the interchange between the poetry composed by human priests during the ritual and the poetic products of Soma himself, who in the hymn is identified as a *kaví* 'poet' (Jamison and Brereton 2014).<sup>270</sup> Another example is represented by ṚV 4.41 to Indra and Varuṇa, whose similes illustrate the way in which the poet's praise song reaches the gods: recall for instance verse 5 (reported in Chapter 9 as example (53) and repeated here as (61)), where the two gods accepting the poet's insight (*dhí-*) are compared to two

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<sup>270</sup> Soma's identification with a poet (*kaví-*) in ṚV 9.94 is motivated by the fact that, when imbibed, he awakens eager thoughts in the poets (ṚV 6.47.3) and stimulates the voice (cf. ṚV 6.47.3, 9.84.4, among others). Since he inspires poetry, Soma is also called *vácás pátis* 'Lord of Speech' (cf. ṚV 9.26.4, 9.106.10; Macdonell 1897: 109).

bulls mating with a milk-cow, and where the insight itself is described as a cow coming from pasture and yielding her ‘milk in a thousand streams’ (see the complex event presented in Chapter 9.3.1, with all its implications). In verse 9, reported in (62), the poet compares his inspired thoughts (*me manīṣā́*) approaching Indra and Varuṇa for goods to mares that, seeking fame, go to a context.<sup>271</sup>

(61) *indrā yuvám varuṇā bhūtám asyá*

*dhiyáh pretārā vṛsabhéva dhenóh*

*sá no duhīyad yávasā iva gatvī*

*sahásradhārā páyasā mahī gauh*

‘O Indra and Varuṇa—become the lovers of this insight (*asyá dhiyáh*), like bulls of a milk-cow. She should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams who has gone to the pastures.’

(ṚV 4.41.5)

(62) *imā índram varuṇam me manīṣā́*

*ágmann úpa dráviṇam ichámānāh*

*úpem asthur joṣtāra iva vásvo*

*raghvīr iva śrávaso bhíkṣamāñāh*

‘These inspired thoughts (*manīṣā́*) of mine have come up to Indra and Varuṇa, seeking material goods. Like those who enjoy a good thing, they have approached them, seeking a share of goods as fleet mares (seek a share) of fame.’

(ṚV 4.41.9)

First, we can recognize an aesthetic and stylistic effect in the connection between poetry and similes, since the latter certainly contribute to ensuring that a hymn is *su-vṛktí-* ‘well twisted’. Indeed, we have seen several times now that the act of poetic composition is described in terms of handicraft and that this metaphor often includes considerations on form and on the addition of ornaments (cf. especially example 12 in the introduction to Part 3).

Beside this aesthetic purpose, the frequency of similes in hymns concerned with poetry may have a more profound motivation. As we have seen in the introduction to Part 3, poetry is a prerogative of the few to whom the gods reveal the truth (*ṛtá-*), which is otherwise hidden from humans, and who are able to grasp it by force of their *dhi-* ‘inner vision’. This truth that poets must

<sup>271</sup> The noun *vásvah* (*vásvo* due to *sandhi*) ‘good’ can be read twice, once as the complement of *joṣtārah* in the standard (‘like those who enjoy a good thing’) and once in the comparee with *bhíkṣamāñāh* (‘seeking a share of the goods’); see Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*).

transpose into words mainly consists in the connections that holds between the different realms of the universe, in the influences of divine forces and man’s relationship to them (Gonda 1963: 68-9). Thus, by explicitly comparing one entity with another, similes may iconically represent the function of poetry to reveal the connections between things: in this sense, we may say that similes have a cognitive function, in that they guide the reasoning behind the poet’s exposition of his knowledge.

Furthermore, since only poets have access to poetry, they are also the only ones who know the mechanisms that regulate poetic inspiration, the process of composition, as well as the reciprocal relationship that is established between men and gods through poetry. Therefore, in putting into words the knowledge they have acquired from the gods, poets must also express in words their knowledge about poetry and the system of reciprocity and exchange between gods and worshippers.

Let me exemplify the two latter functions with passages from another hymn: ṚV 8.41 to Varuṇa. This hymn is characterized by a loose *omphalos*<sup>272</sup> structure and, as all *omphalos* hymns, reveals its cryptic message in the central verses: the power deriving from poetry and from the knowledge of words. In verse 1, Varuṇa is invoked as the one who ‘guards the insights of men (*dhītā mānuṣāṇām* lit. ‘the insights of the sons of Manu’) like the cows of a herd (*paśvó gá iva*)’. The word *dhītā* is a past passive participle of the root √*dhī-* ‘perceive, think’, from which the root noun *dhī-* ‘inner vision’ also derives: since *dhī-* consists in the ability of grasping the truth revealed to poets by the gods, we can interpret *dhītā* in verse 1 as the ‘insightful thoughts’ that the poet conceived after receiving such truth and that he is ready to transpose into poetry. And since Varuṇa is the master of truth (*ṛtá-*),<sup>273</sup> he is the natural protector of these thoughts. After a praise of Varuṇa’s control over various element of the cosmos, in verse 4 the god is compared to an energetic herdsman (*gopā ... íryah*). Finally, the central verses 5 and 6, reported in (63) and (64) respectively, praise Varuṇa’s abilities as a poet (*kaviḥ*): as such, he is the upholder of the worlds (*dhartā bhúvanānām*), he knows the secret, hidden names of the dawns (*usrāṇām apīciyā ... nāmāni gúhiyā*), and fosters the many poetic arts (*kāvīyā purú*) as heaven does its shiny appearance (*rūpām dyaúr iva*). Since it refers to an entity’s outer appearance, the word *rūpām* can be rendered either as ‘color’ or as ‘form’; in relation to the sky, I find the former a better candidate. If this is true, the simile *rūpām dyaúr iva* might refer to the

<sup>272</sup> On *omphalos* hymns, see introduction to Part 3, with references to Jamison (2004; 2007: 80-89). On Ṛgvedic hymns featuring this structural device, see also Macedo (2010) as well as Forte and Smith (2014) who call it the “wheel structure”.

<sup>273</sup> See for instance ṚV 5.66.1cd ‘It [=the hymn] should be set in place for Varuṇa, whose garment is the truth (*ṛtá-peśas-*), for his great pleasure’ and ṚV 6.51.3ab referred to Varuṇa, his mother Aditi, and his companion Mitra: ‘I will praise you, the great herdsmen of truth (*ṛtásya gopān*): Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa, the well-born ones.’.

naturalness and mastery with which poets ‘foster’ or ‘unfold’ ( $\sqrt{puṣ-}$ ) the different poetic arts, just as the sky unfolds its palette of colors and nuances in the different hours of the day (see also Otto 1948).

In verse 6, two other similes follow. The first simile compares the poet-god to the nave of a wheel, in which all the poetic arts are fixed,<sup>274</sup> while the second introduces some ‘horses’ (*áśvām̃*) that have been yoked like oxen in a pen (*vrajé gávo ná*). On the basis of other passages like ṚV 6.24.6 and ṚV 6.34.1b (see below), I suggest that the horses are the insightful thoughts (*dhīyah* or *dhītá*) and that the yoke represents poetry which fixes them in the boundaries of words and meters.

(63) *yó dhartā bhúvanānām*  
*yá usrāṅām apīcīyā*  
*véda námāni gúhiyā*  
*sá kavīḥ kāvīyā purú*  
*rūpām dyaúr iva puṣyati*  
*nábhantām anyaké same*

‘Who is the **upholder of the worlds**, who knows the secret names of the ruddy (dawns), their hidden names, he is a poet who fosters the many poetic arts, as heaven does its shiny appearance. – Let all the other squirts burst!’

(ṚV 8.41.5)

(64) *yásmiṅ víśvāni kāvīyā*  
*cakré nábhīr iva śritā*  
*tritām jūṭī saparyata*  
*vrajé gávo ná samyúje*  
*yujé áśvām̃ ayukṣata*  
*nábhantām anyaké same*

‘**In whom are fixed all poetic arts**—(he is) like the nave in a wheel. Do honor to Trita [the third one] with alacrity. Like oxen in a pen to be yoked together, they have yoked the horses for yoking. – Let all the other squirts burst!’

(ṚV 8.41.6)

<sup>274</sup> The first simile is more complex than it first appears. Syntactically, the more obvious way to render it is ‘In whom are fixed all poetic arts like the nave in a wheel’ (cf. Geldner 1951), in which Varuṇa stands to the wheel as the poetic arts to the nave. However, it is more logical that spokes are fit into the nave with Varuṇa corresponding to the nave and the unexpressed spokes to the poetic arts (Jamison 2021: *ad loc.*).



