
**A THEORETICAL STUDY OF TWO ETHNIC
PERFORMANCES - TIRAYĀṬṬAM AND SARPPAMTUḶḶAL:
INTERPRETATIONS USING DHVANI THEORY**

A THESIS TO BE SUBMITTED TO
**THE UNIVERSITY OF TRANS-DISCIPLINARY HEALTH SCIENCES
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I declare that this thesis entitled “**A Theoretical Study of Two Ethnic Performances - Tirayāṭṭam and Sarppaintullal: Interpretations using Dhvani Theory**”, submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy to THE UNIVERSITY OF TRANS-DISCIPLINARY HEALTH SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY, Bengaluru, is my original work, conducted under the supervision of my guide Prof Sangeetha Menon. I also wish to inform that no part of the research has been submitted for a degree or examination at any university. References, help, and material obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged. I hereby confirm the originality of the work and that there is no plagiarism in any part of the dissertation.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this thesis, “**A Theoretical Study of Two Ethnic Performances - Tirayāṭṭam and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal: Interpretations using Dhvani Theory**”, submitted by **Amrutha M. K.** was carried out under my supervision. No part of this thesis has been submitted for a degree or examination at any university. References, help, and material obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged. I hereby confirm the originality of the work and that there is no plagiarism in any part of the dissertation.

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Synopsis

Artistic expressions and aesthetic responses are ubiquitous in human worlds. They are flexible and versatile, ranging from cave paintings to street art, oral narratives to poetic expressions, and mimes to theatre performances. Of these, some expressions are rooted in local identities and cultures, while others are free from the clutches of locale. However, a general theoretical framework unifying different kinds of aesthetic expressions remains underdeveloped. Representatively, ethnic art forms of Kerala, such as *Tirayāṭṭam* and *Sarppanṭullal*, though popular among the masses, are yet to be brought within a satisfactory theoretical framework. Descriptive and exploratory studies on ethnic performances have focused mainly on socio-political aspects of artistic performances. In preference, Ānadhavardana's theory of suggestion (*dhvani*) provides a theoretical framework for analysing literary expressions. Could this theory be used to develop a theoretical framework for expressions in general?

The thesis suggests the possibility of an extended *dhvani* theory that charts aesthetic expressions in general, in an explanatory way. It proposes a theoretical framework for symbolic expressions and challenges the claim that the scope of *dhvani* theory is limited to literary expressions. First, the thesis examines literary expressions and proposes that there is an additional level of flexibility in aesthetic expressions with suggestions when compared to literal and metaphorical expressions. Nevertheless, this suggestive potential to generate more than one meaning applies to any form of symbolic expression. To substantiate this argument about the wide applicability of *dhvani* theory, the thesis relies on the classification of *dhvani* given by Ānandavardhana and analyses visual expressions and ethnic performances.

Though art is ubiquitous, hinting at an aesthetic capacity unique to humans, its realisation -apprehension and appreciation of aesthetic expressions and sensibilities- is shaped and modulated by cultural and pragmatic elements. Specifically, in aesthetic expressions that share an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meanings, semantic

conflict can arise between the literal and implied meanings or directly at the literal level. The resolution of the semantic conflict lies either through the application of linguistic or pragmatic strategies. As the aesthetic expressions with suggestions get *unleashed* from the literal and metaphorical meanings, they become fluid, flexible, and fuzzy. The ability to create and appreciate aesthetic expressions with suggestions is a uniquely human capacity, though there are different levels of aesthetic appreciation. To illustrate, in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* (phonic-based suggestion), there is a lexical drift from the contextual meaning to the non-contextual meaning or vice versa. If the target expressions cannot capture the contour of the homonym with its multiple meanings, then those subtle nuances of meaning and the impression it has created in the original expression are lost in translation due to linguistic clogging. Even so, satisfying both the semantic and aesthetic constraints by recovering the literal and suggested meanings where possible can improve the quality of translation. However, the adaptation of ethnic performances with another form is even more challenging, as the cognitive and cultural elements are intertwined in aesthetic appreciation. Even now, age-old mythological stories are reintroduced into artistic compositions without losing their aesthetic appeal using suggestive expressions. Hence, artistic composition benefits from the inclusion of aesthetic expression with suggestions, as it adds novelty to a work of art. The proposed general theoretical framework of expressions thus includes an account of cognitive and cultural elements that accommodate aesthetic expressions with suggestions, apart from literal and metaphorical expressions.

List of Publications

1. Amrutha M K. 2022. Linguistic and Aesthetic Constraints in Literary Translation: Phonic Considerations in Translating Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani. Translation Today, Vol. 16(1). 21-48. DOI: 10.46623/tt/2022.16.1.ar2

Conference Presentations

1. “Stylistic Interactions and Semantic Interventions in Literary Translation”, International Conference (online) titled “Stylistic Border Crossings in and beyond Translation” by The British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT), East Center, University of East Anglia, 9, 10 March 2023.
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2. “The Aesthetics of Poetic Suggestion in Artistic and Literary Expressions”, International Conference (online) titled ‘Kinds of Expression’ by Expression, Communication, and Origins of Meaning Research Group supported by the Connecticut Institute for Brain and Cognitive Sciences, the Humanities Institute, and the Philosophy Department of the University of Connecticut, 5th Feb 2022.
<https://ecomresearchgroup.com/kinds-of-expression/>
3. “Lore and Legends of the Sacred Groves” International Summer Conference (Online), International Institute of Applied Aesthetics, Finland, 4 June 2021.
<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/networks/international-institute-of-applied-aesthetics/events/aesthetics-in-the-age-of-environmental-crises>
4. “A Walk through the Sacred Groves of Kerala”, 43rd Indian Social Sciences Congress, Bangalore University, 18 January 2020.
5. “Narratives of Resistance: Creating and Claiming Spaces through Performances”, Young Scholars’ Congress, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 16 March 2019.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Artistic behaviours and aesthetic responses are ubiquitous in human worlds. Aesthetic expressions ranging from cave paintings to street art display the aesthetic sensibilities of human beings in varying degrees and forms. On this footing, aesthetic expressions such as cave art, mural paintings, oral songs, and folk performances mark the chronicle of human civilisation. At the same time, these aesthetic expressions and their cultural realisation hint at the possible underlying aesthetic capacity. The universal nature of human aesthetic expressions and the near absence of similar free expressions in non-human species suggest that the capacity for creating art and enjoying it could be a species-specific capacity. In this sense, human beings are “biologically isolated”¹ from the rest of the animal world with limited, if any, aesthetic sensibilities. Contrary to the limited aesthetic capacities in the non-human species, the potential to elicit aesthetic responses even after repeated encounters with aesthetic expressions makes human beings an “art species”².

Artists use aesthetic expressions to portray incidents or events in various ways, ranging from realistic to exaggerated or concrete to abstract representations. Regardless of the approach taken, aesthetic expressions can evoke a wide range of emotional responses in readers or *sahrdayas*. However, aesthetic expressions are different from ordinary communicative expressions. The primary intention of communicative expressions is to convey information or persuade the listener to react in a particular way. They rely on clear and direct language, on occasion with logical and rational arguments, to communicate their message. People often assess communicative expressions for accuracy, credibility, and effectiveness. In contrast, aesthetic expressions, such as poetry, painting, and music, are primarily intended to create an emotional response. Connoisseurs

¹ Chomsky & Smith (2000). *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*

² Davies (2012) *The Artful Species: Aesthetics, Art, and Evolution*.

often judge aesthetic expressions for their aesthetic qualities, such as creativity, novelty, and emotional impact.

In *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman points out the explanatory limitations in investigating the varieties of aesthetic expressions. He laments about the lack of any systematic theoretical account to resolve the aesthetic enigma. He foregrounds the need for an “intensive examination of non-verbal sign systems” to account for this aesthetic enigma. Later, cognitive scientists, evolutionary biologists, and cultural anthropologists provided various approaches from naturalistic and evolutionary accounts of the aesthetic capacity (Davies, 2012; Rolls, 2017; Kozbelt, 2017). However, those approaches are limited in their domains as they focus either on cognitive or cultural aspects behind aesthetic appreciation in isolation. As an alternative approach, the thesis analyses one of the aesthetic theories proposed by Ānandavardhana and attempts to apply the canons of *dhvani* theory to the study of aesthetic expressions.

Aesthetic expressions with suggested meanings differ from communicative expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings. Aesthetic expressions carry unique, distinguishable characteristics, such as novelty, variability and concealability. The linguistic expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings are insufficient to address the aesthetic puzzle, which is one step higher than the rest. There is an additional level of flexibility added to human aesthetic expressions compared to linguistic expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings. Hence, expressions with suggestive potential need to be considered to account for the characterising features of human aesthetic expressions. *Dhvani* theory (theory of suggestion) posits the possibility of distinguishing between the literal and suggested meanings of expressions. By employing and developing the theoretical tools of classical Indian aesthetics, this thesis proposes that there are cognitive and cultural elements in the production and realisation of aesthetic experience, making a non-human world a different kind despite having “aesthetic” phenomena. The thesis builds on the Indian aesthetic theories of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta in explaining the cognitive and cultural elements of aesthetic experience.

The Theory of Suggestion (*Dhvani* theory)

Around the 9th century CE, Ānandavardhana articulated the philosophy of aesthetic suggestion and systematically theorised the concept of *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion) in his magnum opus *Dhvanyāloka* (*Light on the doctrine of suggestion*)³. At the beginning of the text, he asserts that this theory had already been put into practice, as great artists used it even before his time⁴. However, there were differences in opinion on the concept, nature, significance, impact, and relevance of *dhvani*. Ānandavardhana systematically theorised the concept of *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion), codified them into different varieties and gave clear, concise, and precise definitions for each of its varieties. He gave a proper framework that defines the concept of *dhvani* through various *Karikas*⁵ and *Vrittis*. He explained how each component of a linguistic expression, like word and meaning, can give rise to aesthetic suggestion. According to Ānandavardhana, “words and expressions can be termed *dhvani* only if in its being suggestive in enhancing the aesthetic beauty of the expression which could be achieved by no other, non-suggestive manner of expression”⁶ (1990, p. 183). Even so, secondary literature maintains that *dhvani* theory is confined to literary expressions. Thus, the popular view regarding *dhvani* theory is that *dhvani* cannot be generalised. Ānandavardhana has explained how *dhvani* becomes an essential factor in the aesthetic process and how efficiently poets have used them. The theoretical framework of the texts facilitates multi-dimensional reading. While considering these textual sources as the objective truth on art forms, critics often forget that the text can always have different interpretations. If we take textual sources as ideas rather than fixed rules, we could find their resonance even in contemporary times.

³ *Dhvani* theory is a fully-fledged aesthetic theory with a deep philosophical understanding developed from Kashmir Shaivism.

⁴ “*tasya hi dhvaneḥ svarūpaṃ sakala-sat-kavi-kāvyaopaniṣad-bhūtam atiramaṇīyam anīyasībhir api cīrantana-kāvya-lakṣaṇa-vidhāyināṃ buddhibhir anumīlita-pūrvam*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 6).

⁵ *saṃkṣiptasūtrabāhvarthasūcakāḥ ślokaḥ kārikā*

⁶ “*ukty-antareṇāśakyam yat tac cārutvaṃ prakāśayan / śabdo vyañjakatām bibhrad dhvany-ukter viṣayībhavet //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 32).

“*yatrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanīkṛta-svārthau / vyañktaḥ kāvya-viśeṣaḥ sa dhvanir iti sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 18).

“That kind of poetry, wherein the (conventional) meaning renders itself secondary or the (conventional) word renders its meaning secondary and suggests the (intended or) implied meaning, is designated by the learned as *dhvani* or ‘Suggestive Poetry’ (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 19)”.

This study primarily focuses on examining the role of *dhvani* in the process of art appreciation and suggests a novel approach to understanding and appreciating various art forms. It attempts to show how *dhvani* theory can be generalised by considering different art forms. To explore this theoretical line, specific cases of ethnic art forms of Kerala named *Tirayattam* and *Sarppantullal* are taken. In doing so, it will widen the scope of the theory as it does not restrict to any specific form of art; instead, it will consider the theory from a larger perspective incorporating ethnic performances which were side-lined from art criticism. It is hoped that the comparison and analysis of various art forms will enhance our understanding of *dhvani* theory and thereby make the process of art appreciation an easy sail.

Embracing Ethnic Performances: Enriching the Artistic Landscape

A significant part of India's cultural heritage is built by its extraordinarily dynamic and diverse array of folk and ethnic traditions. However, ethnic performances have not received a comparable kind of attention from scholarly minds as other forms of aesthetic expressions. It is essential to give adequate recognition and importance to ethnic performances as they preserve cultural heritage, foster cultural diversity, and enrich the artistic landscape. These art forms showcase the creativity and artistic ingenuity of ethnic communities and contribute to the broader medley of performing arts and to the wider world of arts. Kerala adorns this cultural tapestry with *Teyyam*, *Tirayattam*, *Sarppantullal*, and *Paṭayani*, which are a few of the ethnic art forms of the locale, among others. Ethnic performances captivate the world of performing arts by embracing the kaleidoscope of artistic diversity. On one side, they showcase cultural expressions deeply rooted in the traditions of ethnic communities, harmoniously performed by all community members. In contrast, certain ethnic art forms are highly refined and specialised, with well-established techniques, formal training, and strict adherence to specific rules and conventions. These art forms come alive through the dedication and expertise of skilled practitioners who have undergone years of training and practice in the art form.

Tirayāṭṭam

Tirayāṭṭam is a ritual performing art form that demands the utmost dedication, skill, and expertise from its practitioners. This captivating art form, deeply rooted in ethnic traditions, embodies the cultural heritage and artistic expression of ethnic communities. Generally, people belonging to communities such as Perumannan, Panan, Velan, and Cheruman perform Tirayāṭṭam. The performance is attended by a handful of people to hundreds of people from various communities, depending upon the time of the performance and the significance of the worshipped deity. It is performed between the Malayalam calendar months of *thulām* and *medam*, corresponding to the period from November to April. It is widely prevalent in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala. Devotees perform Tirayāṭṭam every year to please the gods and goddesses worshipped in sacred groves. Bhagavatī, Karivilli, Karumakan, and Kariyāttan are some of the many deities worshipped in such sacred groves. The verbal component of the performance carries the narrative, often drawing inspiration from local myths, legends, or historical events. It serves as a means for passing down cultural knowledge and expressing the emotions, beliefs, and values of the ethnic communities.



⁷ Guru shishya Tirayāṭṭam and Bhagavati Tirayāṭṭam

Sarppamtuḷḷal

Sarppamtuḷḷal, also known as, Pāmpum tuḷḷal, Pāmpin kaḷam, Nāgam pāṭṭu, Sarppōtsavam, or Nāgapātu Sarpolsavam, is another ethnic art form of Kerala. Snakes are worshipped as Nāgarājā and Nāgayakṣi. Devotees of Nāgarājā and Nāgayakṣi hold the ritual performance once a year to appease the serpent god. The members of the Puḷḷuva community sing Nāgapātu to invoke the serpent gods. Typically, a group of seven members of the Puḷḷuvan community sing Nāgapātu over a span of seven days. The musical instruments used for the performance are Puḷḷuva Vīna, Puḷḷuva kuṭam and Ilattālam. The sacred space where the performance takes place is known as Maṇippaṅṭal. Inside this maṇippaṅṭal, performers create a colourful pattern known as *kaḷam* using the powder of naturally obtained materials. *Kaḷam ezhuth* is an art form performed in conjunction with Nāgapātu. A small *kaḷam* is sketched during the day, while a more elaborate *kaḷam* is created at night. Puḷḷuvan praises the serpents through the Nāgapātu and invites them to the *kaḷam*. Maidens who have completed fourteen days of fasting sit in the *kaḷam* with flowers of areca nut on their hands. The power of serpents is invoked by singing Nāgapātu and by playing the Puḷḷuva Vīna and Puḷḷuva kuṭam in the background. Absorbed in the ritualistic song, they erase the *kaḷam* by vigorously moving and crawling through the *kaḷam*. Some family members are believed to move around the *kaḷam* as they feel the presence of the Nāga deities in their bodies. When they reach a state of frenzy, they move their bodies violently and show the presence of the snake by exhibiting the movements of the snake. ⁸



⁸ Melattur Ramakrishnan, Melattur Kaali, Melattur Shamjith, Mullathil Sudhakaran

⁹ Artist drawing Nāga kaḷam and maṇippaṅṭal after all decorations

Ethnic art forms like *Tirayattam* and *Sarppantullal* constantly help to nurture the inextricable link between humans and nature. These ethnic performances also play a significant role in protecting and preserving sacred groves. Even though it is impossible to date the origin of these performances, they have been constant companions for humans in their life journey from time immemorial. This study is an attempt to understand why these ethnic performances continue to coexist with a large audience and to place it in a general aesthetic framework by reconstructing the aesthetic theories which were developed in India in a comparatively earlier time frame and reinterpreting *dhvani* theory to place them in the contemporary framework by giving a theoretical account.

Fieldwork and method

The present study conducted fieldwork over a period of 10 months, from January 2019 to March 2020. Based on the pilot study conducted, it was understood that restricting the research to a particular *Tirayattam* would limit the scope and understanding of the performance. However, covering every performance was challenging due to simultaneous temple festivals. Consequently, the study focused on eight major *Tirayattam* groups identified during the pilot study. The researcher conducted field visits to eight temple festivals between January and March 2019 and seven temple festivals from February to March 2020. The study on *Sarppantullal* centres explicitly around the Mullathil Nāgakāv located in the village named Puthukod, which is situated in the Cherukaav Grama Panchayat of the Malappuram district.

The primary objective was to identify the elements that contribute to *dhvani* in *Tirayattam* and *Sarppantullal* performances. The research drew upon the theoretical text *Dhvanyāloka*, which does not prescribe strict rules for artists but emphasises the concept of *dhvani* and the significance of suggested meaning. The study argues that suggested meaning is not limited to textual forms alone but extends to symbolic forms. The study examined the patterns, connections, similarities, and contrasts between suggested meanings in literary texts and other symbolic art forms like *Tirayattam* and *Sarppantullal*

to establish a link between theory and practice. The study also drew insights from Ānandavardhana's perspective, which emphasised that *Dhvanyāloka* provides indications rather than strict guidelines. To explore further, literary expressions given in *Dhvanyāloka* were taken for analysis. The examples in the text served as indications and not exclusive cases for manifesting specific emotions. The manifestation of emotions depends on the connoisseur's interpretation and the poet's creativity. By understanding this dynamic, the study aimed to establish a common ground between theory and practice. In summary, the research methodology involved field visits to temple festivals and performances, analysis of textual sources, exploration of suggested meanings in performances, and a focus on the living link between practice and theory provided by the performers. The study aimed to uncover the elements that contribute to *dhvani* in Tīrayāṭṭam and Sarppamtuḷḷal performances and establish connections between theory and practice in the realm of suggested meanings and artistic creativity.

By conducting this study, I hope to rekindle the awareness and understanding of ethnic communities living in connection with sacred groves and nature worship while expanding our cultural knowledge. This study aims to draw the public's attention and cultivate a more profound awareness among individuals regarding the growing importance of these performances. The fact that there has been no substantial research on the aesthetics of ethnic performances specifically focused on this region further adds to the significance and value of this study. A vast amount of knowledge has been handed down orally from generation to generation through these ethnic performances and oral songs, Chandra (1967, 2004), Vishnu Namboothiri (1998, 1977, 2016), Choondal Chummar (1978), and K. K. N. Kurup (1977) have done elaborate studies on folk literature and folk performances of Kerala. However, only a few studies have been conducted on Tīrayāṭṭam and Sarppamtuḷḷal, and most of them are informative, factual descriptions minus their aesthetic significance. Several descriptive studies have been conducted in these areas. However, the studies, if any, that go deep into investigating the development of the ethnic art forms of Kerala and analysing the aesthetic pleasure embedded in these art forms apart from their ritualistic significance are not known.

Chapter Outline

This thesis examines Ānandavardhana's views on the suggestive potential of literary expressions. To further explore the puzzle of aesthetic experience and pleasure, the second chapter begins with an analysis of the different types of linguistic expressions. Based on this, I elucidate some of Ānandavardhana's views on aesthetic suggestion. The chapter argues that freely *anchored* aesthetic expressions have an additional level of flexibility compared to *tightly anchored* non-human expressions and *openly anchored* linguistic expressions. The third chapter relies on the classification of *dhvani* given by Ānandavardhana to analyse verbal and visual expressions. The fourth chapter shows how cognitive and cultural elements are intertwined in the process of aesthetic appreciation. It requires cognitive structures as well as internal temperaments evolved from the cultural context for the apprehension and appreciation of aesthetic bliss. The fifth chapter argues that sound and meaning are not merely external conditions for aesthetic engagement but the essential components that aid suggestion. The sixth chapter argues that even after repeated encounters with aesthetic expressions, the suggestive potential of words never gets exhausted in the minds of connoisseurs. Hence, a work of art can still appear novel even if artists incorporate age-old popular myths into them.

Chapter 2: Symbolic Power of Words

Literary and artistic expressions are free to move beyond denotation and from what is directly represented. Accordingly, the literal meaning of the expressions may be shifted to an allied meaning or may get totally abandoned, overpowered, or overshadowed by a different meaning. Aesthetic expressions differ from linguistic expressions and have some unique, distinguishable characteristics compared to other linguistic expressions. Based on these distinguishable characteristics, expressions can be categorised into three types: *tightly anchored* non-human expressions, *openly anchored* linguistic expressions, and *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions. Further, this chapter argues that *openly anchored linguistic* expressions are in the form of 'reporting' and metaphorical

expression is a form of ‘showing’. In contrast, *freely anchored* aesthetic expression with suggestion is a form of ‘hiding’.

Chapter 3: Resonance of *Dhvani* in Visual Expressions

Human beings commonly express their thoughts and emotions through verbal or visual expressions. The basic requirement of any symbolic act is understanding and making sense of it. An artwork being a symbolic act entails the same, along with its capacity to evoke aesthetic bliss when a worldly object is converted into an art statement. This chapter primarily focuses on visual and verbal expressions and examines the possibility of extending *dhvani* theory to other art forms by analysing certain literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka*. Based on the different varieties of *dhvani*, some visually stimulating paintings and certain acts from *Tīrayāṭṭam* performances are analysed. The chapter is categorised into the following sections based on the various varieties of aesthetic suggestions. The first section includes an analysis of literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka*, introducing different types of *dhvani*. Interpretations and commentaries from secondary literature are considered to analyse these literary expressions. As some free-flowing strokes are also capable of evoking powerful emotions, the second section focuses on some visually stimulating brush strokes to explore the resonance of *dhvani* in visual expressions. The third section explores the ethnic art form *Tīrayāṭṭam*. It aims to figure out the constitutive elements of aesthetic pleasure inherent in performing arts, focusing on *Tīrayāṭṭam* and *Sarppamtuḷḷal*. The final section of this chapter constitutes the empirical core of the chapter, which explains how various art forms are correlated to each other and stresses the need to broaden and deepen our theoretical understanding of *dhvani* by integrating and interweaving different forms of art.

Chapter 4: Paradox in Performance

Art is a ubiquitous element found in all cultures. However, its realisation is not universal. The fourth chapter analyses the presumption that there are different levels of appreciation in art. It discusses the reason for the individual variations in art appreciation, even while

all human beings share the same general cognitive structure that makes art appreciation possible for the species. Presumably, though suggestion provides creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation are realised when circumstances such as cultural context, intellectual preparedness, and social interactions that influence the internal temperament combine to convey it. Otherwise, it will not be apprehended. This chapter proposes that these features are shaped and modulated by cultural elements. This chapter argues that there are cognitive structures and cultural elements behind aesthetic appreciation, which gives it a universal structure. This section will focus on how these two elements are intertwined in the process of aesthetic appreciation.

Chapter 5: The Art of Literary Translation and Artistic Adaptations

Poetic devices like double entendre, paronomasia, and onomatopoeia, though found in the language of everyday life, add a different texture to literary expressions. In literary expressions, figures of speech can be directly expressed or implied by the suggestive potential of words. By outlining two features of language termed ‘lexical drift’ and ‘linguistic clogging’ and employing certain explanatory concepts of classical Indian aesthetics, this chapter addresses the question of how phonic elements of language constrain or smooth the ways of translation. Linguistic clogging, the chapter argues, constrains the translation of expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* (phonic-based suggestion) in two ways. As a semantic constraint, the presence of *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* in source expressions impedes translation if unsatisfied in target expressions. Secondly, as an aesthetic constraint, it curtails the aesthetic pleasure for readers even if the semantic constraint is satisfied by paraphrasing the source expressions. However, with examples illustrating successful attempts to translate literary expressions with *śleṣa* and *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, this chapter shows how paying heed to various linguistic constraints can aid literary translation. The second part of this chapter analyses the role of ethnic performances and related rituals in protecting the environment that sustains them. Traditional methods of community-based conservation through ethnic performances and associated rituals are vital in preserving the pristine sanctum of the

groves, the last shelter of biodiversity. It is not just a display of emotional scenes, but the integration of all the elements that are part of the society is reflected in these performances. The final section of this chapter discusses the consequences of keeping these ethnic performances away from their “natural” environment.

Chapter 6: Novelty in a Work of Art

The sixth chapter examines the different ways in which a work of art appears fresh and novel, even after some popular myths are incorporated into a work of art. Certain literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka* that are relevant to understanding the concept of novelty in a work of art are analysed. Not just words and expressions, even the literary characters are not bound to any single work of art. Even literary characters get metamorphosed into newer versions of themselves. In some instances, they are represented as a reflection of the same without their own existence. Nevertheless, such characters often get portrayed from different perspectives and recreated as different characters by maintaining a life of their own. In doing so, novelty is achieved not just in literary works but also in visual and performing arts as well. In Indian mythology, a mythical character called Kuṭṭiccāttan is familiar to the people of Kerala through indigenous rituals, yet they capture the character through different narratives. The second part of this chapter analyses the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and finds out how the character is portrayed and presented through various performative, literary, and ritualistic traditions across Kerala. The final part of this chapter analyses the different ways adopted by Tirayāṭṭam performers to bring novelty to a performance.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Expressions can be categorised into three types: tightly anchored non-human expressions, openly anchored linguistic expressions and freely anchored aesthetic expressions. Aesthetic expressions categorised under freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions differ from tightly anchored non-human expressions and openly anchored linguistic expressions. Openly anchored expressions form a slightly

permeable yet restricted kind of association between the word and the meaning. The potential to generate more than one meaning favours the flexibility in freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions. Nevertheless, this suggestive potential to create more than one meaning is not just limited to words or verbal expressions. It is applicable to any form of expression that is symbolic in nature. Paintings, performances, oral narratives, be it any form of artistic expression, if it is in the form of freely-anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions, then all the features of freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions are applicable to those expressions as well. Though freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions provide creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation get realised when circumstantial elements, such as cultural context, intellectual ability, and social interactions that influence the internal temperament, are favourable in conveying it. Otherwise, it will not be apprehended. Similarly, when words with similar phonic elements are not brought out in translation, the target expression shortfalls poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). In the translation of freely anchored aesthetic expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, we encounter linguistic clogging not in terms of primary meaning but due to the linguistic and aesthetic constraints in capturing the suggestive aspects. Nevertheless, when the translation succeeds in capturing the parameters of sound (*śabda*), that is, the structural elements of the source expressions, along with the meaning, reference, and other semantic features, then the lyrical beauty and aesthetic attributes of the expression can be maintained even in the translation of aesthetic expressions with poetic suggestions. However, the adaptation of ethnic performances into another form is even more challenging. Sacred groves become the performing yards for ethnic performances like *Tīrayāṭṭam* and *Sarpamtuḷḷal*, and taking them away from those sacred groves will bring down the aesthetic beauty of the performance. The flexibility of freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestion help to add novelty to any artistic composition. Mythological stories can be reintroduced into a creative composition without losing their aesthetic appeal with the help of freely anchored aesthetic expression with suggestions. Not just mythological stories, mythical characters, though bound by social and cultural ties, resurrect across various cultures even after centuries through literary works. As Ānandavardhana says, though the path of art is being explored by

numerous people of the past, with the suggestive potential of words, the path of art will still be infinite.

Chapter 2

Symbolic Power of Words

Human beings and non-human species use expressions either to elicit a response or to reveal a thought or emotion to themselves or others (Heintz & Scott-Phillips, 2021). On the face of it, they use different kinds of expressions in strikingly different evolutionary ways (Tomasello, 1999; Henrich & Muthukrishna, 2021; Heyes, 2018). Expressions¹⁰, as a general term, include responses to stimuli, words or utterances in a language, non-linguistic communicative devices, and language-neutral propositions. Arguably, *some* expressions used by non-human species¹¹ and human beings are different in kind. The expressions, for example, elicited by single-cell organisms and many non-human species are tied to the here and now and are rigid, regimented, and often repetitive¹². In significant contrast to this, *some* human expressions are fluid, flexible, and fuzzy. Though some non-human expressions show certain characteristic features of human expressions, such expressions ranging from the waggle dance of bees to vocal and gestural communication in primates¹³ are constrained and restricted compared to human expressions (Karl von Frisch, 1927, 1953; Gallistel, 2011; Chittka, 2022). Further, there are claims based on “substantial evidence” about the human capacity to generate expressions¹⁴ that it is “a species-specific biological property, essentially unique to humans, invariant among human groups, and dissociated from other cognitive systems

¹⁰ It may be noted that the thesis uses this term in a broad sense. This is similar to the use of “symbol” in Goodman’s work on aesthetics. “Symbol”, Goodman (1976) says, is “a very general and colourless term. It covers letters, words, texts, pictures, diagrams, maps, models, and more but carries no implication of the oblique or the occult. The most literal portrait and the most prosaic passage are as many symbols, and as ‘highly symbolic’, as the most fanciful and figurative”. For some recent uses of the term “expression”, see Sias & Bar-On (2015).

¹¹ Even after having some close interactions with non-human species, it is probable that humans are not yet fully exposed to all forms of non-human interactions. However, based on all available shreds of evidence, it can be said that [most] non-human expressions are characterised by rigidity and fixity.

¹² However, studies show that within certain restricted domains, some non-human expressions are flexible. For example, recent studies on Arabian babblers show that the same non-distinct signals are used for “functional performance” and “communicative performance”. “Communicative additives” “that are not part of the core elements of a signal” are added to emphasise the signalling. (Ben Mocha, Mundry & Pika 2019).

¹³ Heintz & Scott-Phillips (2021)

¹⁴ Linguistic expressions in this case.

(Chomsky, 2017, p. 203)”. Human expressions, including linguistic and non-linguistic communicative expressions, are thus arguably unique, distinct, and unparalleled in the animal world. This thesis considers the case of aesthetic expressions in this discourse of intellectual interest and argues that an additional level of flexibility is added to human aesthetic expressions. The thesis attempts to account for the characteristic features of human aesthetic expressions¹⁵ by employing and developing the theoretical tools of classical Indian aesthetics. The ensuing new interdisciplinary¹⁶ field of study may be called *cognitive aesthetics*¹⁷.

Just as there can be multiple paths to arrive at a single destination, human beings can convey and entertain the very same idea through a variety of expressions. However, not everything is expressed directly, even when it is expressed through words or gestures. Some are meant to be expressed explicitly, while others are intended to be expressed implicitly. Different verbal functions such as denotation, metaphorical indication, suggestion, or a combination of these are used in literary and artistic expressions to meet this expressive need and requirement. Furthermore, these verbal functions help to add layers of meaning to artistic and literary expressions, and they complement each other to varying degrees in various aesthetic expressions. Additionally, there can be some overlapping and blending of these verbal functions in aesthetic expressions. However, aesthetic expressions differ from communicative expressions and carry some unique, distinguishable characteristics compared to other linguistic expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings. Based on these distinctions, expressions can be categorised into three types: *tightly anchored* non-human expressions (TNE), *openly anchored* linguistic expressions (OLE), and *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions (FAE). This chapter argues

¹⁵ The term “aesthetic expressions” hereafter considers only human aesthetic expression.

¹⁶ Goodman (1976) draws up a study of expressions thus. “Systematic inquiry into the varieties and functions of symbols has seldom been undertaken. Expanding investigation in structural linguistics in recent years needs to be supplemented by and integrated with intensive examination of nonverbal symbol systems, from pictorial representation on the one hand to musical notation on the other, if we are to achieve any comprehensive grasp of the modes and means of reference and of their varied and pervasive use in the operations of the understanding”.

¹⁷ For a coevolutionary proposal on human and non-human biotic aesthetics, see (Prum, 2013) Also see for a bioaesthetics, (Gesche Westphal)-Fitch, W. Tecumseh Fitch, Chapter 1 - Bioaesthetics: The evolution of aesthetic cognition in humans and other animals (Julia F. Christensen, Antoni Gomila,2018) For another recent proposal that seeks to expand aesthetics to include non-human machine aesthetics, see French F.2022)

that openly anchored linguistic expressions are in the form of ‘reporting’ and metaphorical expression is a form of ‘showing’. In contrast, freely-anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestion are a form of ‘hiding’. Freely-anchored aesthetic expressions prompt the connoisseur to perceive the object in a new light, revealing hidden meanings and associations.

These types of expressions have been found in numerous literary works written since ancient times. They have been prevalent in various forms, such as epics, plays, poems, and prose. Despite the inherent aesthetic beauty and cultural richness of folk songs, ritualistic songs, and oral songs of indigenous and ethnic communities, these artistic expressions are often overlooked and ignored in academic pursuits that focus on aesthetics. However, there are subtle suggestions lurking in such songs as well. This chapter analyses selected expressions from sacred invocatory songs (*Thottam pāttu*) sung during *Tīrayāṭṭam* performances to explore the possibility of having freely anchored aesthetic expressions among the oral songs of ethnic communities.

Freely anchored aesthetic expressions are open to move beyond denotation and what is directly represented through words or signs. They do not break away from the existing linguistic structure but rather explore the possibility of a creative transformation. The creative transformation of aesthetic expressions can happen at the level of sign, word, sentence, or even a literary text as a whole. These temporary associations are always flexible, making freely anchored aesthetic expressions different from tightly anchored non-human expressions and openly anchored linguistic expressions. However, in openly anchored linguistic expressions, if the metaphorical meaning is equated with the literal meaning by denying the presence of additional layers of meaning, then there is a risk that the suggested meaning may also be overlooked or dismissed. In doing so, such literary expressions miss the chance to explore the additional level of flexibility inherent to freely anchored aesthetic expressions. Similarly, if a divine character is equated solely with the individual who plays that role, it diminishes the aesthetic beauty of the performance, and the focus completely shifts to personal sentiments. By neglecting the suggested meanings inherent in the act, the enchantment of the aesthetic experience is compromised.

Appreciating and exploring these broader perspectives explored in the performance enhances the aesthetic beauty of the performance and allows for a more profound engagement with the performance.

Tightly anchored non-human expressions

Certain non-human species employ a variety of signals for cognitive and communicative purposes. Animals use vocal and gestural communicative expressions for purposes such as locating food sources, warning calls, and mating rituals. For example, vervet monkeys make warning calls to indicate the presence of different predators. Monkeys climb onto the trees when they hear an alarm call for a python, whereas they find a hiding spot near the ground if the alarm call signals an eagle. (Price, 2015; Seyfarth, 1980). The responses of other monkeys to the warning call vary appropriately. Bonnet macaques also give warning calls to indicate the presence of their natural predators, such as leopards. Upon receiving the alarm call from a troop member, the remaining members of the troop swiftly climb to trees and then diligently survey their surroundings in search of the predator. “A bonnet macaque may give alarm calls because the caller believes that there is a predator nearby, although it may have no comprehension of the belief system of its troop members or it wants its troop member to believe that a predator is lurking nearby (Sinha, 2003)”. In most of these cases, non-human species employ various communicative expressions by considering others will believe in a specific act or behave in a particular way. Here, communicative expressions are mainly used to transfer information that influences the behaviour of the receiver in the present or future. However, the connection between the communicative expression and expressed meaning needs to remain consistent when it comes to non-human receivers. Even a slight alteration in this connection may not be effective or perceivable for non-human recipients. Hence, non-human expressions are mostly tightly anchored with respect to signs that are rigid, regimented, and often repetitive in nature. A step forward from tightly anchored non-human expressions begins at the literal level of human communicative expressions, named as openly anchored linguistic expressions.

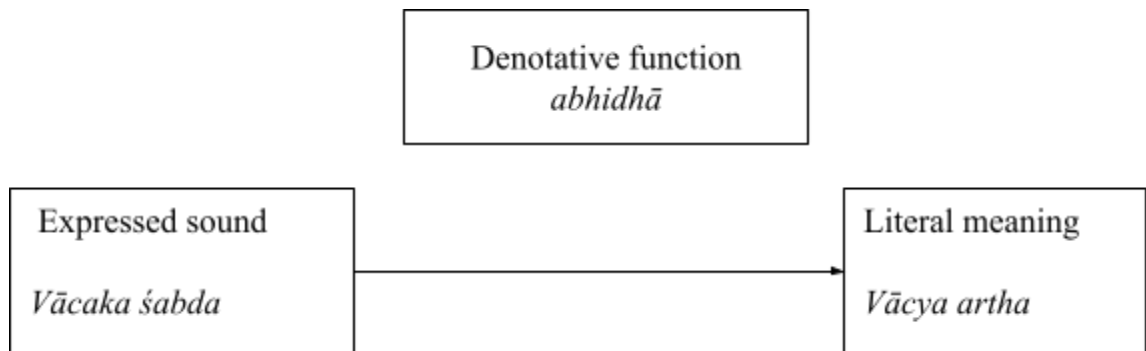
Openly anchored linguistic expressions

Human beings use communicative expressions to inform, persuade, and entertain themselves or others. On the literal level, one of the purposes of language use is to facilitate communication in human and non-human interactions. Hence, conveying factual information and expressing ideas clearly and accurately is given the highest priority at the literal level. However, human communicative and aesthetic expressions differ drastically from non-human communicative expressions. Humans use symbols as a means to convey meaning to other human beings. These symbols can be words, images, gestures, or any other form of representation. Besides, human communicative and aesthetic expressions are deeply intertwined with cultural and historical contexts.

The literal meaning, also known as the primary meaning of a word, may not be dissimilar to many users of that language, which helps to communicate effectively. Besides, some rules and conventions govern a language that facilitates effective communication. While following such language rules, certain combinations of letters or words are found acceptable, while others are unacceptable. If there are rules to regulate the flow of information, interpersonal and interactive communication will be more accessible. Even so, language rules can be modified with mutual cooperation and understanding. Unfortunately, individual language users cannot quickly bring about many changes in the relation between literal words and their literal meanings. However, certain changes can be found in these relations across ages. Though the meanings of words change over time, it needs to be shared among the language users to gain acceptance within the linguistic domain. For example, the use of the singular “they” was accepted in the 14th century, but the use of the singular “they” was considered a grammatical error by the mid-18th century (Gerner, 2000; Wales, 1996). In that period, saying “they likes apple” was inappropriate because the subject “they” was considered plural. Thus, the above-quoted sentence breaks the subject-verb agreement. However, by the beginning of the 21st century, with the move towards gender-neutral language, most style guides accepted the personal pronoun singular “they” to address people in a generic way by curtailing gendered assumptions and addressing those who do not reveal their identity as male or female.

Such inclusions and some exclusions can be found in the domain of human languages. Nevertheless, all these cases are too few and are not regular occurrences. Once such newly established language rules are shared among the language users, they remain consistent. Once such rules are popularised among language users, they become standardised. After they have been established within the linguistic domain, it is also challenging to transgress them.

Due to different methods of language comprehension, the literal meaning of a word gets shared among the users of that language. The eight commonly used methods for grasping literal meanings are; the usage of words by elders, direct statement of a trustworthy authority, grammar, analogy, lexicon, the rest of the passage in the context, explanation, and the syntactic connection with words already known (Raja, 1969)¹⁸. In Indian linguistic tradition, the literal aspect of a word that is directly expressed is known as the “*vācaka śabda*” (expressed sound) of a word. *Vācaka śabda* gives the *vācyartha* (literal meaning) of a word through a function called *abhidhā* (customarily translated as a denotative function) and forms the first variety of meaning.



In certain Indian linguistic traditions, the relation between expressed sound (*vācaka śabda*) and literal meaning (*vācyartha*) is considered to be arbitrary¹⁹. There can be different expressed sounds in different languages to denote the same object. The literal meaning of words remains relatively unchanged throughout one’s life, making it easier to

¹⁸ In *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (1901), Gangesa Upadhyaya describes these eight well-known approaches as well

¹⁹ In western linguistic tradition this idea was put forward by De Saussure. He agrees that there is no natural or necessary connection between the sound and meaning of a word (De Saussure, 1966).

communicate effectively. Within the literal level, the users of that language only have to choose a specific word that is apt for signification, which is already mapped to its meaning at the literal level. However, within the literal level, there seems to be some sort of openly anchored relation between the expressed sound and its literal meaning. The term “*openly anchored*” is intentionally used here to suggest certain features shared by expressed sound and literal meaning.

The relation between words and meaning is not a natural one. Literal words are slightly open to attaching new meanings, but they are not fully flexible. The link between expressed sound and literal meaning is not rigid; it is not stimulus-dependent. However, a slightly permeable yet restricted kind of association “occasioned by” a stimulus makes it challenging to change this relationship. Conventionally, the relationship between literal words and literal meanings is mainly a permanent structure within the linguistic domain. Hence, it is hard-hitting to alter the relationship between the word and its meaning at the literal level due to pre-determined linguistic conventions. However, there is no hard-and-fast rule within the linguistic domain that the denotative meaning should always remain constant and fixed to one word. For example, the literal meaning of “book” is a document or charter²⁰. Before the invention of electronic gadgets, the term “book” included “a set of pages that are fastened together inside a cover”²¹. Later, with the use of electronic gadgets, the literal meaning of “book” also began to include physical and electronic books. Hence, the literal meaning of “book” also gets modified as “a written work published in printed or electronic form”²². Hence, even the literal meaning of words gets updated across ages. Nevertheless, the word “book” continued to have its literal meaning of “document”. On a slightly similar note, the literal meaning of the word “line” is “a long, thin mark on a surface.” Whereas, in Old English, a line meant rope, probably derived from the Latin word *linum/ linea fibra*, meaning flax (fibre)²³. Apart from this,

²⁰ Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. (n.d.). Dictionary. Retrieved 8,2022, from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/dictionary>

²¹ Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved 6,2022, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/book>

²² Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Book. In Cambridge Dictionary.8, 2022, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/book>

²³Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. (n.d.). Line. 8, 2022, from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/line_1?q=line

the coexistence of multiple related meanings for a single word is possible in polysemous words²⁴. For example, the noun “line” has a different meaning in each of the following expressions, although they are all “recognisably related: a line of people, a washing line, lines on a page, lines on a face, a line of business, a fine line between hope and despair”, learn one’s line and so on” (Carston, 2020, p.108). Nevertheless, once it is used in a phrase, the most appropriate meaning for the word that matches the situation is chosen.

At the literal level, it is only a process of recalling the appropriate word and its usage. There is not much significant creative vision associated with this process. It is only a process of selecting appropriate words and meanings that fit the context. However, human languages are not static or stagnant across ages. Constant interactions with the same structure show that change is inevitable. Linguistic expressions also evolve with continuous use. In that process, new relationships are formed. Hence, openly anchored linguistic expressions are categorised as a secure yet slightly permeable relationship. Though this is the case, not everything is explicitly stated in human communicative and aesthetic expressions. Conventional language rules are intentionally violated in some human communication to satisfy certain needs or to fulfil aesthetic purposes. To serve such purposes, the meaning of a linguistic expression can be literal or metaphorical. However, to meet specific needs based on particular situations, certain communication rules are intentionally violated in non-human interactions as well.

Tactical deception in non-human communication

Human and non-human species typically use communication strategies to convey a particular “belief” or idea that they hold, or they want the receiver to react in a particular manner to a message. When animals give an alarm call, their typical intention as a messenger is to alert or warn the receiver. Certain calls and gestures have fixed meanings that convey a particular message that is appropriate to the context and situation. For example, an alarm call indicating a predator on the ground carries the message to escape to a higher surface. However, in some cases, even the alarm calls can be deliberately

²⁴ The occurrence of a word having multiple meanings is known as polysemy

misleading. Studies have shown that certain non-human species exhibit the ability to develop strategies of “tactical deception” to employ in “a variety of social situations, including agonistic interactions, and competition for food, allogrooming companions and sexual partners” (Sinha, 2003. p.1029). Certain non-human species are capable of misleading others by using the alarm call even when there is no predator nearby. For example, “subordinate adult bonnet macaque males often give out loud predator alarm calls when they are being chased by more dominant males, even if there are no predators in the vicinity” (Sinha, 2003. p.1029). The alarm call can be identified as misleading from the behaviour of the subordinate adult bonnet macaque. “A victim of aggression emitted a false predator alarm call on being chased but continued to give this call even as he descended from the tree and continued to walk on the ground”. (Sinha, 2003. P. 1029). If there were a natural predator in the vicinity, the messenger, being a potential prey, would not have behaved the same way. Although some familiar language usages developed within a group of species for communicative purposes may be temporarily disrupted, their use is mainly limited to the speaker who has adopted the deceptive act in non-human interactions. Interestingly, in the non-human interaction quoted above, “the aggressor did not appear to have noticed the internal inconsistency of the victim’s deceptive act” (Sinha, 2003. p.1029). In significant contrast to this, though some conventional language rules are intentionally violated in human communicative and aesthetic expressions, they will not disrupt the flow of communication. Instead, it can convey some additional meanings²⁵. Hence, openly anchored linguistic expressions also include a different category of linguistic expressions called *bounded* metaphorical expressions²⁶.

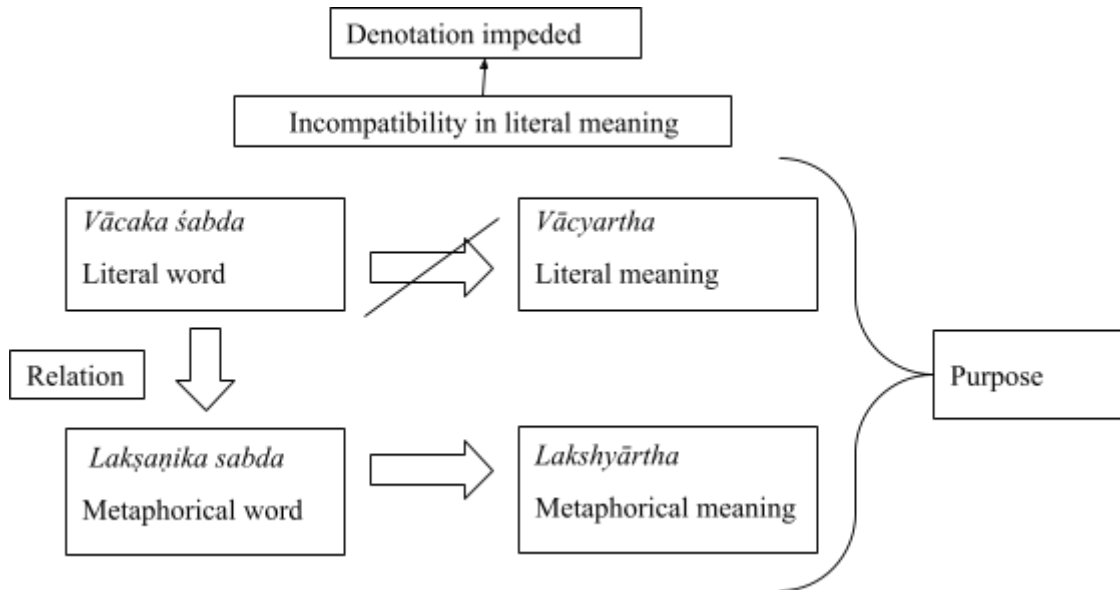
Bounded metaphorical expressions

Verbal and visual metaphors are frequently used in communicative and aesthetic expressions to symbolise feelings, thoughts, or concepts. In metaphorical expressions, the

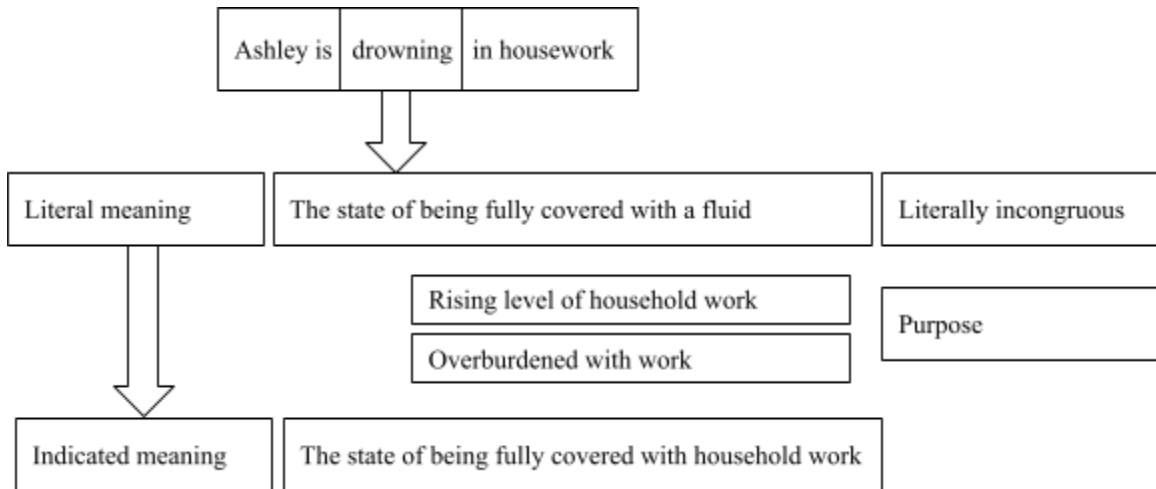
²⁵ *evamanayā lakṣaṇayā pañcavidhayā viśvameva vyāptam* (The whole world is pervaded by this indicative function Ānandavardhana, 1990)

²⁶ Heintz & Scott-Phillips (2021) distinguish human expressions from non-human animal expressions by sketching the “unleashed” character of the former. Following this, the thesis distinguishes aesthetic expressions with *dhvani* by sketching the unique characteristics of suggestive expressions.

literal meaning is either completely discarded or partially set aside due to its incompatibility. However, the literary expression does not become completely useless. When the literal meaning is blocked by incompatibility, that is, when there is a literal incongruence, another meaning is metaphorically indicated for a specific purpose. The group of conditions causing this shift of meaning, as demonstrated by Abhinavagupta, are incompatibility in literal meaning, relation, and purpose (Ānandavardhana, 1990). Consequently, in metaphorical expressions, there is a superimposition of another related meaning, which is associated with the conventional understanding of the literal meaning of the word. The meaning that thus emerges, where the denotation is impeded, and a different but related meaning arises and attains coherence, is called *lakshyārtha* (metaphorical meaning), and the verbal function that conveys it is called *lakshanāvritti* (metaphorical function). The specified mission of metaphorical meaning is over, with the expressed meaning of the sentence modified to be literally congruent. It functions only to the extent necessary to produce a sensible and congruent meaning for the linguistic expression. Therefore, the metaphorical function is often likened to a contract worker who takes on a contract to execute a particular task and disappears once the work is complete (Sreekantaiya, 2001). However, the metaphorical function comes into play only when the literal meaning is incongruous or incompatible.



Lakṣaṇa is the metaphorical meaning that primarily functions through indirect expressions. In *lakṣaṇa*, the literal meaning is incompatible, and another meaning, which is connected to the literal meaning through a specific purpose, is metaphorically indicated. For instance, in the expression “Ashley is drowning in housework”, the literal meaning of “drown” is to be submerged in water or other fluids²⁷. The literal meaning of the expression is partially incongruous, as drowning is an activity associated with fluids. Due to this incompatibility in literal meaning, capturing the literal meaning of the linguistic expression becomes difficult. However, there are certain similarities between the two acts. Despite the mismatch between the denotation of the literal word and the context, a relation between the literal and metaphorical meaning can be identified. In this case, the word “drowning” metaphorically indicates the rising level of household work, indicating that the person is figuratively “drowning” in it. Ashley must be burdened with an overwhelming amount of household work, much like someone who is burdened with the weight of their body while drowning. The person is engulfed in a chaotic whirlpool of household work and unable to catch a breath. Similarly, when someone is drowning, they struggle to breathe. The terrible experience of being overburdened by housework is likened to a horrifying event such as drowning in water.



²⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (n.d.). Drown. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved 6,2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/drown>

In the metaphorical expression quoted above, the literal meaning (*vācyārtha*) is the state of being fully submerged in water, while the metaphorical meaning (*lakshyārtha*) is the state of being fully covered with household work. As we understand the metaphorical meaning of “drowned” to be fully covered with work, the word “drowned” gives away its literal meaning in this literary expression. In metaphorical expressions, the relationship between the expressed sound and literal meaning is temporarily disrupted. The entire process of metaphorical indication relies on the superimposition of some associated meaning onto the literal meaning. In metaphorical expressions, there is a surrendering of literal meaning. Even so, the metaphorical meaning exists with the assistance of the literal meaning.

The presence or use of the metaphorical meaning will not be noticed in the absence of a literal meaning. Hence, the metaphorical meaning remains connected to the literal meaning. Once the metaphorical meaning is clear, the literal meaning becomes congruent. When a relation connecting the literal and metaphorical meaning is identified, metaphorical expressions can offer profound and meaningful thoughts and ideas that are not explicitly expressed²⁸. On the other hand, the meaning is literally expressed in literal expressions. It is direct and straightforward. Hence, openly anchored linguistic expressions, as in literal expressions are in the form of ‘reporting’. Such expressions are used to convey information or describe something in a straightforward and factual manner, as in legal documents and scientific writings. In contrast, metaphorical expressions reveal many things that have been overlooked while focusing on the literal meaning. For example, by comparing a person overburdened with household work to a person drowning in water, similarities between these two situations are revealed. The obstacles and hurdles faced by both individuals in these incidents may seem different. From a practical standpoint, both these incidents might need different strategies to escape from these two situations. A drowning person may need someone to pull him to the

²⁸“*mukhyārthabādhe tadvyoge rūḍhito 'tha prayojanāt / anyo 'rtho lakṣyate yatsā lakṣaṇāropitā kriyā // MKpr-K_9 //*” (Mammaṭa, 1967)

“Semantic capacity of words that occurs when the primary meaning is blocked and which is connected to the primary meaning either by convention or special purpose” (Catlin, 2006).

shore, while a person struggling with household work may need someone to share the workload. The personal requirements in both these situations may be entirely different. However, the comparison unveils a similarity in the nature of the experiences. Therefore, metaphorical expressions serve as a means of ‘showing’. Instead of explicitly stating something, metaphorical expressions bring together two unrelated concepts and help us to see them in a different light. It pushes the literal word beyond its literal meaning and metaphorically indicates an associated meaning. Hence, metaphorical expressions differ from tightly-anchored non-human expressions. Unlike the deceptive signs used in non-human communication, human beings are capable of identifying the purpose behind the “deceptive” signs. Typically, language users can readily understand metaphorical expressions. Human beings are so accustomed to using metaphorical meanings in literary and communicative expressions. The incompatibility of the literal meaning often goes unnoticed unless consciously analysed. The intended purpose is immediately realised. By substituting a different meaning associated with the literal meaning, the incompatibility in literal meaning is also resolved. Hence, using metaphorical expressions in communicative and aesthetic expressions is not deceptive, as the language user intends to convey the metaphorical meaning through an unintended literal meaning.

While some literary expressions rely on direct metaphors, where the connection between literal and metaphorical meanings is readily available, others embrace ambiguity. The use of metaphorical functions offers enormous benefits that primarily attract language users. Even so, in the realm of literary expression, not all meanings arising from a linguistic expression are exhausted. Human communicative and aesthetic expressions are often highly symbolic and can convey meaning beyond the literal and metaphorical meanings. They usually facilitate the communication of abstract ideas, concepts, and emotional states. The denotative function of a word alone is not sufficient enough to capture the additional meaning that emerges from aesthetic expressions with suggestions. A different function of the word is required to capture the subsequent layers of meanings that follow as a benefit of the suggestive potential of words and meanings. For instance, in the expression, “Ashley is drowning in housework”, the literal meaning of the word “drowning” is completely set aside. Despite that, the expression “Ashley is drowning in

housework” describes the misery experienced by Ashley. It implies deep sorrow, regret, and a sense of being trapped with no apparent escape. It conveys a feeling of utter despair, hopelessness, and anguish through the suggestive potential of the meaning. The advantage emerging from “Ashley is drowning in housework” is not readily apparent with the denotative or metaphorical function alone.

Freely-anchored aesthetic expressions

Traditionally, language is conceived as sound with meaning (Aristotle, 1963; Chomsky, 2011). The denotative aspect of words and expressions is commonly used in our daily utterances and is essential for mutual communication. Nevertheless, meaning does not always have to be explicitly expressed. Especially in literary works and in non-literal conversations²⁹, meaning can be intended or implied without being explicitly stated. In Indian aesthetics, this argument was first theorised around the ninth century CE by Ānandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka*. According to Ānandavardhana, meaning, which is essential to a literary work and admired by connoisseurs, has two varieties: the literal (*vācya*) and the implied (*pratīyamāna*)³⁰ (Ānandavardhana, 1990). While the literal meaning of a literary work can provide essential details for language comprehension, it often falls short of portraying the rich and multifaceted interplay of human emotions that a work of art offers. For example, emotions cannot be conveyed literally, or rather, emotions expressed literally may not progress to a state called aesthetic bliss (*rasa*). Hence, in literary expressions, the suggestive function is preferred over and above the denotative function to evoke an emotional response. The suggestive aspect of a word, *vyamjaka śabda* (suggestive sound), is implied through a function called *vyañjana* (suggestion), which gives rise to the *vyañgyārtham* (suggested meaning). The suggested

²⁹ Grice (1989), in the article “Logic and Conversation”, presents cases of ordinary talk exchanges with implied meaning and considers this within the ambit of the cooperative principle and conversational implicature. In contrast, Ānandavardhana presents cases of implied meaning in literary expressions and develops an aesthetic theory based on them, with wider applications. Though both these theorists talk about implied meaning, the formulation, implication, and scope of the theories are entirely different. Currie & Frascaroli (2021) have given a different account on the possibility of paraphrasing in poetry. However, the present author does not endorse it considering the arguments of and notions of meaning in this paper.

³⁰ “*kāvyaśya hi lalitocita-sanniveśa-cāruṇaḥ śarīrasyevātmā sāra-rūpatayā sthītaḥ sahrdaya-ślāghyo yo 'rthas tasya vācyaḥ pratīyamānaś ceti dvau bhedaḥ*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 6). (Source, Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages, hereafter addressed as “GRETIL”).

meaning with aesthetic appeal is usually found in literary expressions, and it differs from the literal meaning of an expression. Mere knowledge of grammar and lexicons may not be sufficient to grasp the suggested meaning of a literary expression. If that were the case, then the aesthetic essence of a literary work could be understood from the literal meaning alone, which would directly offer aesthetic bliss³¹. Capturing the whole aesthetic experience often involves immersing oneself deeply in a work of art, embracing an array of suggested meanings that serve as anchors for a transformative experience.

Even though suggested meanings are given higher esteem in literary creations, the literal meaning is in no way inferior to the suggested meaning. While the flexibility is limited at the literal level, literal meaning cannot be ignored entirely. Denotative words and meanings are selected first, and it is this denotative meaning that enables readers to delve further, even reaching the level of suggestion. The literal meaning of a literary expression provides an anchoring point that guides the direction of interpretation. It serves as a base upon which readers can build and explore, expanding their navigation trajectory. Capturing the implied meaning alongside the literal and metaphorical meaning of an expression is essential in enriching one's aesthetic experience. However, the implied meaning cannot be reduced to the literal or metaphorical meaning in a literary expression. Though the texts and expressions of literary merits creatively employ literal and implied meanings, only those expressions where the literal meaning is subordinated and implied meaning with aesthetic appeal, termed as suggested meaning (*vyāṅgyārtham*), get prominence, are termed as *dhvani* or *aesthetic suggestion*³² (Ānandavardhana, 1974). The suggested meaning elevates those literary expressions to a higher plane, revealing the magnificence and beauty hidden within them. It is through the use of the suggestive function that openly anchored linguistic expressions are transformed into freely anchored aesthetic expressions.

Denotation, indication and suggestion are equally important in a literary work, and they

³¹ *śabdārtha-śāsana-jñāna-mātreṇaiva na vedyate / vedyate sa tu kāvyārtha-tattvajñair eva kevalam // DhvK_1.7 //* (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 14).

³² “*yatrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanīkrta-svārthau / vyāṅktaḥ kāvya-viśeṣaḥ sa dhvanir iti sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 18) (Source, GRETEL).

have specific roles to play in the process of aesthetic appreciation. Three literary expressions are analysed below to demonstrate how a mundane incident can be transformed into a freely anchored aesthetic expression by utilising the suggestive potential of meanings. In all three expressions, a hunter and his wife are the main characters. While these literary expressions share similar contexts, the first expression is limited to its literal meaning and serves as an example of an openly anchored linguistic expression. On the other hand, the other expressions explore the suggestive potential of literary expression and serve as examples of freely anchored aesthetic expressions. These examples highlight the efficient utilisation of the suggestive potential of meanings in creating literary expressions capable of evoking various emotions and sentiments.

The Descent to Rigidity: Literary Expression without Suggestion

A literary expression without suggestion is almost similar to any openly anchored linguistic expression. In such expressions, facts, figures of speech, and emotions are directly expressed. When literary expressions lack aesthetic suggestion and solely rely on literal meaning, their aesthetic potential becomes restricted. Although embellished with some artistic adornments, these literary expressions seem less appealing due to their limited flexibility for interpretation. The flexibility of interpretation refers to the capacity of freely anchored aesthetic expressions to be open to discovering meanings that are not explicitly expressed, allowing readers to engage with the literary text in various ways. When a literary expression lacks interpretative flexibility, it descends to the level of an openly anchored linguistic expression, becoming more rigid and less engaging for readers. Openly anchored linguistic expressions are confined and constrained within their literal boundaries. An example of a literary expression without any apparent suggestion is provided below.

*kariṇī-behabbaaro maha putto ekka-kāṇḍa-vinibāī /
haa soṇhāeṃ taha kaho jaha kaṇḍa-karaṇḍaam baha //*³³

³³“*kariṇī-vaidhavya-karo mama putra eka-kāṇḍa-vinipāī / hata-snuṣayā tathā kṛto yathā kāṇḍa-karaṇḍakaṃ vahati //* (Anandavardhana, 1974, 272)”.

(Anandavardhana, 1974, p. 272)

My son, who once with a single shaft
could widow the elephant herd,
by cursed daughter-in-law is brought
to bearing a basket of arrows.

(Anandavardhana, 1990, p. 687)

The lady is talking about her son, who was once capable of bringing widowhood to an entire host of elephants. Her son has killed many tuskers by shooting just one arrow, bestowing widowhood upon female elephants. From the expression, it seems like the lady is proud that her son was an active hunter when he was young and agile. It appears that the lady disapproves of the actions of her daughter-in-law, who constantly spends time with her son, to whom she is married. Instead of letting him display his virility in the field, she roams around with him, making him carry many arrows in a single basket. He used to take only a single arrow, and with that single arrow, he used to kill many tuskers. After marriage, he now holds a basket full of arrows. The expression “basket full of arrows” suggests the inactivity of a passive hunter. According to the lady, her son has become useless after his marriage. Despite this, in this literary expression, the word “cursed” directly expresses the lady’s dissatisfaction and aversion towards her daughter-in-law. As the lady places direct blame on her daughter-in-law, the hatred towards her daughter-in-law is clearly expressed in the literary expression.

The literary expression quoted above provides a glimpse into an ordinary, mundane incident presented in a straightforward, non-embellished language. In this literary expression, the hostile attitude of a lady towards her daughter-in-law is literally expressed. There is no additional charm or aesthetic appeal in conveying those emotions literally through a literary expression. Although similar incidents are often used by poets in their literary works, such resembling episodes can still be presented from a fresh perspective by utilising the suggestive potential of words and meanings. For that matter,

it is not necessary for an author to rely on metaphors and figurative language to create an aesthetic expression. Even the natural mode of presenting the world as it is can be exquisite and versatile with a touch of suggestion.

Going Beyond Words: Suggestive Potential in Literary Expressions

The literary expression given below shares a similar context to that of the previous literary expression, “*kariṇī-behabbaaro maha putto*”, which expresses the mother-in-law’s hostile attitude towards her daughter-in-law.

*vāṇīaa hatthi-dantā kutto amhāṇaṃ bāgha-kittī a /
jāva luliālaa-muhī gharammi parisakkae suṇhā //*³⁴

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, 110)

Ah merchant, how should we have ivory
or tiger skins for sale,
when daughter-in-law is strolling about the house
with the curls dancing on her forehead?

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, 385)

In this literary expression, a merchant visits a hunter’s house to inquire about the availability of ivory or tiger skin for sale. The lady’s response to the merchant’s query is in the form of a rhetorical question. She questions how they could have ivory or tiger skin for sale when her daughter-in-law is leisurely wandering around the house with curls dancing on her forehead. From this question, it becomes evident that the daughter-in-law is freely roaming around within the home, her hair left untied, with locks of hair adorning her forehead. The suggested meaning of the literary expression revolves around the phrase “curls dancing on her forehead”³⁵. By addressing the merchant’s question in this manner, the beauty of the daughter-in-law is indirectly expressed. The curls dancing on

³⁴ “*vāṇījaka hasti-dantāḥ kuto 'smākaṃ vyāghra-kṛttayaś ca / yāval luliālaka-mukhī grhe pariṣvakkate
snuṣā //* (Anandavardhana, 1974, 110).”

³⁵ *lulitha alaka muki*

her forehead imply that the daughter-in-law is a charming young woman. The suggested meaning is that when such an attractive and charming woman is hanging around in the house, the lady's son may not be interested in going out for hunting. He might be constantly drawn to his young and beautiful wife. Through her question, the lady implies that her son is too captivated by his wife's beauty to go out and hunt for ivory or tiger skin. This suggests that he is mesmerised by the beauty of his wife and remains confined within the house. The use of expressions like "curls dancing on her forehead" emphasises her beauty. From the perspective of the mother-in-law, even the daughter-in-law is seducing her son through her beauty, keeping him under her spell. It can be an intentional act by the daughter-in-law to leave her curls open to attract her husband. In addition to indirectly responding to the merchant's question, the lady's reply to the merchant is capable of suggesting various emotions. To convey these complex emotions, the author relies on the suggestive potential of meanings. This approach of utilising the suggestive potential of meanings is even more poetic than directly expressing emotions by literally expressing them. It is up to the reader to contextualise the situation and interpret the question raised by the mother-in-law to the merchant. Instead of providing a direct answer stating that they do not have any ivory or tiger skin, she asks another question. With this, the lady employs the same expression to convey something that is not literally expressed. A simple "yes" or "no" to the question of the merchant would not be poetic enough to catch the attention and appreciation of readers. It would have been a mere statement of factual information if she had just replied with a straightforward answer, turning it into an openly anchored linguistic expression. Unlike the previous literary expression mentioned earlier³⁶, not everything is literally expressed in this case. There are no words such as "cursed", "cunning", or "crooked" to directly express the inner feelings of the mother-in-law towards her daughter-in-law. Instead, what we find here is a mother-in-law who simply describes her daughter-in-law's appearance while suggesting something that is not literally expressed.

Here, the phrase "curls dancing on her forehead" contributes to enhancing the aesthetic beauty of the literary expression. This literary expression serves as an example to

³⁶ *kariṇī-behabbaaro maha putto...*

illustrate how even a single word in the expression can provide additional suggestions. The phrase “curls dancing on her forehead” is used as a suggestor to project the beauty of the daughter-in-law, thereby suggesting the attraction of the lady’s son towards her daughter-in-law. As demonstrated in this literary expression, the suggestion can continue to unfold, adding more layers to the overall meaning of the literary expression. It is suggested that the daughter-in-law may not have enough time to groom herself or comb her hair as she is preoccupied with her husband, or it could even be a deliberate act on her part to attract her husband’s attention. In addition to revealing the character of the mother-in-law, this literary expression also implies the nature of her son and her daughter-in-law without literally expressing them. Thus, the literary expression quoted above is an example of a freely anchored aesthetic expression. In this literary expression, it is the individual word that acts as a suggestor, highlighting the suggestive potential of meanings in a literary expression. However, the suggestive potential is not limited solely to individual words. At times, the entire literary expression is required to convey the suggestion. There are literary expressions where the entire expression itself is capable of suggesting something that goes beyond the literal meaning. An example of this type of literary expression, where the entire expression suggests something different from its literal interpretation, is given in the next section.

The Subtle Touch: Adding Depth through Suggestion in Literary Expressions

In freely anchored aesthetic expression, the suggestion can stem from individual words, sentences, or even the composition as a whole. The following literary expression serves as an example of a freely anchored aesthetic expression resulting from the suggestive potential of the literary expression as a whole.

*sihi-piccha-kaṇṇa-ūrā bahuā bāhassa gabbirī bhama /
muttā-phala-ra{i}a-pasāhaṇāṇaṃ majjhe sabattīṇaṃ //*³⁷

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 88)

³⁷ “*śikhi-piccha-karṇa-pūrā jāyā vyādhasya garviṇī bhramati /
muktā-phala-racita-prasāadhanāṇaṃ madhye sapatnīṇaṃ //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, 88).

The hunter's wife strolls proudly with peacock feathers behind her ear.
She strolls amid fellow wives who are decked with pearls.

(Anandavardhana, 1990, p. 322)

In the literary expression quoted above, the context plays a crucial role in connecting to the suggested meaning. There is a precise sequence of events from perceiving the literal meaning to understanding the suggested meaning. The literary expression depicts a hunter's wife who is walking proudly with some peacock feathers behind her ears. The hunter has multiple wives, and he recently married another woman. Unlike the other co-wives, who wore pearl ornaments, the newly married woman adorns herself with some peacock feathers. Amidst the co-wives, she is the one walking around in a very prideful manner. By explicitly highlighting the newly married girl and setting her apart from the others, the expression directs additional attention towards her. It implies that the hunter might have collected those pearls in the past and gifted them to his wives. This implies that when he was married to other women, he continued to go hunting and had a reputation as a courageous young man. In doing so, the hunter must have left his wives alone during those times. Despite the fact that the other wives decorated themselves with those pearl ornaments the other day, the newly married girl chooses to wear peacock feathers. Knowing that the other co-wives did not receive as much attention from their husband as she is receiving now, the newly married girl feels an immense sense of pride. It suggests that the hunter did not profoundly love his previous wives enough to spend some time with them. He was away, occupied with hunting. However, when this woman came into his life, he prioritised spending time with her in their garden and had no time for hunting. It is possible that some feathers might have fallen as the peacock danced in joy, and her beloved husband picked up some feathers from the ground and placed them behind her ears as a token of love. Hence, the literary expression suggests that he holds a special affection for this woman, and his over-pouring affection towards her is reflected in this simple act itself. The focus of the literary expression is on the love that the heroine receives from her husband. Here, the literary expression surpasses the literal meaning.

Instead of a single word serving as a suggestor, the expression as a whole suggests additional meanings. The author skillfully utilises a natural incident from the human world to convey profound emotions. While such acts may not be exceptional or uncommon in real life, their beauty is recognised and appreciated when strategically employed in a literary expression. The inherent beauty of these mundane acts is recognised and appreciated when ordinary actions are strategically positioned to suggest some thoughts, feelings, or emotions.

The three literary expressions provided above share similar concerns and context. Except for the last expression, the other two are from the perspective of a mother-in-law who is worried about her son's attachment to his wife. In the third expression, instead of mother-in-law, co-wives take that position. However, all three expressions revolve around a common theme of the husband's love for his wife and the uneasiness and discomfort experienced by others surrounding them. The first two expressions convey a shared concern from the perspective of a mother-in-law. In one instance, the lady blames her daughter-in-law for keeping his son empty-handed with all the arrows unused, while in the other instance, the lady blames her daughter-in-law for preventing her son from hunting to gather ivory or tiger skin. In all these expressions, the hunter's decision not to venture too far for hunting suggests their commitment and affection towards his wife, prioritising their relationship over external pursuits.

The literal meaning of all these literary expressions is clear and consistent with the context. However, additional meanings are suggested in the last two expressions due to the suggestive potential of meaning. Moreover, there is a sequential progression of events that connects to the situation. It is not an instantaneous reaction. These additional meanings go beyond the denotative level. The relationship between literal words and their literal meanings is constrained and restricted at the denotative level. For instance, in the first expression, the word "cursed" directly conveys a strong negative sentiment, implying that the lady harbours grudges or deep resentment towards her daughter-in-law. On the other hand, this is not explicitly stated in the last two expressions. Words transcend their literal meanings at the suggestive level, adding flexibility to freely

anchored aesthetic expressions. Nonetheless, the apprehension of both the literal and suggested meanings one after the other is clearly perceptible as in the last two literary expressions, whereas in some expressions, it may be instantaneous. The transition from the literal meaning to the suggested meaning might not be immediately noticeable. The suggested meaning may be subtly woven into the text, requiring closer attention and careful analysis to uncover the hidden treasure. This hidden meaning enhances the depth and complexity of a literary work, inviting readers to engage in the process of interpretation. Regardless of the scenario, freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions are not restricted to the literal meaning of the expression. In addition to variation in context, the same literary expression can have multiple meanings. Even within the same context, if the literary expression is directed towards a different person, the suggested meaning can deviate and depart from the literal meaning.

The Art of Unveiling: Unravelling the Layers of Suggested Meanings

In freely anchored aesthetic expressions, once the word is released from its literal meaning, it can wander into a realm of endless possibilities. The suggested meaning, when directed towards an individual or group, can differ from the meaning directed using the literal meaning. In such expressions, the literal meaning can be completely different from the implied meaning of the literary expression. The literal meaning can be directed towards a specific individual when the implied meaning is targeted to another individual or group of people.

*kassa ba ṇa hoi roso daṭṭhūṇa piyāe sa-bbaṇaṃ aharaṃ /
sa-bhamara-pa{u}ma-gghāiṇi vāria-vāme sahasu ehṇiṃ //*³⁸

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 10)

Who wouldn't be angry to see his dear wife with her lower lip bitten?

³⁸ “*kasya vā na bhavati roṣo dṛṣṭvā priyāyāḥ sa-vraṇaṃ adharam / sa-bhramara-padmāghrāṇa-śīle vārita-vāme sahasvedānīm //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, 10).

You scorned my warning to smell the bee-holding lotus. Now you must suffer.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 103)

The literary expression is based on a conversation between a lady and her friend. Similar to the literary expressions quoted in previous sections, understanding the context in which the literary expression is uttered is crucial to grasp the suggested meaning. A friend is scolding a lady who has the habit of constantly smelling the lotus flower without checking the presence of bees. However, the context reveals that the lady's lips bear the marks of passion bestowed upon them by her lover. Despite the friend's repeated warnings to avoid meeting her lover in her husband's absence, the lady keeps committing the same mistake. Once again, the lady has gone to meet her lover while her husband is away. The friend is attempting to warn her for not listening to her advice. The literal meaning directed to the lady is that she disregards her friend's words of caution regarding meeting her lover, and now the lady will have to suffer if they are caught. Her friend knew the lady was with her lover, and they might have shared a kiss, resulting in sore lips. The friend is trying to protect the lady from being caught by her husband for infidelity. Though the friend tells this as a warning not to smell the lotus with bees, the suggested meaning to her friend is to refrain from meeting her lover and to avoid having wounded lips hereafter. The friend aims to shield her friend from getting caught, cautioning her without arousing her husband's suspicion. However, the friend deliberately utters these words, knowing that the husband is listening to their conversation, and pretends to be unaware of his presence. The friend behaves as if she has not seen the lady's husband, but she is fully aware that her friend's husband can hear their conversation. The friend has protected the lady by attributing her wounds to a bee sting. Though the expressed meaning seems to be directed towards the lady, the suggested meaning directed towards the husband is a request to forgive his wife. For him, the literal meaning appears as if the friend is warning his wife for her careless behaviour. Through the suggested meaning, the friend informs the husband that the lady has not made any mistakes and carefully prevents any chance of suspicion. The husband may take it literally and believe it as a wound caused by a bee sting, with the friend scolding

his wife for not being cautious while trying to smell the fragrance of a lotus flower. In this way, the friend suggests to her friend's husband to tolerate his wife's behaviour and indirectly asks him to forgive her for hurting her lips. The suggested meaning addressed towards the lady differs from the suggested meaning directed towards her husband. Apart from them, the people who overheard this conversation without knowing the wife's misconduct might take the literal meaning and consider it a general warning. The words of her friend are intended to hide the misconduct of the lady, even if the husband scolds her, and to present the lady as an innocent wife before others. There is also a suggestion to the secret lover, who might be standing beside them, that they are being saved only for that day from getting exposed to the news of their adulterous relationship. However, if they continue their relationship, they will have to face severe consequences. In the end, as the reader connects all the suggested meanings directed towards different characters, the speaker's cleverness becomes gradually evident to the readers.

Although the suggested meaning may differ by addressing a different person, it is up to the reader to choose a position from which to interpret this literary expression. Once the expression is released from its literal meaning, it can encompass multiple suggested meanings directed at different individuals. In this case, all the suggested meaning aligns well with the context, and the literal meaning remains consistent. There is no hindrance in understanding the expressed meaning, but readers can move beyond the expressed meaning to find the suggested meanings. Through this example, Ānandavardhana illustrates that the suggested meaning can vary by addressing a different person from the one addressed in the literal meaning. In this literary expression, it is the context that aids the suggestive function. Suggested meaning is apprehended only in the presence of those contexts.³⁹

³⁹ “*yatra tu prakaraṇādi-pratipattiyā nirdhārita-viśeṣo vācya 'rthaḥ punaḥ pratīyamānāṅga-tvenaivābhāsate so 'syaivānuraṇana-rūpa-vyaṅgyasya dhvaner mārgaḥ / (Ānandavardhana, 1974) ”* “where the particular meaning of a direct expression has been determined by our understanding of the context or some like factor and where this expressed meaning then appears as subordinate to the suggested meaning, we are indeed on the road of this type of *dhvani* that is similar to a reverberation (Ānandavardhana, 1974)”

Contextual Variations: Unravelling the Fluidity of Suggested Meanings

In a literary expression, when a word is rightly placed to suggest something beyond its literal meaning, it has the potential to elevate an openly anchored linguistic expression into a freely anchored aesthetic expression. Another characteristic feature of freely anchored aesthetic expression is that even when the same word, with an identical literal meaning, is used as a suggestor in two distinct literary expressions, the suggested meaning it evokes can be entirely different from one another. It is not necessary for the suggested meanings of a word to align in two distinct literary expressions, even if they share the same literal meaning. For instance, in the literary expressions given below, the word "Rama" suggests something completely different from each other in both literary expressions.

rāmeṇa priya-jīvitena tu kṛtaṃ premṇaḥ priye nocitam /

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 106)

Rama, being overmuch in love with life,
has failed, my beloved, to be worthy of his love⁴⁰.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 373)

When Ravana approached Sita with the intention of marrying her, Sita vehemently refused his proposal and forcefully rejected his advances. Ravana, in turn, grew furious as she dared to disobey his commands. Until then, Ravana had only encountered individuals who blindly obeyed his commands, and he could not tolerate any disobedience from those weaker than him. Hence, true to his inherently wicked nature as a cruel demon, Ravana's actions aligned perfectly with his innate character. The demon Ravana, fueled by his fury from the rejection, treated Sita in a manner consistent with

⁴⁰ The cruel demon treated you as one expects
of such a being angered by rejection:
and you too bore the blow as a lady of high birth
should bear it, with your head held high.
But the witness of your death, who
bears his weapon now to no avail. (Anandavardhana, 1990, 373)

everyone's expectations. Given his cruel disposition, such inhumane actions were expected. His behaviour was unsurprising, as he simply acted in line with his true nature and did not deviate from it.⁴¹ Even Sita withstood Ravana's cruelty and acted rightly. Sita bore the blow like a lady of high birth with her head held high, maintaining her composure. With a calm face and widely opened eyes, she received the blow without displaying any signs of panic. Even in the moment of distress, Sita held her head up bravely and did not fear that Ravana would kill her. She has kept the family values high by not succumbing to his requests. She has done what is true to her nature. Thus, both Ravana and Sita behaved throughout the episode without breaking the propriety.

Rama realises that his actions were the most inappropriate as they did not align with his true nature. Even after witnessing this brutal act of Sita being tormented by a cruel demon, he remained passive, holding his bow uselessly. Without any active intervention, Rama became a mere witness to the tragedy that befell his beloved. This behaviour is not fitting for someone who claims to be Sita's beloved and demonstrates a lack of concern towards her. The failure to take any proper action when she was abducted by a cruel demon is not appropriate behaviour. He agreed that the part he played turned out to be the most improper⁴². He was aware that his exile deprived him of the chance to use the bow. But it might at least have proved helpful in protecting his wife. Now that he has failed to protect his wife, the bow turns out to be completely useless. Yet, Rama continues to carry it. He still has to take the burden of guilt of not being helpful when it matters the most. The only justification one can imagine for retaining his bow is for self-defence, and such a decision goes against proper conduct. Rama felt that, at least for that moment, he considered his own life as much more important than anything else. Otherwise, he could have taken immediate action against Ravana. This Rama, to whom this life is much more important than anything else, has not done what must be done for the sake of love. Rama, who had defeated many demons at the risk of his own life, did nothing to save his beloved from Ravana. Rama could not do anything appropriate to protect his beloved.

⁴¹ *samahasarasatva*- adventure, *sathyasadathva*- truthfulness and *uchitakaritvya*- doing what is proper. More than *priyajevitam* , *Nocitam- na uchitam*- which is not proper

⁴² All these adjectives are proper for Rama.

Aadi- timid person, covert person's behaviour. All these are the nature of a covert person, it would be proper only.

In addition to the literal meaning, the word “Rama” is shifted to the suggested meaning of one who is the embodiment of courage. The purpose of using the word “Rama” here is to suggest the prowess and bravery of Rama. The word “Ramena” refers to Rama, who is brave enough to slay multiple demons. Such a Rama is mighty enough to defeat Ravana as well. His deviation from his true nature in literary expression would be suitable only for a coward. With this, the tragedy of Rama is clearly illustrated in this literary expression. The suggested qualities associated with Rama in this literary expression serve to bring a paradoxical image of Rama, burdened with the guilt for not performing his duties, juxtaposed with the “Rama”, who is the epitome of justice and righteousness. In this literary expression, the meaning of the word “Rama” is developed here to suggest qualities such as extraordinary courage and appropriate conduct. However, the list of suggested meanings derived from the suggestor “Rama” is not exhaustive. In another literary expression, the word “Rama” serves as the suggestor, but the suggested meanings conveyed are entirely different from those in the previous expression.

*snigdha-śyāmala-kānti-lipta-viyato vellad-balākā ghanā
vātāḥ śīkariṇaḥ payoda-suhr̥dām ānanda-kekāḥ kalāḥ /
kāmaṃ santu dr̥ḍhaṃ kaṭhora-hṛdayo rāmo 'smi sarvaṃ sahe vaidehī tu
katham bhaviṣyati hahā hā devi dhīrā bhava /*

(Anandavardhana, 1974, p. 38)

White herons circle against dark clouds
that paint the sky with their wet lustre.
Winds carry the small rain.
The peacocks, friends of the clouds, cry out with joy.
Let all this be: my heart is hard;
I am Rama and can bear it all.
But Vaidehi, how will she live?
Alas, my queen, alas, be brave!

The literary expression begins with a description of the rainy season. The moment Rama sees the clouds that are about to downpour, he is immediately reminded of Sita. Here, Rama is separated from Sita, and he is concerned about how Vaidehi (Sita) will bear this terrible situation. Rama observes the thick, dark clouds that cover the entire sky. The clouds are surrounded by white cranes. The gentle breeze carries tiny droplets of water, accompanied by a delightful chorus of peacocks. Generally, lovers would desire to spend this time together with their beloved, as it creates a soothing ambience ideal for romance. The poet suggests that lovers in separation must be brave to face this rainy season, striving not to succumb to the effects of sorrow, as this season can kindle their romantic memories. Here, Rama is confident in his abilities to bear these circumstances, but he is worried about Sita. The phrase “I am Rama” acquires special significance, as it may seem unnecessary to mention Rama’s name again when he is the one speaking in this expression. Even though the word “Rama” is literally useless in this expression, we do not entirely negate the word “Rama”. The word also indicates an associated meaning which is different from what is literally expressed. When he says, “I am Rama, I can tolerate any amount of sorrow”, the word “Rama” goes beyond being a mere name or a reference to Dasaratha’s son. The word “Rama” goes beyond a mere representation of the person or physical form of Rama. It serves some specific purpose and encompasses a more profound significance that extends beyond a simple name. The word “Rama” indicates something that is not literally expressed. There are numerous qualities that we could associate with Rama. He has faced many hardships, including fighting against many demons in the forest. As a result, he is now a hard-hearted person who can tolerate any amount of grief. Besides, Rama is also portrayed as a loving, kind, and selfless ruler. All these adjectives are associated with the word “Rama”. There are numerous qualities that we can associate with Rama. Therefore, the term Rama can take many other adjectives along with it. However, in this specific context, the poet suggests adjectives relevant to the present context by qualifying Rama with the adjective “hard-hearted”. The word “hard-hearted” (*kathora-hṛdaya*) channels the suggestion to suit the situation, focusing on Rama’s ability to tolerate grief and overcome hardships. Otherwise, the word

“Rama” might put forward suggestions that are not meant or which have no relevance to the present context. As the adjective hard-hearted is used in the expression, it brings the focus to Rama, who has faced many hardships and traversed many challenges. All the qualities that are needed to tolerate grief are indicated here. The hero, Rama, has lost his kingdom and was banished from there. Rama, having lost his kingdom and living in exile, has already encountered various hardships. This is the same Rama who can survive this misfortune very easily. Here, the expression “I am Rama” implies that he is a mature and experienced person who can tolerate any hardships. All the qualities that are needed for enduring the pain of separation are suggested through this literary expression.

In the same literary expression, the poet intentionally used the name Vaidehi for Sita. Vaidehi (Sita) is a kind-hearted person. This rainy season can stir her heart as she is separated from Rama. Rama believes that Vaidehi is the one who has to be more courageous to bear this separation. Unlike the word Rama in the expression “I am Rama, I can tolerate any amount of sorrow”, the literal meaning is not negated here, as it remains literally compatible. Even so, additional meanings are added to the expression because of the suggestive potential of meaning. The name Vaidehi itself suggests that, as the daughter of King Videha, she has lived a luxurious life. She lived in a palace without facing any hardships. For such a lady, it will be challenging to survive this terrible situation. These associated characteristics are not literally expressed; they are implied. But in the expression, “I am Rama and can bear it all”, the literal meaning of the word “Rama” is literally incompatible. However, certain attributes that are apt for the context are associated with the word “Rama”. Here, Rama is portrayed as a mature and experienced person who can tolerate everything. Once such attributes are added, the incompatibility in literal meaning is resolved as well.