If this is true, verses 1, 5, and 6 – together with the repeated characterization of Varuṇa as a herdsman in verse 4 – return a coherent image of poetry and of the poetic process: the poet is the one who, through his *dhī-*, is able to grasp the hidden names of things and therefore the truth. Precisely because the truth derives from him, Varuṇa is the poet per excellence and the natural shepherd, i.e. guardian, of the inspired thoughts of humans. Through the knowledge of the poetic arts (which are fixed in the poet like the spokes in a wheel), the inspired thoughts are ‘yoked like oxes’ and become poetry. This characterization of thoughts as cows and of the poet as herdsman is linked to the simile seen in example (61): if provided with a good poet-shepherd and duly taken to pasture, the poem-cow will return its milk, that is, it will reward the god who inspired it and the poet who composed it. The point of this analysis is that only the poet, thanks to his knowledge, can grasp the profound principles of poetry and transpose them with art using everyday images, such as the one involving cows and their shepherd.

As a whole, we may say that similes have a meta-poetic function, in that they a) certainly fulfill the aesthetic purpose of making a hymn *suṅkti-* ‘well twisted’, b) they iconically represent the role of poetry to reveal the connections between things, and c) they are especially useful to the poet who wishes to narrate his poetic experience and reveal the power of the poetic word.

After describing salient points of ṚV 8.41 to exemplify the notion of meta-poetic function, with the same purpose I will present a more in-depth analysis of analysis of ṚV 10.68 and ṚV 6.24. As anticipated above, the former is a hymn dealing with discovery of poetry, whereas the latter is concerned with the system of reciprocity and exchange established between gods and humans by means of poetry.

### *ṚV 10.68 to Bṛhaspati*

ṚV 10.68 is dedicated to Bṛhaspati, ‘lord of prayers’ and narrates the myth of the liberation of the cows and dawns that were enclosed in the Vala cave. Although not many hymns are addressed to this deity (see Introduction to Part 3, fn. 184, on the figure of Bṛhaspati in the ṚV, sometimes assimilated to Indra), they are usually very well worked and refined, in tune with this god’s sphere of action. ṚV 10.68 is perhaps the clearest example of this trend and its stylistic subtleties have been amply illustrated elsewhere.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> To name a few, Elizarenkova (1995: 159), followed by Macedo (2010: 119-121) has pointed out the notable position of the theonym in the metrical scheme. Throughout the hymn the name Bṛhaspati appears once in each verse at the beginning of the various *pādas*, but only in the exact center of the hymn (verse 7) the theonym opens the verse. Furthermore, Elizarenkova noted that, in the course of verse 1 to 7, the god’s name travels from the beginning of the last *pāda* to the beginning of the first, following a regular pattern. Also noteworthy are the lexical echoes between the first

For our purposes, the most interesting feature is the blizzard of similes which, in line with the artistry of the composition, exploit all the syntactic possibilities allowed by comparative constructions to create complex parallelisms and puns. For instance, the simile in 5ab, which describes Bṛhaspati's removal of darkness from the midspace, is one of the few similes containing three points of comparison in the ṚV. The same holds for the simile in verse 6cd, which describes the removal of the cows from the cave; this simile is further complicated by the ambiguity of the past participle *párvīṣṭam*, which can mean both 'surrounded, trapped' and 'served',<sup>276</sup> and the verb *ádat*, which can belong to *ā* √*dā*- 'take' or to √*ad*- 'eat' (Jamison and Brereton 2014).

The text of ṚV 10.68 is reported below:

<p>1a <i>udaprúto ná váyo rákṣamānā</i>  1b <i>vāvadato abhriyasyeva ghóṣāh</i>  1c <i>giribhrájo ná ūrmáyo mādanto</i>  1d <i>bṛhaspátim abhí arkā anāvan</i></p>	<p>1. Constantly gabbling like water birds watching out for each other, like the sounds of (booming) (thunder) emanating from a cloud, exulting like waves stiff-peaked (like) mountains, the chants bellowed toward Bṛhaspati.</p>
<p>2a <i>sám góbhīr āngirasó nákṣamāṇo</i>  2b <i>bhága ivéd aryamānam nināya</i>  2c <i>jáne mitró ná dámpatī anakti</i>  2d <i>bṛhaspate vājáyāśúm̐r ivājau</i></p>	<p>2. (Bellowing) with the cows, (Bṛhaspati) Aṅgiras, coming near, led (the Aṅgiras) together with the cows, as Bhaga leads Aryaman. As the ally among the people anoints the household pair, he anoints (the Aṅgiras with the cows?).<sup>277</sup> O Bṛhaspati, incite them like swift (horses) in a contest.</p>
<p>3a <i>sādhuaryá atithínīr iṣirá</i>  3b <i>spārhāḥ suvárṇā anavadyárūpāh</i>  3c <i>bṛhaspátīh párvatebhyo vitúryā</i>  3d <i>nír gā ūpe yávam iva sthivibhyah</i></p>	<p>3. (The cows—) thoroughly civilized, providing for guests, vigorous, cherished, of lovely color and faultless form— Bṛhaspati, having brought them through, strewed the cows forth from the mountains, like grain from sacks.</p>
<p>4a <i>āpruṣāyán mádhuna rtásya yónim</i>  4b <i>avakṣipánn arká ulkām iva dyóh</i>  4c <i>bṛhaspátir uddhárann áśmano gā</i>  4d <i>bhúmyā udnéva ví tvácam bibheda</i></p>	<p>4. Spraying the womb of truth with honey, flinging (it=honey?) down like a firebrand from heaven when the chant (sounded), Bṛhaspati, when he brought the cows up out of the stone, split asunder the skin of the earth as if (just) with water.</p>
<p>5a <i>ápa jyótiṣā támō antárikṣād</i>  5b <i>udnāh śīpālam iva vāta ājat</i>  5c <i>bṛhaspátir anumṛśyā valásya</i>  5d <i>abhrám iva vāta ā cakra ā gāh</i></p>	<p>5. With his light he drove away the darkness from the midspace as the wind drives the śīpāla-plant from the water. Bṛhaspati,</p>

and last stanzas, which, together with the movement described above, create a kind of ring composition that further emphasizes the central stanza of the hymn (cf. *abhriyasya* and *abhriyāya* in 1b and 12a, *vāyah* 'birds' in 1a and *vāyah* 'vigor' in 12d, as well as the recurring root √*nū*- 'bellow').

<sup>276</sup> Depending on whether it taken to derive from √*viś*- 'enter' or from √*viṣ*- 'work' respectively.

<sup>277</sup> The instrumental 'with the cows' is not supplied by Jamison and Brereton (2014) and is inspired by Geldner's translation. Instead of taking *anakti* as a simplex verb meaning '(he) anoints', Geldner (1951) takes it with *sám góbhīr* in *pāda* a in the meaning of 'unite'. In either case, the simile certainly refers to some aspect of marriage ceremony, which involved anointing the marrying couple with some liquid substance.

<p>6a <i>yadā valāsyā pīyato jāsum bhéd</i>  6b <i>bṛhaspátir agnitápobhir arkaiḥ</i>  6c <i><u>dadbhír ná jihvā párivistam ādad</u></i>  6d <i>āvīr nidhīm akṣnod usrīyāṇām</i></p> <p>7a <i>bṛhaspátir āmata hí tyád āsām</i>  7b <i>nāma svarīṇām sādane gūhā yāt</i>  7c <i><u>āndéva bhittvā śakunāsya gárbham</u></i>  7d <i>úd usrīyāḥ párvatasya tmānājat</i></p> <p>8a <i>ásnāpinaddham mādhu páry apaśyan</i>  8b <i><u>mātsyam ná dīná udáni ksivántam</u></i>  8c <i><u>nīs tāj jabhāra camasám ná vrksād</u></i>  8d <i>bṛhaspátir viravēṇā vikṛtya</i></p> <p>9a <i>sóśām avindat sá súvah só agním</i>  9b <i>só <u>arkéṇa</u> ví babādhe támāmsi</i>  9c <i>bṛhaspátir góvapuṣo valāsyā</i>  9d <i><u>nír majjánam ná párvano jabhāra</u></i></p> <p>10a <i><u>himéva parná musitā vánāni</u></i>  10b <i><u>bṛhaspátināḥkṛpayad</u> való gāḥ</i>  10c <i><u>anānuḥkṛtyám apunás cakāra</u></i>  10d <i>yāt sūryāmāsā mithá uccārataḥ</i></p> <p>11a <i><u>abhí śyāvám ná kṛśanebhir ásvam</u></i>  11b <i><u>nāksatrebhiḥ pitáro dyām apimśan</u></i>  11c <i><u>rātryāṃ támó ádadhur jyótir áhan</u></i>  11d <i>bṛhaspátir bhinád ádriṃ vidád gāḥ</i></p> <p>12a <i><u>idám akarma námo</u> abhriyāya</i>  12b <i>yáḥ pūrvīr ánu ānónavīti</i>  12c <i>bṛhaspátīḥ sá hí góbhiḥ só ásvaiḥ</i>  12d <i>sá vírēbhiḥ sá nṛbhir no váyo dhāt</i></p>	<p>having (just) stroked (the skin/womb) of Vala, as the wind does a cloud, brought the cows here as his own.</p> <p>6. When Bṛhaspati split the feebleness of taunting Vala with his fire-hot chants, he took (the cows) as the tongue takes (food) trapped by the teeth [/he “ate” (the cows?) as the tongue along with the teeth eats served (food)], and he revealed the hidden treasures of the ruddy (cows).</p> <p>7. <b>For Bṛhaspati brought to mind this very name of these who were resounding (with)in the seat—(the name) that was hidden.</b> Having split the womb of the mountain like the eggs of a bird, he drove up the ruddy ones by himself.</p> <p>8. He caught sight of the honey enclosed by the stone, like a fish living in shallow water. He extracted it, like a (wooden) cup from a tree—Bṛhaspati having cut apart (the mountain) with an (ear-)splitting cry.</p> <p>9. He found the dawn, found the sun, found the fire; he thrust aside the dark shades with his chant [/ray]. Bṛhaspati extracted (the cows) of Vala, whose beauty was the cows, like marrow from a joint.</p> <p>10. As the woods (lament) their leaves stolen by cold, Vala lamented for the cows (stolen) by Bṛhaspati. He performed an inimitable (deed), not to be repeated as long as the sun and moon will rise in alternation.</p> <p>11. Like a dusky horse with pearls, the Fathers ornamented the heaven with stars. In the night they placed darkness and light in the day. Bṛhaspati split the rock and found the cows.</p> <p>12. This act of reverence here we have performed for the one belonging to the storm cloud, who keeps bellowing after the many (cows?): Bṛhaspati—for he shall confer vigor on us with cows, with horses, with heroes, with superior men.</p>
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Differently from the analyses presented above, in this case it is not necessary to analyze all the numerous similes contained in this hymn, but it will suffice to present the types of similes that it contains to understand their functions and effects.