In both expressions quoted above, the word “Rama” has the same literal meaning. However, the suggested meanings are different in both literary expressions. Once the literal meaning of the expression is clear, the meaning gets unleashed from its literal meaning at the suggestive level. Further, the suggested meaning can be entirely different in two literary expressions, even if the words share the same literal meaning. This is the

additional level of flexibility added to freely anchored aesthetic expressions. The literal meaning is merely a vehicle; it has the potential to assume countless forms when infused with the suggestion. The words Rama and Vaidehi are not simply used as names; instead, they are developed into various suggested qualities. The suggested meaning is much more important and prominent than the literal meaning. Even if those qualities were literally expressed, it could only be a factual account, and it would not have any aesthetic appeal.

In the case of the panegyrics addressed to gods and kings, *rasa* is not considered a suggestion unless it is suggested as predominant. It has also been said that in the context of affectionate praise and devotional hymns, if sentiments are regarded as secondary, then they will not be considered examples for *rasa dhvani*” (Sharma, 1968). However, if sentiments are raised to the suggestive level, becoming a prominent aspect, it can be an example of freely anchored aesthetic expression. Even if a performance is categorised as a devotional, ritual, eulogy, and so on, *rasa* can still be infused into them. Malayalam poets like Cherussery, Thunchath Ezhuthachan, Kunchan Nambiar, were praised for infusing humour in devotional poetry” (Narayanan, 2001). However, this flexibility of aesthetic expression is not confined to classical or traditional poetry alone but can also be observed in oral literature. Oral literature often employs various literary devices and techniques that go beyond literal meanings. The use of the suggestive potential of words and meaning enhances the aesthetic appeal and emotional impact, showcasing the artistic and expressive potential of the language across different forms of artistic expression.

The Suggestive Rhythm of Sacred Songs

Sacred invocatory songs sung at the beginning of performances, such as Teyyam and *Tīṛayāṭṭam*, are called *Thottampāttu*. *Thottam* is considered to be a derivative of the word “*sthotram*”. The word also has the meaning of surmise, creation, revival, and feeling (Namboodiri, 2016). During the *Tīṛayāṭṭam* performance, the lead singer will recite the *Thottampāttu*, and other companions will repeat it. *Thottampāttu* is an invocatory song sung to awaken the intended deity. *Anjāṭis* are summarised versions of myths of ancestral

gods and goddesses, while *Thottampāttu* is more extended versions of the same. Such sacred songs of *Tīrayāṭṭam* narrate myths and legends related to the deities that are worshipped in sacred groves. In mythologies, there are instances of gods and goddesses descending to the earthly realm to live among humans by taking mortal forms for various reasons. Conversely, there are accounts of individuals who were born as humans but later ascended to divine forms. The stories of many gods and goddesses who descended to the earth with various purposes, along with the tales of those who have ascended to heaven, are narrated through these sacred songs. The origin, greatness, and appearances of these deities are described in these songs. These songs often depict divine figures who take on human forms to protect, guide or fulfil a specific mission. Some of these songs portray ferocious gods and goddesses who came to destroy evil and restore balance. These sacred songs illustrate the complex relationship between the divine force and humans and demonstrate the interplay between the human and divine realms. Though they praise the intended deities, they add some local colour and flavour to the narratives. Along with lyrical beauty, such locally approved myths are also vital historical records. They narrate the life and life history of ordinary people. Through the preservation and transmission of these songs through oral tradition, they have been passed down from generation to generation, maintaining their linguistic significance and cultural relevance.

The linguistic importance of *Thottampāttu* is undeniable. These songs are composed in narrative styles and are known for their content and style. These songs were created in different eras and have been passed down through different traditions. *Thottampāttu* has evolved over time, with songs being created in various periods, reflecting the cultural and linguistic shifts of their respective eras. The language form of *Thottampāttu* is diverse, such as the Tulu-Carnatic style, Tulu Malayalam style, North-Malabar rural style, pure Malayalam style, Manipravala style and Sanskrit style (Namboodiri, 1981).

Here is a literary expression taken from the *anjati* of the deity called Moorkanad Karumakan. Karumakan is worshipped as the son of Lord Shiva and Goddesses Parvati. He was born when Lord Shiva assumed the form of a Kirāta (hunter). Karumakan is described as the mighty god of deep blue hue who reigns in the thicket of the forest. He

always carries a weapon called *churika* in his hands. It is believed that with his *churika* he could slay the wicked. Karumakan is known by various names such as Pērilān, Vēṭṭay Karumakan, Nītil Karumakan, and Kaṇṇi Karumakan.



കോട്ടമകന്നു നൽധ്വനി കേട്ടു ഞെട്ടിയുറഞ്ഞ തീയിൽ ആട്ടമതിട്ടു മുമ്മൊഴി വാക്കു
ചെയ്തടിയാരെയും നീ കോട്ടമകന്നു നിത്യവും രക്ഷ ചെയ്തു കൃപാമുരാറെ

Koṭṭamakannu naldhwani kēṭṭu ñeṭṭiyuraṇṇa tīyil
Āṭṭamatittu mummōḷi vāḱku ceytaṭiyāreyuṁ nī
Koṭṭamakannu nityavum rakṣa ceyka krupāmurāre

(Peethambaran, 2017, 79)

Grief has moved away with the fine rhythm that condensed the flame
By dancing on it and speaking words so dear
By keeping the sorrow away, Protect us forever.

The literary expression is an invocation that seeks blessing and protection from the deity Karumakan. The poem highlights the significant role of the deity in offering solace and support to the devotee by acting as a shield against sorrow. The profound impact of the deity in overcoming grief and finding solace in the fine rhythm (*naldhwani- nala dhvani*) is expressed through literary expression. It explores the transformative potential of connecting with the divine force and finding comfort in divine hands. It is a heartfelt

⁴³ Karumakan vellat and Karumakan Tiṛa

expression of devotion and reverence towards the deity. The speaker acknowledges that the deity acts as a shield by keeping sorrow away, thereby providing long-lasting protection and comfort.

The literary expression begins by stating that the grief has been dispelled or lessened by the fine rhythm. *Tirayāṭṭam* is performed at night, along with the rhythmic drum beats. The music from the percussion instruments such as *chenda* and *tudi* used during a *Tirayāṭṭam* performance can be taken here as the source for fine rhythm. *Tirayāṭṭam* is performed at night with the background of burning coconut leaves. The literary expression can be interpreted as grief has subsided in the fire that was condensed with the rhythmic beats of the musical instruments. *Tirayāṭṭam* performers also provide a word of solace to the devotees. The words of the divine figure can also be considered as a fine rhythm. Then, the literary expression can be interpreted as, by hearing the soothing words of the deity, the grief subsided in the dancing fire. The fine rhythm can also be interpreted as the song sung by the performer. His grief subsided in the fire that condensed by hearing *Thottampāttu* he sang for the deity. Those words have condensed or transformed the emotional turmoil of the devotee, and the sorrow has swept aside in the flames that danced. The grief departed from their minds as they sang the *Thottampāttu*. The *Thottampāttu* quoted above moves beyond the suggested meaning and can be regarded as an example of freely anchored aesthetic expression. However, there are *Thottampāttu* that focus on linguistic devices and lyrical beauty. Sometimes, those expressions get limited to the literal level without being raised to the suggestive level. An example of an openly anchored linguistic expression is given below.

കൂശൽ കൂടാതെ ദൃഷ്ടജനങ്ങളെ കല ചെയ്തെടുക്കാൻ
കൂർത്ത ശരങ്ങൾ വില്ലുമെടുത്തു കാട്ടിൽ നടന്ന വിരാ
നാശമൊഴിച്ചു കാത്തരുളി വസിച്ച മേലോട്ടിൽ വാഴും
നാവിനാശനൻ കരുവാൻ കഴൽക്കിത കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

Kūśala kūṭāthe duṣṭajānaṅṅaḷe kula ceyteṭukaan
Kūrtha śaraṅṅaḷ villumeṭuthu kāṭṭil naṭanna vīrā

Nāśamoḷicchu kātharuli vasiccha mēloṭṭil vālum
Nāvināśanaṅ karuvān kaḷkkitu kaitozhunneṅ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 80)

To hunt the wicked without any fear

There lived a courageous hero who walked in the forest with
sharp-pointed arrows and a bow

By removing the distress, he reigned as a guardian in “Mellat”

My hands embrace the feet of Karuvon- the destructor of troublemaker

The literary expression celebrates the valour and unwavering courage of the deity Karuvon (Karumakan). He roams around the forest, armed with sharp arrows and a bow, ready to face any challenges that come his way. He has the power to confront and win over those who cause trouble and chaos. He is the destroyer of troublemakers. He fearlessly confronted and triumphed over wicked people. He hailed as a guardian in the realm of “Mellat”. By embracing the feet of Karuvon, the speaker expresses his deep sense of respect and gratitude for his unwavering dedication to restoring peace and harmony. However, the literary expression highlights the strengths and valour of Karuvon. With the expression, “there lived a courageous hero”, the qualities of Karumakan get directly expressed. Instead of suggesting the qualities of the deity, the speaker directly addresses him as a “courageous hero” (vīrā). The characteristics and qualities of Karuvon are directly expressed in this literary expression. Literary expression explicitly states that he can hunt wicked people without any feat. Hence, it cannot be considered an example of aesthetic expression with suggestion. However, a literary device called alliteration can be seen in this expression. When the first alphabet of two or more lines of a poem is the same, it creates an alliterative effect and adds emphasis and musicality to the lines. However, the literary expression is not raised to the suggestive level, as everything is described explicitly.



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Words that Mend and Soothe: Healing Touch through Words

The easing power of art has been acknowledged and appreciated in everyday life, with an increasing acceptance of art and aesthetics as a vital source of healing. Art has the ability to touch our emotions, inspire, and provide solace in times of distress. Sometimes, it can also offer a unique form of expression that transcends language barriers and allows individuals to connect with others and with their inner selves on a deeper level.

ഈക്കുള്ള മഹാലോകരുടെ മെയ്യിലുറഞ്ഞു
 വാക്കുകൾ പലവക പറഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടുകിൾ
 കഷ്ടത വളർന്നു വസൂരി പനിയും
 നഷ്ടമാക്കുവാൻ ദൈവമൊരു പേരുല്ലലകിൽ
 ദൃഷ്ടിക്കൊരുതായി വസിക്കും തമ്പുരാന്റെ
 പുഷ്ടികൊണ്ടുടൻ ലോകം ജയിച്ചു വീര്യയനെ
 കരുത്തോടെ കടികൊണ്ടു മേലോട്ടിൽ വാണരുളും
 കരുത്തരും കരിവില്ലി കഴൽ കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

Ūkkulaḷa mahālōkaruṭe meyyilurañṅu
Vākkul palavaka parañṅukonṭazakil
Kaṣṭata vaḷarṅnu vasūri paniyum
Naṣṭamākkuvān daivamoru pērullulakil
Drṣṭikkora mṛṭāyi vasiccum tamburānte

⁴⁴ Karumakan Tirayāttam

Puṣṭikoṇṭuṇṭan lōkam jayiccha vīryayanē
Karuttōṭe kuṭikōṇṭu mēloṭṭil vānarulūm
Karuttērum karivilli kaḷkaṭaitozhunneṇ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 87)

Immersed into the body of the mighty people.
Reciting countless words eloquently in his divine speech
As suffering grew, so did the small-pox fever
To vanquish the loss, God's name shines as the world's guiding light
The Lord who dwells as a nectar for the longing eyes
The hero who conquered the world swiftly with his strength
He dwells strongly as a guardian in "Mellat"
I bow down, holding onto the divine feet of the strongest Karivilli

The *thottam* is praise dedicated to the deity called Karivilli. The *thottam* acknowledges the deity's role as a guardian who dwells in the sacred groves of Mullat. The speaker bows down to the feet of the deity, seeking blessings. While expressing the heartfelt devotion of the speaker to the deity, the *thottam* praises the attributes of the deity, including his protective nature and prowess. By emphasising the deity's immediate conquest of the world, the *thottam* narrates the heroism and strength of the deity. By the end of a *Tirayāṭṭam* performance, *kōladāri*, the performer who adorns the role of the deity, often enters a trance state. It is believed that during this state, the deity's presence enters the body of the performer. The deity then recites countless words with eloquence. This trance-like state allows the performer to portray the characteristics of the deity in a heightened manner, building a transformative experience for both the performer as well as the audience. This concluding state of performance is highly significant for its spiritual and religious aspects. The immersion of the deity into the performer's body is seen as a sacred and profound moment. Blurring the boundaries between the human and the divine realm, the deity is believed to speak through the performer and give forecasts. This is the divine speech mentioned in the *thottam* given above. Though the deity expresses divine wisdom through various words, devotees have just one word in this world to hold on to

during times of distress. With this, the *thottam* explores the theme of suffering and portrays a period of suffering characterised by hardship and challenges. Smallpox was a disease which was prevalent in many villages, particularly before the development of effective treatment and medicines. It was a highly infectious disease and had devastating effects on people's lives. Lack of treatment and widespread disease among villagers often lead to continuous deaths. Within those villages, isolation and quarantine were commonly employed strategies for controlling the spreading of smallpox. Infected individuals were usually dumped into a separate location to minimise transmission. The literary expression portrayed such a period in history when the only way to get rid of the disease was to seek the blessings of the deities by invoking their names for protection. It is the deity's name, which was celebrated as a guiding light, offering solace and power to infected individuals. During those days, when the infected person was dumped in a separate house, the only individual who visited the infected person was the performer revered as a deity. Hence, this deity is depicted as a source of beauty and comfort, described as nectar for the eyes. The only individual that an infected person could see is the performer revered as a deity (*kōladāri*). Especially during the period when smallpox was common, the infected people were left alone. Only these performers, as *kōladāri*, went to meet those isolated people. *Kōladāri* dwells as nectar for their longing eyes. The expression "nectar for the longing eyes" moves beyond its literal meaning. It suggests that the vision of performers revered as deities brings immense joy and satisfaction to the devotees, even if they are suffering in bed. The experience is truly fulfilling for them, as the divine vision has the power to bring profound joy and satisfaction to those who yearn for it. In this case, it can also be interpreted as a spiritual carving, a passionate longing to see the divine. For them, the presence of the performer revered as a deity is like a sweet, nourishing substance that satisfies the thirst of their longing eyes.



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Another *thottam* that describes the profound impact of the compassionate gaze and its ability to serve as an essential source of healing is given below.

കല്ലോലമെഴും നല്ല കുനിച്ചില്ലി കൊടിയും
 അല്ലലാം മഹാവ്യാധി ഹനിക്കും കൺമിഴിയും
 ഇച്ചയിലധരം നാസിക ദന്തപ്രഭയ്യും
 ചേർച്ചയിൽ വളർന്ന താടിയും മിശകൊടിയും
 കരുത്തോടെ കുടികൊണ്ടു മേലോട്ടിൽ വാണരുളും
 കരുത്തേറും കരിവില്ലി കഴൽക്കു കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

Kallōlam eḷum nalla kunicilli koṭiyum
Allalām mahāvyādhi hanikkum kanmizhiyum
Iccayiladharam nāsika dantaprabhayum
Cērcchayil vaḷarnna tāṭiyum mīśakoṭiyum
Karuttōṭe kuṭikōṇṭu mēloṭṭil vāṇarulum
Karuttērum karivilli kaḷḷku kaitozhunneṇ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 86)

Beautiful tilak on the divine forehead and an auspicious sign
 Eyelids that destroy the great disease of sorrow
 Desirous lips, with teeth that shine
 A well-grown beard and moustache

⁴⁵ Karivilli Tirayāṭṭam

He dwells strongly as a guardian in “Mellat”

I bow down, holding onto the divine feet of the strongest Karivilli

This *thottam* conveys a sense of devotion and admiration towards the deity Karivilli by highlighting the physical appearance and spiritual strength of the deity. The deity reigns in Mellat, a sacred grove. He is the powerful guardian for all. The *thottam* expresses the speaker’s reverence and devotion towards the deity. By bowing down and holding down onto his divine feet, the speaker expresses his willingness to seek solace in the foot of the deity. The expression begins by describing the sacred and auspicious mark on the forehead of the deity. By praising the physical appearance of the deity, the literary expression gives a verbal picture of the divine god. The fully grown and well-maintained moustache and beard suggest his maturity and orderliness. The shining teeth indicate a radiant smile on his face, suggesting the positivity and joy that the deity spreads around. The word “strongly” suggests that the deity possesses immense power and strength to protect the humans who seek his help. His eyes have the power to eliminate or alleviate the suffering caused by sorrow. It implies that a mere glance of the deity can bring comfort and solace to many. In the expression “eyelids that destroy the great disease of sorrow”, the literal meaning is discarded. It suggests that he has the power to remove the pain just by his presence. It describes the extraordinary healing power present in the eyes of the deity. A mere gaze of the deity has a transformative effect on his devotees. Even a mere glance is enough to bring solace and a sense of relief to them. His eyes hold a healing power that is capable of removing even the pain of suffering. Instead of explicitly praising the deity, the *thottam* says he is the one with the eyes that can destroy even the great disease called sorrow. It suggests that the presence of such a compassionate gaze can act as a powerful healing force capable of dispelling the most profound forms of pain and sorrow.

The Sacred Fusion: Confluence of Divine and Human in Ethnic Performance

Ethnic performances, rooted in specific cultural traditions and practices, are often intricately intertwined with the beliefs and values they uphold. These performances

usually provide a unique opportunity for people to momentarily escape from their daily concerns and take themselves through a mesmerising and transformative journey. These performances usually become a source of solace for many. They provide a space where individuals can immerse themselves in the creative as well as the spiritual side of themselves. It is important to recognise the boundary between the aesthetic and ritualistic aspects of ethnic performances in order to enable us to engage with them in a more nuanced, informed, and respectful manner. In most cases, aesthetic and ritualistic elements appear to be intertwined. However, with the help of *dhvani* theory, to an extent, this aesthetic dilemma can be resolved. To illustrate, consider a scene from *Tirayāṭṭam*. Bhagavatī Tira addresses the spectators as “*ente makkale*” or “*ente paithagale*” (my babies). There is a contradiction in the literal meaning of the expression. It is not the literal meaning of “sons” or “babies” as biological children being addressed here. In such cases, the indicative function begins to be active. Though it is not the biological son who is mentioned here, it can be a call based on motherly affection. Here, Bhagavatī Tira takes the role of a mother goddess, and it can be said that the love and care of a mother goddess is suggested through this expression. However, the expression need not be categorised as *abhidhāmula dhvani* or *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*. Rather, the example quoted can be classified under the category of *guṇībhūta vyaṅgya* as a verbal expression. In expressions with *guṇībhūta vyaṅgya*, though there is a suggested meaning, it may not be aesthetically appealing to classify it as *dhvani*. The literal meaning of the word “*paithal*”, as a baby, is not important here; rather, the affection and care for the mother to the son is metaphorically indicated. Even then, it need not be considered as personal affection, which will possibly become a hindrance to enjoying the performance. Here, focusing on the performative act may be much more aesthetically pleasing and rewarding.



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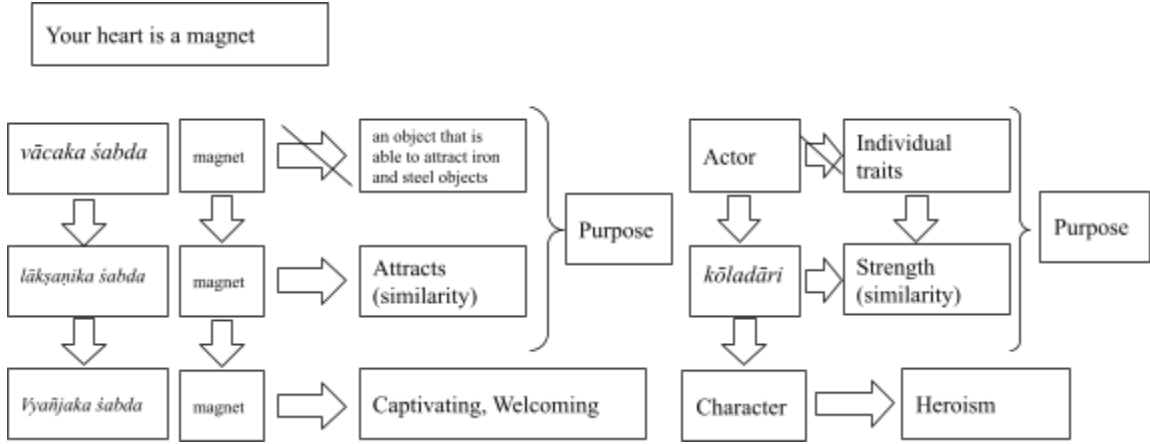
⁴⁶ Bhagavatī tira blessing a devotee

In metaphorical expressions, the literal word gives up its primary meaning, and only certain qualities inherent in the object are communicated. Even in metaphorical expressions, words are carefully chosen, as there are some definite motives for the transfer of meaning. For example, in the expression “your heart is a magnet”, the literal meaning of “magnet” is an object that is able to attract iron and steel objects⁴⁷. This is different from the literal meaning of “heart”, which is “the organ in your chest that sends the blood around your body”⁴⁸. Though it is known that a heart is not a magnet, there are similarities between these two objects. Both a heart and a magnet can attract things. A heart attracts people, while a magnet attracts metal objects. Just because some qualities are shared among these objects, they are not identical, as having all the properties of a metaphor in the object. A heart is not a magnet, and a magnet is not a heart. However, the similarities between these two objects can be used to create a metaphor. In the metaphor “your heart is a magnet”, the speaker is comparing their love to the power of a magnet. They are saying that their love is so strong that it can attract others to them. If the reader does not understand the definite purpose of the metaphor, they may equate it with the literal meaning. They may think that the speaker is literally saying that their heart is a magnet. Those who cannot identify a metaphor either consider the metaphorical meaning the same as the literal meaning or focus on the differences and find this as an absurd relationship. For example, in the expression “your heart is a magnet”, if the magnet is taken literally, the expression may not make much sense. If the focus is on the difference between the literal meanings of “heart” and “magnet”, then the differences will also be numerous, making it difficult to find any association between them. In both these cases, the audience misses the metaphorical meaning. To avoid these problems, it is important to understand the purpose of a metaphor. Metaphors are used to create comparisons between two things that are not literally the same.

⁴⁷ Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Stone. In Cambridge Dictionary.8,2022, Year, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stone>

⁴⁸ Cambridge English Dictionary. (n.d.). Heart. In the Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved Month Day, Year, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/heart>

Ethnic performances like Tirayāṭṭam depict stories of humans who are transformed into gods. In these performances, the performers creatively transform themselves into gods. Though the individual identity of the performer does not suit the context of the performance, a relationship is established between the performer and the character. Thus, in a performance, an actor is not identical to the character, but a relationship is metaphorically indicated. Performers revered as deities (*kōladāri*) dressed in specific costumes are used only as models to represent the divine characters depicted in the performance. These *kōladāri*'s are used metaphorically to achieve a specific purpose. In some performances, masked faces are intentionally used to indicate an associated meaning. In Tirayāṭṭam performances, a mask is not a mere object that the performer wears during the performance. It becomes an inseparable part of the performance, giving the performer a different identity. *Mughzthezhuth* (sacred artistic decorations on the face) is an important process that transforms the artist into a character. The performer selected for performing the role of a heroic character also exhibits specific skills of the character or is able to recreate them during the performance. By wearing long headgear and by performing adventurous tasks using weapons, the heroic nature of the character is suggested. This suggested quality is not part of the literal meaning. This particular purpose for utilising this *kōladāri* as a metaphor is expressed through suggestion. A metaphor is used to emphasise this suggested meaning. In both these cases, something is considered impossible according to conventional rules. The identity of the performer in real life is that of a human being, but the characters they adorn are primarily divine. Though there is divinity within every individual, it is not realised by all. With the *mughathezhuth* and other adornments, the individual features of the performer are sidelined, and the divine character is projected. By focusing on the similarity between the performer and the divine character, the impossibility of being the character is negated. Every performer opts for different techniques in the performance to suggest these relations. In the case of ritual art forms, the masked body and the painted face are not confined solely to the literal meaning of decorating the face with some colours.



In performances like *Tirayāṭṭam*, if the performer (*kōladāri*) is identified the same as the divine character represented, it will force the audience to seek blessings from the performer as the identity of the divine character is fully identified on the individual performer. Once the audience captures this creative transformation of meaning, the suggested meaning immediately strikes them, and various emotions get suggested. The suggestive function adds additional flexibility to literary and artistic expressions.

Beyond the Literal: Flexibility in Freely Anchored Aesthetic Expressions with Suggestions

The expressions worn out by their widespread usage do not excite or surprise the readers. They may not even produce an element of surprise. However, this is not the case with the suggested meaning. Suggestive sound (*vyañjana śabda*) can suggest meanings that are different from the literal meaning. By suggesting a different meaning, it opens up the space for multiple interpretations. Rather than restricting the suggested meaning to a confined space that is limited by various factors, the suggestive function releases them from all confinements. It helps to move beyond the literal meaning. At the suggested level, suggestive sound unveils suggestions that are not conventionally associated with them. In the case of suggestion, there is no permanent one-to-one relationship between the suggested word and the suggested meaning, as is the case with the relationship between expressed sound and the literal meaning. The suggestive potential of words is not constant. Unlike the rigid semantic structure allowed in the expressed sound and

expressed meaning, aesthetic suggestion opens up the space for creative interpretation. It constantly challenges the rigid semantic structure. The same object in different contexts is capable of suggesting different meanings, though they have the same literal meaning. For example, a description of dark clouds can be used to suggest fear of a farmer or arousal of love in couples, compassion towards a bird, and anxiety in a lady waiting for her lover. As there is no permanent relationship between suggestors and suggested, possibilities for finding novel interpretations are never exhausted.

Words transcend their commonly perceived state and the meaning conventionally attributed to them through the suggestive function. The function involves constant experimentation with the rigid and monotonous structure of openly anchored linguistic expressions. Aesthetic suggestion aims to surpass the limitations of this structure and explore new possibilities rather than completely dismantling the existing framework. It allows authors to escape the constraints imposed by prescribed formats and rules, offering a way to break free from conventional setups without destroying them. Aesthetic suggestion continuously seeks novel ways of creating or recreating something rather than reproducing the same. In addition to the expressed meaning of the words, due to the symbolic potential of words in a sentence, an array of ideas get suggested. The suggestive potential of words exercised through suggestive sound creatively transforms the literal meaning and exposes the suggested meaning hidden within them. This suggestive potential of words is indeed a defining characteristic of human language and can be found universally. Literary expressions across different cultures and languages have the potential to convey meaning beyond the literal, adding to the beauty of aesthetic expression. The creative use of language and its suggestive potential of words is a unique and universal trait of human beings, setting them apart from other non-human species. It highlights the potential of words to transcend their surface-level meanings and communicate on deeper levels, enriching the artistic and expressive capabilities of human beings.

The Ripple Effect: Advantages of Freely Anchored Aesthetic Expressions with Suggestions

The suggestive potential cannot be identical to denotation or indication, though it derives assistance from denotation or indication⁴⁹. The suggested meaning may arise in some instances after the literal meaning is understood, while in others, it may come after the indicated meaning is understood. In all these contexts, there is no rule dictating that the suggestive function should occur once and then cease. One suggested meaning may lead to another, which in turn leads to another, and so on. It is this flexibility that distinguishes freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions from openly anchored linguistic expressions and bounded metaphorical expressions. Literal and metaphorical meanings, in one way, have limitations in their scope for improvisations. Though we use them repeatedly in various expressions, in the end, they tend to be similar to the literal meaning of the expression. On the other hand, for freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions, it is possible to present a different perspective or suggest a distinct idea, offering a greater range of possibilities.

In literary expressions, we cannot rely solely on the literal meaning to create an aesthetically enriching and stimulating composition. Though the metaphorical meaning differs from the denoted meaning, its purpose is to give depth and significance to the literal meaning. It does not surpass or go beyond the literal meaning. It is not aesthetically pleasing to name any emotions or to literally express them in literary works. Even if we convey the same feelings to the audience by literally naming an emotion, it merely becomes a method of relaying information rather than creating an emotionally enriching aesthetic experience. Hence, in literary expressions, the suggestive potential of words is utilised to its fullest, resulting in a higher level of flexibility. However, the suggestive potential is not limited to words alone. Suggestors cover a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements such as sounds, sound clusters, morphemes,

⁴⁹ “*pratīyamānaṃ punar anyad eva vastv asti vāṅīṣu mahā-kavīnām / yat tat prasiddhāvayavātiriktaṃ vibhāti lāvanyam ivāṅganāsu // DhvK_1.4 //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 6).

syntactical arrangement, phrases, and sentences. Even silence holds suggestive potential and can contribute to the evocation of aesthetic emotions.

Chapter 3

Resonance of Dhvani in Visual Expressions

Arguably, every art form serves as a medium for expressing both emotional and rational ideas. There are moments when we all have felt overwhelmed while watching a movie and felt a tear drop from our eyes. Emotion plays a transformative role in the creation and appreciation of an art form, elevating it from a mere technical or passive exercise to a profound and meaningful experience. These moments can encourage us to act differently, to learn or unlearn something. Art moves us. Furthermore, the desire to express our feelings and emotions through art is one of the basic characteristics of human beings. Throughout the ages, the feelings and emotions of human beings have been creatively represented in forms such as cave paintings and oral songs (Aubert, 2014). For instance, the Lascaux cave painting, estimated to be around 17,000 years old, demonstrates the presence of visual expressions from an early stage of human evolution (Marris, 2018; Pike, 2012). From the cave paintings of Lascaux to the street art in London City, art has always been a means for us to connect with one another. Similarly, artistic expressions of various kinds mark the different stages in our cultural evolution. Art has the incredible capacity to transform our perception of the world around us. It evokes a range of emotions and invites us to actively engage with them, going beyond mere observation. As we bring in our own ideas, thoughts, and perspectives, we gradually become active participants in the process of interpreting a work of art. Art challenges us. By immersing ourselves in art, we expand our horizons. The diversity of perspectives enriches our creative endeavour, opening up more possibilities for multiple interpretations and conversations.

Human beings express their thoughts and feelings primarily through verbal and visual expressions. Words, images, colours, and sounds serve as a means to convey various human emotions. Each artwork possesses unique characteristics and styles that set it apart from other artistic creations. Moreover, each artistic expression is distinct in its

presentation and appearance. This diversity and individuality contribute to the richness and variety of the artistic landscape, providing connoisseurs with a multitude of opportunities to engage, enjoy, and appreciate. In *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa*, an ancient Indian text, there is an account of the correlation between different forms of art. *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa* presents a dialogue between Markandeya and King Vajra, where Markandeya emphasises that having an acquaintance with the science of dancing can greatly aid in comprehending the rules of painting with ease (Nardi, 2003). This suggests that the different forms of art are interconnected and that a deeper understanding of one art form can lead to a deeper understanding of other art forms. People who appreciate one art form in a particular way are more likely to enjoy different art forms in a similar way. If there is an interrelationship between various forms of art, then is it possible to find some relations in the way in which these different forms of art are enjoyed and appreciated?

From Dots to Lines: The Power of Strategic Arrangement

One common characteristic of aesthetic expressions is their symbolic nature. The basic requirement of any symbolic act is understanding and making sense of it. An artwork being a symbolic act entails the same, along with its capacity to evoke aesthetic bliss, when an artist converts a worldly object into an art statement. Visual representation often begins with a single dot and progresses through various combinations of dots to form lines⁵⁰. The arrangement of these lines on a canvas can significantly influence the perspective from which an object is perceived. For instance, a single horizontal line creates a sense of stability, while a vertical line conveys a sense of vitality, and a diagonal line introduces a sense of movement within the artistic composition. Similarly, the placement of lines and shapes in a particular space can create the illusion of depth and perspective. For example, an upright triangle provides a sense of stability, whereas an inverted triangle appears more unstable.

⁵⁰ A line is “a long thin mark that is an idealised form of an object with no curvature, that is a straight object which has only one dimension with negligible width and depth”.

On the one hand, visual expressions can be realistic, portraying the object as it is and focusing on some minute details. Alternatively, some visual expressions can be abstract, focusing on the bare minimum of lines to capture the “essence” of the object. When it comes to depicting animals, artists employ simple lines and shapes to convey their essence. The use of animal motifs in art reflects the enduring fascination that artists have with the natural world. Birds, in particular, have found their place in the artistic realm through both realistic and abstract interpretations.



Figure 1 is one of the famous bird paintings by Bruno Liljefors titled “Common Swifts”. Liljefors had a knack for capturing dramatic moments from the lives of birds by keeping them in their natural environment. His canvases were filled with vibrant colours, depicting the movements and actions of birds in flight, fighting for survival, and in romantic or relaxed positions. He maintained visual accuracy while recreating these scenes on canvases, making many of his paintings realistic and natural. Figures 2 and 3 are the sculptures created by Charlotte Mayer⁵⁵ titled “Flight II” and “Solar”. These sculptures exhibit a visual departure from Figure 1. While they do not strive for a realistic portrayal of birds, when compared to the image of a “bird”, the strategic arrangement of sticks in these sculptures creates a visually captivating effect. The sculpture “Flight II” resembles a dancing peacock, but it lacks beaks, wings, legs, or coloured feathers. The sculpture “Solar” shows a sense of movement even though the sculpture is stable. The

⁵¹ Bruno Liljefors (1886), Common Swifts, oil on canvas, 41 × 56 cm, Wikimedia Commons.

⁵² Mayer, C. (2008). *FLIGHT II* [Photograph]. Pangolinlondon.
<https://www.pangolinlondon.com/content/feature/55/artworks-559-charlotte-mayer-flight-ii-2013/>

⁵³ Mayer, C. (2009). *Solar* [Photograph]. Pangolinlondon.
<https://www.pangolinlondon.com/artists/40-charlotte-mayer/works/4142-charlotte-mayer-solar-2009/>

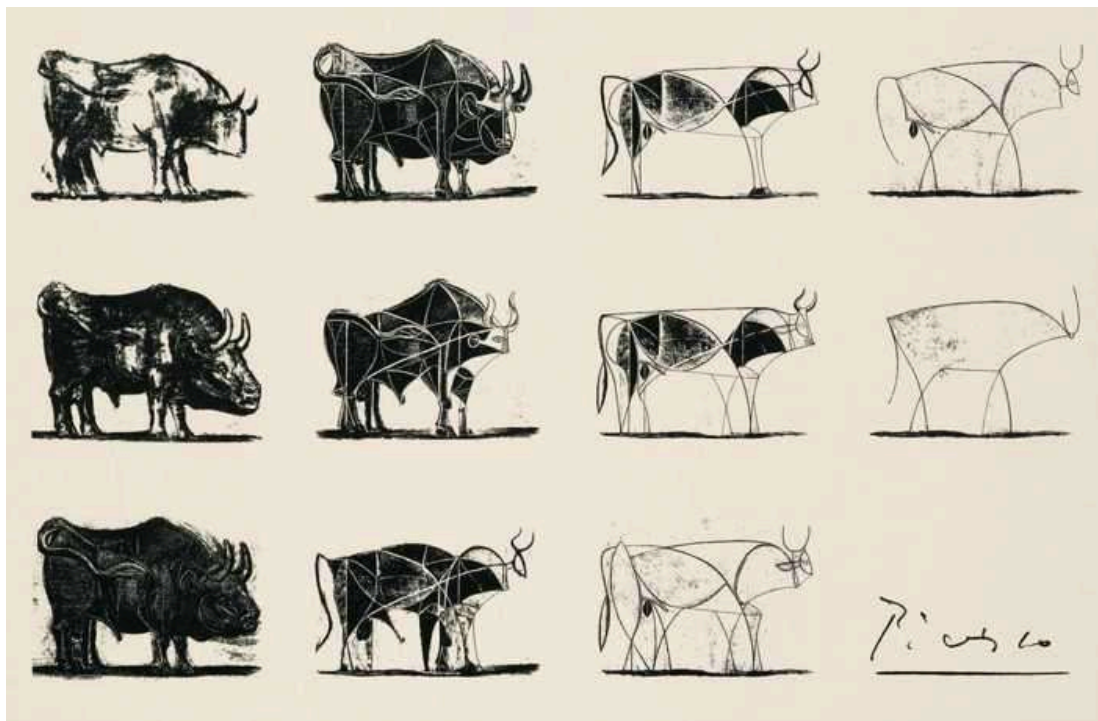
⁵⁴ Brâncuși, C. (1923). *Bird in Space* [Photograph]. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81033>

⁵⁵ Tom Flynn, Charlotte Mayer In Essence:
<http://www.gallery-pangolin.com/downloads/gallery-pangolin/catalogues/in%20essence%20book%20for%20website.pdf>

artistic world also encompasses unique expressions that stand apart from conventional imagery. One such sculpture is “Bird in Space” by Constantin Brâncuși. The sculpture conveys an upward movement through a small, elongated body devoid of wings or feathers. The head and beak are reduced to a slanted oval surface, while the two legs merge to form an inverted cone. The sculpture skillfully represents the idea of balance, which is represented by the point where the inverted cone meets the elongated body.

Artistic Dissection: The Quest for the Ideal Image

Visual expressions, on the one hand, eliminate “unnecessary” elements to create a visually stimulating masterpiece, while on the other hand, they fill the canvases with intricate details. Picasso’s painting of the bull demonstrates the process of visually dissecting an image into its essential graphical components, thereby capturing the essence of the animal bull. The painting initially presents a realistic portrayal of a Spanish bull but gradually evolves into a universal bull with a couple of lines. The artist’s quest for the ideal image evokes the idea of a bull through simplification. However, stylisation reaches its peak in the final image.



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⁵⁶ Picasso’s painting titled Bull

Interestingly, artists explore different techniques to create visual narratives, and one such approach involves the distortion of sense perception. This technique, which distorts the perception of reality, often surprises the viewers. Escher, a renowned graphic artist, employed this approach to create visual paradoxes with conflicting proportions in his paintings. Through the use of interlocking patterns, symmetry and distorted perspectives, he opens up multiple viewpoints, allowing us to peep into the world he created on the canvas. Escher's painting series titled "Metamorphosis" effectively blurs the boundaries between the real and the illusory. The images undergo such precise metamorphosis into new forms that the objects appear entirely different on each end. However, pinpointing the exact location of this transformation proves to be a challenging task.

There is a play of human imagination in transforming everyday objects into artistic pieces. It is not always necessary for a work of art to have elaborate artistic embellishments in order to be appreciated by spectators. What matters most is whether the art object can convey or trigger human emotions. Artists utilise their imagination to transform ordinary objects into artistic creations that can evoke various feelings. For instance, Pablo Picasso's sculpture "Bull's Head", created in 1942, using a bicycle seat and bicycle handle, challenges many traditional assumptions about what defines a work of art. In many sculptures, existing objects are modified and raised to the grandeur of a work of art. Duchamp's sculpture titled "Bicycle Wheel" is an example of interactive art. Duchamp attached a readily available mass-produced item, such as a bicycle wheel, to a kitchen stool in his sculpture. What distinguishes this artwork is the underlying concept and the deliberate selection of objects by the artist to bring it to life by giving a different meaning. He did not attempt to replicate "movement" on a canvas but rather to evoke a sense of movement by encouraging viewers to spin the wheel. "The movement of the wheel reminded him of the movement of flames"⁵⁷. Similar to the viewer rotating the "Bicycle Wheel", the water from Escher's "waterfall" painting creates the illusion of rotating water in the viewer's mind. Upon comparing Escher's waterfall painting and

⁵⁷ "To see that wheel turning was very soothing, very comforting...I enjoyed looking at it, just as I enjoy looking at the flames dancing in a fireplace".(an interview with Arturo Schwarz in 1960) Duchamp, *Apropos of Readymades*, 1951), (Lowery, 2019).

Duchamp's "Bicycle Wheel" sculpture, it becomes evident how two similar ideas are portrayed in unique and distinct ways. Both art forms revolve around the theme of circularity, but the unique depictions of this concept set these artworks apart from each other.

The Language of White Space: Unleashing Emotions through Aesthetic Expressions

Apart from visually representing objects in their physical form, it is also possible to weave emotionally enriching narratives even with some basic geometric shapes. For instance, people can unravel stories and narratives by interpreting the movement of simple shapes like triangles and circles, as portrayed in Heider- Simmel illusion. In this illusion, viewers observe two simple shapes moving around. Viewers often interpret the shapes as having different personalities and motivations. Viewers could perceive diverse characters with desire, intention, tactics and emotion within those geometrical shapes (Heider & Simmel, 1944). Simple shapes tend to be "anthropomorphised", with people attributing emotions and intentions to them despite being mere lines and curves. Similarly, in the movie *Taare Zameen Par*, the nine-year-old boy named Ishan squeezes his life into the pages of a flipbook. As Ishan's art teacher flips through the pages of his drawing book, a visual narrative unfolds, depicting his past experiences. The story of Ishan unravels within seconds. The placement of the characters within the white canvas was enough to convey many complex emotions. This evocative visual narrative, created by flipping a book, possesses the immense potential to profoundly touch our core and stir our emotions. Despite the absence of dialogue or meaningful gestures, everything was suggested by intentionally leaving white space between the characters portrayed in the flipbook, creating a deliberate division. The white space implies the gradual fissures that have formed within familial relationships. The white beyond its denotative meaning as the colour "white" carries profound significance, enough to bring tears to the face of the protagonist and the viewers alike.

A work of art, whether a visual or a verbal expression, can trigger our emotions and activate our sentiments. Art possesses immense potential to move us in ways that other

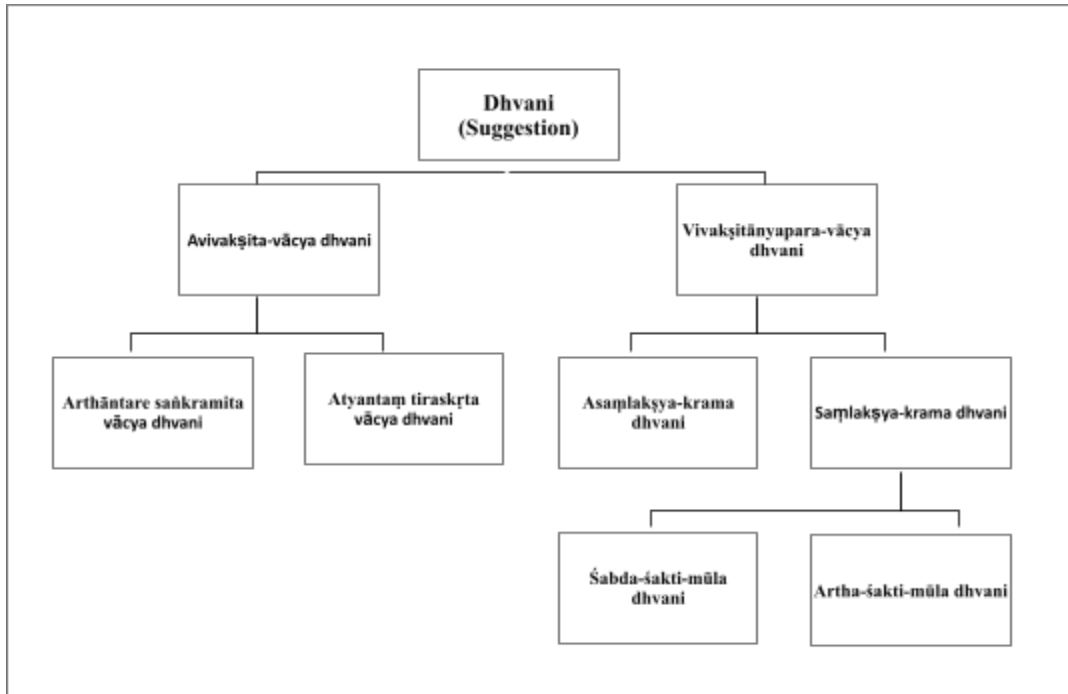
forms of communication cannot. It can make us laugh, cry, think, and even feel deeply. By developing the tools of classical Indian aesthetics, this chapter suggests a novel approach to understanding and appreciating aesthetic expressions based on *dhvani* theory. The meaning of the visual expression is not just limited to its denotative level. Many paintings demonstrate that visual expressions move beyond literal interpretation. Artists utilise colours, shapes, and lines to create specific moods and evoke certain emotions. In performances, actors employ their bodies, voices, and costumes to create a captivating and immersive experience for the audience. Through body movements, gestures, and glances, actors bring life into characters on stage. Similar to verbal expressions, it is not necessary to denote everything through visual expressions. In visual expressions, ideas can be denoted, indicated, or even suggested. The viewer then interprets these suggestions and creates their own meaning from the visual expression. Often, paintings can instantaneously convey emotions as well. Although this chapter focuses theoretically on visual expressions, it aims to provide a broader perspective by incorporating performing arts into the spectrum of visual expressions. The *dhvani* theory serves as a powerful tool for understanding and appreciating a work of art. It enables the audience to perceive beyond the literal meaning and explore the emotional dimension of a work of art. This chapter attempts to apply the canons of *dhvani* theory in the study of visual and performing arts. It primarily examines visual and verbal expressions in literature and performing arts. By comparing and analysing various art forms, the aim is to provide insights into the understanding of *dhvani* theory and thereby make the process of art appreciation an easy sail.

The Theory of Suggestion

Ānandavardhana, in his monumental work *Dhvanyāloka* (Light on the doctrine of suggestion), theorised the concept of *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion) and formulated the philosophy of aesthetic suggestion⁵⁸. According to Ānandavardhana, the essence of a literary work does not solely reside in the literal meaning of the words but rather in the

⁵⁸ Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* is one of the most important and influential theories of poetics in the Indian tradition.

suggested meaning evoked by the suggestive potential of words. Ānandavardhana classifies aesthetic suggestion into two types: *avivakṣita vācya dhvani* and *vivakṣitānyapara vācya dhvani*⁵⁹. Literary expressions in which the literal meaning is not intended and is aesthetically taken over by the suggested meaning are called *avivakṣita vācya dhvani*, and literary expressions where the literal meaning is intended but the literal meaning is subordinated due to the presence of aesthetically appealing suggested meaning are called *vivakṣitānya-para-vācya dhvani*⁶⁰. Ānandavardhana further systematically classifies suggestive expressions into various varieties and subvarieties. Ultimately, he concludes that listing all the subvarieties of *dhvani* is almost impossible. However, the divisions he has provided in *Dhvanyāloka* are extensive enough to offer a comprehensive understanding of the different types of suggested meanings.

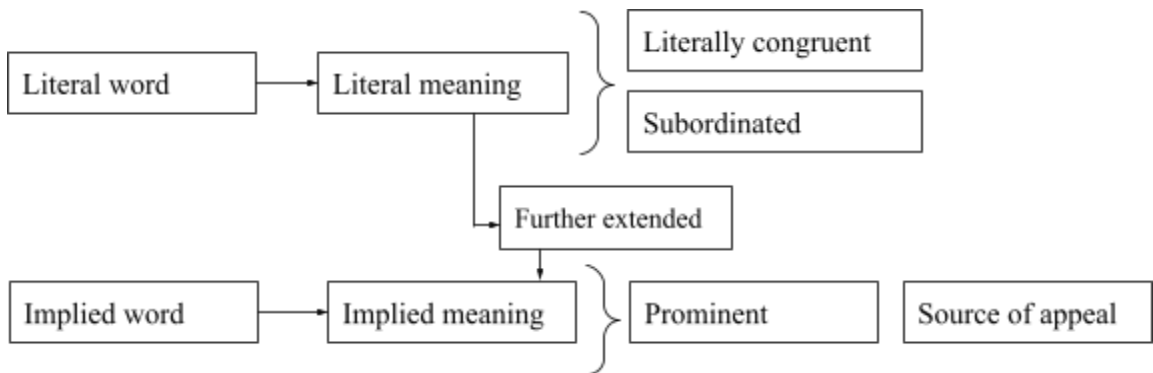


⁵⁹ “*sa cāsāv avivakṣita-vācya vivakṣitānyapara-vācyaś ceti dvividhaḥ sāmānyena / (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 39)*”.

⁶⁰ “*avivakṣita-vācya-vivakṣitānya-para-vācyaiva dhvanir dvi-prakāraḥ prakāśitaḥ (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 39)*”.

***Vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* (the suggestion of extended denotation)**

*Vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*⁶¹ is a type of aesthetic suggestion where the literal meaning of a word or a phrase is intended by the author but is overpowered by a more aesthetically appealing suggested meaning. In this type of *dhvani*, the literal meaning remains compatible with the existing context. Hence, the literal meaning is not discarded; instead, it is subordinated to allow more profound and aesthetically appealing suggested meaning to take over. Later, the suggested meaning becomes the focus for interpretation and appreciation, while the literal meaning recedes into the background. In such literary expressions, authors utilise the suggestive potential of words and meanings in *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* to imply facts or figures that are not explicitly stated. The suggested meaning becomes the source of a greater appeal in *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*. However, in such literary expressions, the reader grasps the suggested meaning only after comprehending the literal meaning of the expression. As the suggested meaning is derived from the denotative meaning, *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* is also referred to as *abhidhāmūla dhvani*. It is a type of suggestion that derives from the literal meaning of words but extends beyond the literal meaning to establish deeper and more profound meanings. *Vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* shows that, while remaining literally congruent with the existing context, it is possible to evoke suggested meanings that go beyond the literal meaning of the expression.



⁶¹ intended (*vivakṣhita*) and referring to something else (*anya para*)

Vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani in literary expression

*śikharīṇi kva nu nāma kiyac ciraṃ
kim abhidhānam asāv akarot tapaḥ /
taruṇi yena tavādhara-pāṭalaṃ
daśati bimba-phalaṃ śukaśāvakaḥ || DhvA_1.13 ||*

(Ānandavardhana 1974, p. 28)

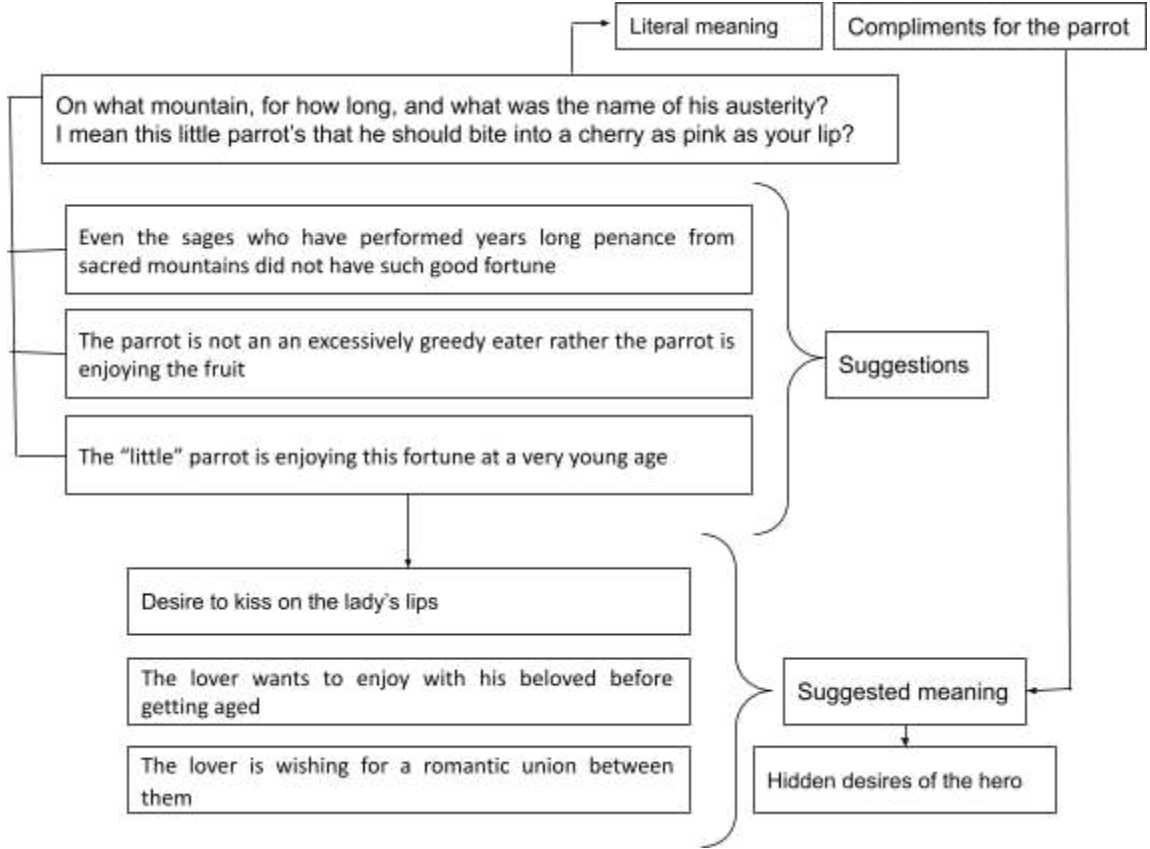
On what mountain,
for how long,
and what was the name of his austerity?
I mean this little parrot's
that he should bite into a cherry
as pink as your lip?

(Ānandavardhana 1990, p.173)

The lady holds a parrot in her hand. She is talking to that parrot while her lover is observing their interaction. The parrot bites a *bimba* fruit that is pink like her lips. Intrigued, the lover questions where the parrot carried out its penance and for how long it took to bite that *bimba* fruit. Even the sages who have performed years-long penance on sacred mountains did not attain such good fortune within such a brief span of time. At first glance, from the literal meaning, the lover seems curious about the mountain where the parrot carried out its penance. However, both the lady and the reader are aware that the parrot did not do any penance to attain any benefits. Here, the lover wants to enjoy with his beloved and cleverly conveys his desire to enjoy the lady's company. Indirectly, the lover is trying to flatter his heroine. By highlighting how swiftly a young parrot acquired such good fortune, the lover implies that he should not have to wait excessively to savour the lady's companionship.

In the literary expression, there is no literal incompatibility. Though the parrot is biting a *bimba* fruit that is pink like her lips, there is no direct comparison between these actions at a physical level. The parrot is literally biting into a cherry, and there is no direct

indication that the hero wants to literally bite his beloved's lips. At least, that is not the literal meaning conveyed by the literary expression. Hence, there is no literal incompatibility in the expression "that he should *bite* into a cherry". The parrot, as a bird, might be literally "biting" the cherry fruit. Hence, the act of "biting" the cherry is literally and semantically congruent with respect to the parrot. Therefore, there is no hindrance in finding the literal meaning of this literary expression. This expression cannot be considered an example of a metaphorical indication since there is no incompatibility in the literal meaning. However, the literal meaning extends to suggest further meanings, and the suggested meaning takes precedence and overpowers the literal meaning. In this expression, the parrot is not portrayed as an excessively greedy eater; instead, the parrot is depicted as enjoying the fruit. Here, the word "little" suggests that the parrot is too young to enjoy this fortune. Similarly, the lover also desires to enjoy the company of his beloved while he is still youthful. The lover indirectly expresses his desire to be with the heroine, comparing himself to a young parrot who can relish the fruit of love at a young age. He wishes for a romantic union with this young girl. Hence, he questions how long he must wait to have a union with her, hinting at his longing to unite romantically with the young lady. Therefore, the literal meaning is not discarded in this literary expression. Instead, the literal meaning is intended, and it is further extended to convey the suggested meaning. This example showcases how the suggestive potential of words and meanings can create multiple layers of meaning. While the literal meaning of the expression is clear, the suggested meaning adds complexity and nuance. The literary expression suggests something beyond what is literally expressed; precisely, the suggested meaning conveys the hero's desire to be with the lady. The suggested meaning of the expression deepens the reader's understanding of the hero's feelings towards the heroine.



Based on the process of apprehending the literal meaning and the suggested meaning, *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* is divided into two varieties: *asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani* and *saṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*⁶². The suggested meaning is produced immediately along with the literal meaning in *asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*, or the suggested meaning is produced with an apparent sequence between the literal and the suggested meanings in *saṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*⁶³.

***Asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani* (The suggestion of undiscerned sequence)**

Asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani is a type of suggestion in which the suggested meaning is realised immediately alongside the literal meaning without any noticeable sequence. In literary expressions with *asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*, the literal meaning, although

⁶² “*asaṃlakṣya-kramoddyotaḥ krameṇa dyotitaḥ paraḥ / vivakṣitābhidheyasya dhvaner ātmā dvidhā mataḥ // DhvK_2.2 //* (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 40)”.

⁶³ *mukhyatayā prakāśamāno vyaṅgyo 'rtho dhvaner ātmā / sa ca vācyārthāpekṣayā kaścīd alakṣya-kramatayā prakāśate, kaścīd krameṇeti dvidhā mataḥ || DhvA_2.2 |*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 40)

intended, leads to a different meaning. However, there is no apparent time gap between comprehending the literal meaning and perceiving the suggested meaning in literary expressions with *asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*. The suggested meaning of the literary expression occurs almost simultaneously with the literal meaning itself. Although there is a sequence in which the suggested meaning is perceived, the transition from the literal meaning to the suggested meaning is rapid and imperceptible, resembling a flash of light. As it acts so swiftly, the sequence of transition from the literal meaning to the suggested meaning is not perceived, or it eludes our attention. Consequently, the suggested meaning is understood nearly at the same time as the literal meaning is expressed. Thus, *asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani* is generally perceived as the suggested meaning being conveyed without any apparent sequence. Ānandavardhana holds the view that aesthetic bliss (*rasa*) cannot be expressed directly through words but must be suggested in order to be truly relished⁶⁴. When aesthetic bliss and sentiments (*bhava*) are suggested in literary and artistic compositions, they are immediately apprehended from the expression of *vibhāva* (determinant or cause), *anubhāva* (consequent or effect) and *vyābhicāribhāva* (transitory emotions) belonging to the relevant *sthāyibhāva* (dominant emotion)⁶⁵. However, *rasa* becomes a distinct aspect of *dhvani* only when it is revealed as a predominant component through suggestion.

***Asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani* in literary expression**

Ānandavardhana introduces the domain of *dhvani* with an invocation to Narasimha, the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu. The invocatory verse of the *Dhvanyāloka* serves as an example to illustrate *rasadhvani* in literary expressions.

svacchā-kesariṇaḥ svaccha-svacchāyāyāsītendavaḥ /
trāyantāṃ vo madhuripoḥ prapannārti-cchido nakhāḥ //

(Ānandavardhana 1974, p. 2)

⁶⁴ “*rasa-bhāva-tad-ābhāsa-tat-prasānty-ādir akramaḥ / dhvaner ātmāṅgi-bhāvena bhāsamāno vyavasthitaḥ // DhvK_2.3 //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 40)

⁶⁵ “*rasādir artho hi saheva vācyenāvabhāsate / sa cāṅgitvenāvabhāsamāno dhvaner ātmā //*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 40)

“Of Madhu’s foe
Incarnate as a lion by his will,
May the claws, which put the moon to shame
In purity and shape
By cutting off his devotees’
distress Grant you protection.”

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 43)

The literary expression is in the form of an invocation, stating, “Let Vishnu, who has taken the form of Narasimha, protect you all”. The literal meaning that is directly expressed in the literary expression is a request for the nails of the enemy of demons that put the moon to shame in purity and shape to grant protection. The word “self-adopted” implies that Lord Vishnu is not bound by the principle of *karma* and acts of his own volition. He incarnated as a lion not to satisfy anyone else’s desire or as a result of any past actions but out of his own free will. He has the freedom to assume any form. Therefore, driven by his own interest in vanquishing the demon and safeguarding his devotees, he took the form of a lion. The word ‘Madhu’s foe’ suggests that he is the enemy of demons, and as such, he is always active in warding off any calamity that befalls his devotees. Furthermore, his nails possess the capacity to destroy evil. Those nails tear away the miseries and sufferings of people who seek refuge in him. It is not possible for ordinary nails to tear away the miseries of people, but his nails have the capacity to remove the miseries of his devotees. His powerful claws are equivalent to the ten avatars of Vishnu, capable of taking away the grief of his devotees. However, these nails cause distress to the moon due to their form and purity. The moon, with its uneven spots, looks impure, pale and devoid of charm. Thus, the moon feels inferior when compared to the flawless nails of Narasimha. The nails are ten in number, flawless, and capable of relieving the distress of devotees⁶⁶. This description of nails and moon suggests the figure of speech known as contrast (*vyatireka*). The new moon also feels tormented when compared with the nails. Hence, in this literary expression, two figures

⁶⁶ *Prapannārti*: it removes the suffering of people who come to him

of speech named fancy (*utprekṣā*) and denial (*apahnuti*) are also suggested. Foremost of all, the beauty of the expression lies in the suggestion of the heroic sentiment (*veera rasa*). The poet is deeply immersed in devotion towards the form of Narasimha. However, the poet is not directly praising the qualities and characteristics of Narasimha or praising them in an explicit manner. Instead, the poet portrays the nails of Narasimha as capable of destroying demons. The heroic sentiment is suggested “by our apprehension of energy, an apprehension furnished by the association of God, who is constantly exerting himself on behalf of mankind, with the characteristics of clarity of purpose and diligent resolve” (Ānandavardhana, 1990. p. 44). There is no apparent sequence in which the heroic sentiment is suggested in this literary expression. It is suggested instantaneously. The suggested *rasa* can elevate a work of art and is more captivating than the directly expressed ones. This literary expression encompasses all three types of suggestions, namely *vastu dhvani* (where a fact is suggested), *alaṅkāra dhvani* (where a figure of speech is suggested), and *rasa dhvani* (where sentiments are suggested).

***Samlakṣya-krama dhvani* (The suggestion of discerned sequence)**

Samlakṣya-krama dhvani is a type of suggestion in which the suggested meaning is perceived after a momentary interval from perceiving the literal meaning. In such literary expressions, the literal meaning and suggested meaning do not appear at the same time. Instead, the literal meaning is initially perceived, and then, through a noticeable sequence of events, the suggested meaning gradually emerges. The suggested meaning is produced with an apparent sequence, and the sequence in which the suggested meaning is registered or perceived is clearly distinguishable. This engages the reader in the process of discovery and revelation, enhancing the aesthetic experience and the overall impact of the literary expression.

***Samlakṣya-krama dhvani* in literary expression**

*evaṃ vādini devarṣau pārśve pitur adhomukhī /
līlā-kamala-patrāṇi gaṇayāmāsa pārvatī //*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p.82)

While the heavenly visitor was speaking,
Parvati, standing with lowered face beside her father,
counted the petals of the lotus in her hand.

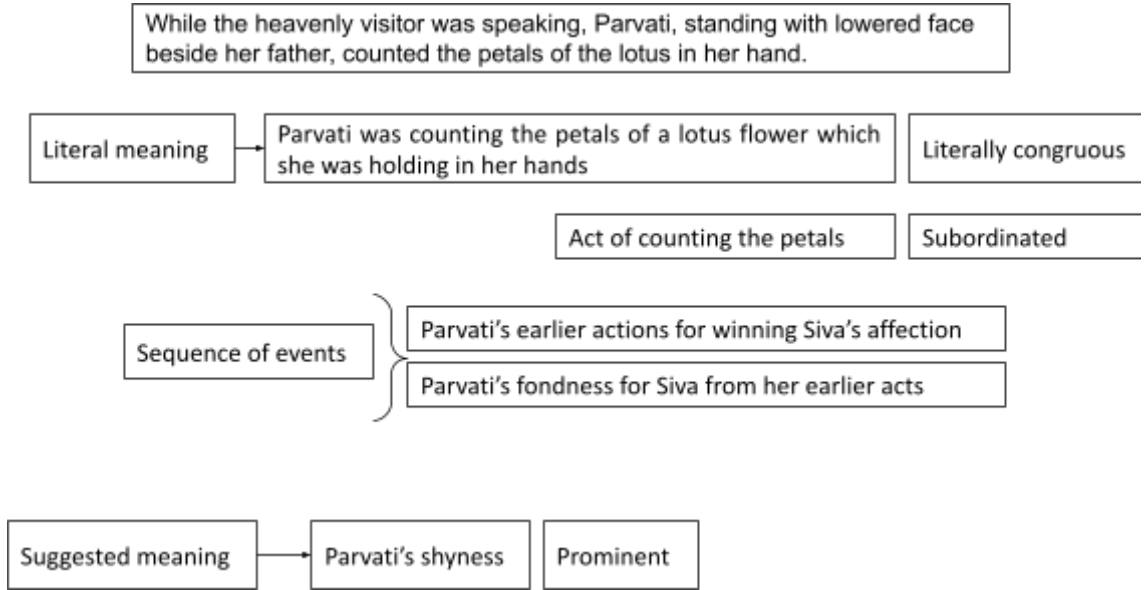
(Ānandavardhana 1990, p. 311)

The literary expression exemplifies the concept of *saṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*, where the suggested meaning is perceived after a noticeable sequence of events. Parvati is standing beside Narada with a lowered face and counting the petals of the lotus flower she is holding while Narada is speaking to Parvati's father. The literary expression given above is in no way literally incongruous. Once the expressed meaning of Parvati counting the petals of a lotus flower is conveyed, it can then be linked to earlier actions of Parvati in her pursuit to win Siva's affection. After hearing about a proposal regarding her marriage with Siva, the idea that Parvati is feeling shy needs to be conveyed. Rather than expressing her emotion directly, it is suggested. But before moving to the suggested meaning, Parvati's fondness for Siva from her earlier acts is taken into consideration. Hence, through a noticeable sequence of events, the literal meaning leads to the suggested meaning of the expression. The suggested meaning, which is conveyed through the sequence of events, is Parvati's feeling of shyness. Instead of expressing her shyness directly, it is suggested through her engagement in the task of counting the petals. The literary expression relies on the reader's understanding of Parvati's fondness for Siva and her previous actions to win his affection.

The use of lotus petals and the act of counting them are interchangeable elements that contribute to the overall suggested meaning. In this literary expression, the predominant suggestion is the transitory emotion of shyness, while the act of counting lotus petals serves as a subordinate element that supports the suggested emotion. Parvati performs this action as a means to conceal her shyness, and counting petals is just one alternative act to hide her true feelings. Even if the name of the flower is changed, the suggestions

conveyed by this literary expression will not be lost. The lotus can be replaced with some other flowers without compromising the suggested meaning. Similarly, the act of counting petals can be substituted with similar actions such as drawing circles with her foot, fiddling with a flower, biting nails and so on or any other suitable actions that are “appropriate” for the given context. Even with these changes, the suggestion of Parvati’s transitory emotion of shyness would still be preserved. The suggested information about Parvati’s feeling of shyness is conveyed by a detailed description of the situation rather than by relying on a fixed set of words. There is an apparent sequence of events evident from the context, and the realisation of the suggested meaning is not immediate as in the case of *asamlakṣya-krama dhvani*.

The act of “counting petals” can be interpreted in various ways. The same act of “counting petals” can be associated with reasons such as boredom, inattention, or naivete and is not necessarily limited to shyness. However, her state of mind and emotion depicted in the act is identified as shyness only after a momentary interval by connecting it to past actions and contextual cues. Thus, there is an apparent sequence of events from understanding the literal meaning of counting petals to recognising the suggested meaning of shyness. Though the transitory emotion of shyness is suggested without the use of any literal word, this literary expression does not fall under *asamlakṣya-krama dhvani*. *Asamlakṣya-krama dhvani* involves the immediate realisation of the suggested meaning without an apparent sequence. In this literary expression, there is no specific description of *vibhāva* (determinants) and *anubhāva* (consequent) that evoke *rasa* or *bhava*. Hence, the suggested meaning of Parvati’s shyness cannot be considered an example of *bhava dhvani* or *rasa dhvani*. There is a perceived interval between the presentation of the *anubhāva*, which is counting the lotus petals and the suggestion of the *vyābhicāribhāva*, which is shyness. Contrastingly, there is no perceived interval between the suggestion or expression of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *vyābhicāribhāva* and the suggestion of the *rasa* in *asamlakṣya-krama dhvani*. Since the realisation of the suggested meaning is not immediate, the literary expression is categorised under *samlakṣya-krama dhvani*. This is a subtle distinguishes between *asamlakṣya-krama dhvani* and *samlakṣya-krama dhvani*.



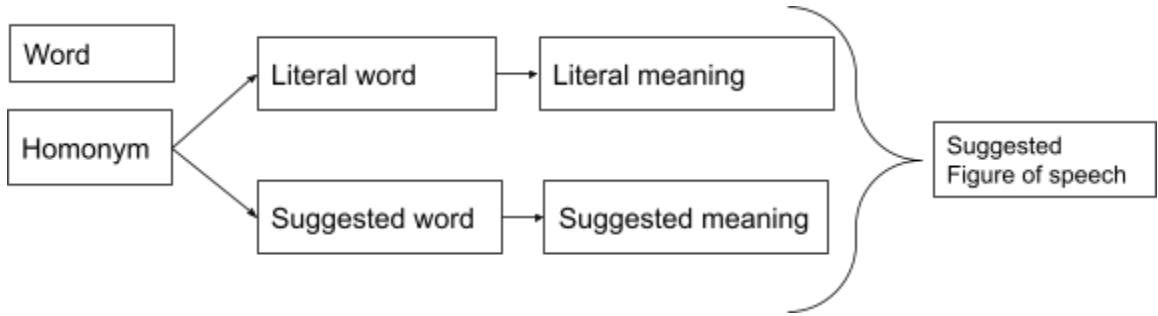
In *saṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*, there is no literal incompatibility. The literal meaning gets further expanded or extended through the suggestive potential of words and meanings. Based on the suggestor, *saṃlakṣya-krama dhvani* is further divided into two sub-varieties: *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* (phonic-based suggestion) and *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani* (meaning based suggestion)⁶⁷.

***Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* (Phonic-based suggestion)**

Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani is a sub-variety of *dhvani* where a figure of speech is suggested primarily due to the suggestive potential of words used in a literary expression. When the meaning of a particular object is fixed by the context, and if there is another figure of speech that is suggested, it is called *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the literal meaning of the words or expressions is complete and self-sufficient. Thus, the literal meaning remains independent of the suggested meaning. In this case, words are considered to be chiefly responsible for conveying the suggested meaning. An additional meaning is implied due to the suggestive potential of words.

⁶⁷ “*krameṇa pratibhāty ātmā yo 'syānusvāna-sannibhaḥ / śabdārtha-śakti-mūlatvāt so 'pi dvedhā vyavasthitah // DhvK_2.20 //*” (Ānandavardhana 1974, 70).

Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani occurs when the context establishes a specific meaning for the literary expression, and yet another figure of speech is suggested due to the suggestive potential of words. *Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* is said to be based on the suggestive potential of the words because the suggestion relies on the use of words that are capable of conveying two different meanings. In this sub-variety of *dhvani*, words play a significant role in conveying the suggested meaning. This capacity of certain words to convey more than one meaning at a time facilitates *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. It adds depth, complexity, and layers of meaning to a literary expression through the suggestive potential of words.



***Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* in literary expression**

*khaṃ ye 'tyujjvalayanti lūna-tamaso ye vā nakhodbhāsino
 ye puṣṇanti sarorūha-śriyam api kṣiptābja-bhāsaś ca ye /
 ye mūrdhasv avabhāsinaḥ kṣiti-bhṛtām ye cāmarāṇām śirām-
 syākrāmanty ubhaye 'pi te dina-pateḥ pādāḥ śriye santu vaḥ //*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 82)

May both those feet (also, rays) of the Sun to your welfare conduce;
 Both they that dispel darkness (also, sin)
 And they that profusely illumine the sky (also, the different senses);
 They that partake of (or enhance) the beauty of lotuses
 They that shine on the heads of earth-supporting mountains (or kings);

Also they that rest on the heads of heavenly gods (or the tips of chowries).

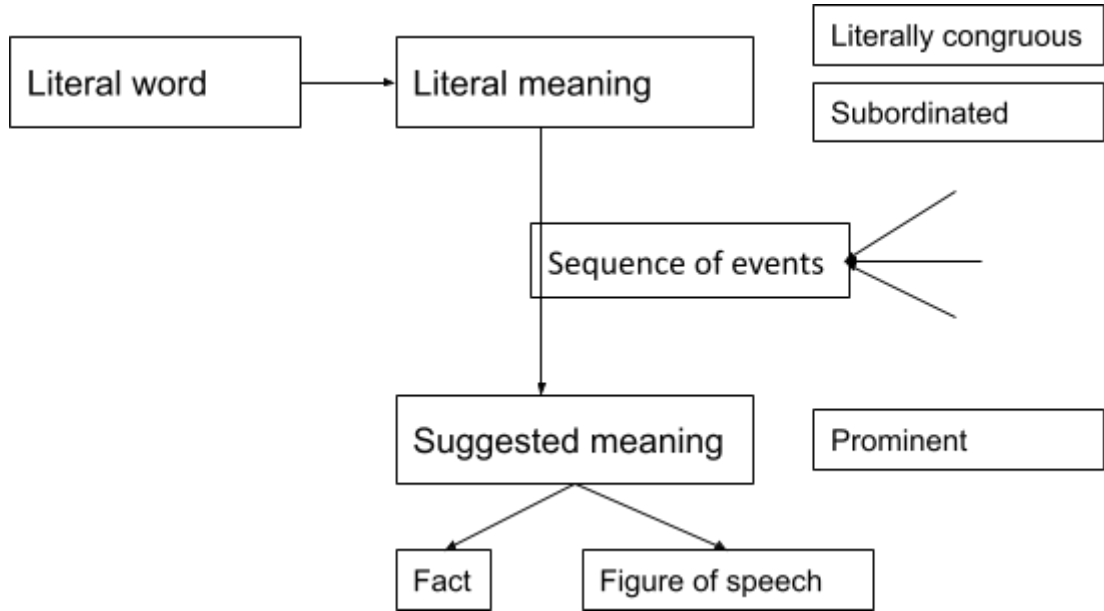
(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 82)

The literal meaning of the expression is, “Let the sun god’s feet (*dina pateḥ pādāḥ*) lead you to prosperity (*śriye santu vaḥ*)”. Even the toenails of the sun god’s feet shine brightly (*nakha: udbhāsino*) and dispel sins (*lūna-tamaso*). Those feet put the beauty of lotus to shame (*kṣipta abja-bhāsas*). Besides, those feet are even capable of resting on top of benevolent immortals⁶⁸ (*ye ca amarāṇām śirām-syākrāmanty*). The poet concludes by saying, “Let those feet lead to prosperity”. In this literary expression, *pādāḥ* is a homonym. *Pādāḥ* means “rays” as well as “feet”. With respect to rays, the suggested meaning of the expression is that the rays of the sun (*pādāḥ*) dispel darkness (*lūna-tamaso*) and illuminate the entire sky (*khaṃ ye ’tyujjvalayanti*). They light up the whole sky by removing the darkness. They nourish the beauty of lotus flowers (*ye saroruhāśriyam api puṣṇanti*). Those rays of the sunshine, even on the top of the mountains (*ye kṣiti-bhṛtām mūrdhasv avabhāsinaḥ*). Thus, the poet says the sun is the lord, even for the benevolent gods, and can even rule over them. The sun is the supreme lord. Here, there is a comparison between rays (*upameya*) and feet (*upamāna*). The poet suggests that rays (*kirana*) are superior to feet (*cāmarā*) because rays are capable of lighting up the sky, whereas feet are not. The sun’s rays nourish the beauty of lotus flowers, whereas the feet do not. The feet have tried to win over benevolent gods by stepping over them. Feet have to physically step over the heads of the gods to show their supremacy, whereas the rays simply light up the mountains. The feet have to demonstrate supremacy in a more explicit way, whereas, for rays, it is easier. The comparison between the feet and rays highlights the poetic suggestion that rays are more powerful and capable than feet. In this way, the *vyatireka ālankāra* (figure of contrast) is suggested in this literary expression, and the figure of speech is not literally expressed. On a similar note, just like the suggestive potential of words, meanings also possess suggestive potential. Because of the suggestive potential of meaning, layers of further meaning are added to a literary work, enhancing the aesthetic beauty of a literary expression.

⁶⁸ *devas*

***Artha-śakti-mūla dhvani* (Meaning-based suggestion)**

Artha-śakti-mūla dhvani is a sub-variety of *dhvani* where a fact or a figure of speech is implied due to the suggestive potential of meaning. In *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the suggested meaning is not directly expressed by any specific word; rather, it is implied through the suggestive potential of meaning. The suggested meaning is not expressed by the denotative power of words but rather due to the suggestive potential of meaning.



***Artha-śakti-mūla dhvani* in literary expression**

taṃ tāṇaṃ siri-sahoara-raaṇāharaṇammi hiaam ekka-rasam /
*bimbāhare piāṇaṃ nivesiaṃ kusuma-bāṇena //*⁶⁹

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, 92)

⁶⁹ *tat teṣāṃ śrī-sahodara-ratnāharaṇe hṛdayam eka-rasam /*
bimbādhare priyāṇāṃ niveśitaṃ kusuma-bāṇena //

Their hearts once bent on theft of those gems born of the same womb as Sri were transferred by the god of flower arrows to the *Bimba-like* lips of their women.

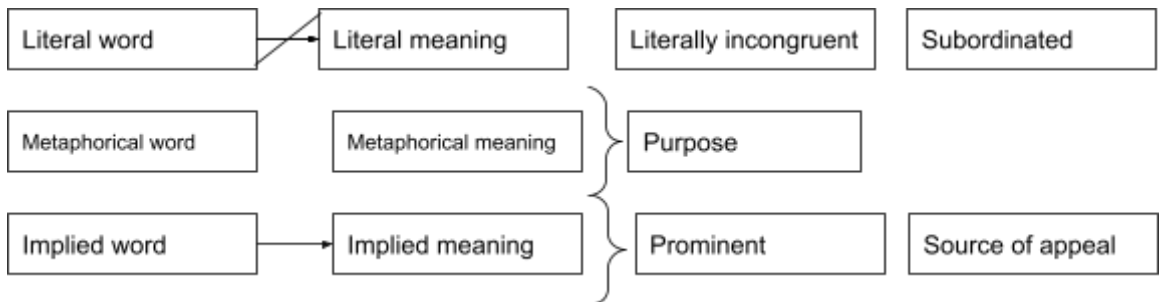
(Ānandavardhana, 1990, 335)

The literary expression narrates the conquest of the demons by Manmatha, the god of love. The demons were solely focused on stealing some precious gems from heaven, which were formed during the churning of the ocean along with the goddess Lakshmi. The expression “born of the same womb as Sri” emphasises the high value and preciousness of those gems. The hearts of the demons were filled with all kinds of evil thoughts and wicked intentions. Thus, their actions were entirely driven by negative thoughts, and they were wholly occupied with the thought of abducting these precious gems. To protect the gems, Manmatha redirected the focus of the demon’s heart from their wicked thoughts of stealing the gems to thoughts of beautiful women. Precisely, he placed the heart of those demons, which were consumed by the desire for gems, onto the lips of their lovers. This is an example of *atisayokti* (hyperbole). Although the figure of speech hyperbole is directly expressed, as it literally mentions that Manmatha moved the focus from the wicked thoughts on robbing the gems to that of ladies, it suggests a drastic change in their desire and priorities. However, after this shift in focus, gazing at ladies and kissing their lips became the highest life goal for these demons. Their hearts burned with the fire of physical affection. They were willing to forgo the precious gems and became entirely focused on the allure of the lips of those ladies. A figure of speech called simile (*upama*) is also suggested in this literary expression, without any word literally expressing the figure of simile. The similarity between the *bimba-like* lips and the finest gems is suggested. The resemblance of the women’s lips with the finest of all gems is suggested, highlighting the value placed upon these lips. The focus of the demons on their lovers parallels their earlier obsession with gems. The suggested simile carries more significance and aesthetic appeal than the expressed figure of speech, hyperbole. In addition to suggesting the figure of speech, Manmatha’s victory over the demons is also implied.

In all the literary expressions aforementioned literary expressions, the literal meaning remained compatible with the context. However, due to the suggestive potential of words and meaning, additional meanings were suggested. In contrast, there are expressions where the literal meaning is incompatible, and instead, an associated meaning gets metaphorically indicated. In those expressions, the suggested meaning is derived from the metaphorical meaning.

***Avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* (Indication-based suggestion)**

Literary expressions where the literal meaning of the expression is shifted to a different associated meaning or entirely set aside due to the literal incompatibility are known as metaphorical expressions. If the suggested meaning is more aesthetically prominent than the metaphorical meaning, such expressions are known as *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*. In *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, the suggested meaning is derived from the metaphorical meaning of the expression. The literal meaning is incongruous in such literary expressions, and the suggested meaning is perceived only after comprehending the metaphorical meaning. Thus, *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* is also known as *lakṣaṇāmūla dhvani*. There is a specific purpose in using literally incongruous words in literary expressions, and by identifying that purpose, the suggested meaning of the expression can be generated. While the unintended literal meaning may arise and contribute to suggestion in *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, literal incompatibility at the denotative level often goes unnoticed, and only the suggested meaning gains prominence.



***Avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* in literary expression**

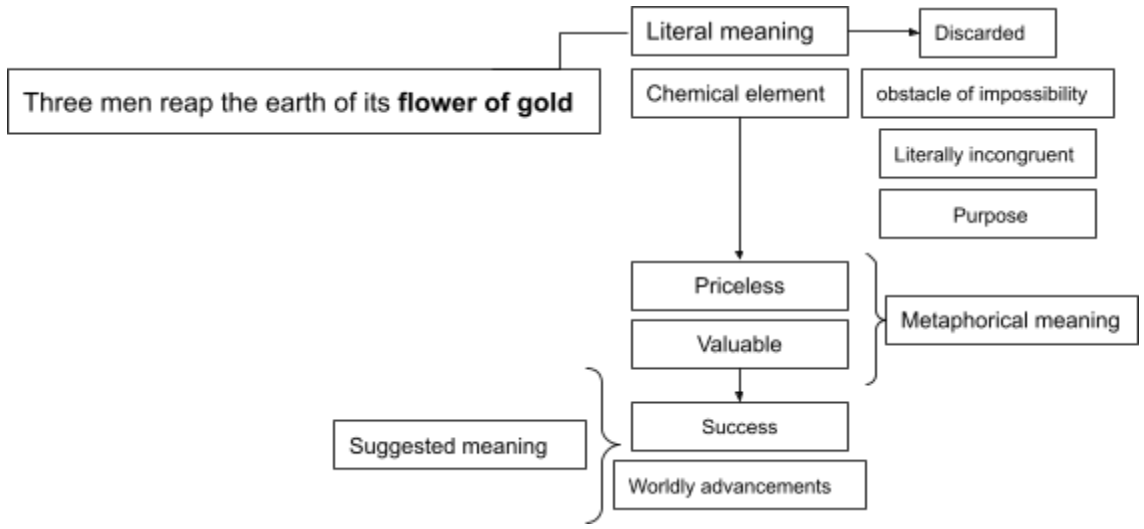
*suvarṇa-puṣpāṃ pṛthivīm cinvanti puruṣās trayah /
śūraś ca kṛta-vidyaś ca yaś ca jānāti sevitur //*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 28)

Three men reap the earth
of its flower of gold
the warrior, the man of learning,
and he who knows how to serve.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 173)

The literary expression portrays three individuals pursuing three different professions. One is a warrior, a man of learning, and the other is the one who serves others. Each of them is focused on reaping the “flower of gold”. The literal meaning of “gold” refers to a chemical element. Flowers of gold cannot be reaped from the earth. The expression “three men reap the earth of its flower of gold” is literally incongruous, as the literal meaning of “gold” is incompatible. Consequently, the literal meaning is abandoned due to the obstacle of incompatibility, and a metaphorical meaning is indicated instead. The expression “flowers of gold” serves as a metaphor for extracting valuable or precious things from the world. It is used in the literary expression to suggest the success and worldly advancement achieved by three individuals. The warrior represents strength and courage. He is capable of reaping the flower or gold through conquest and battles. The man of knowledge represents knowledge and wisdom. He might reap the flowers of gold by using his cognitive abilities and the wise application of his knowledge. The third individual is skilled in serving others, so he must be reaping the flower of gold by helping others and being empathetic towards others. Rather than directly praising the warrior, the man of knowledge, and the servant, their achievements are conveyed indirectly. The poem highlights three different paths that individuals can take, leading to the acquisition of valuable rewards.



ഉണ്ടുകരിവൂർക്കുന്നു മാമതെന് വിഖ്യാതമായിടും
 പണ്ടുപണ്ടേ മികച്ചെഴും ദിക്കിൽ നിന്നു വരുന്നിതാ ഞാൻ
 കണ്ടുവാനോടൊത്തു നീ കാലവിദ്യകളുഭ്യസിപ്പാൻ
 വേണ്ട കൃപയുണ്ടാകണമേ സൽഗുരോ മഹനീയരൂപാ
 ഇണ്ടുണ്ടാകമെന്തകനെ മണലിലെഴുതിയാലോ
 കൊണ്ടുവരേണം ആയിരം നാഴി പൊൻപൊടി പൊന്തകനെ

uṅṭukarivūrkkunnu maṭamatenna vikhyātamaaīṭuṁ
paṇḍupaṇḍe miḱaṭṭeḷum dikkil ninnu varunnita njaan
kaṅṭubhavānōṭu nī kālavidyakalabhyasippān
vēṅṭa kṛpayuṅṭākaṇamē salgurō mahanīyarūpā
iṅṭaluṅṭākumenmakane maṇalilezuthiyaalō
kōṅṭuvarēṅṅām āyiram nāḷi pōnpoṭi ponmakane

It is famously known as the "Undukarivoorkunku" monastery
 From all famous directions, I come seeking you
 Having seen you, I yearn to learn the knowledge of time with you, dear
 Lord.
 May your grace be bestowed upon me, O glorious form
 There will be sorrow, my son, if it is written in the sand

Bring a thousand measures of golden dust, golden son

(Peethambaran, 2017, p. 82)

The speaker in the *thottam* expresses a strong desire to receive blessings from the deity. The speaker believes that being in the presence of the deity will grant them the opportunity to acquire knowledge and wisdom. The speaker humbly requests the grace and guidance of the deity, indicating a desire for prosperity and spiritual enrichment. They acknowledge the transient nature of worldly sorrows and seek spiritual understanding and growth. The speaker believes that being in the presence of the deity will grant them wisdom and a deeper comprehension of the passage of time. They express a longing for divine favour and assistance in their spiritual journey. A deep reverence for the divine and a quest for spiritual enlightenment is shown in these words. The literary expression suggests that there will be sorrow if his words are written in sand, but the divine command is to bring a thousand measures of golden dust. This implies the need to prepare one's mind before embarking on a spiritual quest. However, the speaker acknowledges that this path will not be easy. Metaphorically, it can be seen as a call to offer devotion, faith, and surrender to God in order to mitigate the sorrows that may come their way. These lines emphasise the power of devotion and trust in God during hard times. By maintaining unwavering faith and dedication, one can find solace and overcome the challenges that are part of the transient nature of life. In this expression, "Bring a thousand measures of golden dust, golden son", the phrase "golden son" is literally incongruous. However, it suggests that for the deity, the devotee is precious as gold. It implies that whatever the person is searching for lies within themselves. Instead of searching for wisdom externally, if they seek it within, it will be more rewarding. The finely powdered golden dust within him suggests that he is already a blessed soul.