In verse 1, the cascade of very specific similes spanning *pādas* a to c delays the mention of the two main characters of the hymn to *pāda* d: *bṛhaspátim abhí arkā anāvan* ‘the chants bellowed toward Bṛhaspati’. The employment of the verb  $\sqrt{nn}$ - ‘bellow’ identifies the chants with cows and makes the topic of the hymn immediately clear: the poet will narrate Bṛhaspati’s liberation of the cow which coincide with the discovery of poetic language and inspiration.

(65) *udaprúto ná váyo ráksamānā*  
*vāvadato abhrīyasyeva ghósāh*  
*giribhrájo ná ūrmáyo mādanto*  
*bṛhaspátim abhí arkā́ anāvan*

‘Constantly gabbling like water birds watching out for each other, like the sounds of (booming) (thunder) emanating from a cloud, exulting like waves stiff-peaked (like) mountains, the chants bellowed toward Bṛhaspati.’

(ṚV 10.68.1)

Verse 2 presents the discovery of poetry as the (re-)union of the Angirases, the bardic family to which Bṛhaspati belongs, and their cows. But this reunion is compared to the ceremony of marriage and its participants are compared to the divinities who preside over marriage as well as to a married couple (Jamison and Brereton 2014). In *pādas* ab, Bṛhaspati leads the Angirases together with the cows ‘as Bhaga leads Aryaman’. Together with Varuṇa and Mitra – and to a lesser extent Aṃśa and Dakṣa –, Aryaman and Bhaga are called the Ādityas, a group of deities generally representing the different principles that regulate social relations. More precisely, Aryaman, is the god of the customs of the Āryas; since marriage depends on the recognition of custom, marriage also falls within Aryaman’s governance. Bhaga, the god of ‘fortune’, ensures that people will receive an appropriate portion of goods and is often linked with Aryaman and with the expectation for the prosperity of a marriage (Jamison and Brereton 2014: 43).

In *pādas* the Angirases and the cows are compared to a married couple anointed (or united, see fn. 277) by the ritual fire (Agni), which here is referred to by his epithet *jáne mitró* ‘ally among the people’. However, the simile is further complicated by the fact that the noun for ‘ally’, *mitrá-* is also the name of god Mitra who, as one of the Ādityas, is also responsible for social bonds. As a whole, in verse 2 the poet reveals the importance of the liberation of the cows/poetry: poetry plays a fundamental role in the Āryas’ system of customs and social relations because it creates the most important bond, i.e., the one between gods and humans.

(66) *sám̐ góbbhir āṅgirasó náksamāño*  
*bhága ivéd aryamánam nināya*  
*jáne mitró ná dámpatī anakti*  
*bṛhaspate vājáyāśúm̐r ivājaú*

‘(Bellowing) with the cows, (Bṛhaspati) Angiras, coming near, led (the Angirases) together with the cows, as Bhaga leads Aryaman. As the ally among the people anoints the household

pair, he anoints (the Aṅgirasas with the cows?). O Bṛhaspati, incite them like swift (horses) in a contest.’

After verse 2 unveils the hymn’s deeper message, all remaining similes in ṚV 10.68 are based on image metaphors and describe with vivid images the different moments of the myth of the opening of the Vala cave and the release of the cows. For instance, with a care for details which is reminiscent of painting, verse 8ab describes Bṛhaspati catching sight of the ‘honey’ (i.e., the cows/dawns)<sup>278</sup> enclosed in the cave ‘like a fish living in shallow water’ (67). Similarly, through the liberation of light from the cave, the Aṅgirasas have adorned the sky with stars ‘like a dusky horse with pearls’ (*śyāvāṃ ná kṛśanebhir áśvaṃ*).

(67) *áśnāpinaddham mādhu páry apaśyan*

*mátsyaṃ ná dīná udáni kṣiyántam*

‘He caught sight of the honey enclosed by the stone, like a fish living in shallow water.’

(ṚV 10.68.8ab)

(68) *abhí śyāvāṃ ná kṛśanebhir áśvaṃ*

*nákṣatrebhiḥ pitáro dyám apimśan*

‘Like a dusky horse with pearls, the Fathers ornamented the heaven with stars.’

(ṚV 10.68.11ab)

As noted by Jamison and Brereton (2014), the exuberance, the vividness, and the everyday nature of some of the imagery conveyed by these similes seem to forerun the *kāvya* style of Classical Sanskrit poetry.

To conclude, while with similes in verse 2 the poet reveals his knowledge about the power of poetry, with the artistry displayed in all other similes he pays due tribute (cf. *námas* in 12d) to the dedicand of the hymn, the lord of prayers. The former exemplifies similes’ cognitive function, while the latter are examples of their aesthetic function: as a whole, ṚV 10.68 is a good example of the meta-poetic function that similes can take.

### *ṚV 6.24 to Indra*

This hymn begins (vs. 1ab) with a strong statement of Indra’s relationship with soma, but soon turns to a more general praise of the god (vss. 1cd and 2). Starting from verse 3, a series of similes stresses

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<sup>278</sup> Recall that, in the Vala cave, cows are also identified with dawns and that poetry was born from the knowledge that the cows are the dawns (see introduction to Part 3).

the importance of mortal praise and worship for maintaining Indra's powers and reveal the system of reciprocity and exchange which characterizes god-human relationships. Indeed, they all present the same two comparees: praise and worship reaching Indra and going back to humans in the form of the god's favors and deeds. Finally, the last two verses (9 and 10) ask for Indra's gifts and protection.

The text of RV 6.24 is presented below:

<p>1a <i>vṛṣā máda índare ślóka ukthā</i>  1b <i>sácā sómesu sutapā rjīṣī</i>  1c <i>arcatrīyo maghāvā nṛbhya ukthair</i>  1d <i>dyukṣó rājā girām ákṣitotiḥ</i></p> <p>2a <i>táturir vīró náriyo vicetāḥ</i>  2b <i>śrótā hávaṃ grnatá urvīutiḥ</i>  2c <i>vásuḥ śámso narāṃ kārúdhāyā</i>  2d <i>vājī stutó vidáthe dāti vājam</i></p> <p>3a <i>áksó ná cakrīyoh sūra bṛhán</i>  3b <i>prá te mahnā ririce ródasīyoh</i>  3c <i>vṛksásya nú te puruhūta vavā</i>  3d <i>vī útáyo ruruhur indra pūrvīḥ</i></p> <p>4a <i>sácīvatas te puruśāka śākā</i>  4b <i>gávām iva srutáyah samcáraṇīḥ</i>  4c <i>vatsānām ná tantáyas ta indra</i>  4d <i>dāmanvanto adāmānah sudāman</i></p> <p>5a <i>anyád adyá kárvaram anyád u śvó</i>  5b <i>ásac ca sán múhur ācakrír índraḥ</i>  5c <i>mitró no átra váruṇas ca pūṣā</i>  5d <i>aryó vāsasya parietā asti</i></p> <p>6a <i>vī tvád āpo ná párvatasya prsthād</i>  6b <i>ukthébhīr indra anayanta yajñaiḥ</i>  6c <i>tām tvābhīḥ suṣtutībhīr vājáyanta</i>  6d <i>ājīm ná jagmur girvāho áśvāḥ</i></p> <p>7a <i>ná yám járanti śarádo ná māsā</i>  7b <i>ná dyāva índram avakarśáyanti</i>  7c <i>vṛddhásya cid vardhatām asya tanū</i>  7d <i>stómebhīr ukthaiś ca śasyámānā</i></p> <p>8a <i>ná vīlave námate ná sthirāya</i>  8b <i>ná śárdhate dásyujūtāya stavān</i></p>	<p>1. Bullish exuberance, noise/signal call, and solemn words are in Indra; he is the drinker of the pressings and in possession of the silvery drink, when the soma juices are in his company. He is worthy to be chanted by men with solemn words as the bounteous one, the heaven-ruling king of hymns, whose help is imperishable.</p> <p>2. The surpassing hero, favorable to men, discriminating, the hearer of the singer's call, whose help is wide-ranging, the good one, the Laud of Men, who gives succor to bards, praised as the prizewinner, he gives the prize at the rite of distribution.</p> <p>3. <u>Like an axle beyond its two wheels, your lofty (greatness), o champion, projects beyond the two worlds in their greatness. (Like) the branches of a tree, your forms of help have grown outward, o much-invoked Indra.</u></p> <p>4. The abilities that belong to you, the able one, o you of many abilities, <u>are converging like streams of cattle.</u> (They are) <u>like cords for calves, Indra, binding without bonds,</u> o you of good bonds [/gifts].</p> <p>5. One deed today and another tomorrow, one which is not and another which is—Indra makes (them) happen in an instant. Mitra and Varuṇa, also Pūṣan, are there for us, but it is he [=Indra] who keeps the will of the stranger contained.</p> <p>6. <u>Like waters forth from the back of a mountain, they proceeded forth</u> from you along with solemn words and sacrifices, Indra. Along with these good praises, seeking the prize they have (also) <u>gone to you, like horses to a contest,</u> o you whose vehicle is songs.</p> <p>7. Indra, whom the autumns do not age, nor do the months, nor days make lean— may his body, even though he is fully grown, grow stronger while it is being celebrated by praises and solemn words.</p> <p>8. He does not bow to the tough, nor to the stubborn, nor to the vaunting one sped by the Dasyus, when he</p>
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<p>8c <i>ájrā indrasya giráyaś cid řšvā</i>  8d <i>gambhīré cid bhavati gādhām asmai</i></p>	<p>receives praise. Even the towering mountains are flatlands for Indra. Even in the deep there is a ford for him.</p>
<p>9a <i>gambhīreṇa na urūṇā amatrin</i>  9b <i>prá iśó yandhi sutapāvan vājān</i>  9c <i>sthā ū śú ūrdhvā ūtī áriṣanyann</i>  9d <i>aktór víuṣṭau páritakmiyāyām</i></p>	<p>9. With a (vessel) that is deep and wide, o bearer of the vessel, hold forth to us refreshments and prizes, you drinker of the pressings, and stand erect with your help, allowing no harm, at the early brightening of the night, at its final turn.</p>
<p>10a <i>sácasva nāyám ávase abhīka</i>  10b <i>itó vā tám indara pāhi riśáh</i>  10c <i>amā cainam áranye pāhi riśó</i>  10d <i>mádema śatāhimāḥ suvīrāḥ</i></p>	<p>10. Accompany our leader to help him at the close encounter, or protect him from harm from here, Indra. Protect him from harm at home and in the wilderness. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.</p>

Verses 1 and 2 introduce the main topic of the hymn: Indra has signal call and solemn words (*ślóka* and *ukthā*) within him, he is king of hymns (*rājā girām*), and hearer of the singer’s call (*śrótā hávaṃ grṇatá*), which he repays being ‘of imperishable and wide-ranging help’ (*ákṣitotiḥ; urvíūtiḥ*), favorable to men (*náriyo*), and to the bards (*kāruḍhāyā*). Then, in verse 3 we find the first two similes:

(69) *ákso ná cakríyoh śūra bṛhán*<sup>279</sup>  
*prá te mahnā ririce ródasīyoh*  
*vṛksásya nú te puruhūta vayā*<sup>280</sup>  
*vī ūtáyo ruruhur indra pūrvīḥ*

‘Like an axle beyond its two wheels, your lofty (greatness), o champion, projects beyond the two worlds in their greatness. (Like) the branches of a tree, your forms of help have grown outward, o much-invoked Indra.’

(ṚV 6.24.3)

In 3ab, Indra’s greatness is said to project beyond (*prá* √*ric-*) heaven and earth as an axle projecting beyond the two wheels. The verb *prá* √*ric-* ‘project beyond, surpass’, a compound of *prá* ‘forth,

<sup>279</sup> Citing the nearby passage ṚV 6.21.2 *áti mahnā ... riricé mahitvám* ‘(whose) greatness projects beyond heaven and earth in their greatness’, where Indra’s greatness (nom. *mahitvám*) projects beyond the two worlds in/with their greatness (instr. *mahnā*), Geldner supplies the synonym *mahimā* ‘greatness’ as the referent of *bṛhán* ‘lofty’ here, referring to Indra’s greatness, with instr. *mahnā* belonging to the two worlds as in ṚV 6.21.2. Pace Oldenberg who takes *bṛhán* with *ákṣah* as ‘the lofty axle’, Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) follows Geldner’s interpretation.

<sup>280</sup> Note that the simile is not explicit here, for it has no STM. However, ‘like the branches of a tree’ (e.g. ṚV 6.57.5b) and ‘like branches from a tree’ (e.g. ṚV 6.13.1b) are conventional similes and we can therefore assume that the first is meant here.

forwards’ and the root  $\sqrt{ric}$ - ‘let go, leave’, is frequently employed in comparative constructions with standards such as the ‘two worlds halves’ (*ródasī-* in the example above), ‘heaven and earth’ (cf. *divam pṛthivyāḥ* in the nearby passage ṚV 6.21.2cd), or lofty heaven (cf. *divás bṛható* in ṚV 1.59.5a). As we have seen in Chapter 6.1.2.3 on primary reach equatives, (caused) motion verbs such as *prá*  $\sqrt{ric}$ - can develop a comparative meaning ‘surpass someone in something, be superior, excel’, in which case the trajector constitutes the comparee and the landmark the standard. In verse 3, the spatial meaning of the verb is retained by the simile, where trajector and landmark are concrete entities (*ákṣa* ‘axle’ and *cakríyoḥ* ‘the two wheels’) instead of qualities (Indra’s and the two worlds’ greatness). Since the axle (*ákṣa-*) is proverbially known to be firmly fixed between its wheels (cf. e.g. ṚV 3.53.17, 19; ṚV 1.30.14), the novel simile in 3a emphasizes the hyperbolic nature of the comparison: the fact that Indra’s greatness exceeds that of heaven and earth is as sensational as an axle that surpasses its wheels, instead of being fixed at their center.

As a counterpart to his outstanding greatness, in *pādas* 3cd we find Indra’s forms of help (*ūtáyas*)<sup>281</sup> having grown outward (*vi*  $\sqrt{ruh}$ -) like the branches of a tree (*vṛkṣásya ... vayā*). Thanks to the ontological metaphor called reification (or objectification; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 62-63), the verb takes a metaphorical meaning with the comparee, but retains its spatial meaning with the standard. What is more, the presence of the preverb *vi* ‘apart, asunder, away, out’ and the image of branches departing from a tree enriches our understanding of the way Indra’s forms of help grow: rather than simply increasing, they depart from the god toward different directions, probably to be understood as the devotees.

(70) *śácīvatas te puruśāka śákā*  
*gávām iva srutáyah samcáraṇīḥ*  
*vatsānām ná tantáyas ta indra*  
*dāmanvanto adāmānaḥ sudāman*

‘The abilities [/helps] that belong to you, the able one, o you of many abilities, are converging like streams of cattle. (They are) like cords for calves, Indra, binding without bonds, o you of good bonds [/gifts].’