Avivakṣita-vācya dhvani is further divided into two categories: *arthāntare saṅkramitam* and *atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani*. In *atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani*, the literal meaning is wholly incompatible and is entirely set aside. In this type of *dhvani*, the literal meaning is discarded as it cannot align with the context. On the other hand, in *arthāntare*

saṅkramita vācya dhvani, the literal meaning is disregarded, and it requires partial modification, leading to a shift in meaning towards a different associated meaning.

***Arthāntare saṅkramitam* (Suggestion of progressive denotation)**

In *arthāntare saṅkramitam*, the literal meaning is not entirely set aside but instead modified and shifted towards an associated meaning. The literal meaning is hindered due to its incompatibility. However, instead of rejecting or abandoning the literal meaning completely, the literal meaning undergoes partial modification to overcome the literal incompatibility and align with the context. This shift in meaning enables the expression to convey a deeper meaning while retaining a connection with its literal meaning.

***Arthāntare saṅkramitam* in literary expression**

*yaḥ prathamah prathamah sa tu tathā hi hata-hasti-bahala-palalāṣī /
śvāpada-gaṇeṣu siṃhaḥ siṃhaḥ kenādhari-kriyate //*

(Ānandavardhana 1974, p. 266)

He who is first is first indeed.

And so the lion,

eating the mounded meat

of his slaughtered elephant,

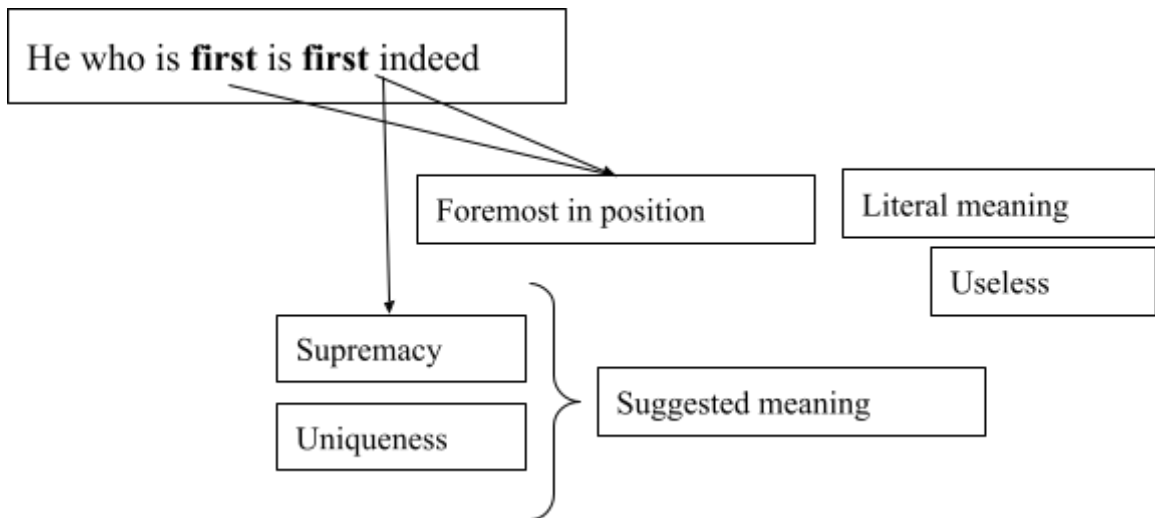
is a lion to other beasts.

Who is there that can put him down?

(Ānandavardhana 1990, p. 679)

The literal meaning of the literary expression is, "the individual who is in the first position is truly the first". It highlights the significance of being in the first position. A mighty lion showcases its dominance by single-handedly killing an elephant and selectively consuming the choicest part of its flesh from the thick meat. It refrains from consuming the meat of animals that were not hunted by its own prowess. A lion sets its

sights on a single target when it is hungry and consumes only as much flesh as it requires. These characteristics reinforce the lion’s status and distinguish it from other four-legged animals. It is due to these characteristics that, among numerous other four-legged animals, only a “lion” is called a ‘lion’. In this literary expression, the second “lion”, *simhaḥ*, is the suggestor. Here, the literal meaning of “lion” is unintended. The literal meaning of the second “lion” is partially discarded in this context as it is irrelevant at the literal level. The focus is not on the actual animal itself but on the associated qualities it represents. It is shifted to qualities such as bravery, valour, and strength. The lion is indeed brave because it can overpower and defeat giant elephants, which are almost triple times its size. In this expression, the word “lion” is expanded to encompass various suggested qualities.



ആരണർപോലുമൊന്നറിയാതെ പാർത്തുഴലുന്ന നിന്റെ
 ആദിയുമനവും മറിമായവും ബലവിക്രമങ്ങൾ
 കാരണമേതുമൊന്നറിയാതെ മൂലരിൽ മൂലനാം ഞാൻ
 കാംക്ഷ മുഴുത്തു നിൻ ചരിതാമൃതം പുകഴൊന്നു പോറ്റി
 പാരമേശ്വരൻ പിഴയെ പൊറുത്തു തുണക്കവേണം

(Peethambaran, 2017, p. 82)

āraṇarpēālumeānṇariyāte pārttuḷalunna ninre

*ādiyumantavum marimāyavum balavikramaṅṅaḷ
kāraṇamētumeānnariyāte mūḍharil mūḍhanām ṅān
kāṅkṣa muḷuttu nin caritāmytam pukalēānnu pēārri
pārameḷunna van piḷaye peāruttu tuṅakkavēṅam 3*

Even Brahmins, without knowing, wander in life
Your beginning and end, delusion or mighty acts,
without knowing any apparent reason,

I, fool among the fools

With ripened desire, am praising your history
Assist me by forgiving this big mistake

The *thottam* begins by highlighting the idea that even individuals with extensive knowledge can wander aimlessly in life without grasping the real purpose of life. The speaker admits that he himself is one among the fools, lacking complete knowledge or understanding of the beginning or end of life. They are confused as to whether their experiences are mere illusions or significant events meant to test human will. They belong to the group of people who blame their fate without perceiving the greater picture or, the greater plan that life is yet to reveal. When the word “fool” is used for the first time, it addresses a group of people who simply chant the name of god without understanding the real purpose behind them. Among them, the poet considers himself a fool among fools because he does not do any action to please God. Beyond the literal meaning of the words, the *thottam* reflects a sense of humility and self-awareness as the speaker contemplates the mysteries of life and the speaker’s own limitations. Despite their limited understanding of the world and its mysteries, the speaker expresses a genuine and ardent desire to praise the deity who possesses higher power. The speaker acknowledges his foolishness in not doing what others commonly practise. He has a sincere longing to sing the praises of the deity, driven by a sense of devotion towards him. He is profoundly longing for blessings of the deity to attain a broader perspective on

life. The speaker humbly requests forgiveness for any mistakes they may have made in their attempt to praise the deity. This plea itself carries a significant implication, suggesting the speaker's awareness of their own limitations, and this plea comes as a genuine request seeking guidance. The *thottam* conveys a sense of humility as the speaker willingly acknowledges the limitations humans have in comprehending the mysteries of life. However, they still maintain a sincere desire to seek meaning and answers to the unacknowledged questions of life, making them different from the rest. It serves as a plea for guidance in the pursuit of understanding and recognition, acknowledging their limitations along the way.

***Atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani* (The suggestion of totally discarded denotation)**

In the *atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani*, as the name indicates, the literal meaning is entirely incongruous. In such literary expressions, the literal meaning is discarded as the literal meaning is unintended. Even so, the literal meaning is shifted to an associated meaning for a specific purpose. In *atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani*, the word departs from its conventional meaning and metaphorically indicates a different meaning that is not conventionally associated with it. In such literary expressions, the unintended literal meaning holds little significance. Instead, it is the metaphorical meaning that gives rise to the suggested meaning. By employing unconventional and unexpected associations, these expressions can offer a fresh perspective, challenge conventional narratives, and stimulate new ideas. The suggested meaning derived from the metaphorical expression becomes the centre of attention and carries the aesthetic appeal forward.

***Atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani* in literary expression**

*gaganam ca matta-megham dhārā-lulitārjunāni ca vanāni /
nirahaṅkāra-mṛgāṅkā haranti nīlā api niśāḥ //*

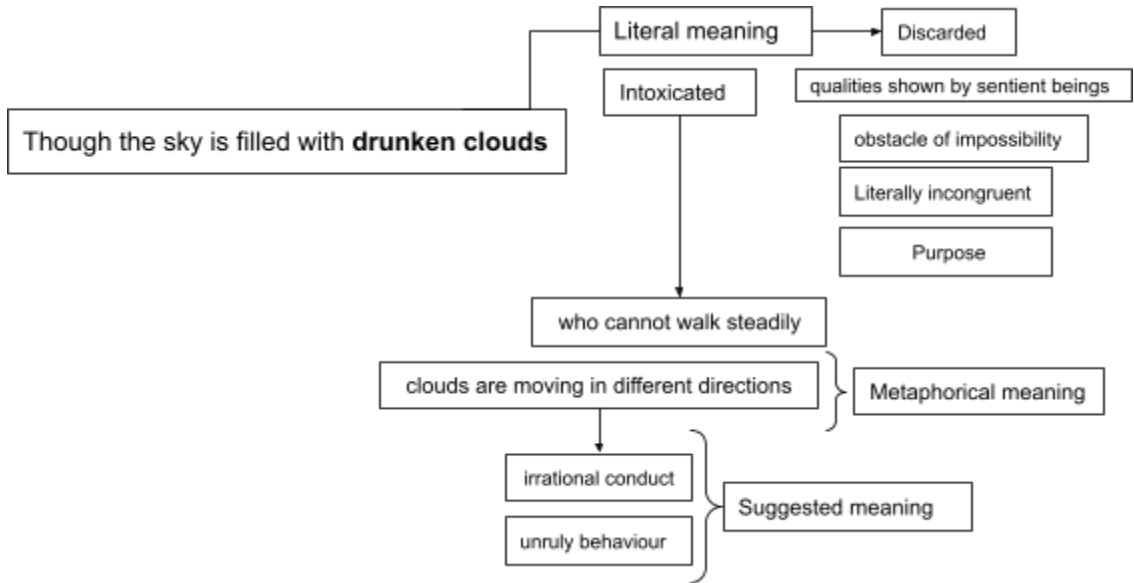
(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 40)

Though the sky is filled with drunken clouds

And the woods with Arjunas thrashing in the downpour,
these black nights too when the moon has lost its pride
carry of my hearts.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 211)

The literary expression depicts a monsoon night. Generally, literature portrays moonlit nights as arousing passion in lovers. However, the speaker asserts that even the opposite of such nights, where the moon is not visible, have the potential to evoke passion in lovers. In this literary expression, the words drunk (*matta*) and lost in pride (*nirahankāra*) are attributed to non-sentient objects, which is incongruous at the literal level. Here, the word “drunken” is literally incongruous. The literal meaning of “drunk” is “a person under the influence of alcohol or is intoxicated”. But it is literally incompatible. Hence, through a metaphorical extension, these qualities associated with an intoxicated person are attributed to the clouds. The clouds, just like a drunkard who cannot walk steadily, move in different directions. It exhibits erratic movement and behaviours, suggesting irrational conduct and lack of control. The speaker’s heart is captivated not by the bloomed Arjuna trees but also by the trembling Arjuna trees that are shaken by the downpour. When the sky is overcast with clouds, the night will be darker. The speaker conveys that not only nights illuminated by the rays of the moon are capable of arousing passion, but even these dark moonless nights of the monsoon can evoke longing. Instead of simply stating that these are the nights of monsoon where the moon is not visible, the poet uses the expression “the moon has lost its pride”. Here, “without pride” (*nirahankāra*) is applied by secondary usage to convey that the moon is not shining brightly. By depicting a moonless night and using the expression “the moon has lost its pride”, the poet suggests the absence of moonlight and diminished radiance. It suggests the lack of lustre, and as the moon is dependent on the night to attract people, it suggests the subservience of one who has literally lost their pride.



മിന്നിയേറി ചിതറി തിയിലറും കണ്ണിനെയും
 മന്ദഹാസാ നിജയവക്രതാ ദന്തജാല പ്രഭയം
 ഉന്നതമാം തുളുമ്പൻ മീശയും താടി വളരും
 സുന്ദരമാമാറു പിഞ്ചം നിരന്ന പൊതുടിയും
 മന്ദിരങ്ങൾ വിറയ്ക്കുമാർ മുഴങ്ങും വായുടിയും

(Peethambaran, 2017, p. 88)

minniyēri chithari tiyyalarum kaṅṅinayum
mandahāsā nijayavakrathā dantajāla prabhayum
unnathamām thuḷumpaṇ mīśayum tāṭi vaḷarum
sundaramāmāru pincaṁ niranna ponmuṭiyum
mandiraṅṅaḷ viṛaykkumār muḷaṅṅum vāyuṭiyum

The eyes that roar in anger flickered and scattered
 A unique curve with a slow smile, with a light from a set of teeth
 A tall, bushy moustache and beard will grow
 A beautiful chest filled with golden hair
 The voice that could shake a building

The *thottam* offers a glimpse into the nature of the deity Karivilli, describing various characteristics and features. The intense and powerful gaze of the deity is depicted as roaring with anger. However, the *thottam* also highlights a significant change in expression from fierceness to a pleasing demeanour by highlighting the unique curve and slow smile on the face. The *thottam* focuses on the physical appearance of the Karivilli, with mention of the tall and bushy moustache and beard that contribute to the deity's majestic look. The deity's chest is described as beautiful, adorned with golden hair. The *thottam* also mentions the deity's voice, which is capable of shaking a building, signifying the authority, strength, and power of the deity. Collectively, these descriptions in the *thottam* paint a vivid picture of the deity, evoking feelings of reverence and admiration. In this *thottam*, the expression "the eyes that roar in anger" is literally incongruous. The literal meaning is unintended, and it is entirely set aside. However, certain similarities exist between the two. Roaring is often associated with expressing anger and strength; similarly, the intense rage and fury of the deity are reflected in her eyes. Eyes cannot literally roar, but *thottam* suggests that just as a roar can silence enemies, the mere glance of the deity is enough to silence his enemies.

The literal, metaphorical, and suggested meanings are intricately employed in literary expressions. As illustrated through examples, words certainly have suggestive potential. However, the suggestive potential is not limited to words but extends beyond words to include nonverbal cues like tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions. These non-verbal elements can convey ideas, even without the use of words. For instance, a single suggestive gesture can communicate a message without any word being uttered. Ānandavardhana, while differentiating the function of denotation from implication, recognises the suggestive potential in various forms of expression, including musical notes and gestures. He highlights the suggestiveness of sentiments in music. Ānandavardhana acknowledges that even in the absence of auditory signals, gestures possess the ability to suggest ideas like literary expressions⁷⁰ (Ānandavardhana, 1974).

⁷⁰“prakaraṇādy-avacchedena vyañjakatvaṃ śabdānām ity anumataṃ evaitad asmākam / kiṃ tu tad-vyañjakatvaṃ teṣāṃ kadācit svarūpa-viśeṣa-nibandhanamkadācid vācaka-śakti-nibandhanam / tatra yeṣāṃ vācaka-śakti-nibandhanam teṣāṃ yadi vācya-pratītim antareṇaiva svarūpa-pratītyā niṣpannam tad

He says, “The specific gesture (viz. side-glance) of the heroine has been described by the great poet in a way suggestive of unique charm” (Ānandavardhana, 1974). For example, the literary expression, *evaṃ vāḍini devarṣau pārśve pitur adhomukhī / līlā-kamala-patrāṇi gaṇayāmāsa pārvatī //* can be enacted on a stage. Even without the words, the suggested meaning can be conveyed through appropriate gestures, glances, and facial expressions. In this enactment, the literal meaning of Parvati counting the number of petals gets subordinated, and the suggested meaning can be elevated to a higher level through the skilful use of appropriate gestures and facial expressions. However, the suggestive potential of any form of expression depends on the context in which it is used, as the same gesture carries different meanings in different contexts.

The Subtle Strokes: Dhvani in Visual Expressions

Similar to verbal expressions, visual expressions also hold the suggestive potential to communicate ideas and emotions without explicitly expressing them. While verbal expression focuses on spoken or written words, visual expressions like painting concentrate on colours, composition, brush strokes, and various artistic techniques to communicate the literal meaning. However, visual expressions do not necessarily rely on explicit meaning; they can also have implicit meanings. In visual expressions, suggested meanings derive from the denotative or metaphorical meanings conveyed through various elements, such as the choice of colours or the texture of brush strokes. The suggested meaning in painting invites viewers to interpret and engage with the work of art on a deeper level. The suggested meaning through visual expressions helps the viewers to traverse through the hidden narratives and emotions associated with the scene portrayed on the canvas. In paintings, the choice of colours can evoke specific feelings and sentiments. Even in visual expressions, suggested meaning is essential as it allows artists to convey complex emotions and thoughts that may be challenging to express solely through denotative meaning. It invites the viewer to interpret and engage with the work of art in a meaningful way. Each viewer may perceive and interpret the painting in their

bhavaṇ na tarhi vācaka-śakti-nibandhanam / atha tan-nibandhanam tan-niyamenaiva vācya-vācaka-bhāva-pratīty-uttara-kālatvaṃ vyaṅgya- pratīteḥ prāptam eva /” (Ānandavardhana, 1996. 161)

unique way, thereby adding richness and depth to the artwork. In the next section, various artistic expressions are analysed based on the different varieties of suggested meanings. The analysis of various aesthetic expressions based on the varieties of suggested meanings aims to further enhance our understanding and appreciation of the artwork.

Vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani in paintings



⁷¹ In paintings portraying Lord Krishna, it is common to find the depiction of a dark-skinned figure wearing a yellow garment and peacock feathers on his head. Once the male figure in the painting is identified as Krishna, it becomes easy to recognise the female figure sitting beside Krishna as Radha. There is a broken garland on Krishna's neck, and some scattered beads are seen all over the bed. Both characters are portrayed as partially naked. Krishna is lying in a very relaxed position, with his glances fixed on Radha. On the other hand, Radha is looking down, displaying her coyness. There are no visual inconsistencies at the denotative level. The broken garland and scattered

beads on the bed suggest the culmination of some romantic play between Krishna and Radha. Even Krishna's glance suggests the intensity of their romance. The broken garland and scattered beads can also be interpreted as the disruption of harmony or any interruption in a celebration. However, in this context, they signify the culmination of a romantic scene between the hero and the heroine. The denotative meaning of the broken garland image is not discarded in this painting, but the suggested meaning, indicating a culmination scene, takes precedence. Once the suggestion is conveyed, the placement of the garland or the specific number or colour of beads on the bed becomes less important.

⁷¹ Goswamy, B. N. (1986). *Essence of Indian art*. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.
Goswamy, B. N. [LalitKalaAkademi Chandigarh]. (2022, 10). B. N . Goswamy- The World of The Indian Painter- Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi)[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyRUz4YvM2o>]. Retrieved from URL

Such details are subordinated. The denotative meaning of the painting is further extended to give the suggested meaning, and the suggested meaning becomes prominent. Hence, this painting is an example of *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*.

Asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani in paintings



⁷² The motif of the third eye on one of the characters' forehead denotes that the character portrayed in the painting is Lord Shiva. The character standing next to Lord Shiva is Parvati. Nandi, the bull, is also beside Shiva and Parvati. A tiger's skin is placed on the floor, and pieces of wood are arranged to create a fireplace. A white conch is

a motif that is commonly associated with Lord Vishnu. The presence of the white conch and lotus flower helps to identify the person standing on the right side of Lord Shiva as Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu's consort, Garuda, stands next to him. This painting induces immediate laughter in any informed observer by connecting some commonly known facts about the characters depicted (Goswamy, 1986). The painting portrays an unexpected visit of Lord Vishnu with his consort, Garuda, to meet Lord Shiva. Garuda, being the natural enemy of snakes, causes the snake to retreat instantly from Shiva's body. The snake hastily seeks refuge in a burrow to escape from the Garuda. A small portion of its tail is clearly visible near the hole of the burrow. The immediate withdrawal of the snake left Shiva nearly naked. Parvati notices this awkward situation and swiftly turns her face backwards. However, out of concern for her husband's modesty, she offers a small piece of cloth to cover his naked body. Once the literal meaning of the painting is clear, the humorous scene unfolds seamlessly. The suggestion of comic sentiment (*hasya rasa*) is

⁷² Goswamy, B. N. (1986). *Essence of Indian art*. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

instantaneous. An informed viewer can grasp the situation at a glance, as the common knowledge regarding the enmity between the snake and the eagle is widely known.

Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani in paintings



⁷³ Pichhwais are elaborate devotional paintings painted on textiles that mainly illustrate the narratives related to Krishna. Other than their artistic appeal, the purpose of Pichhwais is to narrate the tales of Krishna through paintings. This painting depicts the image of two girls standing next to a tree, engaged in plucking flowers. The background is a slightly darker shade of blue. Some flowers are falling from the tree, creating a scene that appears

ordinary at first glance. In this painting, Krishna's consorts gather flowers. However, if we connect the ends of falling flowers, the hidden outline of Krishna with crossed feet and a flute in hand becomes apparent. The image of Lord Krishna is subtly concealed within the falling flowers, blending with the dark black background (Goswamy, 1986). In this painting, the image of Krishna is not explicitly expressed; instead, it is suggested. The use of a particular word is the leading cause for suggestion in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In this painting, instead of the sound, the *rekha* (line) gives a double meaning. The use of a particular design or shape is the primary source of suggestion here. The significance lies in the form of the outline, and any alterations to its shape would disrupt the suggestion. The expressed meaning of flowers falling from the tree is not negated; instead, along with the expressed meaning, the suggested meaning is apprehended. The flowers themselves, as they shower towards Krishna, collectively form the image of

⁷³ Goswamy, B. N. (1986). *Essence of Indian art*. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.
Goswamy, B. N. [CSMVS Mumbai]. (2022, 10). The Things We Do Not See by Prof. B.N. Goswamy (2nd CSMVS Centenary Lecture)[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OHN7O1ZTxM>]. Retrieved from URL

Krishna. It is not the individual flowers that hold importance; instead, once the image of Krishna is unveiled through *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the emphasis shifts to the image of Krishna being showered with love by his devotees, who are his beloved ones. The image of Krishna receiving their love becomes prominent.

Artha-śakti-mūla dhvani in paintings



⁷⁴ This painting, titled “Radha’s Confusion”, belongs to the *Rasikapriya* series and is a Pahari painting dating back to the first quarter of the 19th century (Goswamy, 1986). The blue skin tone and the peacock feather on the head of the character help the viewers to identify the character portrayed as Krishna. The lady beside Krishna represents Radha. Krishna and Radha have spent the night together in Krishna’s chamber. The presence of a peacock on the terrace and the colour of the sky indicate that it is early morning. Hoping to get back to her home as quickly

as possible, Radha hastily puts on her clothes and prepares to leave Krishna’s chamber. In her haste and confusion, she mistakenly wears Krishna’s yellow garment (Goswamy, 1986). Although it may seem like a simple act, the yellow garment carries deeper meanings. Krishna notices the yellow-coloured upper garment on Radha’s shoulder and realises that if she were to leave wearing his garment, the villagers would get to know about their secret meeting. The yellow garment (*pitambar*⁷⁵) is well-known in the village as Krishna’s attire. In response, Krishna calls her back, stretching his arms. The full appreciation of this painting requires an attentive and informed viewer who can unveil the underlying meaning. The denotative meaning of the image does not stop at expressing some familiar scene from the lives of the characters portrayed; it extends beyond that. If one fails to notice the yellow garment on Radha or fails to identify the context, the work

⁷⁴ Goswamy, B. N. (1986). *Essence of Indian art*. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

⁷⁵ yellow coloured dress of Krishna

of art cannot be thoroughly enjoyed. If anyone misses the minute details of this image, they can satisfy themselves by considering it an ordinary painting of Radha and Krishna. The context of the painting and some background information is essential for getting the suggested meaning from the painting. Hence, this is an example of *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, where prior knowledge and background information are necessary for grasping the suggested meaning. While all the elements are present to suggest the sentiment of humour (*hasya rasa*), with Krishna and Radha as the stimulus (*ālabhana vibhāva*), the yellow garment as the excitant (*uddīpana vibhāva*), and Radha's hurried movement as the consequent reaction (*anubhāva*), the apprehension and appreciation of the humour are not spontaneous. It goes through a noticeable sequence of events. Here, one must have prior knowledge about the yellow garment (*pitavasthra*) of Krishna to fully grasp the suggested meaning of the painting. Therefore, this painting is considered an example of *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*.

Kaḷam ezhuth

Kaḷam ezhuth is an art form that is intricately connected with Sarppantullal, with both art forms being performed in tandem. Artists use five types of powders to paint the *kaḷam*. Performers make a small hole in an empty coconut shell and fill it with natural colour powders to draw the *kaḷam*. They acquire the skill of painting with powders through continuous training and practice. A group of four members take approximately three hours to finish drawing the *kaḷam*. There are around forty-one types of *kaḷam*. Nāga kaḷam, Santāna kaḷam, Nāgarājāv kaḷam, Anantasayana kaḷam, Bhūtha kaḷam, Nāgakanya kaḷam, and Nāgayakṣi kaḷam are the popular ones.

Engaging the Senses: Visual and Verbal Expressions in the Performing Arts

Performing arts encompass a wide range of visual and verbal expressions. Performers rely on visual expressions such as body movements, gestures, facial expressions, costumes, stage design, and props, in addition to verbal expressions like spoken words, to communicate a narrative and to evoke various emotions. Performers utilise verbal and

visual expressions to communicate ideas and convey abstract concepts. This integration of visual and verbal expression is important in performing arts to create a more immersive and impactful experience for the audience. Visual expressions in a performing art refer to the physical movements, postures, costumes, and other visual attributes that contribute to a performance. Together with verbal expressions, visual expressions work in harmony to engage the audience and evoke emotional responses. In the realm of performing arts, the Nāṭya Śāstra, an ancient Indian treatise on performing arts, holds dramatic performance in the highest regard among all arts. Abhinavagupta considers dramatic performances to be the most potent means of evoke *rasa*. Performers can communicate ideas, evoke emotions, and create a dynamic space using verbal and visual expressions. The presence of *dhvani* in verbal expressions is demonstrated in the earlier sections. Visual expressions also communicate non-verbal messages, adding depth and nuance to a performance. Such a combination of visual and verbal expressions paves the way for creating a captivating and profound aesthetic experience. These expressions also hold cultural significance, particularly in the performances of indigenous and ethnic communities. These art forms have been present since time immemorial and have played a significant role in engaging and entertaining a large group of audiences. These art forms often reflect unique traditions, customs and belief systems, serving as a means of cultural expression for these communities. Passed down through generations, these performances contribute to a rich tapestry of artistic heritage.

Exploring Ethnic Performances

Ethnic art forms bring life to myths and legends, carrying deep significance for the communities they belong to. These performances often possess a sense of authenticity and share an intimate connection with the land, people, and ancestral wisdom. They embrace a varied range of art forms, including music, dance, theatre and ritualistic practices. These performances often use elaborate costumes, vibrant choreography, rousing rhythms, and captivating oral narratives. Though many ethnic performances are not extensively documented, they play a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, particularly those based on oral traditions. When we consider the combination

of visual and verbal expressions in ethnic performances, a rich tapestry of artistic elements can be seen. The fusion of verbal and visual expressions creates an immersive experience for both the performers as well as to the audience. In ethnic performances like *Tirayāṭṭam*, visual expressions take precedence. While there are invocatory songs like *Thottampātu*, they are usually presented separately, either at the beginning or end of a performance. During the main performance, visual expressions dominate, encompassing vibrant costumes, lively choreographed foot and hand movements, and carefully selected props.

Vivakṣitānyapara-vācyā dhvani in Tirayāṭṭam

Dārikavadam is a *Tirayāṭṭam* performance based on the myth of *Kāli* and *Dārika*. There is a short scene in the performance that serves as a subplot within the larger narrative, in which a local priest is being disturbed by some insects. The scene depicts a local priest in a small sacred grove, where he performs rituals and *pūja* at a small shrine. After offering some flowers to the deity, he takes a short nap. In the course of his sleep, the priest is disturbed by some insects that bite and bother him. Despite his attempts to shoo them away, he is unable to find peace and is forced to abruptly wake up from the middle of his sleep. Although it may appear insignificant or even comical to a specific audience, this particular scene holds a deeper meaning for those who are familiar with the context. Some audience laughs out loud after seeing the situation of an old man being disturbed by insects. However, for an informed audience, this short scene is placed between the main acts to provide a glimpse into future acts. The disturbance in the priest's sleep implies that his carefree mind has been disturbed. Here, the sleep of the priest implies peace of mind. Previously, his concern was focused solely on taking care of a small shrine by performing some sacred rituals. But now, some external objects have entered his territory and created some nuisance. The scene is repeated again at a later point in the performance when the priest's sleep is disrupted by the entry of the demon *Dārika*. The short scene of insects disturbing the sleep of an old priest was carefully placed in the beginning to give an indication of the future events that are about to happen. When some insects disturbed the priest in the middle of his sleep, his peaceful state of mind was

disturbed. Similarly, the whole peaceful rhythm of the world was disrupted when Darika entered the Earth. There is also a comparison between Dārika and the troublesome insects. The parallel between the insects and Dārika is drawn, highlighting their insignificance when compared to the priest and the powerful goddesses Kāli. Though insects disturbed the sleep of the priest, after waking up, he killed all of them. Similarly, Kāli took her birth to kill Dārika. When compared to the priest, insects are insignificant creatures. Likewise, when compared with Kāli's might, Dārika is insignificant. Just as the priest quickly dispatches the insects after waking up, Kāli takes birth to vanquish Dārika. In this short scene, there is no literal incongruence; the denotative meaning is further extended to the suggested meaning. The placement of this scene at the beginning of the performance provides a glimpse into future events and sets the stage for the war and conflict that will unfold in the later part of the performance. In this way, the short scene of the priest being disturbed by insects serves as a subtle indicator of the subsequent events, connecting the disruption of the priest's peace of mind to the disruption of the peaceful rhythm of the world with the entry of Dārika. The juxtaposition of seemingly inconsequential elements with significant plot points adds depth and layers of meaning to the performance for an informed audience.



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Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani in Tirayāṭṭam

Gestures and glances that have multiple meanings are very common in visual expressions. The act of raising one hand can signify a request for attention, punishment,

⁷⁶ Dārikavadam Tirayāṭṭam

greeting, a symbol of solidarity, or a symbol of surrender, depending on the context and cultural background. In the case of Nāgakāli tira, such a gesture can be identified. The performer recreates the movements and actions of the snake in order to depict the snake (*nāga devata*), but certain gestures carry multiple meanings and move beyond the literal meaning. One such gesture involves the performer making a hissing sound and leaning forward. The meaning of this gesture can vary depending on the context. The same action can be classified as a positive or negative action depending on the cultural background of the audience. Some audiences perceive the strike of the snake as a blessing. As the performer's head snaps forward rapidly, it is believed that the snake god has blessed them. On the other hand, some interpret the same gesture as a negative gesture, prompting them to offer appeasements to snakes to nullify any harm that might befall them. Gestures take the role of *śabda* in performances. For a connoisseur, this gesture is strategically placed within the performance to instil fear. Before this gesture occurs, the percussionists intensify their beats, gradually increasing the volume and tempo. Then, slowly, the beats gradually subside, leading to a moment of complete silence. Spectators are all at the peak of tension, waiting to know the following action. At that moment, the performer makes this hissing sound, leans forward, and then suddenly strikes. The sudden strike incites fear in the audience, creating a heightened emotional response. The same gesture can have two different meanings. The first meaning, indicating the strike as a blessing, is contextual. However, the second meaning instils fear in the audience. When they interpret the hissing gesture as part of the performance representing the movements and actions of a snake, then it evokes *ayanaka rasa*. It is important to note that genuine aesthetic appreciation requires transcending personal emotions and biases. Absorption into one's own personal happiness or sadness is one of the defects of spectators. As some spectators try to interpret these gestures based on their own individual situations to justify their individual causes, they cannot enjoy aesthetic bliss. They miss out on the aesthetic bliss the performance aims to evoke. In contrast, a connoisseur can perceive the dual nature of the god, evoking comfort and fear at the right moments.



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The Universal Language of Dhvani in Aesthetic Expressions

Literary expressions turn out to be aesthetically pleasing with transformative potential based on the power of suggestion in words and meanings (Anandavardana, 1990). In literary compositions, expressions with aesthetic suggestions (*dhvani*) are often employed to transcend the limitations of denotation. Consequently, in aesthetic expressions with suggestions, the literal meaning of the expressions may shift to an allied meaning, be entirely abandoned, or be overpowered or overshadowed by a different meaning. The potential to generate more than one meaning enhances aesthetic expressions in multi-layered interpretative works of art. However, the suggestive potential is not limited to the words of verbal expressions. It encompasses a wide range of non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice and more. These non-verbal expressions, including the visual expressions, can convey subtle nuances in the implied meaning that can complement or even overshadow the explicit denotative meaning. Ethnic performances also involve the use of gestures and symbols that bear cultural or spiritual significance. These performances create a space for the audiences to delve into the deeper layers of meaning and encounter a sense of transcendence or transformation. Within the context of ritual-based ethnic performances, a creative transformation takes place, inviting audiences to connect with the symbolic implications of gestures and objects that surpass their literal meanings. Furthermore, artworks, be it visual or verbal expression, employing the suggestive potential, have the ability to present familiar objects in a defamiliarised form, trivialising objects that seem to be extremely important,

⁷⁷ Naagakali Tirayāttam

providing tremendous significance to what appears to be strikingly trivial and capturing supreme beauty in what seems to be unappealing. Similarly, the use of aesthetic expressions with suggestions introduces novelty to a work of art. Great works of art explore these nuances of suggestion to reflect the peak of creativity. The theory of *dhvani* is not confined to any specific art form; it is universally applicable when *dhvani* becomes a form of expression. It revolves, reverberates and resonates across creative spaces.

Chapter 4

Paradox in Performance

Art forms are expressions of symbolic capacity that are finely tuned to diverse cultural contexts. Each culture possesses its own unique array of art forms, styles, and practices that are reflective of its history, traditions, and belief systems. Yet, artistic expression is nearly a universal aspect of human culture. The broad spectrum of artistic styles, techniques, and genres created by artists from various cultural backgrounds and historical periods stands as a testament to the boundless creativity and imagination exhibited by human beings. Though art is ubiquitous, its appreciation is not universally shared. In a representative case, some individuals can and do listen to classical music for hours, while others may not or cannot derive enjoyment from it (Hargreaves & Adrian, 2008; Friedenber, 2019)⁷⁸. Similarly, in the case of modern painting, some people appreciate and derive pleasure from them, while others cannot or may not possess the inclination or attempt to interpret or appreciate them (Silvia, 2016). While exposure and familiarity with a particular form of art influence one's aesthetic judgements, these judgements are ultimately shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive and cultural factors.

Different cultures may exhibit their own unique stylistic and technical preferences, which can affect how they appreciate various forms of art. Beyond these stylistic and technical variations, the meaning and significance of an art form can also vary across cultures. For instance, traditional art forms in one culture may be highly valued and appreciated, while they may be less appealing to individuals from different cultural backgrounds. However, acquiring a basic understanding of an artwork and progressing towards a more sophisticated evaluation and interpretation requires the cultivation of a different set of skills and knowledge. Familiarity with artistic styles and movements, along with the understanding of cultural and historical contexts in which a work of art is created, can certainly nourish aesthetic sensibilities and help us to dissect and appreciate the nuances

⁷⁸ Similar is the case with other genres of music as well, see; Greenberg (2022).

of an artwork. Even so, analysing and interpreting a work of art demands a distinct set of skills and expertise compared to the skill set required for perceiving and understanding tightly anchored expressions or openly anchored linguistic expressions. This implies that the process of analysing a work of art differs significantly from merely comprehending its essential features and characteristics. To delve into the deeper layers of meaning hidden within a piece of art, one must be willing to look beyond the superficial details provided by the literal meaning of the expression. Ultimately, appreciating and interpreting a work of art requires cognitive structures as well as internal temperaments evolved from the cultural context.

This chapter analyses the presumption that there are different levels of appreciation in art. It discusses the factors that contribute to the individual variations in art appreciation; individual variation despite the fact that human beings share the basic cognitive structure that makes art appreciation possible for the species. It examines the complexity and diversity of aesthetic responses to unfamiliar cultures, which can range from admiration to discomfort or even rejection. This chapter argues that there are cognitive structures and cultural elements behind aesthetic appreciation. It demonstrates how these two aspects are intertwined in the process of aesthetic appreciation. To illustrate this point, the chapter focuses on antagonistic expressions, where the implicit meaning of an aesthetic expression contradicts the explicit meaning of the expression. It focuses on a particular case of aesthetic expressions with suggestions, where the literal meaning of the expression is semantically opposite to the suggested meaning of the expression. Such situations, where two seemingly contradictory ideas co-exist together, may occur based on the suggestive potential of the words or meanings. Specifically, this chapter analyses the interaction between the conventionally encoded literal meaning of a literary expression and the implicit meaning of an aesthetic expression incorporating “use-driven modulations and manipulations” (Camp, 2006). In accordance with this, the chapter discusses the influence of the spectator’s cultural background on art appreciation and the process of meaning-making. Further, this chapter examines the nature and dynamics of these aesthetic interactions across cultural boundaries. It also highlights the significance

of context, encompassing social, historical, and political factors, in shaping meaningful cross-cultural aesthetic interactions.

The Paradox in Literary Expressions

Authors use a variety of stylistic techniques to create compelling and captivating narratives that evoke emotional responses in readers. These techniques include vivid and sensory descriptions, powerful imagery, metaphors, similes, dynamic characters and gripping dialogues. In addition, authors often introduce contrasting words and contradictory ideas to make their writing more engaging and alluring. A paradox is a statement or a situation that seems to contradict itself or is logically inconsistent but often holds a deeper meaning that is not immediately obvious. In literary expressions, seemingly contradictory ideas are sometimes skillfully merged together to create a paradoxical situation. The juxtaposition of two ideas that contradict each other in a literary expression generates potential suspense in the readers and compels them to seek a resolution for the apparent contradiction. In order to understand the paradox, the reader must engage in a process of careful analysis and interpretation, which often prompts the reader to revisit the text. The process of deciphering the meaning of a paradox serves as a kind of gateway to deeper engagement with a literary work. As readers strive to comprehend the meaning of the paradox, they get fully immersed in the intricacies of the literary work. However, in a literary expression, these semantic contradictions can manifest explicitly as well as implicitly, offering different layers of meaning to explore and unravel.

Literal Incompatibility and Semantic Conflict

In *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana argues that aesthetic suggestion cannot be equated with denotation or indication, though it draws support from denotation or indication. Ānandavardhana classified *dhvani* as two types: *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* and *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*. Abhinavagupta further expounded on these categorises, explaining that *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* “indicates the cooperation in the operation called

suggestion (*dhvanana*) of the apprehension on the part of the auditor of meanings implied by the three other operations of denotation, sentence-meaning, and secondary usage”. On the other hand, *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* indicates “the cooperation of what is wished to be said, that is, of the intention on the part of the poet” (Ānandavardhana, 1990). Following this definition, it can be said that the interpretation of aesthetic expressions with suggestions can either arise from the apprehension of the implied meaning resulting from the literal and metaphorical meanings or from decoding the intention of the poet through pragmatic strategies.

In a literary work, semantic contradiction can manifest in two distinct ways. Firstly, a conflict in meaning can arise directly at the literal level, as in the case of a paradox or in metaphorical expressions. Secondly, a conflict in meaning can arise between the literal meaning and implied meaning. In the former case, the conflict in meaning is limited to the literal level and can be resolved through logical reasoning and by discovering a coherent explanation. Paradoxes, by their very nature, exhibit self-contradictory literal meanings. For example, the expression from *Great Expectations*, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”, juxtaposes two contrasting ideas that are placed opposite to each other. On the one hand, the expression “it was the best of times” conveys a period of great prosperity, happiness, and success. On the other hand, the expression “it was the worst of times” means a time of suffering, torture, and hardship. The expression highlights the simultaneous existence of positive and negative aspects within the given period of time. Here, paradox draws attention to the complex and contradictory nature of human experience, illustrating how the same event can be portrayed from varying perspectives. In a paradox, the contradiction is evident at the literal level, and it can be resolved by identifying a logical explanation and by delving deeper into the underlying content. However, in the case of paradox, though there is a semantic contradiction, it is literally congruent. In contrast, in the case of *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, the literal meaning is partially or wholly discarded due to literal incompatibility. The literal meaning of a literary expression is not intended in *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*. In such expressions, the literal incompatibility between the literal meaning and metaphorical meaning creates a semantic conflict. However, the semantic conflict lies at the literal level itself. This

semantic conflict can be resolved by finding an associated meaning through secondary usage. In both these cases, once the apparent contradiction or the literal incompatibility is resolved, the literal meaning becomes congruent. The semantic contradiction in paradox and the semantic conflict in metaphorical meaning can be resolved. Both of them are openly anchored linguistic expressions as they do not involve the suggestive function for the resolution of conflict.

On the contrary, certain aesthetic expressions with suggestions, though coherent at the literal level, can have contextually varied implied meanings based on the suggestive potential of words or meanings. These expressions involve an interplay between the conventionally encoded literal meaning and the implied meaning derived from the suggestive potential of words. They belong to the category of *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* as the literal meaning is literally compatible with the context. However, apart from the literal meaning, an additional meaning is also suggested. The meaning which is suggested may contradict or complement the literal meaning. As they belong to the category of freely anchored literary expressions, the ways in which these expressions are modulated or manipulated can vary depending on the context and the speaker's intention. When the literal meaning and the implied meaning share an antagonistic relationship, that is, when there is a semantic contradiction between the literal meaning and implied meaning, it may not be resolved through any linguistic operations like denotation, sentence meaning, or secondary usage. Such expressions do not express literal incompatibility. Besides, the explicit meaning aligns well with the context, eliminating any conflict at the literal level. The semantic contradiction is not literally given as a paradox. Hence, the reader must first recognise the presence of an implied meaning to see the semantic contradiction. Once the semantic contradiction between the literal and implied meaning is identified, it needs to be resolved by recognising the suggestive potential of the word and its meaning and connecting it with contextual cues.

Decoding the Metaphorical Complexity in Literary Expressions

Literary expressions with *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* feature a deliberate shift from the literal meaning of an expression to an associated meaning through metaphorical indication. In such literary expressions, the literal meaning is literally incompatible, and it is entirely discarded. The metaphorical meaning thus formed is then subordinated by an implied meaning. Though there is a literal incompatibility, the selection of incongruous words in these expressions serves a distinct purpose. Therefore, the apparent conflict in meaning can be resolved by identifying the specific purpose behind it. For instance, consider the following example:

*ravi-saṅkrānta-saubhāgyas tuṣārāvṛta-maṅḍalah /
niḥśvāsāndha ivādarśaś candramā na prakāśate*

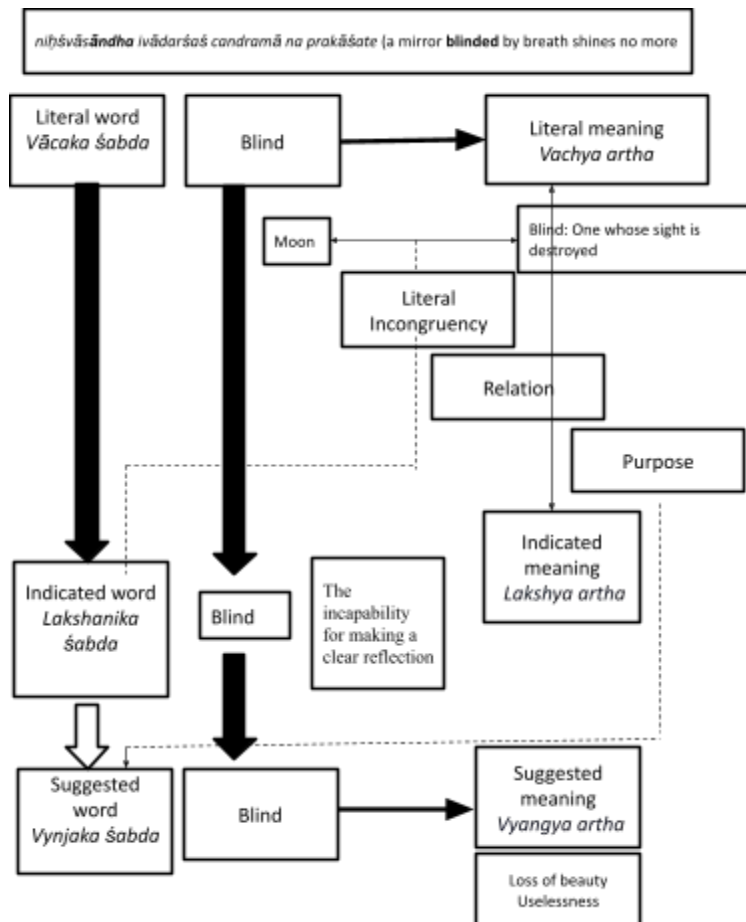
(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 40)

The sun has stolen our affection for the moon,
whose circle now is dull with frost
and like a mirror **blinded** by breath
shines no more.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 209)

During the winter season, the sun is loved for the warmth it provides, while the moon is often covered in frost. In this context, the speaker expresses that our affection for the moon is redirected towards the sun during the winter season. As the moon is completely covered with frost, it is compared to a mirror that has been fogged by breath. The word “like” (*iva*) in the expression establishes a similarity between the moon and the mirror. The literal meaning of the word “blind” (*andhā*) is “one whose sight is lost”. But here, the mirror is not a sentient being for it to lose its vision. So, there is a hindrance in comprehending the literal meaning of the literary expression. The literal meaning of the word “blind” is wholly negated as it is literally incongruous in this context. However, a similarity between the mirror and the moon can be easily identified in this literary expression. The word “blind” is applied to a mirror with a secondary usage, indicating the

mirror is incapable of producing a clear reflection. When we exhale or blow onto a mirror during winter, the mirror gets completely covered with water droplets. When a mirror is covered with a layer of water droplets, it cannot reflect anything clearly. Its ability to reflect anything clearly is hindered. Here, the word “blind” is used to indicate the inability of the mirror to form a clear reflection. Besides, the use of the word “blind” serves the purpose of suggesting several other properties, such as the worthlessness, inefficiency and uselessness of the moon⁷⁹. It suggests that the moon is unable to fulfil its purpose, which is to provide light. The moon appears dull, especially with the frost surrounding it. Nevertheless, for a mirror that is covered with water drops, its capability to reflect is not entirely lost. It can still form vague reflections. As time passes, the water droplets will evaporate, allowing the mirror to reflect clearly. The mirror is temporarily useless. Similarly, the moon during winter nights is simply dormant. Once the winter is over, it will shine brightly.

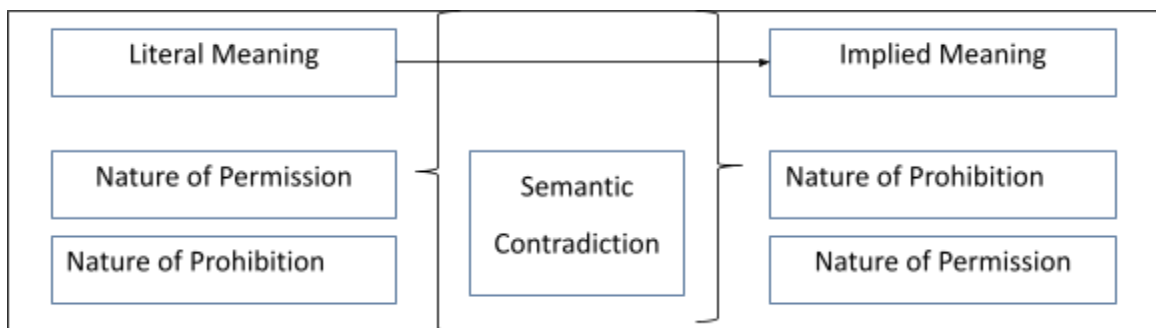


⁷⁹ The author disagrees with this idea of uselessness in being blind.

In literary expressions with *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, identifying the similarities between the literal and the metaphorical meanings requires more than the mere knowledge of words and their meanings. The same metaphor can evoke different implied meanings depending on the context in which it is situated. For example, the expression “life is a rollercoaster” can be interpreted differently in various contexts. In a positive context, it implies the idea of excitement, thrill, and adventure. Whereas in a negative context, the same expression can be interpreted as being out of control, fearful, and dangerous. In a motivational context, it suggests the importance of perseverance and the need to hold on to one’s core values even during tough times. In a philosophical context, it implies the impermanence of life and the need to embrace both the ups and downs of life and the need to embrace both ups and downs to enjoy the ride to the fullest. Similarly, the interpretation of an object is influenced by the surroundings, the setting, and the cultural associations tied to those contexts. For example, when a red rose is placed on a well-arranged dining table in a private room, the rose mainly signifies love, romance, and desire. However, when the same rose is placed on a grave in a cemetery, the meaning becomes the opposite. In the second context, the red rose symbolises sorrow, mourning and memories. The same object, the red rose, takes on different meanings based on the context in which it is placed. Metaphor, as Elizabeth Camp states, is a “deeply context-sensitive linguistic phenomenon”. Even so, once the appropriate relationship is established in line with the intended purpose, it enhances the aesthetic beauty of the expression. Given the proper context, almost any word or expression can be used metaphorically to enhance its meaning or impact. However, in *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, the unintended literal meaning merely serves as a means to suggest the implied meaning. In the process, certain common attributes or qualities between the two objects are also revealed. On the other hand, in *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*, the suggested meaning goes beyond the literal meaning of the literary expression. In some literary expressions, the implied meaning of the expression can be semantically opposite to the literal meaning of the expression. In such cases, the literal meaning remains congruent, but the implied meaning diverges in a semantically opposite direction.

Semantic Contradiction in Literary Expressions: Exploring the explicit prohibition and implicit permission

In literary expressions, there are cases where the literal meaning of the expression is of the nature of permission, and the implied meaning of the expression is of the nature of prohibition or vice versa. Despite the absence of literal incompatibility, a semantic contradiction arises between the literal and implied meanings. In such cases, the suggested meaning resolves the semantic contradiction. This challenges the reader to explore the contrasting meanings and invites the reader to a deeper engagement with the text. In other cases, the presence of semantic contradiction gets literally expressed. The semantic contradiction is resolved from the literal interpretation of the literary expression itself. The use of semantic contradiction in literary expressions is a powerful tool to challenge the reader's assumptions. When used effectively, semantic contradictions can add depth to a literary work.



The literal and implied meanings can be easily distinguished in literary expressions that have an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meanings. To differentiate the literal meaning from the implied meaning, two literary expressions are analysed. In the first literary expression, the intention of the speaker is literally expressed, whereas in the second literary expression, the intention of the speaker is suggested. Both literary expressions share similar contexts; a traveller is being welcomed to stay in a lady's house at night when her husband is away.

The Explicit Revelation: When Every Idea Gets Literally Expressed

*ambā śete 'tra vṛddhā pariṇata-vayasām agrāṇī atra tāto
niḥśeṣāgāra-karma-śrama-śithila-tanuḥ kumbha-dāsī tathātra / asmin pāpāham
ekā katipaya-divasa-proṣita-prāṇanāthā pānthāyetthaṃ taruṇyā kathitam
avasara-vyāhṛti-vyāja-pūrvam // (2.23 A)*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 87)

Here my old mother sleeps,
And here my father, the oldest of the old;
Here it is that the house-maid stretches her body,
So tired and jaded by her ceaseless chores!
Here I am, woe is me, all alone;
Even my husband went on a journey for a few days ago'-
Thus did the young woman speak to the traveller

Under the guise of welcoming words.

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 86)

In the literary expression, a young woman shows the exact locations where her family members will sleep at night to a traveller who has been invited to stay in their house for the night. She points out to the traveller that her elderly mother sleeps here, and her aged father sleeps nearby. The housemaid, who is exhausted and fatigued from doing all the chores in the house, sleeps in a different room. Her husband is also away for a few days. She realises that this is the best time for her to be with the traveller, and she conveys this to the traveller as well. Her parents are elderly, so they will not be easily disturbed by small sounds. The housemaid, who completes all the household chores, will also be tired by nightfall and unlikely to wake up in the middle of her sleep. Under the guise of showing the traveller where everyone sleeps at night and advising him to be careful not to fall over them at night, she indirectly conveys her desire to be with him at night. However, the phrase “under the guise of” (*vyāja-pūrvam*) exposes the actual motive of the speaker. Therefore, the intention of the speaker is not suggested; it is explicitly

expressed. In disguise, she cunningly conveys that this is the best opportunity for them to fulfil their desire. The intention of the speaker is clearly expressed through the words of the author himself.

Even though the literal and the implied meanings are semantically opposite from the speaker's point of view, there is no semantic contradiction between the literal and the implied meaning of this literary expression, as every idea is literally expressed through the words of the author. On the other hand, there are cases where the same message is conveyed as a suggestion without being explicitly expressed. Here, the literal meaning and implied meaning do not appear at the same time. The implied meaning is subtly conveyed by connecting the contextual cues with an apparent sequence. To resolve the semantic contradiction, the reader shall connect with the contextual cues. Additionally, the implied meaning does not arise from literal incompatibility; instead, the suggestive potential of words is used to convey something that is different from the expressed meaning. In such literary expressions, knowledge of the intention of the speaker helps the reader resolve the semantic contradiction.

The Implicit Revelation: Unveiling Ideas Through Suggested Meanings

*śvaśrūr atra nimajjati, atrāhaṃ divasa eva pralokaya /
mā pathika rātryandha śayyāyāṃ mama nimaṅkṣyasi //*
Ānandavardhana, 1974

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 8)

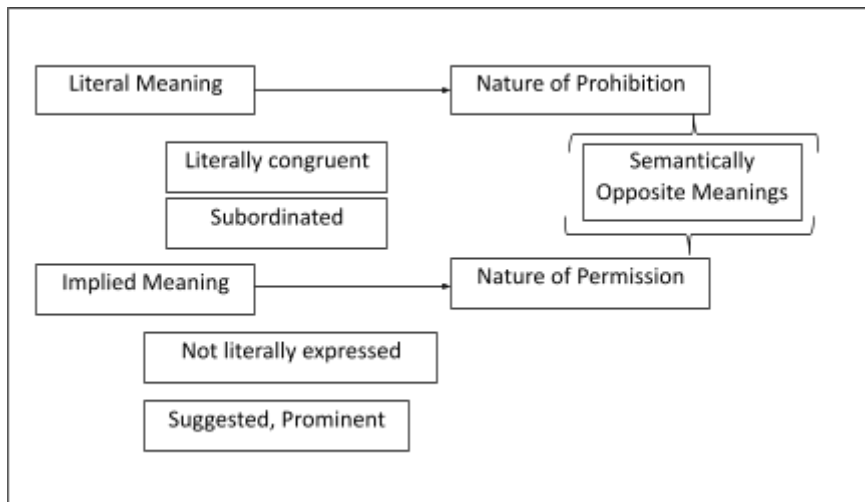
Mother-in-law lies here, lost in sleep;
And I here; thou shouldst mark
These before it is dark.
O traveller, blinded by night,
Tumble not into our beds aright.

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 9)

In this literary expression, the context is the same as in the previous literary expression, “*ambā śete 'tra vṛddhā pariṇata-vayasām*”. However, the author presents the matter in a

considerably different way. A traveller is invited to stay in a lady’s house at night while her husband is away. She advises the traveller to make careful note of where she and her mother-in-law are sleeping so that he will not accidentally stumble into their bed in the dark. Contrary to her stated intention conveyed through the literal meaning, her real intention is to convey that the night would be the perfect time for them to meet, as he would be completely blinded by passion at night. Here, the phrase “blinded by night” (*rātryandha*) implies that he will be blinded by passion at night. The expression goes beyond the literal meaning, helping to reveal the implied meaning. She is instructing him to take note of where her mother-in-law is sleeping at night so that he does not fall on her mother-in-law in the dark. Her mother-in-law will be sleeping there as if she has completely lost her senses, thereby ensuring that she will not cause any disturbance at night since she cannot hear any sound while sleeping. At night, he will be blinded by passion, so he needs to be careful not to wake her up. Unlike the previous literary expression (“*ambā śete 'tra vṛddhā*”), there are no explicit words that literally indicate the motive of the speaker. Instead, the intention of the speaker is suggested.

In the literary expression “*śvaśrūr atra nimajjati*”, the implied meaning is semantically opposite to the literal meaning of the expression. The literal meaning is of the nature of prohibition, restricting the traveller from meeting her at night. However, the implied meaning suggests permission, conveying her desire to welcome him at night. Despite the absence of any words that directly express her passion, the implied meaning suggests her desire in a subtle way.



In both these literary expressions, the primary meaning is literally congruent. However, the intention of the speaker is not literally expressed in the second literary expression. This literary expression demonstrates that, even while remaining literally congruent, it is possible to convey a suggested meaning that is different from the literal meaning. While being literally congruent, the literal meaning is subordinated to a second meaning in the second literary expression. In such literary expressions, the literal meaning does not stand alone but is used to express a suggestion along with it. The suggested meaning can be related to something entirely different from that of the literal meaning of the literary expression. Here, the literal meaning is subordinated, and the suggested meaning takes precedence. Hence, it is an example of freely anchored aesthetic expression. Besides, in this case, the implied meaning, which is of the nature of permission, is semantically opposite to the literal meaning of the expression, which is of the nature of prohibition.

Semantic Contradiction in Literary Expressions: Exploring the Explicit Permission and Implicit Prohibition

Two literary expressions from the Sanskrit language where the literal meaning is of the nature of permission, whereas the implicit meaning of the expression is of the nature of prohibition, are analysed. Both of these literary expressions share a similar context: the moment before the separation of two lovers. The mere thought of separation from their beloved is unbearable for the lovers.

*gaccha gacchasi cet kānta panthānah santu te śivāh
mamāpi janma tatraiya bhuyādyatra gato bhavan*

(Kāvyaḍarśa, 2.141)

“Go go if you want, my beloved. May your journey be blessed!
May my birth too be there where you go”.

(Tr. Sreekantaiya, p. 2001)

In the literary expression provided above, the literal meaning expresses the wife's approval and support for her husband's journey. The use of the word "go" in the literary expression literally gives positive affirmation from her side. Though the heroine is sending good wishes for her beloved's journey, she conveys her desire to be with him. Beneath the surface meaning of approving the journey, the heroine secretly yearns to be with him. Through the expression, "May my birth too be there where you go", she suggests that living without him is no longer possible for her. Her existence loses its meaning in his absence. She implies that she cannot bear to live without him, and she is praying to be born in a place where he will be present.

Another literary expression that shares a similar context with that of the above literary expression is as follows:

*guruṇaparavasa pia kiṃ bhaṇāmi tui maṇḍabhāiṇī ahakam /
ajja pavāsaṃ vaccasi vacca saam̐ jevva suṇasi karaṇijjam //*
(*Kavyaparakasha*, 1.21)

(Mammaṭa, 1967)

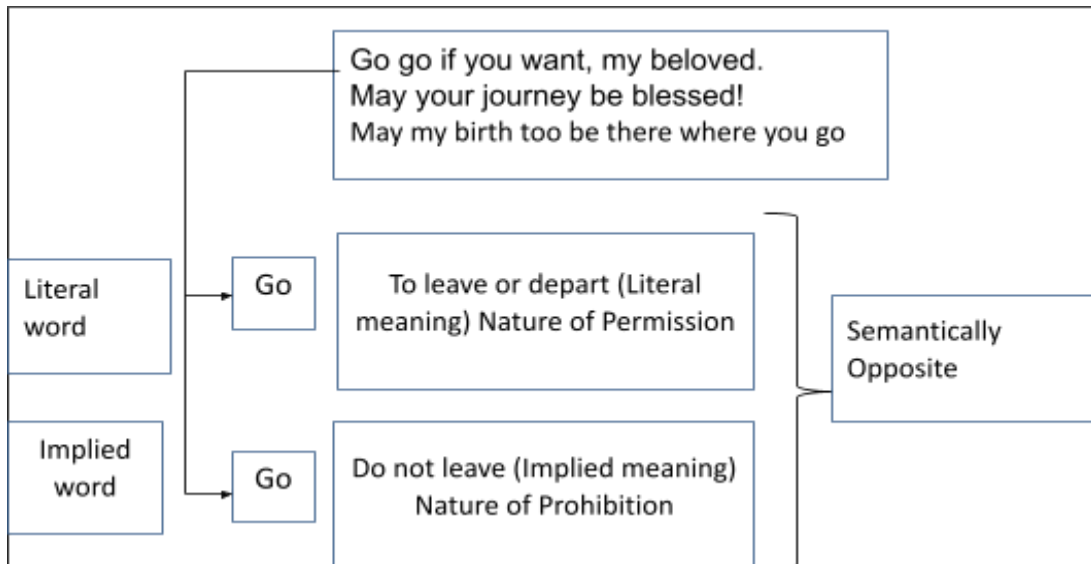
The elders have decided for you, O loved one,
What can I say? My luck is lost.
Today you are going abroad. Go!
Only you know what must be done

(Catlin, 2006)

In the literary expression, the heroine is unable to bear the thought of being separated from her beloved. Yet, she outwardly expresses her agreement with his decision to embark on his journey. She says if you decide to go on with your journey to fulfil the wishes of your elders, you may do so. She literally agrees with his journey. However, through the phrase "only you know what must be done", she implies that he should stay back or else he may have to return to do her last rites. Once the husband leaves the house, his wife may die from the pain of separation. She wanted to suggest that the moment her *pranan* (beloved) leaves the house, her *pranan* (vital force) will also leave her body. As

she cannot survive in his absence, he will have to hear some bad news. Her desire to be with her beloved and her love towards him is suggested in this literary expression.

Both of these literary expressions exhibit a semantic contradiction. Although the word “go” literally agrees with the journey, the implied meaning is a plea for him, suggesting that he should not go. In both cases, the implied meaning of the expression is semantically opposite to the expressed meaning of the literary expression. Despite the expressed meaning conveying permission, the implied meaning suggests prohibition and a plea for the beloved not to leave.



In the literary expressions mentioned above, although there is an evident opposition between the literal meaning and implied meaning, they do not qualify as examples of contradictory indications. This literary expression does not exhibit any literal incongruity, and they are not dependent on the indicative function. Instead, the literal meaning is initially established, and it is through the suggestive potential of meaning that the implied meaning arises.

Decoding Semantic Paradox Based on the Suggestive Potential of Meaning

In literary expressions with *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, even after the literary meaning is fixed, an additional meaning is conveyed due to the suggestive potential of the meaning. In the case of *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the suggestion is derived from the literal meaning itself, but the literal meaning remains complete and stands independent of the suggested meaning; even in the same setting, if the literal meaning is directed to a person, the suggested meaning can deviate and depart from the literal meaning and can be directed to another individual. The suggested meaning can be something completely different, and it can even be the opposite of the literal meaning. In literary expressions where the literal meaning of the expression is semantically opposite to the implied meaning of the expression, there will not be any literal incompatibility. Even then, a semantically opposite meaning gets suggested due to the suggestive potential of meaning, forming an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meaning, leading to a semantic contradiction. As the literal meaning is contextual, it is only after connecting the literal meaning with contextual cues that one can move to the suggested meanings. This is made possible with the flexibility of freely anchored aesthetic expressions.

*sāhentī sahi suhaaṃ khaṇe khaṇe dūmmiāsi majjhakae /
sabbhāvaṇehakaraṇijjasarisaṃ dāva viraiyaṃ tumae*

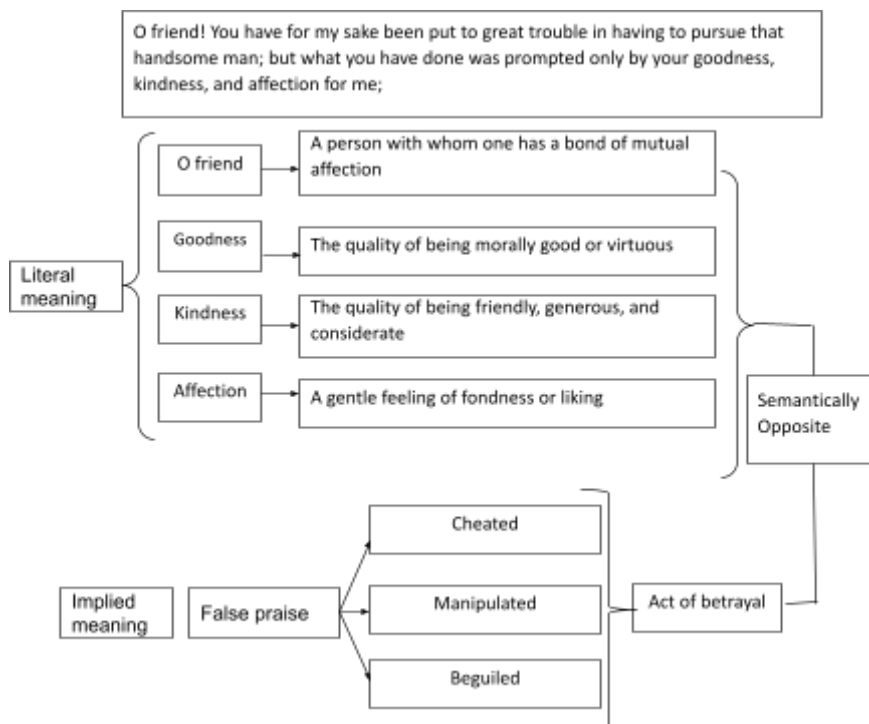
(Mammaṭa, 1967)

O friend! You have for my sake been put to great trouble in having to pursue that handsome man; but what you have done was prompted only by your goodness, kindness and affection for me;

(Trans. Catlin, 2006)

The lady requested her friend to deliver a message to her lover, expressing her sadness at not being able to meet him. Her friend took many great troubles to meet the lady's lover and convey her despair. The speaker literally acknowledges that her friend's actions were motivated purely by her kindness, goodness, and affection towards her. For any other person listening or overhearing their conversation, this appears to be a direct compliment

from the lady to her close confidant. However, the literal meaning does not stop with conveying the conventionally encoded literal meaning. Although the expression is addressed to her friend, the literal meaning of the expression is directed towards other people eavesdropping on their conversation. This meaning fits well with the context as well. However, when it is connected to past actions based on contextual cues, it reveals that the friend has not only met the lover of the lady but also engaged in some intimate moments with him. The speaker understands that her friend has met her lover and enjoyed some time with him. Instead of calling out the real character of her friend, the speaker praises her friend at face value. The speaker aims to suggest to the readers that the friend who was sent to convey her love has betrayed her, but with the intention that only her friend should know that she is caught. Here, the suggested meaning is that by enjoying with my beloved, you have betrayed me. Despite being a friend, she behaved like an enemy. If the heroine had directly called out the act of betrayal by her friend, others would also get to know about everything that has happened. Others who are not aware of the act of betrayal might take the words of the heroine literally. But, her friend, who has cheated, is familiar with the context in which the words are uttered. For her friend, the literal meaning is semantically opposite to the implied meaning.



The literal meaning of the expressions conveys that the friend's actions were driven by her kindness and genuine affection for the speaker, and the speaker appreciates her friend. However, the implied meaning suggests an act of betrayal from her friend and false praise from the speaker's side. This creates a semantic contradiction between the literal and implied meaning of the expression. The semantic contradiction occurs in antagonistic expressions when the literal meaning of a literary expression is semantically opposite to the implied meaning of the expression, even when the literal meaning remains literally congruent.

The resolution of the semantic contradiction lies in identifying the appropriate suggested meaning. The literal meaning is considered complete as long as it is consistent with the surrounding context. The compatibility of literal meaning is maintained in this case as well. However, the real beauty of the expression lies in the apprehension of the suggested meaning, which is beyond its literal interpretation. In the literary expression quoted above, the suggested meaning reveals the true nature of her friend, which is different from what is explicitly expressed through words. Moreover, the underlying sophistication behind the speaker's words suggests the ability of the heroine to navigate social interactions and to deal with people by exposing their true nature. Similar to this example, there are literary expressions where the suggestion is based on the suggestive potential of words. In such cases, there can be semantic contradiction leading to the suggestion of a figure of speech called a paradox.

The Poetry of Paradox: Exploring the Implied Paradox in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*

Certain literary expressions have the ability to convey an additional meaning through the suggestive potential of words, even when the literal meaning is compatible with the context. The suggested meaning can be non-contextual, but it need not be considered absurd or disconnected. Instead, a relationship can be identified between the two meanings. It requires the imaginative power of the reader to identify the suggested figure of speech. Such expressions belong to the variety of *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In some

instances, if the suggested figure of speech is a paradox, then the semantic contradiction happens at the suggestive level. In such expressions, there is no literal incompatibility.

*sarvaika-śaraṇam akṣayam adhīśam īśam dhiyāṃ hariṃ kṛṣṇam /
caturātmānaṃ niṣkriyam ari-mathanaṃ namata cakra-dharam //*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 80)

Bow down, you all, to that god
Who is the only refuge for all, while he is deathless
(also, homeless),
Who is the supreme ruler (also, not the lord of
intelligence as also the lord of intelligence),
Who is Hari (also, green) as well as Krishna
(i. e. dark and also remover of sins),
Who is four fold in form (also, who is a clever person)
and also inactive,
And who is the destroyer of enemies (also, breaker of
wheels).
While he holds a wheel in his hand.

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 81)

The literal meaning of the literary expression is, offer your salutations to Lord Vishnu who is the sole abode of everyone (*sarvaika-śaraṇam*), who is imperishable (*akṣayam*), who is the supreme lord (*adhīśam*), who is the lord of intelligence (*dhiyāṃ īśa*), who is Hari (*hariṃ*) as well as Krishna (*kṛṣṇam*), who is fourfold in the form (*caturātmānaṃ*), who is beyond all actions, actionless (*niṣkriyam*), who is the destroyer of enemies (*ari-mathanaṃ*), who is the wielder of the wheel (*cakra-dharam*). Bow to him (*namata*). The literal meaning is complete in this case. There is no word *api* (even) to indicate the presence of paradox. In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the literal

meaning stands independent of the suggested meaning. However, by the suggestive potential words, a figure of speech is suggested. Each word in the expression helps to suggest *virodha alankāra* (figure of contrast). The suggested meaning highlights two contradictory characteristics or two contrasting qualities as adjectives that co-exist in the same person. There is a double meaning for each word, and hence the paradox. Here, a figure of paradox is suggested. Although the suggestion is based on literal meaning, the implied meaning can stand independent of the literal meaning.

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>sarvaika-śaraṇam</i> <i>akṣayam</i> <i>adhīśam</i> <i>īśam-dhiyām</i> <i>hariṃ kṛṣṇam /</i> <i>caturātmānaṃ niṣkriyam</i> <i>ari-mathanam</i> <i>cakra-dharam //</i> | <i>sarvaika-śaraṇam</i> <i>akṣayam</i> | The sole abode of everyone; abodeless |
| | | The sole abode of everyone; imperishable |
| | <i>adhīśam dhiyām īśam</i> | Lord of intelligence; not the lord of intelligence |
| | | Lord of intelligence; Supreme lord |
| | <i>hariṃ kṛṣṇam</i> | Green-hued; Black-hued |
| | | Hari; Krishna |
| | <i>caturātmānaṃ niṣkriyam</i> | Who is active; actionless |
| | | fourfold in form; actionless |
| | <i>arimathanam</i> <i>cakradharam</i> | Destroyer of the wheel; wielder of the wheel |
| | | Destroyer of enemies; wielder of the wheel |

Accordingly, the suggested meaning of the literary expression is to bow down to both the sole abode of everyone (*sarvaika-sāraṇam*) and the abodeless (*akṣayam*). Not the lord of intelligence (*adhīśa*) and lord of intelligence (*dhiyām īśa*). The green-hued (*hariṃ*) as well as black-hued (*kṛṣṇam*). The active (*caturātmānam*) and actionless (*niṣkriyam*). The destroyer of the wheel (*niṣkriyam*) and wielder of the wheel (*cakradharam*). In this example, the first part of the expression negates the second part of the expression. However, this contradiction is not literally given, and there are no words to denote such a contradiction. It is because of the suggestive potential of words that the semantic contradiction has emerged as well as resolved.

In the literary expressions quoted above, the paradox is suggested. It is not literally expressed. Hence, there is no semantic contradiction at the literal level. The literal expression is literally compatible as well. However, the semantic expansion from literal to suggested meaning happens only in the case of freely anchored aesthetic expressions. The paradox can appear in openly anchored linguistic expressions as well. However, in openly anchored linguistic expressions, the paradox gets literally expressed.

The Paradoxical Pun: Exploring the Explicit Paradox with *śleṣa*

When two facts are simultaneously manifested at the literal level by the power of a word, there is the directly expressed figure of pun (*śleṣa*)⁸⁰. In *śleṣa*, two facts are manifested simultaneously because of the use of homonyms. Both the meanings of the homonym are required at the literal level to understand the literary expression correctly. When a separate figure of speech appears by the power of words together with *śleṣa* (pun), that combination is also taken as an instance of the figure *śleṣa*^{81,82}. In such literary expressions, the figure of speech gets directly expressed. The literary expression quoted

⁸⁰ vastu-dvaye ca śabda-śaktyā prakāśamāne śleṣaḥ /

⁸¹ nanv alaṅkārantara-pratibhāyām api śleṣa-vyapadeśo bhavātīti darśitam bhāṭṭodbhāṭena

⁸² yatra śabda-śaktyā sāksād alaṅkārantaram vācyaṃ sat pratibhāsate sa sarvaḥ śleṣa-viśayaḥ / Wherever by the power of words a figure of speech appears in addition (to *śleṣa*)—this figure being directly denoted—all that is the domain of *śleṣa*.

below is an example of an expressed figure conveyed directly by the power of the word together with *śleṣa*.

*tasyā vināpi hāreṇa nisargād eva hāriṇau /
janayāmāsatuh kasya vismayam na payodharau //*⁸³

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 74)

As even without a necklace
they had a **natural charm,**
necklace,
in whom did this maiden's breasts
not arose wonder.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 294)

| <i>Tasyā</i> | <i>Vina</i> | <i>api</i> | <i>hāreṇa</i> | <i>nisargād</i> | <i>eva</i> | <i>hāriṇau</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Even without a | | | Necklace | by very nature | | It is adorned with a necklace |
| | | | | | | It is attractive |

tasyā payodharau hāreṇa vināpi nisargād eva hāriṇau.

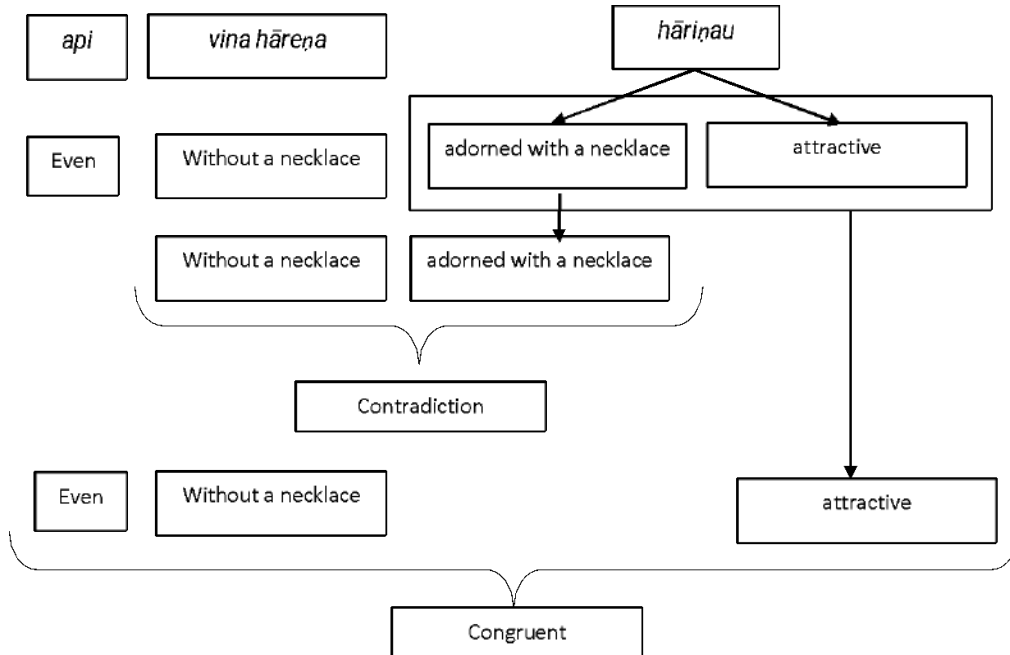
Her bosoms, even without a necklace by very nature, were adorned with a necklace.

Her bosoms, even without any necklace, were by very nature attractive.

The literal meaning of the expression is, “Who will not be surprised by seeing such a beautiful lady who is naturally adorned with a necklace (*hāriṇau*) even without any necklace (*hāreṇa vina api*)?” Here, the word “even” (*api*) clearly indicates the presence of a paradox. Her bosoms, even without a necklace, by very nature were adorned with a

⁸³ Her bosoms without a **garland though,**
Garlanded (also, **ravishing**) by nature were;
Whom would they not amaze!

necklace⁸⁴. The paradox is not suggested. It is clearly expressed. Even though there was no necklace (*hāra*), they were adorned with a necklace (*hāriṇau*). There is an apparent contradiction which is, how can something without a necklace be adorned with a necklace? There is an expectation of a second meaning to solve this contradiction. This apparent contradiction between two meanings is resolved by giving another meaning. Here, the word *hāriṇau* has two meanings. *hāriṇau*- adorned with a necklace and attractive. Her bosoms, even without any necklace (*hāreṇa vina api*), look naturally attractive (*hāriṇau*)⁸⁵. She does not need any extra ornaments like a necklace to adorn her. Even without any necklace (*hāram*), she is (*hāri*) attractive. Who will not be surprised by seeing such a beautiful lady who is naturally attractive (*hāriṇau*) even without any necklace (*hāreṇa vina api*)⁸⁶? The literal meaning is complete only when the second meaning is present. Thus, the second meaning of *hāriṇau*, as attractive or ravishing, is required. Once the second meaning is clear, there is no semantic contradiction. This literary expression is an example of *śleṣa* along with *virodhabhāsa alaṅkāra*. The *virodhabhāsa alaṅkāra* is not ignored. Instead, *virodhabhāsa alaṅkāra* is resolved by the second meaning.

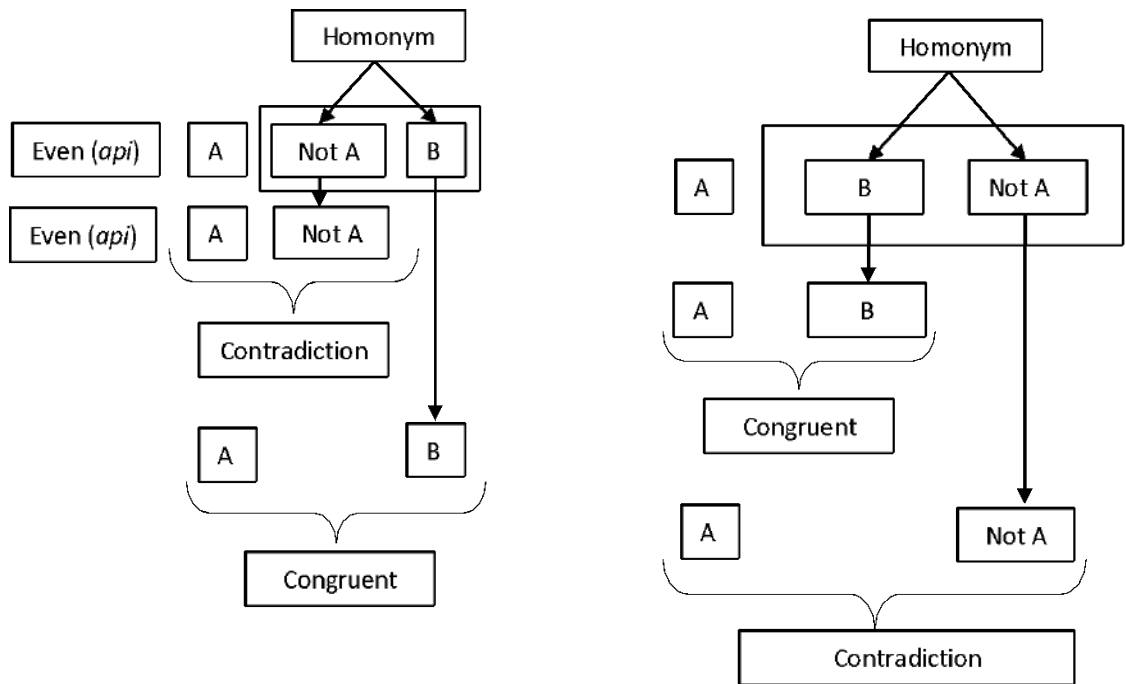


⁸⁴ *tasyā payodharau hāreṇa vināpi nisargād eva hāriṇau*- Her breasts (*payodhara*) are even (*api*) without (*vina*) any garland (*hāreṇa*) is garlanded (*hāriṇau*).

⁸⁵ (*tasyā payodharau hāreṇa vināpi nisargād eva hāriṇau*).

⁸⁶ (*kasya vismayam na janayāmāsatu tasyā payodharau hāreṇa vināpi nisargād eva hāriṇau*)

In the literary expression quoted above, the paradox is literally expressed. Here, the *śleṣa alaṅkāra* helps the paradox, and it is because of *śleṣa* that the apparent contradiction is removed. Once the second meaning is recognised, then it resolves the contradiction. However, there is no suggestion in this literary expression. In contrast, in the literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the second meaning is non-contextual and a figure of speech is suggested. Even then, there is no contradiction at the literal level. The paradox appears only at the suggested level.



In literary expressions with *śleṣa* and *virodhabhāsa alaṅkāra*, the apparent contradiction is resolved at the literal level itself. Hence, the literal meaning becomes congruent with the two meanings of the *śleṣa*. However, the contradiction stays at the suggestive level in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In such expressions, the literal meaning is semantically congruent as well as literally compatible with the context. But the suggestion of the paradox makes it appealing.

The Paradox in Tirayāṭṭam

The intentional use of contradictory ideas or thoughts is prevalent in both visual and performing arts. These semantic contradictions play a crucial role in challenging conventional expectations and fostering aesthetic engagement with the audience. They often add depth and complexity to aesthetic expressions, nurturing imagination and offering ample space for reflection and retrospection. The interplay of contradiction between literal and implied meanings creates a dynamic and engaging experience for the audience. In theatrical performances, characters often deliver lines that convey conflicting ideas and thoughts. These semantic contradictions, where the literal meaning contradicts the implied meaning, serve as a tool to challenge the conventional associations typically found in openly anchored linguistic expressions. To illustrate the use of semantic contradiction in verbal expression, a *Thottampātu* is analysed.

ഭക്തിയില്ലെന്നിരിക്കിലും
ഭക്തനെന്നു കരുതി
മുക്തി നൽകീട്ടടിയനെയെന്നും
കൃപയാൽ തമ്പുരാനെ

(Peethambaran, 2017, p. 89)

bhaktiyillennirikkilum bhaktanennu karuti
mukti nalkīṭṭaṭiyaneyennum kṛpayāl tampurāne

Even without devotion (Though there is no piety,)
I thought I was a devotee (by considering me as a pious person)
Provide me salvation, O dear Lord,
by your grace

The *thottam* reflects a heartfelt plea for salvation. The speaker acknowledges their own imperfections and places their unwavering faith in the benevolence of the deity. Through the *thottam*, the speaker expresses a deep yearning for spiritual guidance and maintains a

hopeful belief that the deity's blessing will ultimately lead to salvation. The speaker's fervent prayer and intense desire to be in the deity's presence reflect their sincere plea, emanating directly from the speaker's heart. The speaker firmly believes that salvation can be obtained through the grace of the deity, transcending the limitations of their imperfect nature. The longing for spiritual upliftment and blessing from the divine is evident in this expression. It highlights the speaker's profound desire for a higher spiritual connection and their hope for divine intervention. However, the *thottam* begins by acknowledging a lack of devotion or religious virtue within the speaker. The expression "even without devotion" implies there is a lack of devotion or a belief within the speaker. Even without devotion, the speaker thought he was a devotee. This was a mistake on the part of the speaker to consider himself a devotee without any devotion. He acknowledges this mistake and seeks the blessings of the deity. Therefore, he now requests the deity to provide salvation. The same expression can also be seen as, despite acknowledging the absence of piety within the speaker, the speaker humbly requests the deity to consider the speaker as a pious individual. The expression "by considering me as a pious person" suggests that the speaker wants to be perceived as pious or wants others to view them as pious. At the literal level, this is a plea for salvation. However, a paradox arises from the contradiction between the speaker's denial of the existence of piety within the speaker and the desire to be seen as pious. It seems inconsistent to assert that piety does not exist and yet seeks to be recognised as a pious individual.

A paradox can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the context or intention behind the expression. Here, the expression "though there is no piety" reflects a sense of humility and self-awareness regarding one's own shortcomings. It can also be taken as a reflection of a personal struggle or a contradiction within one's beliefs. It reflects the speaker's inner conflict. Literally, the paradox can be seen as a mistake on the speaker's part to consider themselves as a devotee due to external expectations or social pressures. They later release this mistake and seek the deity's blessing to get rid themselves of such thoughts. However, here the paradox serves as a suggestor. By presenting an apparent contradiction, the writer aims to engage the audience and encourage them to question the nature of piety. Even though the speaker acknowledges the absence of piety or

righteousness literally, the implied meaning suggests that they are on the right path. The context will reveal that the piety that they used in the literary expression is the one established by social conventions. By acknowledging his own shortcomings, the speaker seeks redemption and liberation from struggles and challenges. The humble plea to the deity for salvation and grace, despite acknowledging a lack of inherent piety, reveals the speaker's genuine longing for assistance, blessings, and guidance. It is not merely an acknowledgement of limitation but a sincere request that stems from the depths of the speaker's heart. There is a semantic contradiction between the literal and implied meanings in this *thottam*. However, the semantic contradiction in *thottam* can be resolved by identifying the suggested meanings.