(ṚV 6.24.4)

The central *pādas* of verse 4 (70) contain two other similes, but before trying to analyze them we must comment on some ambiguities of *pādas* a and d. As noted by Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*), verse 4

<sup>281</sup> Recall that Indra is called *ákṣitotīḥ* ‘of imperishable help’ and *urvīūtīḥ* ‘of wide-ranging help’ in verses 1 and 2. Both compounds take *ūtí-* ‘help’ as second element, of which *ūtáyas* in verse 3d is the plural form.



begins and ends with triple etymological figures: *śácīvatas te puruśāka śākāḥ* and *dāmanvanto adāmānaḥ sudāman*. Starting from the latter triplet, *su-dāman-* and *dāmanvat-* are puns uniting two homonymous roots √*dā-* ‘give’ and √*dā-* ‘bind’: thus, *su-dāman-* means both ‘bestowing abundantly’ and ‘of good bonds’, while *dāmanvat* means both ‘provided with gifts’ and ‘provided with cords’.<sup>282</sup>

Given the presence of a pun in *pāda* d, Jamison hypothesizes that a buried pun is also present in the triplet *śácīvatas te puruśāka śākāḥ*: since verse 3 compared Indra’s aid to the branches of a tree (*vrkṣāsya ... vayāḥ*), she suggests that the poet might be punning off a synonym of ‘branch’, *śākhā-*, which is phonologically very close to the *śāk-* forms. The suggested connection between the alliterating triplet *śácīvatas te puruśāka śākāḥ* and the simile in 3cd comes to our aid in the interpretation of the former. To begin with, the root √*śak-*, from which all words in the triplet derive, has ‘to be strong, able to or capable of’ as its basic meaning but, when it occurs with a dative beneficiary, the idea of being ‘strong for someone’ translates in to one of ‘helping someone, being helpful’. Example (71) is a case in point, since here √*śak-* takes the dative *naḥ* ‘to us’ and occurs next to the verb (*prá*) √*av-* ‘to help’:

(71) *śagdhī no asyá yád dha paurám ávitha*

*dhiya indra síṣāsataḥ*

*śagdhī yáthā rúsamam śyāvakaṁ kṛpam*

*indra právaḥ súvarṇaram*

‘Muster your ability (*śagdhī*) for us since you helped (*ávitha*) Paura (and help) the insights of this one striving to win, Indra. Muster your ability (*śagdhī*) just as you furthered (*právaḥ*) Ruśama, Śyāvaka, and Kṛpa possessing solar glory, Indra.’

(RV 8.3.12)

Therefore, if we associate Indra’s ‘abilities’ (*śākā* 4a) to his ‘forms of help’ (*ūtáyo* 3d), we notice that the similes in 3cd and 4ab present the same entities moving in opposite trajectories: while in 3cd Indra’s forms of help have grown in all directions (*ví ruruhur*) like branches of a tree, in 4ab they converge (*saṁcáraṇīḥ*) like streams of cows.

In its only other occurrence (RV 1.56.2 = 4.55.6) *saṁcáraṇa-* ‘converging’ is used of the converging of rivers into the sea. The word *srutáyah* ‘streams’ in the simile maintains the flowing imagery, but refers to streams of cows, not of water. On what Indra’s abilities converge is left open:

<sup>282</sup> Gledner’s translation also does justice to the pun that underlies *dāmanvat*: ‘Wie die Stricke der Kälber sind deine Kräfte schenkend und bindend ohne Fesseln, du reichlich schenkender Indra.’

they could converge on Indra himself, as a consequence of the poet’s praise or, more likely, on the lucky mortal recipients of his aid.

In the second hemistich, we find the broad-scope simile *vatsānām ná tantāyas te* ‘your (abilities are) like cords for calves’, followed by an elaboration which selects the preferred mapping between Indra’s abilities and cord for calves: *dāmanvanto adāmānaḥ sudāman* (see Chapter 9.1.1). However, while the elaboration clarifies the mapping occurring in the simile, the presence of the standard *tantī-* ‘rope’ seems to be responsible for the pun between √*dā-* ‘give’ and √*dā-* ‘bind’: both the adjective *dāmanvat-* and the exocentric compounds *a-dāmán-* and *su-dāman-* are attested only once outside of ṚV 6.24, and they clearly derive from √*dā-* ‘give’ in this other occurrence.<sup>283</sup> Beside Sayana’s description of the *tantī-* as a long line to which a series of calves are fastened by smaller cords, a passage from the much later *Gobhilagr̥hyasūtra* discussing a series of ceremonies connected with cattle-keeping offers us an interesting clue on how to interpret the simile:

(72) *tantīm prasāryamānām baddhavatsām cānumantrayetyaṃ tantī gavām māteti //*  
*tatraitāny aharahaḥ kṛtyāni bhavanti //*  
*niškālanapraveśane tantīviharaṇam iti*

‘When the rope (to which the calves are bound) is spread out, and (again) when the calves have been bound to it, he should recite over it (the verse), ‘This rope, the mother of the cows’. Here now the following (rites) have to be performed day by day, (viz.) (The rites at) the driving out (of the cows), at the coming back (of the cows), and at the setting into motion of the rope (with the calves).’ (Oldenberg 1892)

(GGs 3.6.7-9)

In (72), the reference to cows being taken out, presumably for pasture, and then brought back in suggests that ropes prevented calves from leaving the stable during the mother’s absence but at the same time left them some freedom of movement; for example, from the passage it seems that the ropes were set in motion so that the calves could reach their mothers when they came back from pasture (see also the different sub-events involving cow and calf in Chapter 9.3.1). Correspondently, Indra’s forms of help can be compared to ‘bindings without bonds’ because, in the system of exchange that characterizes Vedic ritual, they create a bond between the god and his devotees, but this bond is for the benefit of both.

<sup>283</sup> *dāmanvat-* occurs in ṚV 5.79.4, *a-dāmán* in ṚV 6.44.12, and *su-dāman-* in ṚV 6.20.7, whose poet is the same as ṚV 6.24.

Verse 5 praises Indra’s numerous deeds and his power to ‘contain’ (*pári* √*i-*, lit. ‘encompass’) the desires of strangers.<sup>284</sup> After this short break, verse 6 contains again two similes, one for each hemistich:

(73) *ví tvád āpo ná párvatasya prsthād*  
*ukthébhīr indra anayanta yajñaiḥ*  
*tām tvābhīḥ suṣṭutibhir vājáyanta*  
*ājīm ná jagmur girvāho ásvāh*

‘Like waters forth from the back of a mountain, they proceeded forth from you along with solemn words and sacrifices, Indra. Along with these good praises, seeking the prize they have (also) gone to you, like horses to a contest, o you whose vehicle is songs.’

(ṚV 6.24.6)

The simile in *pāda* a makes explicit the flowing waters that were only hinted to by the simile in in 4b (*gávām iva srutáyaḥ saṃcáraṇīḥ* ‘(they are) converging like streams of cattle’). However, it is not clear what is being compared to the water in this case. Geldner suggests a parallelism with the nearby ṚV 6.34.1b, reported in (74), which has *manīṣāḥ* ‘thoughts’ as subject.<sup>285</sup>

(74) *vī ca tvád yanti vibhvò manīṣāḥ*

‘Out from you go inspired thoughts far and wide.’

(ṚV 6.34.1b)

Although Indra is generally viewed as the goal and recipient of poetic thoughts and praises, in our hymns he is also the point of departure for poetry and cult (see introduction to Part 3). Furthermore, the simile with its ablative *párvatasya prsthād* ‘from the back of a mountain’ must have triggered a sense of *ví* √*ni-* that is otherwise unattested for this verb: even the rare medial forms of the overwhelmingly active present *náya-* are otherwise transitive and mean ‘lead’ or ‘introduce to’, as in (75), whereas in (73) the ablative *tvád* makes clear that Indra is the landmark from which the subject departs.

<sup>284</sup> See Jamison (2021: *ad loc.*) for an overview of the different interpretations proposed for this verse.

<sup>285</sup> The parallelism between ṚV 6.24.6ab and ṚV 6.34.1b, in which Indra is depicted as the *Ausgangspunkt* of poetry is reinforced by the correspondence between ṚV 6.24.6cd and ṚV 6.34.1a, where the god is more conventionally represented as the poetic goal: *sám ca tvé jagmúr gíra indra pūrvír* ‘many songs have converged on you, Indra.’

(75) *udnā ná nāvam anayanta dhīrāḥ*

‘Like a boat through the water the wise ones guided (him).’

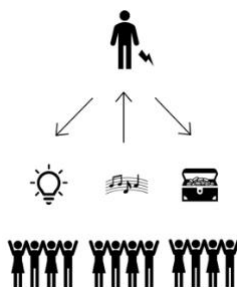
(RV 5.45.10)

The more conventional view of Indra as poetic goal is expressed in the second hemistich, where poetic thoughts are said to have gone to Indra ‘like horses to a contest’. In Chapter 9.3.1 we have seen that, since chariots are usually drawn by horses, similes involving one or the other – or both as in the case of the standard *sáptir ná ráthyo* ‘like a chariot span’ – can be considered as part of the same network. Furthermore, we have seen that the different actions described by such similes can be analyzed as sub-events of a complex event called CHARIOT COMPETITION. In this case, horses clearly represent the poets’ inspired thoughts that compete to attract Indra’s attention and the prize of his benevolence. As a whole, verse 6 seems to concern the traffic in praise: inspiration departing from Indra towards the poets and coming back to him as praise.