The Dance of Contradiction: Exploring the Power of Paradox in Ethnic Performances

Just as in verbal expressions, visual expressions also involve the use of ideas or concepts that appear contradictory on the surface but are resolved upon reflection. Contradictory ideas or thoughts are purposefully employed in visual and performing arts to evoke emotional responses and challenge traditional perceptions. Resolving an apparent contradiction often involves finding the suggested meaning and connecting it with contextual cues. By introducing conflicting ideas and contradictions, performers aim to disrupt the established patterns and invite the audience to delve deeper into the layers of meaning embedded within the performance. This approach serves as a means to evoke emotions or convey specific meanings to intrigue and provoke introspection. For instance, in a performance that explores the theme of love and betrayal, the protagonist passionately declares their love for one another while, in the next scene, they engage in a secret affair behind their partners' backs. This intentional contradiction challenges the audience's expectations of love being faithful, inviting them to question the complexities and contradictions inherent in human relationships. The same sequence can be portrayed explicitly or implicitly. Through the juxtaposition of contradictory elements, performers can create a range of emotional responses, from surprise to fury or fear to devotion. The

example given below illustrates how semantic contradiction is utilised with an ethnic performance to create complexity and enhance aesthetic beauty.

Gulikan Tirā is a popular ritual art performance that is performed in temples and sacred groves where Gulikan is worshipped. The popular myth surrounding Gulikan states that he was born from the left toe of Lord Shiva. When Kālan was killed, there were no deaths in the world. Subsequently, Mother Earth complained to other gods about the increased burden she had to bear. Gulikan was created as a solution to restore the balance of the time cycle disrupted by the absence of Kālan. Lord Shiva sent Gulikan to earth to carry out the actions of Kālan. Worshipers firmly believe that Gulikan's gaze and movement are omnipresent. In some places, Gulikan Tirā performances include minor characters like Kallichi and Kaliyan. In these short acts, Kallichi goes through various stages of love, marriage, and pregnancy, culminating in the birth of a child. It symbolises a woman's life balanced between pleasures and sorrows. An important sequence in the Gulikan Tirā involves the interaction between Gulikan and Kallichi. Right from the beginning of the performance, Kallichi seeks blessings from Gulikan upon seeing him. The first part of the play is humorous, with the scenes of Kallichi attempting to seduce other men from the audience and teasing them by claiming they are the father of her child in the womb. Using a rope, the span of her pregnancy is humorously calculated. This sequence in Gulikan Tirā induces laughter. After Kallichi gives birth to her child, she entrusts the child to Gulikan for temporary care. A fearsome fight takes place as Gulikan attempts to take the life of the child. This apparent contradiction between the explicit actions and the inherent nature of Gulikan, as suggested in the previous cases, can be resolved by considering contextual cues. Gulikan is regarded as the god who takes away the life of living beings during the time of death. Gulikan took off the weight of the earth by taking lives away. It is believed that the presence of Gulikan can be found in all human deeds from birth to death. In this act, the use of semantic contradiction serves as a powerful tool to evoke emotions and convey specific meanings. The apparent contradiction within the act lies in contrast between the cheerful portrayal of Gulikan in the initial acts and the subsequent fearsome fight of Gulikan to take the life of a child. While the previous acts present a humorous episode, the contradiction arises when

Gulikan, who is initially depicted as a benevolent deity, is portrayed as a deity responsible for taking the life of the child. However, this contradiction can be resolved by recognising the dual nature of Gulikan. He embodies the role of both preserving life and being responsible for the cessation of life. Gulikan balances the cycle of life and death, relieving the burden of the earth by taking lives away. By considering the contextual cues, the contradictory actions can be reconciled, revealing the multifaceted nature of Gulikan within the performance.



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Ethnic performances are rooted in rich cultural traditions that represent the practices and customs of specific ethnic groups or communities. What distinguishes ethnic performances from other forms of art is their root and connection to a particular cultural context. Exploring ethnic performances helps us to delve into the vibrant and diverse world of cultural expressions. Some myths about the history of Sarppantullal go as follows. In a wildfire, many living organisms of the Khandavanam perished. One snake with a half-burnt body approached a woman who was drawing water from a well. Upon seeing the snake's charred body, she felt pity and offered it some water. Out of fear, the snake hid inside the pot. The woman placed the pot near a tulsi plant. Over time, a snake burrow formed in that very spot. Upon witnessing this, the other elders in the family became angry and expelled the woman from the house. Even a servant who supported her was also cast out. The snake emerged and blessed her by saying, "As you rescued me through your pot, you will find sustenance through this very same pot as well". The woman who saved the snake later became the ancestor of the Pulluva community, who lived by singing the songs of serpents. Sarppantullal is the most significant ritual

⁸⁷ Gulikan Tira and Kallichu

performed as a part of serpent worship in Kerala. Young girls observe fourteen days of fasting to carry out this ritual. Prior to commencing Sarppantullal, the construction of Maṇippaṅtal is the first and vital step in this process. The preparations for building the Maṇippaṅtal begin in the afternoon of the first day of the performance. The Maṇippaṅtal is constructed to resemble the Kandava forest, and thus, the decorations of the Maṇippaṅtal are in sync with this theme. Additionally, tender coconut and areca nuts, symbolising the fruits of the forest, are also hung as part of the decorations. An example of semantic contradiction in Sarppantullal is in the transformation of human performers into snakes. Despite being human beings, the artists assume the role of serpent goddesses, embodying their characteristics while retaining their human form. The juxtaposition of divine serpents and human aspects within the same individual blurs the boundaries between reality and divinity. The semantic contradiction in Sarppantullal offers a mystical and transformative experience for both the performers and the audience, providing a unique perspective on spirituality. During the performance, young girls immersed in the rhythmic chants of the Nāgapātu traverse and crawl across the *kaḷam*. As they enter a heightened state of frenzy, their bodies convulse and writhe, mirroring the movements of a snake. However, with respect to the performance, Maṇippaṅtal represents the Kandava forest, and the actions of the girls are in sync with the movements of the snakes in an anxious state. The forceful physical movements showcase their intense energy to escape from the wildfire. Absorbed in the Nāgapātu, the girls energetically crawl across the *kaḷam*. Using the leaves of arecanut, they drench their bodies with a liquid known as *guruti*, a concoction of turmeric and lime. Without this narrative in the background, the actions of the girls are taken as a manifestation of intense energy and spiritual connection within the divine serpents. The dynamic movements of the girls with the *kaḷam* resemble the actions of an intensely active or “insane” individual. To remove this semantic contradiction, one has to see Maṇippaṅtal as the Khandava forest and the girls as the snake residing there, trying to escape from the wildfire. Once the suggested meaning is clear, it will be aesthetically pleasing to watch the girls crawling and climbing like snakes, evoking a sense of fear.



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Harmony of Dissonance: The Impact of Semantic Contradictions in Aesthetic Expressions

Semantic contradiction challenges established patterns of thoughts and perceptions, encouraging the audience to question preconceived notions and assumptions. By disrupting these patterns, performers create a space for the audience to engage actively with the performance. The deliberate use of semantic contradiction invites the audience to interpret and reflect upon the contrasting ideas presented in the performance. This can lead to a deeper understanding of the themes of the performance and its messages. Semantic contradictions can create depth, complexity and emotional impact. By creating tension or conflict between the literal and implied meanings of words, phrases, or images, artists engage their audience and create a more meaningful and memorable aesthetic experience.

In aesthetic expressions that share an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meanings, semantic conflict can arise between the literal and implied meanings. In aesthetic expressions with suggestions, the conflicting situation or concepts that appear at first to be contradictory or impossible can be resolved upon further reflection due to the discovery of an underlying level of reason or meaning. In some instances, the semantic contradiction between literal and implied meanings can be resolved by deciphering the intention of the poet or the speaker or by identifying the suggestive potential of words and meaning and linking it with contextual cues. The resolution of the

⁸⁸ Decorating Manippantal and girls circumambulating the *kalam* before the performance

semantic conflict lies within the use of either linguistic or pragmatic strategies. One way to resolve the semantic contradiction is through the use of linguistic strategies. The use of metaphor and simile helps to clarify the implied meaning and bring it into alignment with the literal meaning. In certain literary expressions, the suggested meanings are shaped and modulated by cultural and pragmatic elements. Another way to resolve the conflict is through pragmatic strategies, which involves considering the speaker's intention, the audience's expectations, and the social and cultural framework shaping the context of communication. Either way, the apparent contradiction can be resolved. Though suggestion provides creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation are realised when circumstances, such as cultural context and pragmatic elements, combine to convey it. Otherwise, it may not be apprehended.

Chapter 5

The Art of Literary Translation and Artistic Adaptations

A literary work cannot be permanently confined to a single language; it transcends language barriers and travels to diverse regions. Whether it is a literary work, music, or movie, it garners appreciation from people all over the world. These appreciations surpass language barriers and reach other lands through translations. In a world where a misplaced comma can turn one's fortune wheel, translation is a sail close to the wind. Even so, paying attention to the constraints on translation and understanding the parameters of its wind and climatic conditions can smooth the sail and contribute to its aesthetics and workability, and in time to come, improved machine translations. Translation, in general terms, is a rendition of the meaning or content of expressions from one language or one (communication) system to another; creative, accurate, and functional in good ones and not so or weakly so in the opposite (Kelly, 1979; Malmkjær, 2012; Venuti, 2000). However, performing arts encompass elements beyond verbal expressions, such as body movement and music, which cannot be strictly translated in the same manner as a written text is translated. In the context of performing arts, adaptation refers to the modification or reinterpretation of a work to suit different cultural, artistic, and contextual settings. While specific dialogue or lyrics are translated within a performance, the overall process of transforming a work to be performed on stage or in terms of live entertainment is generally referred to as adaptation (Hutcheon, 2012).

At one end of the spectrum of human translation, there are source texts in mathematical, logical, or scientific languages, whereas, on the other end, the texts are in natural languages, having expressions with suggested meanings. In some cases, for example, in transposing mathematical or factual information expressed in one language to another, a plain literal translation of expressions may be sufficient. Translation in most of these cases could be smooth and plain sailing, for what it needs to preserve in the transition is

the form or structure⁸⁹ of expressions only. Translation of literary works, on the other end, takes a different path; here, neither literal translation of forms of expressions nor content alone is sufficient. Capturing or *recovering* the network of words along with their meaning in a literary work and *discovering* or rendering them in another language requires additional considerations. (Ingarden, 1973). This chapter argues that these considerations include phonic elements and shows that the suggestive potential of words (*dhvani*) in a literary work creates semantic and aesthetic constraints, if unsatisfied with target expressions, can impede translation and, in turn, offers how paying heed to these constraints can aid translation. This chapter analyses literary expressions with *śleṣa* (double entendre), where the figures of speech get directly expressed and contrasts them using literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* (phonic-based suggestion), where the suggestive power of words implies a figure of speech. This chapter argues that for the literary expressions with *śleṣa*, as the figure of speech is directly expressed in the target expression, the literal translation of the homonym as two separate words in the target expression will not produce any ambiguity in the target expression due to the direct appearance of a second figure. On the other hand, for literary expressions where the figures of speech are suggested in the source expression, as in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the literal translation of the literary expressions using paraphrasing or individually mentioning both meanings of the homonym will lead to ambiguity in the target expression, as the second meaning is non-contextual. However, with examples illustrating successful attempts to translate literary expressions with *śleṣa* and *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, this chapter shows how paying heed to various linguistic constraints can aid literary translation. In line with this, the second section of the chapter argues that the process of adapting ethnic performances into different forms poses even more significant challenges. Ethnic performances such as *Tirayāṭṭam* and *Sarppamtuḷḷal* are intricately connected to sacred groves, and their removal from their

⁸⁹ Since form or structure guarantees the truth of mathematical expressions, form preservation is the only requirement in the case of translation of these expressions. For example, any translation (#>@, #, therefore @) that preserves the form of the following expression (p>q, p, therefore q) would be truth-preserving as well, and so would count as a good translation of the given expression. For an account of how these non-content-specific expressions are computed in classical AI and how content-specific expressions are computed in human cognitive systems and contemporary AI models, see Shea (2021).

original surroundings not only impact the visual appeal of the performance but also have indirect consequences for their natural habitat.

Translation and Linguistic Clogging

Each human language has its own archetypal, characteristic, and distinct structural components, such as semantic, morphologic, syntactic, pragmatic, and phonological features, that play a significant and often decisive role in contributing to the quality of translation. Linguistic constraints create a few verbal barriers related to these features in finding the balance between *recovering* the essence of a text and *discovering* it along these parameters in another language. A word can have, as is the case with literary expressions, a network of synonyms with specific nuances of meaning along these parameters in a source language. Nevertheless, the lack of words with similar features in the target language to reveal those nuances and surface features makes translation high and dry. Keats' (1820) famous line "Thou still unravished bride of quietness" from the poem "Ode on a Grecian urn" in the English language is taken as an example to illustrate this. The word "still" in the above line is polysemic; as an adjective, it means "motionless," and as an adverb, it means "yet" or "even now," implying it will stand the test of time. A paradox is suggested as the urn continues to be "the unravished bride of quietness", and the urn is lifeless as if it is frozen in time. The artwork is free from the clutches of time, yet it simultaneously represents the past and the present. If the target expressions cannot capture this contour of polysemy with its multiple meanings, then those subtle nuances of meaning and the impression it has created in the original literary expression are lost in translation due to *linguistic clogging*.

Linguistic clogging, as introduced and argued for in this chapter, is a case of interpretive condition present in literary expressions with homonyms where the literal and suggested meaning of expressions are entirely different and take different inferential and narrative trajectories though connected through the vehicle(s). Linguistic clogging can happen at three levels; where the reader is not alert to both the meanings of the homonym, where the reader glides away from *recovering* the figure of speech, and where the translator

understands the meanings but does not find words with similar *lexical drift* in the target expression. At the third level, linguistic clogging reaches its challenging form in disrupting the poetic suggestion of literary expression. Even if the linguistic constraint is satisfied by paraphrasing⁹⁰, that is, compensated otherwise using literal expressions in the translation, the aesthetic beauty cannot be maintained as such in literal translations.

We may note here that some scholars have labelled the translation of poetry as a “creative transposition” (Jakobson, 2000), “transadaptation” (Wong, 2012), or “transcreation” (Portela, 2003). The linguistic features, “idiomatic or idiosyncratic word choices, contextually grounded utterances, ideologically problematic concepts” (Glynn & Hadley, 2021, p. 29) (Bassnett, 1980), cultural issues (Min, 2007), and aesthetic constraints make translation challenging and arduous. Though translators use various methods for translating poetic devices (Delabastita, 1997; Lefevere, 1992; Low, 2011; Offord, 1997; Reiss, 1981), language-specific literary devices like paronomasia and double entendre build up linguistic constraints to a higher degree (Klitgård, 2018). This difficulty arises because paronomasia and double entendre are phonology-based literary expressions. Paronomasia or pun is a rhetorical device that creatively employs multiple meanings of words, where “two strings of thought tied together by a purely *acoustic* knot” (emphasis added, Kostler, 1964) usually to arouse laughter or amusement (Newmark, 1988). A *double entendre* is a phrase that can be interpreted in more than one way. Because of the phonological features of puns, many scholars have retained puns in the category of ‘absolute untranslatability’ (Min, 2007). O’Flaherty (1971) emphasised the need to preserve the details and “compactness” of the content in Sanskrit to English translation. He offered examples where literary expressions with double entendres and puns are maintained within a square bracket in one translation. In contrast, by eliminating double meanings, only the “essential” words are preserved in the other translation. Various scholars have made several successful attempts to show the presence and use of poetic suggestions in Indian and Western poetry (Rustomji, 1981; Sreekantaiya, 2001).

⁹⁰ Currie & Frascaroli (2021) have given a different account on the possibility of paraphrasing in poetry. However, the present author does not endorse it considering the arguments of and notions of meaning in this paper.

However, studies that use some explanatory concepts of classical Indian aesthetics in translation studies are limited. Translators like Catlin, Ganganatha, Krishnamoorthy, Ingalls, Masson, & Patwardhan have translated literary expressions with poetic suggestions into the English language. Ingalls (1982) and Catlin (2006) have illustrated some of the problems encountered in the translation of Sanskrit poetry. Ingalls (1982) focused on the semantic constraints to translate literary expressions with suggested meanings to the target audience, reflecting varied sensibilities stemming from two different ages or cultures.

Poetic devices like double entendre, paronomasia, and onomatopoeia, though found in the language of everyday life, add a different texture to literary expressions. In literary expressions, figures of speech can be directly expressed or implied by the suggestive power of words. In this chapter, Ānandavardhana's theory of suggestion is used to explain linguistic clogging in phonology-based literary expressions. In the case of phonology-based literary expressions like *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, there could be a lack of equivalent words in the target language, resulting in linguistic clogging.

The Creative Use of Homonyms in Literary Expressions

Poetic devices like double entendre, paronomasia, and onomatopoeia, though found in the language of everyday life, add a different texture to the literary expressions. Apart from adding double meaning to a literary expression, the creative use of homonyms, homographs, and homophones adds to the stylistic beauty of a literary expression. Two or more words with the same pronunciation and spelling can have different meanings in the same language as homonyms. The word “bark”, which means “the outer layer of a tree”, and “the sharp cry of a dog”, for example, is a homonym. Poets and creative writers utilise homonyms through phonology-based literary devices to capture two distinct meanings of the same word. Such juggling of words with similar spellings and pronunciation is common across literature and in various literary genres worldwide. Although a word can have multiple meanings in a dictionary or mental lexicon, the

context helps us decipher the intended meaning. The literal meaning of a word can be fixed by several determining factors such as compatibility, association, and purpose, as explained by Bhartṛhari in *Vākyapadīya*⁹¹. In Sanskrit literature, when two facts appear by the power of a single word, the directly expressed figure is called *śleṣa* (the figure of pun)⁹². Besides this, in addition to *śleṣa*, a figure of speech appears by the power of words, and this figure is directly denoted by a word that also forms the domain of *śleṣa*. In such expressions, the figure of speech gets directly expressed in the source expression along with *śleṣa*. With these determining factors, the literal meaning of a word in a particular sentence can be firmly expressed. A literary expression in Sanskrit with *śleṣa*, along with the *rupaka alamkara*, is quoted below.

bhramim aratim alasa-hṛdayatām
pralayaṃ mūrchām tamaḥ śarīra-sārdam /
maraṇaṃ ca jalada-bhuja-gajaṃ
prasahya kurute viṣaṃ viyoginīnām //

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p.77)

The literary expression describes the emotional state of ladies who are separated from their loved ones when they see a downpour. As soon as the clouds pour forth water, all these reactions, such as sudden dizziness, lethargy, loss of interest in eating, weariness of heart, loss of consciousness, fainting, darkness, emaciation, and even death, are seen in those ladies who are separated from their beloveds⁹³. It is as if these ladies had lovesickness. The Sanskrit word *viṣaṃ* is a homonym with meanings “water” and “poison”. The context fixes the meaning of the word “*viṣaṃ*” as water showered from the clouds. Even so, water usually does not bring such effects. At the same time, a metaphor

⁹¹ “*samsargo viprayogaś ca sāhacaryaṃ virodhitā arthaḥ prakaraṇaṃ liṅgaṃ śabdasyānyasya saṃnidhiḥ // 2.315 sāmartyam aucitī deśaḥ kālo vyaktiḥ svarādayaḥ śabdārthasyānavacchede viśeṣasmṛtihetavaḥ // 2.316*” (Bhartṛhari, 1980, pp. 282-283) (Source, GRETIL).

“The indicatory factors for fixing the meaning are connection, disjunction, association, enmity, purpose, context, peculiarity, the proximity of another word, capacity, compatibility, place, time, gender, accent” (Mammaṭa, 1967, pp. 34-35).

⁹² *vastu-dvaye ca śabda-śaktyā prakāśamāne śleṣaḥ /*

⁹³ dizziness (*bhramim*), lethargy, lost interest in eating (*aratim*), a listlessness, weariness of heart (*alasa-hṛdayatām*) loss of consciousness (*pralayaṃ*) fainting (*mūrchām*) darkness (*tamaḥ*), emaciation (*śarīra-sārdam*) death (*maraṇaṃ*) are seen in those women who are separated from their beloved.

of a snake given for the cloud (cloud serpent - *jalada-bhuja-gajam*) is directly expressed in this literary expression. The literary expression will be complete only when we give attention to the word “serpent” (*bhuja-gajam*) and analyse how it is used as a metaphor for the cloud. The *viṣam* (water/ poison) from the cloud serpent brings dizziness, fainting or all these reactions to those ladies who are separated from their beloveds. Even though the word *viṣam* gives the meaning of water, it will not stop with that because the word serpent (*bhuja-gajam*) is literally expressed in the literary expression, so we have to move to the other meaning, which is poison (*viṣam*). The symptoms, such as sudden dizziness, fainting, and loss of consciousness, are also shown by people who are bitten by a snake. Both meanings of the word *viṣam* as “water” and “poison” are literal and are congruent in this literary expression. The primary meaning will be complete only when both meanings of the homonym are given and explain the literary expression with both meanings. For those ladies who are separated from their husbands, the water that comes from the clouds is like snake poison, which brings all those effects on them. The effect on the ladies from consuming the snake poison and seeing the rain in the absence of their beloved is the same. The metaphor is helped by the double meaning of the word *viṣam*, and this metaphor (*rūpaka ālaṅkāra*) is literally expressed in the source expression. In this literary expression, the *śleṣa*, which assists the metaphor (*rūpaka ālaṅkāra*), is directly expressed⁹⁴.

As the metaphor is expressed directly in the source expression without suggesting it, both meanings of the homonym are necessary, even at the literal level. In the target expression, the figure of speech can be maintained using literal translation. However, there can be difficulty in finding an equivalent homonym in the target language. Even if an equivalent homonym is lacking in the target language, it needs to be compensated by directly expressing both meanings individually in the target expression. Though aesthetic beauty is compromised in the target expression, double meanings of the homonym need to be expressed directly. As the figure of speech is directly expressed in the target expression, the literal translation of the homonym as two separate words in the target expression will not produce any linguistic ambiguity. In the source expression, the metaphor is literally

⁹⁴ atra vācyatayaiva vyatireka-cchāyānugrahī śleṣaḥ pratīyate /

expressed using the word “*jalada-bhuja-gajaṃ*”. Thus, the metaphor can be maintained using literal translation in the target expression. English and Malayalam translations of the literary expression substantiate this argument.

The English translation of the verse by Ingalls, Masson, & Patwardhan

The **cloud serpents** pour forth water
pour forth venom
which brings to ladies whose husbands are away
a sudden dizziness, a listlessness and weariness of
heart, then fainting, darkness, emaciation, death.

Malayalam translation by C.V. Vasudeva Bhattathiri

“*talakkarakkam, udāsīnata, ālasyam, taḷarcca, mēāhālasyam, iruṭṭ, uṭalinre kulaññu pēākal, maraṇam-mēghasarppattinte viṣam (veḷḷam, viṣam) itellām virahikaḷkku nalkunnu*”.

The word *jalada-bhuja-gajaṃ* is translated as “cloud serpents” in English and as “*mēghasarppam*” in Malayalam. The primary meaning of the literary expression will be complete only when both meanings of the homonym *viṣam* (water and poison) are literally expressed in the source expressions. However, with the use of the word “cloud serpent” or “*mēghasarppam*” for “*jalada-bhuja-gajaṃ*”, the metaphor gets literally expressed even in the target expression. Yet, for the literary expression to be complete, both meanings of the homonym are necessary. Due to the lack of an equivalent homonym for “*viṣam*” in English and Malayalam language, both meanings of the homonym are separately given. Despite that, as the metaphor “*jalada-bhuja-gajaṃ*” is directly expressed in the target expressions, both meanings of the homonym will be congruent at the literal level, even for the translated literary expression. If we take the meaning of “*viṣam*” as water, then the literary expression will be “the cloud serpents pour forth water”, for which there is no incongruence as water is poured from serpent-like ‘clouds’. Whereas, if we take the meaning of “*viṣam*” as poison, then the literary expression will be “the cloud serpents pour forth venom”, in which the venom is released from cloud-like

‘serpents’. Both these expressions are literally congruent. Therefore, even if there is no equivalent word for the homonym in the target language, both meanings of the homonym can be individually expressed in the target expression. Since both the individually expressed meanings are literally congruent, there will not be any ambiguity in the target expression. The main reason for this is that the figure of speech is literally expressed in the source expression. Nevertheless, there are literary expressions, as in the case of *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, where the figure of speech is implied. Translation of such literary expressions is even more complex.

Unleashed Homonyms: Poetic Suggestion in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*

In *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, when context fixes the meaning for a particular object, an additional non-contextual meaning is suggested. (Ānandavardhana, 1974). There is a *lexical drift* from contextual meaning to non-contextual or vice versa in literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. ‘Lexical drift,’⁹⁵ the study terms as a movement of meaning from one word to another through the same phonic elements. It occurs, in the present case, when the expressed sound and suggestive sound share the same phonic elements yet indicate distinct meanings, literal and suggested meanings, respectively. The lexical drift, along with the presumed figure of speech, aids the reader in *discovering* that the additional meaning suggested is not inappropriate or inconsistent. Though there is a lexical drift in literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, distinct, unrelated meanings of homonyms coexist with each other. On this ground, Ānandavardhana suggests that “in order that the two meanings might not appear as entirely disconnected, we will have to postulate the relation of the standard of comparison and the object compared as existing between the two” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 79).⁹⁶ There are no connecting words⁹⁷ to indicate the presence of a figure of speech in literary

⁹⁵ For a use of “lexical drift” in experimental psychology literature, see Mattys et al. (2010), and another one in linguistics, see Pullum (2006).

⁹⁶ “*śabda-śakti prakāśamāne satya-prākaraṇike ’rthāntare vākyasyāsambaddhārthābhidhāyitvaṃ mā prasāṅkṣīd ity aprākaraṇika-prākaraṇikārthayor upamānopameya-bhāvaḥ kalpayitavyaḥ*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 78). (Source, GRETIL).

⁹⁷ Connecting words like *iva* for *upamā*, (simile) *tu* for *vyatireka* (poetic contrast) or *eva* for *rūpakā* (metaphor)

expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*; instead, it is suggested. Subsequently, a relation between the subject of comparison (*ūpameya*) and the object of comparison (*ūpamāna*) is suggested. The contextual meaning is the subject to which attributes are ascribed⁹⁸, and the non-contextual meaning is the object whose attributes are borrowed, which is suggested. For the other subvarieties of *dhvani*, if the literal meaning is translated correctly, the literal meaning can give rise to suggestions even in the translated literary expression, just like the original. Furthermore, in cases where target expressions have poetic suggestions that are lacking in source expressions, translation can even outperform the source text (Sagan & Hofstadter, 2009) and transform it into a new product (Bradley, 1909). In general, satisfying both the semantic and aesthetic constraints in the target expressions in line with the source expressions can improve the quality of translation.

Linguistic Constraints in Translating *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*

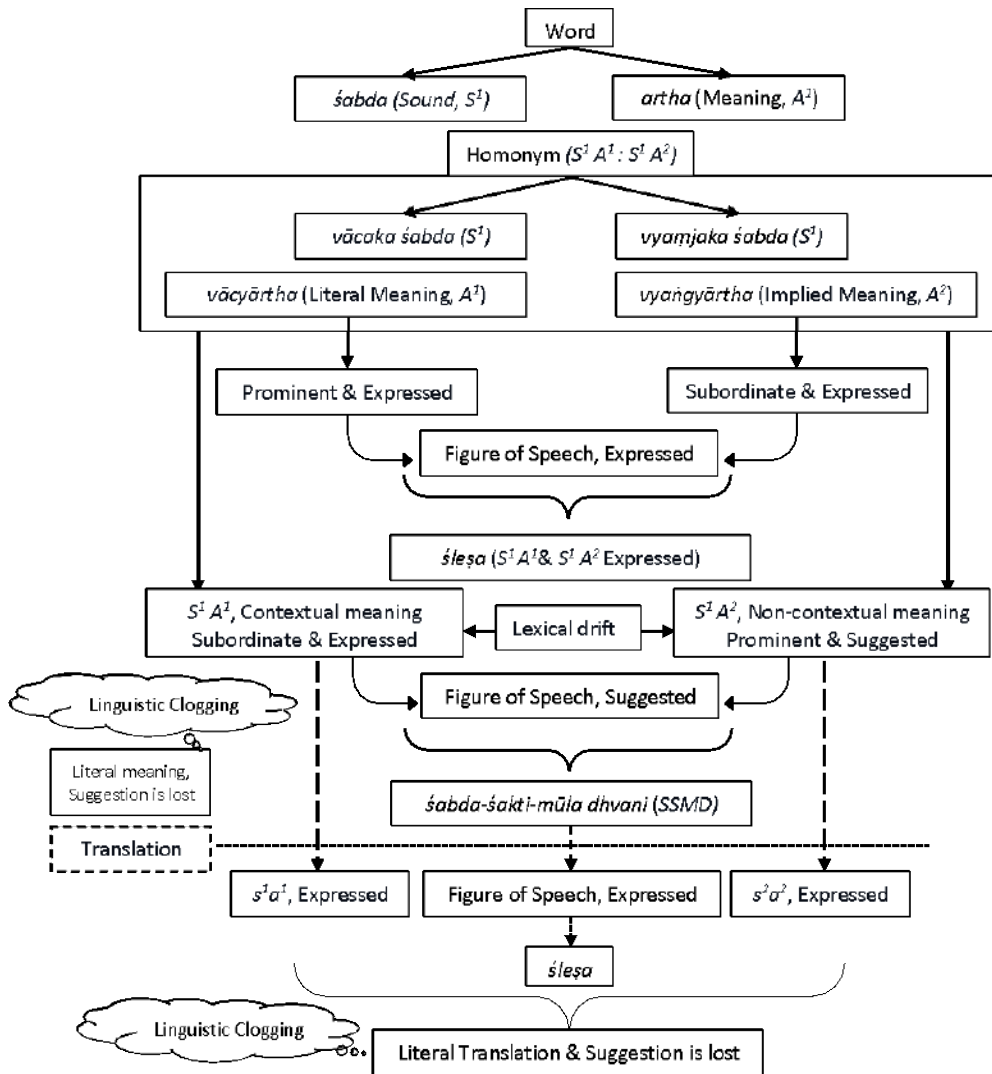
In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the literal meaning stands independent of the suggested meaning and is complete by itself. An array of suggestions apart from the literal meaning may arise because of the suggestive power of the homonym in such literary expressions. As the literal and suggested meanings of expressions encoded within the same sound are entirely different, some readers might miss the suggested meaning or overlook them. If the reader captures the literal and suggested meanings and discovers the figure of speech suggested by the word, then there is no linguistic clogging. Here, the suggestive potential of words becomes a desirable feature that heightens the aesthetic beauty of the literal expression (See Fig 1). Linguistic clogging becomes an undesirable feature of expressions for those who miss capturing the suggested meaning. Linguistic clogging can happen at the following three levels.

- (1) The first stage of linguistic clogging happens when readers are not alert to both the meanings of the homonym. In such cases, the reader is unaware of linguistic clogging and focuses on the literal meaning. The suggested meaning is invisible here.

⁹⁸ The subject to which attributes are ascribed is called “*tenor*” (Richards, 1936).

- (2) In the second stage, readers identify both meanings, yet they miss the relation between them and fail to discover the figure of speech. Here, the reader is aware of linguistic clogging but does not give the necessary attention needed to interpret the suggested meaning.
- (3) The third stage happens in translation, where linguistic clogging reaches its peak in disrupting the poetic suggestion of the literary expression. The translator is aware of linguistic clogging present in target expressions. However, translation fails to capture the suggested meaning due to the lack of equivalent words for conveying both the expressed and suggested meanings in the target language.

Figure 1. A pictorial representation of linguistic clogging in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*.



- Signs of verbal communication have two components: sound (*śabda*) and meaning (*artha*).
- Homonyms- words with the same spelling and pronunciation [sound] (S¹) and different meanings (A¹ & A²).
- If two ideas or concepts are expressed simultaneously because of the power of the word, it is considered as “*śleṣa*”. If (S¹ A¹) & (S¹ A²) are the two words presented by the homonym (SA), then (S¹ A¹) will be the expressed meaning which is prominent. (S¹ A²) will be the suggested meaning, which is subordinate. The figure of speech will be expressed literally in *śleṣa*.
- Wherever a figure of speech is implied because of the suggestive power of the word, it is regarded as “*SSMD*” or “*phonic-based suggestion*”. If (S¹ A¹) & (S¹ A²) are the two words presented by homonym (SA), then (S¹ A¹) will be the literal meaning which is subordinate. (S¹ A²) will be the suggested meaning which is prominent. The figure of speech will be suggested in *SSMD*.
- In *SSMD*, there is a lexical drift between non-contextual meaning (S¹ A²) and contextual meaning (S¹ A¹)
- In the translation of *SSMD*, if an equivalent homonym is not found in the target expression, then (S¹ A¹) & (S¹ A²) can be paraphrased as (s¹ a¹) & (s² a²), which would be a literal translation. In such cases, the figure of speech can no longer be suggested. Such cases are termed “*linguistic clogging*”, where the literal meaning is translated, and the suggested meaning is lost in translation. If the figure of speech is literally expressed in the translated expression, then the translated verse will be considered only as *śleṣa* and not *SSMD*.

A passage in Sanskrit from Bāṇa’s *Harśacarita* with the poetic suggestion is taken for literary analysis to illustrate linguistic clogging at the third level.

“*atrāntare kusuma-samaya-yugam upasaṃharann ajṛmbhata grīṣmābhidhānaḥ
phulla-mallikā-dhavalāṭṭa-hāso mahā-kālah*”

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 78).

“In the meanwhile, appeared (also, yawned) the Terrible

Time (also Lord Siva) of the name 'Summer ' putting an end to the two flowering months (also, bringing an end of the aeons) and with radiant laughter in the form of mansions festooned with blooming jasmines (also, with boisterous laughter white like full-blown jasmines)”

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 79).

The literal meaning of the passage is as follows. In the meantime, (*atrāntare*), after putting an end (*upasaṃharann*) to the spring season (*kusuma-samaya*), which lasted for two months (*yugam*) expanded (*ajṛmbhata*) [the summer, *grīṣma*]. The long season (*mahā-kālah*) named summer (*grīṣmābhidhānaḥ*) came with the wild laughter (*hāso*) of Jasmine flowers (*phulla-mallikā*) that were making the palace terrace (*aṭṭa*) white (*dhavala*). In this literary expression, the expressed meaning is a description of the summer season. The author wants to convey that after putting an end to both months of Spring, the summer season has arrived. That makes the Jasmine bloom in such a manner that it seemed the palace terrace was laughing. The literal meaning of every word is set according to the context, which is the description of the summer season. Within that context, the word *mahā-kālah* means a long period of time. Even though the compound word *mahākālah* means Lord Shiva, the denotative power of the word *mahā-kālah* is restricted to the meaning of its individual components, *mahā* and *kālah* as “long season” because of the context. There are no linking words like *eva* or *iva* that will force us to choose the meaning that refers to Lord Shiva. Even though the primary meaning of the word *mahā-kālah* is fixed as long season, the meaning of Lord Shiva also comes to our mind from the homonym *mahākālah*. Accordingly, the suggested meaning of the Sanskrit passage quoted above is as follows. Meanwhile, (*atrāntare*) Lord Shiva (*mahākālah*), whose wild laughter is white (*dhavalāṭṭa-hāso*) as jasmine blossoms (*phulla-mallikā*) aroused (*ajṛmbhata*) as he brought an end to aeons of time (*yugam upasaṃharann*).

In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, every word in the passage does not relate to the suggested meaning. When Lord Shiva is taken as the suggested meaning for *mahā-kālah*, then the description of the season called summer (*grīṣmābhidhānaḥ*) will

not fit with the suggested meaning. The aesthetic delight of the passage does not stop just by the attribution of the meaning of Lord Shiva to the word *mahākālah*. It goes to the extent of suggesting the similarity between Lord Shiva and the great summer through the suggested metaphor (*rūpaka alaṅkāra*)⁹⁹. In such cases, the suggested meaning cannot stand independently without the presence of a figure of speech. There could be expressions with lexical drift without suggesting a figure of speech, but the suggestion of a figure of speech makes literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* stand out of its kind.

In most cases of literal translation of literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, a lack of a figure of speech might lead to ambiguity. To avoid interpreting the meanings of homonyms as entirely disconnected meanings, the reader imagines a suggested simile along with it. Therefore, similar properties of summer and those of Lord Shiva are suggested in this literary expression. Just like summer puts an end to the spring season, Lord Shiva puts an end to the aeons of time. The suggestion of a figure of speech removes the ambiguity, and the gentle touch of the suggestion brings out aesthetic delight in the readers. A similarity-based relation is established between the contextual and non-contextual meanings. Likewise, any other figure of speech where we could assume a relation of the standard of comparison and object compared through suggestion can be taken as an example for *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*¹⁰⁰.

It is also not possible to say that the figure of speech present in the literary expression is because of *inference*. If the method of cognition was through *inference*, then we would only get the contextual literal meaning that we can infer from the context. *Inferring* a non-contextual meaning is not possible because it will result in ambiguity. In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, distinct, unrelated meanings are recognised from the creative use of homonyms. In such cases, a relation between the contextual and non-contextual meaning can be identified due to suggestion. In Keats' famous line,

⁹⁹ *Ābhidhāna* (named) is usually used in *rūpaka alaṅkāra*. The author is thankful to Dr. Shankar Rajaraman for this insight.

¹⁰⁰ “*anye 'pi cālaṅkārah śabda-śakti-mūlānusvāna-rūpa-vyaṅgye dhvanau sambhavanty eva*” (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 78). (Source, GRETIL)

“Thou still unravished bride of quietness”, the word ‘yet’ is a polysemy¹⁰¹. Hence, there is a lexical drift from one meaning to another. There is no subject of comparison (*ūpameya*) and no object of comparison (*ūpamāna*). Even so, the figure of speech paradox is suggested, and it brings a creative, expressive touch to the literary expression.

A Sanskrit verse from Mayūra’s *Sūryaśataka* with poetic suggestion shows how linguistic clogging appears in the translation of *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*.

*“dattānandāḥ prajānām samucita-samayākṛṣṭa-sṛṣṭaiḥ payobhiḥ
pūrvāhṇe viprakīrṇā diśi diśi viramaty ahni saṃhāra-bhājah /
dīptāṃśor dīrgha-duḥkha-prabhava-bhava-bhayodanvad-uttāra-nāvo
gāvo vah pāvanānām parama-parimitām prītim utpādayantu //¹⁰²”*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 78)¹⁰³.

In this literary expression, the expressed meaning is a description of the sun. Sun’s rays (*dīptāṃśor gāvo*) bring delight to all people (*dattānandāḥ prajānām*) by absorbing (*ākṛṣṭa*) water (*payobhiḥ*) at the right time (*samucita-samayā*) [summer season] and releasing (*sṛṣṭaiḥ*) water (*payobhiḥ*) at the proper time (*samucita-samayā*) [rainy season]. The sun’s rays (*dīptāṃśor gāvo*) are spread out in all directions (*viprakīrṇā diśi diśi*) during the daytime (*pūrvāhṇe*) and withdrawn (*saṃhāra-bhājah*) by the close of the day (*viramaty ahni*). The sun’s rays (*dīptāṃśor gāvo*) are the ships (*uttāra-nāvo*) for crossing the sea (*odanvad*) of a non-ending cycle of birth and rebirth, which is the source of our prolonged grief (*dīrgha-duḥkha-prabhava*). May the rays of the sun (*dīptāṃśor gāvo*) bring us (*utpādayantu*) unlimited bliss (*parama-parimitām*)

¹⁰¹ To find the distinction between pragmatic polysemy and syntactic polysemy, see Carston (2020).

¹⁰² (Source, GRETEL)

¹⁰³ English translation of the verse by Krishnamoorthy.

“Bringing delight to the public by sucking
And showering down water (also, milk) at proper times
Scattering wide in every quarter in the forenoon
And receding back at the close of the day,
Those veritable ships that ferry one across
The ocean of rebirth’s terror and suffering,
May such rays (also, cows) of the blazing Sun
Bring us delight, holy and limitless”. (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 79).

prītim) to all kind-hearted people (*pāvanānām*). Looking at the context, the meaning of *gāvo* as “rays” is the expressed meaning. However, *gāvo* is a homonym, with one meaning being ‘rays’ and another meaning being ‘a cow’. Accordingly, with the non-contextual meaning, it reads as the cow (*gāvo*) takes (*ākṛṣṭa*) water/milk (*payobhiḥ*) at the correct time (*samucita-samaya*) and gives happiness to its progeny (*prajānām*) [calves] by releasing (*sṛṣṭaiḥ*) milk (*payobhiḥ*) at the proper time (*samucita-samaya*). The herd of cows is scattered in all directions (*viprakīrṇā diśi diśi*) during the daytime (*pūrvāhṇe*) [for grazing]. All the cows gather around (*saṃhāra-bhājah*) [the cattle shed] by evening (*ahni viramaty*). Here, the primary word *gāvo* gives the contextual meaning of “sun rays”. The suggested meaning of cow appears by the suggestive potential of the word *gāvo*. Accordingly, the first two lines match perfectly with both meanings. In contrast, the literal meaning of *dīrgha-duḥkha* as “prolonged grief” will not fit with the suggested meaning of cow.

There will not be any change in the literal meaning if the poet has used any other synonym for sun rays instead of the word *gāvo*. In that case, the suggestion would not have arisen. Even if the poet has used any other synonym for rays, the literal meaning will be complete. It goes well with the contextual meaning also. Nevertheless, another synonym for *gāvo* (sun rays) will not give the meaning of cow. Hence, the figure of speech cannot be suggested. Therefore, even within the same language, the homonym that produces *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* cannot be replaced with a synonym. The use of the homonym (*gāvo*) and the relation it shares with other words used in the literary expression is the primary source for suggestion here. The literal meaning is fixed with sun rays, and the meaning of cow is achieved through the suggestive function. A simile is suggested by comparing sun rays to the behaviour of cows.

As another example of linguistic clogging in the Malayalam language, a literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* quoted in *Bhashabhooshanam* by Rajarajavarma is given below.

“*salkīrttikonṭu paramannakulattinellā-
mulkkarṣadan prathitavikramanitrilōkyām*”

nalśāradōjvalavilāsavilōlaśīlan

sanmānasattilamarunnitu rājahamsan” (Rajarajavarma, 2017, 171).

The literal meaning of the literary expression is, through esteemed reputation (*salkīrttikōṇṭu*), the king brings an end to the fame of the clan of enemy kings (*paramannakulam*). The king’s valour and manliness (*vikramam*) are praised (*prathita*) in the three worlds. He is the one whose conduct shines forth due to the grace of muses. The literal meaning of the word *sanmānasam* is right-minded. “The king resides inside the minds of his virtuous subjects” is the contextual meaning. Alternatively, the word *sanmānasam* is also the spot where the swans (*rājahamsa*) arrive. In Hindu mythology, lake Manasarovar is seen as the abode of swans during the rainy season. Thus, the literary expression also suggests that, through esteemed reputation (*salkīrttikōṇṭu*), the Rājahamsa provides high excellence to the clan of splendid swans (*parama anna kulam*). They desire the welfare of others (*ulkkarśadan*). The glory given by the swans to the Manasarovar is known in three worlds. During autumn (*śārada*), they are full of energy while playing, and they are the ones who gleefully wander amongst the lotus of goddess Sarasvati. Such swans settle in *sanmānasam*. To remove the impression of impropriety through the non-contextual meaning, a similarity between the king and the swan is suggested in this literary expression. Achuthanunni (2015) interprets the literary expression as, just like a swan in Mansarovar Lake, the king stays in the minds of his subjects because of his good deeds. The aesthetic pleasure lies in the fact that the poet was able to give us the image of swans without mentioning it. Just like the glory given by the swans to the Mānasasaras, the king resides in the minds of virtuous subjects through his glory known to the three worlds. The suggestion of a figure of speech shows that the literary expression does not stop merely by presenting a non-contextual meaning of swans. The aesthetic beauty of the literary expression lies in resonating with the similarity between the swans and the king. In the translation of literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, if an equivalent homonym is not found in the target expression, then the literal and the suggested meanings have to be paraphrased, as in a literal translation. In such cases, the figure of speech can no longer be suggested. If the figure of

speech is literally expressed in the translated expression, then the translated literary expression will be considered only as *śleṣa* and not *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*¹⁰⁴.