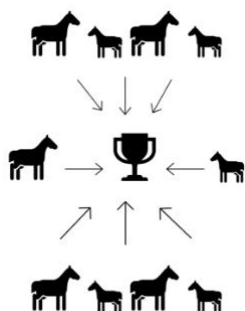
With verse 6 the series of similes comes to an end. In verse 7, the poet wishes that Indra, ‘even though he is fully grown, grows stronger while it is being celebrated by praises and solemn words’; in verse 8ab, he assures that, as long as Indra will be praised, he will not bow ‘to the tough, nor to the stubborn, nor to the vaunting one sped by the Dasyus’. In the second hemistich (*pādas* cd), the poet reaffirms Indra’s greatness by means of new superlative strategies but taking up the comparison with the mountains’ height (*giráyaś cid ṛṣvā*) that we had seen in verse 3. Finally, the last two verses (9 and 10) ask for Indra’s gifts and protection in a traditional way and are somewhat detached from the rest of the hymn.

From the above analysis, it emerges that the poet employs similes in order to vividly illustrate the mechanisms regulating the poetic process, from its beginning with poetic inspiration coming from Indra to rewards going back to the poet for his poetry. What is more, the analysis of each simile allows us to specify in which way they highlight the hymn’s central theme: the metaphoric motion of poetic thoughts from Indra toward humans, from humans toward Indra, and finally their going back to humans in the form of favors are represented by vivid images of trajectors moving away from or going toward a landmark. What tree branches growing in all directions or horses rushing towards a contest have in common with the movement of prayers from and towards Indra is above all image structure. Since all these motion events involve a single landmark and a multiplex trajector, we can identify the Center/Periphery image-schema as the prevalent one in the series of similes and their respective targets. To this, we will need to add an image schema Up/Down, specific for the spatial relationship holding between Indra and his devotees, a mountain and the waters flowing downwards,

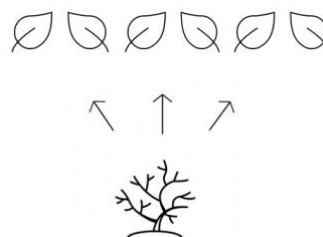
and between pasture and cows running back to their stall.<sup>286</sup> Figures 47 to 49 illustrate the center/periphery image-schema with examples from R̥V 6.24:



**Figure 47.** Center/Periphery: a. poetic thoughts (light bulb) depart from Indra toward men; b. poetic thoughts go back to Indra in the form of praise songs (notes); c. poetic thoughts depart again from Indra as forms of help (treasure).



**Figure 48.** Center/Periphery: horses go to a contest.



**Figure 49.** Center/Periphery: tree branches grow in all directions.

To conclude, I suggest that identifying the Center/Periphery image schema as the underlying motif to the whole hymn helps us to shed light on the simile ‘like rope for calves’ (vs. 4cd): even if we have seen that a motion event may be implicated here too, the ropes suggest that the trajector (the calves) moving towards the periphery always remains in the sphere of competence of the center (the stable/the herdsman).

### 10.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that a study of the function of similes not only requires a knowledge of the cultural context that produced them, but also an in-depth analysis of the texts in which they occur,

<sup>286</sup> Pasture is not explicitly mentioned in verse 4, but we know that the one of coming down from pasture is a sub-event of the complex event involving cows and calves. Recall for instance R̥V 2.16.8 *purá sambādhād abhí á vavṛtsva no dhenúr ná vatsám yávasasya pipyúṣī* ‘Before distress (strikes), turn here toward us, like a cow, milk-swollen from the pasture, toward her calf.’

which considers the literary genre of the text, its content, as well as its purposes. For this reason, after summarizing the extant literature on the function of similes in ancient Indian literature (Section 10.1), I presented three main functions that similes can take in the ṚV in relation to the genre and purpose of the texts contained in the collection and provided detailed analysis of similes in context (10.2).

First, similes have a descriptive function (Section 10.2.1). According to Israel et al. 2004, the fact of being used as attributes of the target and of elaborating its salient characteristics is what distinguishes similes from metaphors (see Chapter 4.2). Taking similes that compare Agni's brilliance to the Sun, in section 10.2.1 we have seen that their descriptive function contributes to the laudatory character of Ṛgvedic hymns, allowing the poet to praise the characteristics of a god through vivid images of refined flavor. Sometimes, on the other hand, similes participate in the colloquial character of a hymn, as in the case of the gambler's lament. Especially in dialogic hymns or in *dānastutis*, similes introduce images taken from everyday life creating complicity between the speaker and the interlocutor. Similes described in this section have literal parameters or parameters based on image metaphor and consequently trigger limited or narrow-scope mappings.

Turning to individual hymns, I have shown that similes can assist the poet in praising the dedicand's attributes or in characterizing the hymns' main characters. In the case of ṚV 1.124, similes positioned at one third and two thirds of the composition make a typical Dawn hymn a masterpiece of precision and vividness: the arrival of Uṣas is indeed presented through a series of portraits taken first from the animal world and then from the female social life of the ancient India. In the case of ṚV 10.95 and ṚV 3.33, similes characterize the hymn's main characters contributing to its narrative development: in the former, they cooperate with other linguistic strategies (such as the contrast between 1<sup>st</sup> person dual and 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person singular verbs) aimed at emphasizing the distance between Urvaśī and Purūravas. In the latter hymn, in addition to mimicking the movements of Vipāś and Śutudrī, similes partake in the repetition of lexical elements pertaining to the sphere of motherhood (cow and calf, womb, etc.) underlining the protective attitude of the two rivers towards Viśvāmitra and the Bharata troop.

Second, similes may have a performative function (Section 10.2.2). Employing Sweetser's (2000) notion of performativity as a matter of fit between two mental spaces, I have argued that similes participate in the performative character of the utterance: by explicitly comparing a target with a source, they transfer the qualities of the source to the target and collaborate in achieving the goal of the utterance. They are, in Sweetser's (2000) terms, performatively employed descriptions, in that they make the represented space fit its representation. In analyzing performative similes, we have seen that they are usually based on conceptual metaphor, which is responsible for the systematic mapping between the two evoked frames and for the rich emergent structure of their blend. Finally, I

have argued that an analysis of similes in terms of mental spaces allows a unified account of Ṛgvedic similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*, of historical comparisons encoded by *yathā* clauses and adverbs in *-vát*, as well as of the so-called persuasive analogies which are more typical of the AV. Turning to individual hymns, we have seen that in ṚV 2.16 similes seem to guide the reasoning behind the hymn accompanying the poet's praise toward Indra on the search for favors. On the other hand, in ṚV 3.17, historical comparisons encode the hymn's topic of the relation between ancient and present Agni.

Finally, similes may have what I have called a meta-poetic function (Section 10.2.3). Similes are indeed often employed with reference to poetry, to the process of poetic composition, and to the system of reciprocity and exchange established by poetry between gods and humans. The meta-poetic function includes an aesthetic component, in that similes fulfill the purpose of making a hymn *suvṛktí-* 'well twisted', and a cognitive component: indeed, similes iconically represent the role of poetry to reveal the connections between things, and they are necessary to the poet who wishes to share his poetic experience and reveal the power of the poetic word. In ṚV 10.68 to Bṛhaspati, we have seen that similes in verse 2 allow the poet to reveal his knowledge about the power of poetry, while the extremely artful similes displayed in the rest of the hymn pay due tribute to its dedicand, the lord of prayers. Finally, in ṚV 6.24 to Indra, the poet employs similes to vividly illustrate the mechanisms regulating the poetic process, from its beginning with poetic inspiration coming from Indra to rewards going back to the poet for his poetry. In this case, the metaphoric motion of poetic thoughts from Indra toward humans, from humans toward Indra, and finally their going back to humans in the form of favors share the highly schematic structures of the Center/Periphery image-schema.

## 11. Summary and conclusion

In this study, I have analyzed different formal, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of Ṛgvedic similes, that is, figurative equative and similitive constructions introduced by the comparative particles *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā*. Guided by the desire to put an end to the sparsity that has characterized the studies on these constructions so far, I have framed my work within a Construction Grammar approach, according to which the analysis of the form of an expression is inseparable from the one of its meaning and pragmatic function. The principles on which the Construction Grammar is based, above all that of the form-meaning mapping, made up the red thread of the different analyses pursued in this work.

Since studying Ṛgvedic similes implies engaging in the two thriving topics of comparison and gradation and of figurative language, a second objective of my work was to bring these constructions within the contemporary linguistic debate. Therefore, in the analysis of different aspects of Ṛgvedic similes, I have alternatively borrowed categories and tools from language typology and cognitive linguistics. These were introduced in Part 1 (Chapters 2 to 4) or before the relevant discussions in the different chapters.

In Chapter 6, I have reappraised the state of the art on Ṛgvedic similes presented in Chapter 5 in the light of typological studies on comparison and gradation. In order to fully understand their function, I have framed the analysis of Ṛgvedic similes as equative and similitive constructions within the rich system of constructions and strategies employed for the expression of comparison of equality in the ṚV. The main finding of this chapter is that different strategies attested in the ṚV for the expression of comparison of equality tend to specialize for a given semantics or for a given pragmatic function. Constructions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā/yathā* (type 1) constitute a coherent construction from the point of view of both syntax and semantics. Syntactically, we have seen that a) they are always phrasal; b) they are characterized by transparency of case and thus by formal and functional parallelism between CPREE and STAND; c) the standard marker follows either the standard or, when this is a complex phrase, the first element of the standard. Semantically, they are under-specified with respect to quantitative or qualitative comparison but specialize for figurative comparison and can thus be defined as similes in all respects. Indeed, they have a) either generic standards that belong to the natural world, b) or specific standards that represent a prototypical instantiation of the quality expressed by the parameter. In cases where the standard can be read literally with the parameter, c) they employ cognitive processes such as metaphor, metonymy, and personification holding between comparee and parameter. Other comparative constructions tend to specialize for either equative or similitive semantics and, in the case of similitive constructions, they



can express similarity with respect to a given quality or with respect to an action performed in the past (historical comparison). Furthermore, comparative clauses of manner can be related to different functional/semantic layers of the utterance.

In Chapter 7, I have presented a corpus-based analysis of Ṛgvedic similes. After introducing the annotation scheme developed for these constructions within the Vedic Treebank, in Section 7.2.1, I have analyzed the internal syntax of standards. Since in most similes standard and standard marker make up a continuous constituent, standards that are “interrupted” by the verb are usually pointed out as exceptions to the regular syntax of similes. After analyzing all discontinuous standards attested in the sample, I have argued that their peculiar syntax can be attributed to diachronic, pragmatic, or formulaic factors. In Section 7.2.2, I have focused on the relative order of standard and parameter. Ṛgvedic similes present STAND-PAR order in 60% of cases, against 40% of the PAR-STAND order. The preference for the former pattern is predicted by the fact that, at least with respect to the order of verb and direct object, Vedic is a non-rigid head-final language (see Haspelmath et al. 2017, Generalization 2). The relatively high frequency of the PAR-STAND order, on the other hand, seems to be determined mainly by processing preferences and pragmatic factors. In the case of double similes, issues of processing and anaphora seem to be at stake in the preference of rightward over leftward gapping, which results in a preference for the PAR-STAND order over STAND-PAR. Similar issues seem to be responsible for the higher frequency of the PAR-STAND order in similes with ellipsis and complex standard, i.e. in similes whose standard contains adjectival, participial, or genitive modifiers. Another factor at stake is theticity and affects both similes with ellipsis and similes with gapping. As largely discussed in the literature, thetic sentences tend to have initial verbs because their structure is not pragmatically bi-partite into topic/subject and focus/predicate, but presents subject and predicate as a single information unit. All such cases in which the parameter is sentence initial increase the percentage of similes featuring PAR-STAND order.

In Chapter 8, I have focused on the diachronic development of Ṛgvedic similes, asking whether and to which extent this can be traced in a chronologically composite corpus such as the ṚV. First, I have reviewed different theories on the origin of similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*, and brought forth arguments for or against a given hypothesis mostly based on cross-linguistic evidence. Afterwards, I have shown that quantitative evidence provided by the treebank also points to very different origins of the three types of similes. Word order patterns attested in *ná* similes support their origin from negative parallelism (Pinault 1985) and point to their original clausal nature; since negative parallelism usually represents a prototype participant of the action expressed by the verb, if this hypothesis on the origin of *ná* similes is correct, it follows that figurativity constituted part of their original meaning. Turning to the origin of similes introduced by *iva*, quantitative evidence

suggests that this particle always marked phrasal standards; furthermore, taking *iva*'s deictic function seriously, I have tentatively suggested that it originally marked standards with specific referents, instead of generic ones. Finally, *yáthā* similes developed from *Adverbiale Modalsätze* via ellipsis of the subordinate verb and cliticization of the subordinator; as for their semantics, in the ṚV we observe a gradual shift from historical to figurative comparison. Since Ṛgvedic similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* constitute a much more coherent schema than their counterpart source constructions, I have suggested analyzing them as a product-oriented schema and tried to understand in which way different source constructions influenced each other and gave rise to the kind of constructions we observe in the ṚV.

Employing notions borrowed from Mental Space Theory, Blending Theory, and Frame Semantics, in Chapter 9, I have presented the kinds of similes attested in the ṚV, analyzing the kinds of mappings that they trigger, their interaction with other figurative expressions, and exploring the issue of their conventionality. As predicted by literature on figurative language (see, e.g., Sullivan 2013, Dancygier and Sweetser 2014), the kind of mapping triggered by similes is strictly connected to their syntactic form. Predicative constructions cue extended mappings and sometimes need an elaboration that suggests the relevant dimension of comparison; narrow-scope similes mostly consist of single comparisons providing vivid examples of the kind of quality or event depicted in the comparee; finally, double comparisons characterized by gapping structure often involve analogical mapping between source and target domain. Beside occurring alone, similes often occur in tandem with metaphors or other figurative expressions such as metonymy, personification, or synesthesia. In such cases, similes inherit and make explicit the kind of mapping triggered by the other figurative expression. Thus, while simile occurring alone usually evoke one single frame, similes scaffolded on the top of metaphors evoke two or more different frames and cue systematic mappings between their elements. Turning to the issue of conventionality as described by Moder (2008), I have argued that, in the case of Ṛgvedic similes, this cannot be kept separated from the formulaic diction of the text. Although we find truly conventional similes such as *pitéva* 'like a father', similes tend to be distributed in formulaic networks, which include simple and conventional expressions as well as more complex ones, characterized by lexical and syntactic flexibility. In order to detect semantic connections holding between similes that go beyond the lexical similarity, I suggested taking both standards and parameters into account. This allows interpreting conventionality as a *continuum*: a group of similes can be said to be conventional if their parameters evoke different subevents of the same complex event. If a simile's parameter does not partake in the same complex event but can nevertheless be subsumed under the same complex frame, this simile occupies an intermediate

position in the *continuum*; finally, if a simile evokes a completely different frame, it belongs to the less conventional end of the network.

In Chapter 10, I presented three main functions that similes can take in the ṚV and provided detailed analyses of similes in context. First, similes can have a descriptive function; this can emphasize a hymn's laudatory character but may also contribute to the colloquial character of a hymn, introducing images taken from everyday life and creating complicity between the speaker and his interlocutor. Furthermore, descriptive similes can assist the poet in characterizing the hymns' main character(s). Similes characterized by this function have literal parameters or parameters based on image metaphors and consequently trigger limited or narrow-scope mappings. Second, similes may participate in the performative character of the utterance: by explicitly comparing a target with a source, they transfer the qualities of the source to the target and collaborate in achieving the goal of the speech act. Such similes are usually based on conceptual metaphor, which is responsible for the systematic mapping between the two evoked frames and for the rich emergent structure of their blend. In the same section, I have argued that an analysis of similes in terms of mental spaces allows a unified account of Ṛgvedic similes introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*, of historical comparisons encoded by *yathā* clauses and adverbs in *-vát*, as well as of the so-called persuasive analogies which are more typical of the AV. Finally, similes employed with reference to poetry and to the process of poetic composition have what I have called a meta-poetic function. This includes an aesthetic component, in that similes fulfill the purpose of making a hymn *suṽṛktí-* 'well twisted', and a cognitive component: indeed, similes iconically represent the role of poetry to reveal the connections between things, and they are necessary to the poet who wishes to share his poetic experience and reveal the power of the poetic word.

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FrameNet: <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/>

Udapi: <https://udapi.github.io>



## Appendix 1: queries employed in this work

This Appendix contains all the queries employed for the corpus-based study presented in Chapters 7 and 8. All queries were written in Udapi query language (<https://udapi.github.io>).

### Query 0: number of annotated similes

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.Mark node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner", "obl:manner",
"obl:grad", "root") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) ==
1'
```

Result: 879 similes

### Chapter 7.2.1

#### Query 1: standards of simple similes interrupted by the parameter, order obl:manner, PAR, x.

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel != "case:sim" and node.parent.deprel
in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and node.parent.parent.ord > node.ord and
node.parent.parent.ord < node.parent.ord' | less -R
```

#### Query 2: standards of simple similes interrupted by the parameter, order x, PAR, obl:manner

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel != "case:sim" and node.parent.deprel
in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and node.parent.parent.ord < node.ord and
node.parent.parent.ord > node.parent.ord' | less -R
```

#### Query 3: standards of double similes interrupted by the parameter, order advcl:manner, PAR, x

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel == "orphan" and node.parent.deprel
== "advcl:manner" and node.parent.parent.ord < node.ord and node.parent.parent.ord >
node.parent.ord' | less -R
```

#### Query 4: standards of double similes interrupted by the parameter, order x, PAR, advcl:manner

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel == "orphan" and node.parent.deprel
== "advcl:manner" and node.parent.parent.ord > node.ord and node.parent.parent.ord <
node.parent.ord' | less -R
```

#### Query 5: Standard constructed with a finite verb

```
query: cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and
node.deprel in ("case:sim", "mark:sim") and node.parent.upos == "VERB" and
node.parent.feats["VerbForm"] == ""' | less -R
```

#### Query 6: Standard constructed with any kind of parameter (orphan)

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and
node.deprel in ("case:sim", "mark:sim") and node.parent.deprel == "orphan"' | less -R
```

- Query 7:** standards of simple similes interrupted by any kind of elements, order obl:manner, X, x  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel != "case:sim" and node.parent.deprel  
 in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and node.parent.ord - node.ord >= 3' | less -R
- Query 8:** standards of simple similes interrupted by any kind of elements, order x, X, obl:manner  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel != "case:sim" and node.parent.deprel  
 in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and node.ord - node.parent.ord >= 3' | less -R
- Query 9:** standards of double similes interrupted by any kind of element, advcl:manner, X, x  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel == "orphan" and node.parent.deprel  
 == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in node.children ]) == 0 and node.ord - node.parent.ord  
 >= 3' | less -R
- Query 10:** standards of double similes interrupted by any kind of element, x, X, advcl:manner  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel == "orphan" and node.parent.deprel  
 == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in node.children ]) == 0 and node.parent.ord - node.ord  
 >= 3' | less -R

### Chapter 7.2.2

- Query 11:** N. of predicative similes (no PAR)  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel in ("mark:sim", "case:sim") and  
 node.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and node.parent.deprel in ("root", "acl:dpct", "xcomp",  
 "acl", "acl:attr", "amod", "acl:result", "acl:part")' | less -R
- Query 12:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in all similes  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner", "obl:manner",  
 "obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 1'
- Query 13:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in all similes with ellipsis  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for  
 x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1'
- Query 14:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in all similes with gapping  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner") and len([x for x in  
 node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1'
- Query 15:** visualize similes with rightward gapping  
 cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Eval node='if node.deprel == "mark:sim" and node.lemma in  
 ("na", "iva", "yathā") and node.parent.ord > node.parent.parent.ord' | less -R

Counter: `cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Eval node='if node.deprel == "mark:sim" and node.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and node.parent.deprel == "advcl:manner" and node.parent.ord > node.parent.parent.ord: count_node.lemma +=1' end='pp(self.count)'`  
Result: {'na': 73, 'iva': 48, 'yathā': 13}

**Query 16:** visualize similes with leftward gapping

`cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel == "mark:sim" and node.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and node.parent.ord < node.parent.parent.ord' | less -R`

Counter: `cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Eval node='if node.deprel == "mark:sim" and node.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and node.parent.deprel == "advcl:manner" and node.parent.ord < node.parent.parent.ord: count_node.lemma +=1' end='pp(self.count)'`  
Result {'na': 86, 'iva': 54, 'yathā': 13}

**Query 17:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in similes with ellipsis and simple STAND

`cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 0'`

**Query 18:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in similes with ellipsis and complex STAND

`cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) >= 1'`

**Query 19:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in similes with gapping and simple STAND

`cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 1'`

**Query 20:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in similes with gapping and complex STAND

`cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) >= 2'`

**Query 21:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in all similes with simple STAND

`cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner", "obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel in ("mark:sim", "case:sim")]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 0'`

**Query 22:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in all similes with complex STAND

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner", "obl:manner",
"obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na", "iva", "yathā") and x.deprel
in ("mark:sim", "case:sim")]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na",
"iva", "yathā")]) >= 1'
```

Gapping in coordination:

**Query 23:** N. of rightward gapping:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.Eval node='if node.upos != "VERB" and node.deprel == "conj" and
node.parent.feats["VerbForm"] == "" and len([x for x in node.children if x.deprel ==
"orphan"]) >= 1: count_node.lemma +=1' end='pp(self.count)'
```

```
Visualize: cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.upos != "VERB" and node.deprel
== "conj" and node.parent.feats["VerbForm"] == "" and len([x for x in node.children if
x.deprel == "orphan"]) >= 1' | less -R
```

**Query 24:** N. of leftward gapping:

```
Visualize: cat RV.conllu | udapy util.Eval node='if node.upos != "VERB" and node.deprel ==
"root" and len([x for x in node.children if x.deprel == "orphan"]) >= 1 and len([x for x in
node.children if x.deprel == "conj" and x.feats["VerbForm"] == ""]) >= 1: count_node.lemma
+=1' end='pp(self.count)'
```

```
Visualize: cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.upos != "VERB" and node.deprel
== "root" and len([x for x in node.children if x.deprel == "orphan"]) >= 1 and len([x for x in
node.children if x.deprel == "conj" and x.feats["VerbForm"] == ""]) >= 1' | less -R
```

**Query 25:** N. of gapping involving the copula:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.Eval node='if node.deprel == "conj" and len([x for x in
node.parent.children if x.deprel == "cop"]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.deprel
== "orphan"]) == 1: count_node.lemma +=1' end='pp(self.count)'
```

Result: 1

```
Visualize: cat RV.conllu | udapy -TM util.Mark node='node.deprel == "conj" and len([x for x
in node.parent.children if x.deprel == "cop"]) == 1 and len([x for x in node.children if x.deprel
== "orphan"]) == 1' | less -R
```

Result: sent\_id = RV\_8\_2\_13\_1 with rw gapping

## Chapter 8.1.2

### Query 26:

- a. N. of STAND – PAR and PAR – STAND orders in similes introduced by *ná*:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner", "obl:manner",
"obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma == "na" and x.deprel in ("case:sim",
"mark:sim")]) == 1'
```

- b. N. of STAND – PAR and PAR – STAND orders in similes introduced by *iva*:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("advcl:manner", "obl:manner",
"obl:grad") and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma == "iva" and x.deprel in ("case:sim",
"mark:sim")]) == 1'
```

### Query 27:

- a. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *ná*-similes with ellipsis

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma == "na" and x.deprel in ("case:sim", "mark:sim")]) == 1'
```

- b. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *iva*-similes with ellipsis

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma == "iva" and x.deprel in ("case:sim", "mark:sim")]) == 1'
```

### Query 28:

- a. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *ná* similes with ellipsis and simple STAND

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma in ("na") and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x in
node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 0'
```

- b. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *iva* similes with ellipsis and simple STAND

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma in ("iva") and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x in
node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 0'
```

### Query 29:

- a. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *ná*-similes with gapping

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in
node.children if x.lemma == "na" and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1'
```

- b. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *iva*-similes with gapping

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in
node.children if x.lemma == "iva" and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1'
```

### Query 30:

a. N. of *iva* similes with ellipsis in each book

```
cat rv1.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma == "iva" and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1'
(repeated for rv2.conllu to rv10.conllu)
```

b. N. of *ná* similes with ellipsis in each book

```
cat rv1.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma == "na" and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1'
(repeated for rv2.conllu to rv10.conllu)
```

c. N. of *iva* similes with gapping in each book

```
cat rv1.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in
node.children if x.lemma == "iva" and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1'
(repeated for rv2.conllu to rv10.conllu)
```

d. N. of *ná* similes with gapping in each book

```
cat rv10.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and len([x for x in
node.children if x.lemma == "na" and x.deprel == "mark:sim"]) == 1'
(repeated for rv2.conllu to rv10.conllu)
```

**Query 31:** N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *yáthā* similes

a. all *yáthā* similes:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad",
"advcl:manner") and node.feats["VerbForm"] == "" and len([x for x in node.children if
x.lemma == "yathā" and x.deprel in ("mark:sim", "case:sim")]) == 1'
```

b. with ellipsis:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and
node.feats["VerbForm"] == "" and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma == "yathā" and
x.deprel in ("case:sim")]) == 1'
```

c. with gapping:

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel == "advcl:manner" and
node.feats["VerbForm"] == "" and len([x for x in node.children if x.lemma == "yathā" and
x.deprel in ("mark:sim")]) == 1'
```

b. N. of STAND - PAR and PAR - STAND orders in *iva* similes with ellipsis and simple STAND

```
cat RV.conllu | udapy util.See node='node.deprel in ("obl:manner", "obl:grad") and len([x for
x in node.children if x.lemma in ("yathā") and x.deprel == "case:sim"]) == 1 and len([x for x
in node.children if x.lemma not in ("na", "iva", "yathā")]) == 0'
```