Aesthetic Concerns about Translating *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*

In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the figure of speech, rather than expressed directly through the denotative words, is being suggested. The author knits two seemingly unrelated objects (the long season of summer and Lord Shiva in the passage quoted below) using the poetic threads of suggestion in literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In the translation of literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, it becomes necessary to either individually express the suggested meaning through denotation or to expose the figure of speech directly through words, as in the case of *śleṣa*. Literal translation and paraphrasing of expressions take away the possibility for suggestions in the translated literary expression. We often miss the poetic suggestion in a translated work because the suggested figure gets directly expressed or is omitted in the translated literary expression.

Three different translations of the Sanskrit passage, “*atrāntare kusuma-samaya-yugam upasaṃharann ajrmbhata grīṣmābhīdhānaḥ phulla-mallikā-dhavalāṭṭa-hāso mahā-kālah*”¹⁰⁵ (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 78) are taken to demonstrate the point mentioned above.

English translation of the passage by Krishnamoorthy.

In the meanwhile, appeared (also, yawned) the Terrible
Time (also Lord Siva) of the name ‘Summer’ putting an
end to the two flowering months (also, bringing an end of the
aeons) and with radiant laughter in the form of mansions
festooned with blooming jasmines (also, with boisterous
laughter white like full-blown jasmines)

¹⁰⁴ For more examples of *śleṣa* and *SSMD*, see Ānandavardhana (1974, pp. 72-82).

¹⁰⁵ (Source, GRETIL)

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 79).

English translation of the passage by Ingalls, Masson, & Patwardhan.

Meanwhile the long period named Summer,
Meanwhile the God of Destruction,
when the market stalls are white with the laughter
whose terrible laughter is white
of their blossoming jasmine flowers,
as jasmine flowers,
expanded as it put an end to the two months of Spring
yawned as He put an end to the aeons of time

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 302).

Malayalam translation by C.V. Vasudeva Bhattathiri

itiniṭayil raṅṭu vasantamāsakālam upasam haricca keāṅṭu kēāṭṭuvāyittu.
vēnalkkalamennu pēruḷḷa viṭarnna mullappūvākunna peāṭṭi ciriyēāṭe vanna
mahākālam (śivan)

(Ānandavardhana, 2008, p. 73).

In all three translations, the contextual and non-contextual meanings are directly denoted. The translator uses various methods to portray both of these meanings. The non-contextual meaning is given either in separate brackets or in smaller font or italics to differentiate it from contextual meaning. When it is directly denoted through words in the translated literary expression, they become part of the literal meaning. The literal meaning of such literary expression is conveyed through literal translation, whereas, owing to the linguistic constraints triggered by *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the suggested meaning is lost in translation. If the passage cannot suggest a non-contextual meaning after translation, then there is no chance for the reader to grasp the figure of speech in the translated literary expression.

The suggested meaning is non-contextual, and the imaginative ability of the reader is required to identify the suggested meaning. The author/translator keeps it open for the reader's imagination to explore the suggested figure of speech without directly expressing it. The relation between the two seemingly unrelated objects is what the reader *recovers* in their imagination. Therefore, it opens the possibility for interpretation from the reader's frame of mind. An active engagement of the reader is necessary for this process of *recovering* the relation between the contextual meaning and the non-contextual meaning. The reader gets that aesthetic pleasure by actively engaging in the creative process along with the author.

In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, if a translator cannot employ equivalent expressions that can convey *both* the meanings encoded in the source expression, then translated literary expression misses the poetic suggestion. Consequently, readers cannot savour the suggested meaning as it is absent in the translated literary expression. Suppose the suggested meaning in a literary expression is translated through denotation instead of the non-contextual meaning. In that case, it does not form any relationship with the context and thus remains ambiguous. Thus, linguistic clogging arises at the suggested level in literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. Literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* can be translated at the literal level without any specific difficulty. If we look at the contextual meaning, the translated literary expression is meaningful and complete at the literal level. However, it cannot suggest the figure of speech in the translated literary expression. The lack of poetic suggestion in the target expression thus results in a half-baked translation. However, by paying close attention to these linguistic constraints can ensure the meaning and artistic qualities of the original work are faithfully conveyed in the target language.

***śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* with suggested fact**

While the explicit meaning is literally congruent, a fact or a figure that is different from the literal meaning can be suggested in literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*.

In such literary expressions, the implied meaning will be revealed due to the suggestive potential of words. In order to effectively convey both the implied and explicit meanings of a literary expression and capture the nuances of suggested meaning from the source expression, equivalent homonyms need to be employed in the target expressions. In cases where there is no equivalent homonym available in the target language, translators employ various methods, such as paraphrasing or providing explanatory footnotes. However, for the translation of literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, a literal translation of the literary expression alone will not fulfil the purpose served by the homonym in the source expression. In literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the implied meaning diverges from the explicit meaning, and the suggested fact is not explicitly stated in the source expression. In such cases, literal translation either makes the implied meaning also explicit or fails to capture the intended effect. A literary expression in the Sanskrit language in which the implied meaning differs from the explicit meaning is quoted below.

*paṁthia ṇa ettha sattharamatthi maṇaṃ pattharatthale gāme /
 uṇṇapaoharaṃ pekkhiṇṇa jai vasasi tā vasasu // 58 //*
 “*pathika nātra prastaramasti manākprastarasthala grāma
 unnatapayēādharaṃ prēkṣya yadi vasasi tadavasa/*”

These are the words of a homemaker to a traveller who came home on a rainy evening. The literal meaning of the literary expression is as follows: “O traveller, this barren village has no lodge to stay, yet if you wish to stay here after seeing these rising clouds, please do so¹⁰⁶. In this literary expression, the word “*payodhara*” is a homonym with two meanings: “bosoms” and “clouds”. While the literal meaning of the literary expression is explicitly conveyed, an idea that is entirely different from the literal meaning is revealed due to the suggestive potential of words. If we interpret “*payodhara*” as “bosom”, the literary expression suggests a meaning that diverges from the literal meaning of the

¹⁰⁶ O traveller (*pathika*), this barren village (*manākprastarasthala grāma*) has no lodge to stay (*nātra prastaramasti*), yet seeing (*prēkṣya yadi*) these rising clouds (*unnata payēādharaṃ*), if you wish to stay here (*vasasi tadavasa*), please do so.

expression. The suggested meaning of the literary expression is, O traveller, this barren village has no lodge to stay, yet if you wish to stay here after seeing my blooming bosoms, please do so. The suggested meaning implies that the traveller is invited to spend time with the lady¹⁰⁷. In this literary expression, the literal meaning is explicit and congruent, while the suggested meaning is indirectly expressed. The aesthetic beauty lies in the fact that, while remaining literally congruent, the literary expression hints at another meaning without directly stating it. The implied meaning is conveyed through the suggestive potential of words. It is possible to convey both the implied and explicit meanings in the target expression by utilising the suggestive potential of words, just as in the source expression. Only by employing this suggestive function can the implied meaning be effectively conveyed in the target expression. If the suggestive potential of words is not explored in the target expression, the implied meaning either becomes directly expressed or remains absent in the target expression.

The English translation of the literary expression by Gangadar Jha,

O traveller, in this village of stones, there is not a. bedding to be had; yet,
seeing the rising clouds (*unnata payodhara*, my blossoming breasts), if
you decide to lodge here, you may do so.

In this English translation of the literary expression, both meanings of the homonym "*payodhara*" are provided individually as "clouds" and "breasts". In the source expression, the suggested meaning was not explicitly stated but rather implied. However, in the target expression, both the literal and the suggested meanings are literally given. Since the suggested meaning is also literally congruous, the target expression does not become ambiguous. However, when the suggested meaning is literally expressed, the implied fact in the source expression becomes directly expressed. Expressing something explicitly is different from expressing it implicitly. The second meaning is implied in the source expression and is not directly expressed. On the contrary, the target expression

¹⁰⁷ O traveller (*pathika*), this barren village (*manāḥprastarasthala grāma*) has no lodge to stay (*nātra prastaramasti*), yet seeing (*prēkṣya yadi*) these rising bosoms (*unnata payēādharām*), if you wish to stay here (*vasasi tadavasa*), please do so.

directly expresses that implied meaning. This takes away the beauty of the literary expression as the subtlety of meaning captured in the source expression is lost in the target expression. However, it is possible to capture the suggested fact as an implied meaning by relying on the suggestive function even in the target expression. Instead of strictly adhering to the literal translation of the literary expression, translator Catlin takes a different approach.

O traveller, this barren plateau has no inn.
Feel the charged atmosphere!
If you want to stay with me, then please do.

(Tr. Catlin, 2006)

In the English translation of the literary expression, the phrase (*unnata payodharam*) is modified as “charged atmosphere”. Since the word “*payodharam*” is a homonym with meanings “clouds” and “bosoms”, *unnata payodharam* can be individually translated as “rising clouds” or “blooming breasts” as we have seen in the translation by Gangader Jha. In order to capture the nuances of the suggested meaning from the source expression and simultaneously convey both the meanings of the expression, translator Catlin has opted for the term “charged atmosphere” in his translation. While it is not a literal translation of the expression, it carries a different semantic meaning from the source expression while successfully capturing the aesthetic beauty in the target expression as well as the meaning of the literary expression. The use of the expression “charged atmosphere” in the target language means to “be charged emotionally as well as meteorologically”. With this translation, both the literal meaning and implied meaning are successfully captured in the target expression.

In certain instances, translators may find it necessary to provide additional details or contextual information in order to fully capture the literary expression in translation. This is especially true when there are world plays or suggested meanings involved. In the Malayalam translation of the aforementioned literary expression, the translator includes

extra details to further enhance the understanding of the situation. These additional details assist the reader in quickly grasping the suggested meaning.

Malayalam translation of the verse by A R Rajaraja Varma.

*“salkkāramēkānāyi pāntha kēḷkka talkkālaminñilla gr̥hādhināthan
payēādharrattinre uyarcca pārttiṭṭī ādhiyenkil pulareggamikkām.”*

The literal meaning of the literary expression is that for providing you with hospitality, the lord of the house is not here for the time being. If you are anxious by seeing the rising clouds, you can resume your journey in the morning¹⁰⁸. The explicit meaning states that the lady is offering the traveller a safe space to stay, protecting him from the potential storm that might come at night. In both Sanskrit and Malayalam languages, the word “*payodhara*” means “clouds” and “bosoms”. The suggested meaning in the translated literary expression is, listen, traveller, the lord of the house is not here for the time being. If the sight of rising bosoms had made you fall in love with me, then stay here at night and resume your journey in the morning¹⁰⁹. Her desire for intimacy with the traveller is implied through the suggestive potential of words. The homonym “*payodhara*” in the source expression can also be used in the same manner in the target expression, as it holds the same meanings in the target language. In the Malayalam translation, the homonym “*payodhara*” is maintained. Thus, the explicit and implicit meanings in the source expression can be maintained in the target expression. Both meanings of the homonym are not literally expressed in the target expression. However, with this translation approach, both the literal meaning and the implied meanings are captured in the target expression. Such creative interventions from the translator’s side can be observed in every translation. Hence, translation is not simply a replication of the source expression in the target language. Translators have the liberty to make adjustments while translating a literary expression.

¹⁰⁸ For providing you the hospitality (*salkkāramēkānāyi*) lord of the house (*gr̥hādhināthan*) is not here for the time being (*talkkālaminñilla*). If you are anxious by seeing (*pārttiṭṭī ādhiyenkil*) the rise of bosoms (*payēādharrattinre uyarcca*), you can resume your journey in the morning (*pulareggamikkām*).

¹⁰⁹ Listen traveller (*pāntha kēḷkka*), the lord of the house (*gr̥hādhināthan*) is also not here for the time being (*talkkālaminñilla*). If you are excited (*ādhiyenkil*) by seeing the rising bosoms (*payēādharrattinre uyarcca pārttiṭṭī*), then stay here at night and resume your journey in the morning (*pulareggamikkām*).

Translating Ethnic Songs: Navigating through Cultural Nuances and Linguistic Complexities

Linguistic constraints encompass not only the technical aspects of language but also the cultural and historical context in which the literary expression is situated. Translators need to be sensitive to the cultural nuances, metaphors, and other literary devices employed in the source text, as these elements play a crucial role in shaping the literary expression and its aesthetic impact. Translators must be capable of navigating these cultural constraints and making informed decisions to find creative solutions that can capture the essence of the original literary expression. Translating literary expressions often involves striking a delicate balance between maintaining the linguistic integrity of the source expression and ensuring readability in the target language. The translations must be accessible and comprehensible to the target audience.

Translating ethnic songs requires an understanding of the cultural contexts, mythological references, and contextual strategies used in the source expression. The process of translating ethnic songs involves careful interpretation and linguistic expertise in both the source language and the target language. To capture the essence and emotions conveyed in the original songs while maintaining the linguistic integrity and cultural significance of the song is a tedious task. The process of translating ethnic songs presents unique challenges, particularly when it comes to finding equivalent words, phrases, imagery and expressions in the target language that can convey the same sentiments as in the source language. Maintaining the musicality of the song, including its rhythm, rhyme, and metre, when shifting to another language is also a challenging exercise. Besides, ethnic performances are deeply rooted in specific cultural traditions, and their cultural significance can be challenging to convey accurately through translation. Translators often face the challenge of finding equivalent terms in different cultural contexts. It requires an intense apprehension for the cultural nuances and artistic elements embedded within those literary expressions. However, translations make these ethnic songs available to a broader audience while preserving their traditional roots and authenticity.

Invocation of Karumakan: Waves of Devotion and the Inner Turmoil

The use of literary devices, alliteration, assonance, simile, and metaphor are commonly found in *Thottampātu*. Additionally, although rare, the use of homonyms can also be seen, similar to the usage in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* in *Thottampātu*. Below is a *thottam* with a suggested figure of speech due to the suggestive potential of the word.

സിന്ധു വില്പുതിത്തള്ളി വരുന്നവൻ
തിരമാല പോലെ അന്തരം
തന്നിലന്തർഭവിച്ചൊരന്ധത തീർക്കുവാനായ്
ബന്ധുര ഗാത്രീലക്ഷ്മി വിളങ്ങിടുന്നുഴലിപ്പുറത്ത്
കാന്തി കലർന്ന കരുമകൻ പദപങ്കജം കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 81)

Sindhu vilunthittaḷli varunnavan
Thiramāla pōle antharam
Thannilantarbhavichorandhatha thīrkkuvānāy
Bandhura gāthrilakṣmi viḷaṅṅiṭunnu zhalaippurattu
Kānti kalarnna karumakan padapaṅkajam kai thozhunnēn

He who flows through the Sindhu
like a wave, my inner self (like a wave, there is a gap)
to remove the darkness that had entered within me
At Uzhalipuram, where the beautiful Gatrilakshmi is shining
I clasped my hands at the lotus-like feet of the radiant Karumakan

The literary expression is an invocatory literary expression dedicated to the deity called Karumakan. The deity is depicted as flowing through the river Sindhu. The speaker, in an effort to dispel the darkness that has entered within him, clasps his hands in a prayerful gesture at the lotus feet of Karumakan. The goddess Gatrilakshmi also shines in the same place named Uzhalipuram. Seeking blessings from god to dispel the darkness that has

engulfed him, the speaker folds his hands. The darkness represents his inner turmoil. The word “*antharam*” is a homonym, meaning “inner self” and “gap”. The speaker's thoughts fluctuate like waves, suggesting that his inner self is inconsistent, constantly wavering with thoughts. The simile of “my inner self is like a wave” is expressed literally. Alternatively, if the second meaning is taken, it means that even though the darkness has engulfed him, there is still a gap. This gap is similar to the gap between the waves, indicating that the darkness has not entirely consumed him. There is still room for divine intervention within that gap, which can be represented by his devotion to God. This devotion may come and go like a wave. It is not consistent. The *thottam* suggests a similarity between the gap in his mind and the waves. While the waves continue to fluctuate endlessly, however, the blessings of the deity can bring stillness to his thoughts. To remove the darkness that has entered him due to these fluctuating thoughts, he seeks divine intervention. The *thottam* portrays the speaker’s profound faith and devotion towards the deity Karumakan.

Just like any literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the *thottam* is also constrained by linguistic and aesthetic elements related to *śabda* or sound. When the target expression falls short in capturing the homonyms with its multiple interpretations, the intricate layer of meaning and the lasting impression it has left in the source expression are compromised in the translation. The suggestive potential of words, when actualised through the creative use of phonic elements and lexical drift to encode meaning, enhances the aesthetic attributes of an expression by alluding to a figure of speech. In the translation of such literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, we encounter linguistic clogging not in terms of primary meaning but due to the linguistic and aesthetic constraints in capturing the suggestive aspects. This chapter analysed literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, where the literal and suggested meanings were entirely different, and showed how linguistic clogging created linguistic and aesthetic constraints on the translations. Generally, when words with similar phonic elements cannot be brought out in translation, the target expression shortfalls poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). Nevertheless, when the translation succeeds in capturing the parameters of sound (*śabda*), that is, the structural elements of the source expressions,

along with the meaning, reference, and other semantic features, then the lyrical beauty and aesthetic attributes of the literary expression can be maintained even in the translation of literary expression with poetic suggestions. Once the explanatory link between the structural (phonic) elements of words and content, that is, the causal connection between *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* and lexical drift and meaning, is understood, it may be possible to put that for broader applications. In such a manner, understanding the importance of the phonic elements in human translation can be helpful in areas such as machine translation, where structural elements are registered and processed, capturing aspects of content.

The translation aims to convey the meaning or content of an expression from one language to another. An ethnic performance is not just about the verbal component; along with the verbal component, the visual component is equally important. However, recreating a performing art with visual and verbal components in a different medium is a complex and challenging endeavour that requires careful consideration and artistic skill. For instance, the adaptation of a song into a dance form allows for the exploration of different aesthetic elements, such as visual imagery, movement, or gestures, to convey the essence and emotions of the poem. The adaptation of an ethnic performance goes beyond the linguistic hurdles. It is a multi-faceted process that requires a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, linguistic, artistic, and aesthetic aspects involved in conveying the essence of the original performance. Finding a delicate balance between honouring the source culture and art form while also allowing for meaningful engagement and appreciation from diverse audiences in new contexts is tedious. Yet, it provides a unique opportunity for the artist to bring novel perspectives and creativity to the original form, adding new layers of meaning and expression. An adaptation of a performance can be both creative as well as a replica of the original.

Creative Adaptation vs Replicated Adaptations

Creative adaptation refers to the process of taking an existing work and modifying it to place it in a different medium or form, creating new expressions from the existing ones. It

involves the reinterpretation and transformation of the original form to create new works that are inspired by, but not limited to, the original work. In contrast, a replicated adaptation involves the act of replicating an existing art form in a new space without making significant changes or alterations to its original form. The original form is reproduced or reproduced through replicated adaptations. Replicated adaptations are often made for various reasons, such as preserving the original art form or reproducing it for different audiences or situations. The purpose is to reproduce the same artistic experience and impact as the original work. Hence, replicated adaptations do not involve significant modifications or reinterpretations of the original form. They present the replicated version without introducing substantial changes to the artistic vision.

Novelty through visual expressions

Novelty can be introduced through the difference in suggestor (*vyañjaka*), suggested meaning (*vyañgyārtham*), and difference in place and time. In any form of art, whether it is literature, music, or dance, newer forms are constantly emerging. Even paintings based on epics and narratives are not an exact replication or copy of the literary expressions. The painter may have taken ideas from earlier poets, but the paintings also offer a new dimension to what has been suggested. In the portrait of Shakuntala by Ravi Varma, he may have taken ideas from Kalidasa or epics, but the painting is not an exact replication of the narrative. Raja Ravi Varma may have even incorporated novel elements into it. Even if an author follows the same idea that has been described by many other poets earlier, it can still have something novel and charming.

Though many ethnic art forms have faded away over time, it is appreciable that Sarppaṁtuḷḷal is reviving from the brink of extinction. Ethnic art forms are very much different from modern art forms. Occasional changes are not as common in Sarppaṁtuḷḷal as in contemporary art forms. One reason for this is the adherence to established techniques and subject matter that have been passed down through generations. It has limited scope for embracing new techniques and subject matter. On the other hand, performers of Tīrayāṭṭam adapt to evolving cultural, technological, and social contexts.

Performative freedom in *Tirayāṭṭam* allows for greater experimentation, flexibility, and diversity in *Tirayāṭṭam* compared to *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal*. One main reason for this is the availability of diverse characters within the performance, which are not bound to any particular time or place. For example, characters like *Kuṭṭiccāttan*, *Guru*, and *Kallichi* are very fluid. It is easier to present a new narrative with them as characters. They are not restricted by any cultural ties. However, based on these characters, several creative adaptations can be made. For example, a dance composition named “*Sarpatatwam*” or “*The Serpent Wisdom*”, choreographed and performed by Dr Methil Devika, a renowned Mohiniyattam artist, is inspired by performances like *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal*. Devika skillfully depicts the captivating allure and mystique of serpents through her dance. Through this choreography, she uses expressive movements, gestures, and facial expressions unique to Mohiniyattam to convey the serpentine charm and elegance by bringing forth the graceful and enchanting qualities associated with serpents. Similar to *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal*, the erasing of the *kaḷam* is found in this choreography as well. However, grace and elegance are more in *Sarpatatwam*, whereas it is more violent in *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal*. Devika’s performance captures the fluidity of the serpents; its sensuality and mysterious nature captivate the audience. The movements of the serpents as they gracefully glide through the *kaḷam* are captivating and capture the attention of the audience. Similar to *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal*, the act of erasing the *kaḷam* serves as a metaphorical representation of creation and dissolution, echoing the constant change observed in the natural world. Through this gesture, Devika adds layers of meaning to her performance, inviting the audience to reflect on the fleeting nature of time and beauty. Such creative adaptations based on *Tirayāṭṭam* can be seen as well. However, inspired by ethnic performances, various narratives can be presented. For example, Vimal Chandran’s SciFi series are connected to ethnic performances such as *Theyyam*. His artworks try to reimagine characters from folklore, myths, and native traditions in science fiction environments. Replicated adaptations of *Tirayāṭṭam* performances into modern stages may have backlashes.

Ethnic performances like *Tirayāṭṭam* and *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal* are traditionally performed in sacred groves. They share an intricate connection with the sacred groves, forming an inseparable bond between the performance and its natural environment. The sacred

groves serve as both a divine space as well as a performing yard for the artists. These backdrops also play a vital role in the performance itself. Each act is intricately connected to the elements found in the sacred groves. For example, there will be one particular tree mentioned in the *thottam* under which some acts have taken place. For that specific context, the significance that the tree holds is also important. In any case, if a particular water body is being talked about in a *thottam*, its protection also goes along with it, as the deity visits them as a part of the performance. In recent times, performers have begun exploring the possibility of presenting ethnic performances, such as *Tirayāṭṭam*, on modern stages.



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Adapting an ethnic performance to different venues or cultural settings may require modifications to ensure that the performance resonates with the new audience while maintaining its cultural heritage. Elements such as stage, set design, costumes, and choreography, which were initially designed for a specific performance setting, such as sacred groves, need to be adapted to fit the constraints and possibilities of the new medium. The replicated adaptation of the ethnic performance often involves removing the performance from its original setting. But in reality, ethnic performances rely heavily on the unique ambience of the sacred groves. Simply taking an ethnic performance as it is and placing it on a modern stage without recreating the associated cultural context diminishes both the aesthetic as well as the cultural significance of the performance. As a result, replicated adaptations of *Tirayāṭṭam* and similar performances often fail to capture their aesthetic purpose. Performing an ethnic art form without creating a performance

¹¹⁰ Nāgakālī tira performed in Bengaluru city

yard in a suitable space or meeting the technical requirements can lead to disappointment for the audience. On a modern stage, these performers may appear as mere representations, lacking the connection and engagement with the audience that is essential to an ethnic performance.

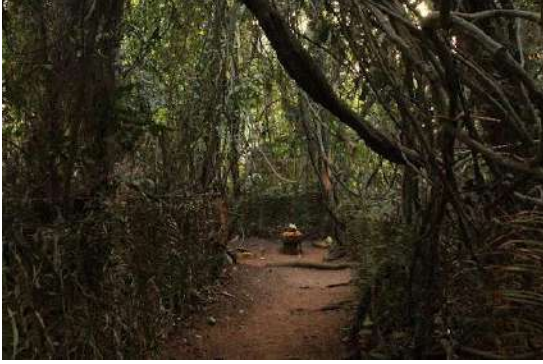
There is a strong interconnection between the performance and the sacred groves, as they mutually sustain each other. Any changes or alterations in one significantly impact the other. This connection is inseparable, akin to the relationship between *śabda* (sound) and *artha* (meaning), where they are interdependent. In the absence of one, the other ceases to exist. Ethnic performances and the lore and legends associated with them play a crucial role in the protection and preservation of the sacred groves. Local communities have taken on the responsibility of preserving these tiny patches of forest in honour of the deities that abode in these groves. In the Kozhikode district, *Tirayāṭṭam* performances commence with the *Kadalundi vavulsavam* at the *Jathavan kotta*. Jathavan, a deity worshipped in the sacred groves, visits each corner of Kadalundi village along with its mother, *Pediyattu Bhagavati*. They visit nearly ten sacred groves in the vicinity during the three-day festival.

Sacred groves serve as significant repositories of numerous endemic, endangered and medicinal species, supporting a vast diversity of life forms. These thick green patches of land adorned with climbers and creepers, with the chirping of birds and buzzing of bees, are showers of hope for the future. Several decades ago, Kerala boasted thousands of sacred groves, yet sadly, many have vanished, and some are on the brink of extinction.



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¹¹¹ Satellite image showing the land use around the sacred groves



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The active participation of local communities and their indigenous knowledge regarding sacred groves hold immense value in biodiversity conservation. The various rituals associated with the ethnic performances serve as guardians of natural resources, playing a crucial role in safeguarding the last shelter of biodiversity. In the name of various deities worshipped within these groves, the local communities have dedicated themselves to preserving these tiny patches of forest. The diverse practices associated with the ethnic performances contribute to the preservation of sacred groves, the ultimate haven of biodiversity. Through traditional community-based conservation methods facilitated by ethnic performances and related rituals, the pristine sanctum of the groves is protected. These ethnic performances portray the interrelationship between nature and humans. It is not just a display of emotional scenes, but the integration of all the elements that are part of the society is reflected in these performances. The role of aesthetic sensibility and imagination is paramount in the conservation of nature, achieved through the preservation and dissemination of lore and legends connected with sacred groves. These lores and legends associated with ritual performances hold immense significance in curtailing the encroachment of sacred groves.

ഒന്നുമേവേണ്ട വെറ്റിലയും പണവുമെനിക്കുമിപ്പോൾ
 തന്നിടേണം തുലാമുറ്റത്തുള്ള വെള്ളിക്കരിമ്പനയെ
 ഇന്നുവെട്ടി മുറിപ്പതിനായ് ഭവാൻ പോന്നിട വേണം
 തന്നിടേണം ഭവാനതിനായനജ്ഞ നൽകീടവേണം
 ഉന്നതമായ വെള്ളിക്കരിമ്പനയെ വെട്ടുന്ന നേരം

¹¹² A sacred grove in Kozhikode district where Sarppantullal is performed

തെന്നിയാൾ വന്നുരച്ചുനി വെട്ടല്ലേ കരിമ്പനയെ
ഇന്നതിൽ നാഗഭൂത ഭഗവതിയായുഴലിപ്പുറത്ത്
ചെന്നു വസിച്ചിടുന്ന കരുമകൻ കഴൽ കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 83)

I don't need anything, neither betel leaves nor money now
Give me the dark silver palm of the yard
You please come today to cut it off
Grant us, Give us your divine command
When it is time to prune the tall, dark silver palm
He came swayed and said - do not cut the dark silver palm
Within it resides the divine goddess of the serpents at Uzhalipuram
Holding my palm for the lord who lives in Uzhalipuram

The *thottam* highlights the divine presence within nature and emphasises the importance of respecting and preserving sacred groves. The *thottam* portrays an individual who yearns for a dark silver palm in the yard. They assert that they no longer desire any other possessions, such as betel leaves or money. His sole focus is obtaining the dark silver tree. However, when the time comes to prune the tall, dark silver palm, an unexpected event occurs. He came swaying and advised them not to cut down the trees. The reason behind the divine intervention is the presence of a serpent goddess residing within the tree at Uzhalipuram. The *thottam* begins with a request from the person to give the dark silver palm in their yard. They reject Betel's leaves and money, stating that they need nothing else. However, his desire for the dark silver palm is revealed. Others suggest that the person should come and cut down the tree on that day. When the time comes for the tall tree to be pruned, the lord appears and advises against cutting it, citing the presence of the divine goddess of serpents residing within the tree at Uzhalipuram. The *thottam* concludes by expressing the person's desire and devotion towards the lord, offering his folded palms. These lores and legends hold the potential to raise awareness about the ecological importance of these groves and the need to protect them from human activities such as deforestation and urbanisation. By fostering an appreciation for the beauty and spiritual significance of these spaces and by instilling a sense of collective responsibility,

these lores and legends contribute to curbing the encroachment upon these invaluable ecosystems.

Breaking the balance

As society evolves, its reflection is seen in ethnic performances as well. The changes in the performances which have once nurtured these sacred groves have affected them badly in recent times. Earlier, these performances took place in the warm glow of firewood and *chootu*. However, they have been replaced by electric lights, which diminish the aesthetic beauty of the performances. To accommodate bigger structural temples with the least aesthetic sensibility, these sacred groves have been transformed into modern temple complexes. The expansion of temple complexes and the celebration of festivals with grand programmes pose significant threats to these sacred groves. The construction of barricades and *nadapanthal* using steel and iron rods disrupts the sanctity of the pristine groves. Additionally, the cutting down of trees for temple-related activities itself causes significant harm to the natural environment. Tarred roads have also replaced the stone pavements in many sacred groves. Ethnic performances, which have played a major role in protecting and preserving sacred groves, have been negatively affected by the recent changes in the performance and the associated objects used for the performance.



After every *Tirayāṭṭam* season, the keepers of the sacred grooves used to plant some trees in the sacred grove. Though such specific practices are forgotten in the past, they are a significant loss to the sacred groves as well as to the environment. Through thoughtful and respectful adaptation, ethnic performance can continue to inspire, educate, and bridge cultural gaps, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of our shared human experiences.

Chapter 6

Novelty in Performance

Human beings have the capacity to symbolise things. An artwork is a symbolic expression of thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Besides, it is the capacity of human beings to improvise a piece of art. While some non-human species may create “artistic” works, they may not improvise them. To mention, bees construct complex and magnificent hives. Even so, there is no *visible* variation in the design of hives as they are not products of creative minds. The beehive primarily serves as a shelter and storehouse for honey. Similarly, spiders spin intricate webs that are visually appealing to humans. However, for spiders, webs function solely as fly traps (Skelly, 2022). Based on necessity and requirements, non-human species create objects and signals, some of which are visually or orally pleasing. However, such artistic works produced by non-human species tend to be repetitive in nature. In contrast, human beings have the ability to transform even a point or a line into genuine works of art through improvisations. Even these minimal expressions outstep the perceptible contents of a line or a point. Artistic expressions by human beings began to appear on the walls of caves just before the period that marked the arrival of modern humans in the evolutionary cycle. Since then, cave art, mural paintings, oral songs, and folk performances have marked the chronicle of human civilisation.

Drawing inspiration from an already existing narrative or story and offering a fresh take on familiar themes and ideas can be a great way to delight the readers. As authors venture down a new path, departing from existing narratives, they have the opportunity to build upon the established foundation and enrich it with additional layers by following the map of suggestions. These adaptations may present an entirely fresh storyline or choose to retain the same one. Not only are the words and expressions transformed, but literary characters are not confined to any single work of art. When authors transform existing

narratives, the characters within those narratives often find themselves represented through different forms of art. Authors can surprise readers by using characters in new and unexpected ways. Literary characters can be metamorphosed into newer versions of themselves. In some cases, characters are represented as mere reflections of the original without any independent existence. However, more often than not, these characters are portrayed from diverse perspectives and are recreated as distinct entities, maintaining a life of their own. When characters from existing narratives are portrayed through various forms of art, they undergo a profound transformation and can have a whole new life. As literary characters evolve from the literary expressions, they can also be interpreted differently. This process not only brings novelty to the characters but also revitalises the literary works from which they originate. In the first section of Udyota IV, Ānandavardhana explains how literary expressions can take on a new form, even if the poet works with the same ideas as earlier poets. Building on this, the chapter examines the different ways in which a popular myth can be incorporated into a work of art while still maintaining a fresh and new appearance. This chapter also analyses certain literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka* that are relevant to understanding the concept of novelty in a work of art.

Navigating the Map of Suggestions: A Creative Journey

Adaptation or recreation can result in various artistic works, such as a movie adaptation of a book, a dance composition based on poetry, or a painting based on lyrics. Throughout history, mythological narratives have served as a rich source of inspiration for artists. By reinterpreting and adapting these narratives, authors give new life to them and explore contemporary themes and ideas. This process of transforming familiar and popular content into something new can be observed in various art forms, including poetry, dance, music, and movies. Some artists draw inspiration from mythological themes to create stories that resonate with modern audiences, while others adapt myths to a contemporary setting.

Mythical characters, though bound by social and cultural ties, have resurrected across various cultures even after centuries through literary works. Examples like Tennyson's Oenone, John Keats' Hyperion, or Percy Shelley's Prometheus Unbound to Mary Shelley's The Modern Prometheus showcase the metamorphosis of these characters. In Indian mythology, a mythical character called Kuṭṭiccāttan is familiar to the people of Kerala through indigenous rituals, yet they capture the character through different narratives. This chapter analyses the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and sees how the character is portrayed and presented through various performative, literary, and ritualistic traditions across Kerala. It examines the budding and blooming of the character over the years. The first section provides a brief introduction to the various depictions and popular narratives of Kuṭṭiccāttan based on the myths. The second section focuses on the Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra to analyse the portrayal of Kuṭṭiccāttan as a heroic figure. The third section explores the mythical character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and examines the different ways in which novelty is introduced through various narratives revolving around Kuṭṭiccāttan. This chapter analyses the different approaches adopted by Tīrayāṭṭam performers to infuse novelty into their performances. The first section analyses various literary expressions with a backdrop of age-old stories to examine how they have incorporated novelty into a work of art. The second part of this chapter analyses the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and finds out how the character is portrayed and presented through various performative, literary, and ritualistic traditions across Kerala. The final part of this chapter analyses certain creative adaptations of mythological characters and discusses the different ways adopted by Tīrayāṭṭam performers to bring novelty to a performance.

The Art of Creative Transformation: Exploring the Unexplored

Literary compositions encompass a wide variety of suggestive expressions. However, in the realm of literary compositions, the focus should be placed on developing the suggested meanings that have the potential to evoke aesthetic bliss¹¹³. "Though the sequence of events is well known to the audience, and if the progression of events is on

¹¹³ asminn arthānantya-hetau vyaṅgya-vyañjaka-bhāve vicitre śabdānām sambhavaty api kavir apūrvārtha-lābhārthī rasādi-maya ekasmin vyaṅgya-vyañjaka-bhāve yatnād avadadhīta /

expected lines as described in the source text, there is no anxiety regarding ‘what’ in a story. The interesting thing that the audience wants to know is ‘how’ it is presented” (Kulaśekhara, 2013, p.41). Despite the recurrence of the fight and romantic scenes in literary compositions, each iteration appears fresh and new in every different composition with the addition of suggestion¹¹⁴. Though the realm of poetry has been explored by countless individuals in the past, the path of poetry remains boundless, with the suggestive potential of words (Ānandavardhana, 1990)¹¹⁵. Ānandavardhana argues that even though a literary composition follows an age-old theme or delves into a popular subject matter that a previous poet has already explored, the literary expression acquires a fresh hue when embellished with any variety of suggestions¹¹⁶ (Anandavardhana, 1990). The addition of suggestive elements, even into a seemingly ordinary expression, can elevate the expression beyond its literal meaning and acquire a newfound depth that enhances its aesthetic allure. Suggestion releases an openly anchored linguistic expression, which was once firmly anchored in its denotative level. It propels the literary expression towards uncharted vistas and ascends the realm of freely-anchored aesthetic expressions.

The Many Facets of Emotion: Infusing Rasa to Revitalise Literary Expressions

The multiplicity of meaning is achieved through the inherent capacity of words to establish varying relationships between the one suggesting and the one being suggested. Within the realm of literary expression, there are innumerable ways to convey emotions. Regardless of the meaning that may have been previously expressed, when the literary expression is infused with *rasa*, it appears fresh and new to us¹¹⁷.

*śūnyaṃ vāsa-grhaṃ vilokya śayanād utthāya kiṃcic chanair nidrā-vyājam
upāgatasya suciraṃ nirvarṇya patyur mukham /*

¹¹⁴ tathā ca rāmāyaṇa-mahābhāratādiṣu saṅgrāmādayaḥ punaḥ punar abhihitā api nava-navāḥ prakāśante / “And so it is that in such works as the battle scenes, etc., although they repeatedly occur, always appear new”

¹¹⁵ mitho 'py anantatām prāptaḥ kāvya-mārgo yadāśrayāt // DhvK_4.3 //

¹¹⁶ ato hy anyatamenāpi prakāreṇa vibhūṣitā / vāṇī navatvam āyāti pūrvārthānvayavaty api // DhvK_4.2 //

¹¹⁷ dr̥ṣṭa-pūrvā api hy arthāḥ kāvye rasa-parigrahāt / sarve navā ivābhānti madhu-māsa iva drumāḥ // DhvK_4.4 //

*visrabdhaṃ paricumbya jāta-pulakām ālokya gaṇḍa-sthalīm
lajjā-namra-mukhī priyeṇa hasatā bālā ciraṃ cumbitā //*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 268)

Seeing that the attendant had left the bedroom,
the young wife rose half upright from the bed
and gazing long upon her husband's face
as he lay there feigning sleep, at last took courage
and kissed him lightly, only to discover
his feint by the rising flush upon his cheek.
When then she hung her head in shame, her dear one
seized her, laughing, and kissed her in full earnest.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 682)

In this literary expression, the heroine is a newly married girl. She has spent the night with her husband. In the morning, she wakes up first while her husband is still sleeping. Overwhelmed by shyness, she struggles to find a way to approach him and convey her wishes. She finds a time when things are very calm and quiet in her house. She ensures that there is no one around, allowing her to observe him without any fear. Slowly, she raises the upper half of her body and gently gets up from her bed, taking care not to disturb him. With a careful gaze, she looks at his face to determine whether he is pretending to sleep or genuinely asleep. Waiting patiently, she observes his expressions for any sign of change. Gathering all her courage, she fearlessly kisses him, only to discover that he is not asleep. His body reacted naturally with horripilation. She saw that and understood that he was feigning sleep. She becomes timid when she realises that he has tricked her. She looked down and lowered her face in shyness. He laughed at her and reciprocated by kissing her.

There is *asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani*, where the *uddīpana vibhāva* is the empty house, and the *ālambana vibhāva* is the newlywed couple. The shyness and other associated

sentiments are *vyābhicāribhāvas*. Ānandavardhana says that the anticipation of the *rasa anubuti* is much more potent than directly expressing it in an expression. This is because the anticipation allows the reader or listener to actively participate in the creation of the aesthetic experience. Ānandavardhana gives another example, which is as follows:

*nidrā-kaitavinaḥ priyasya vadane vinyasya vaktraṃ vadhūr
bodha-trāsa-niruddha-cumbana-rasāpy ābhoga-lolaṃ sthitā / vailakṣyād
vimukhībhaveḍ iti punas tasyāpy anārambhiṇaḥ sākāṅkṣa-pratipatti nāma
hrdayaṃ yātaṃ tu pāraṃ rateḥ /*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 266)

The bride has lowered her lips to her beloved's face,
but afraid of waking him, for he pretends to sleep,
she checks the relish of her kiss and hesitates
with watchful turning; he too continues motionless,
fearing that in shame she may wholly turn aside.
In such a moment these two hearts, caught in the state
of their anticipation, have reached the peak of love.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 682)

This literary expression is contextually similar to the literary expression beginning with “*śūnyaṃ vāsa-grhaṃ vilokya*” but differs in certain other important aspects. It does not describe any excitants (*vibhāva*), such as an empty house, as in previous literary expressions. Instead, it focuses on the heroine looking at her beloved's face. The expression “*priyasya vadane vinyasya vaktraṃ*” itself suggests that they are a newlywed couple. She gently places her face on the face of her beloved, who is pretending to be asleep. She is cautious about not waking him up. So, she hesitates to proceed with a kiss. She is confused as to whether to remove her face, keep it there, or go ahead and kiss him. She is in a dilemma about what to do next. She hesitates a little bit. The hero also does not turn his face. He is also too shy to express his feelings directly. Both their hearts are

in a state of anticipation. It has just reached the peak of love at that moment because of that anticipation. Unlike the earlier one, here, it is not limited to just the kiss. This literary expression gives us the *śṛṅgāra rasa* as it is much more beautiful than just restricting it to the physical display of emotions. The poet added a new colour to the same *śṛṅgāra*. The way a poet expresses it gives that uniqueness to the literary expression. Some minor additions would just take that literary expression from a very ordinary expression to an extremely beautiful suggested emotion. In the first literary expression, it is limited to the kiss, whereas in the second literary expression, there is anticipation. The poet does not explicitly describe what happens there; the connoisseur can imagine the subsequent scenes beyond what is being described. This is an example of how novelty can be brought to a literary expression even when the same context is used again. Novelty can be attributed to an expression by a poet who uses different suggestors to suggest an idea or to convey something different from what is literally expressed. When the poet expresses similar ideas in a different manner using different suggestors, it takes on a very unique turn. Even though the characters are based on mythical and puranic stories, it is possible to bring aesthetic bliss within a performance.

Resurrected Myths: The Enduring Presence of Mythical Characters

vṛtte 'smin mahā pralaye dharaṇī-dhāraṇāyādhunā tvam śeṣaḥ

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 110)

In this great disaster, you are now all that is left

In this cosmic destruction, you are now the world-serpent Sesa

for the support of the earth

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 381)

The literary expression is addressed to King Harshavardhana. After the great disaster, Harshavardhana is the only one left to support and console the entire kingdom. Simhanada says to Harsavardhana that he is the only one left today (*tvam evam śeṣaḥ*) to bear the weight of the empire and to take care of his kingdom¹¹⁸. Here, the word “*maha*

¹¹⁸ “*dharaṇī dhāraṇa ayādhunā, he harsha, tvam eva śeṣaḥ*”

apralaye” means “the complete cessation of happiness”. The tragic event that caused the “complete cessation of happiness” refers to the deaths of two close family members of Harshavardhana. With their deaths, the entire responsibility of the empire has fallen onto his shoulders. It is he who has to bear the burden as a yoke beam¹¹⁹. However, in this literary expression, the suggestive potential of the word leads to another meaning. Śeṣa is the primitive serpent who supported the earth during the great flood. The word “*mahā pralaye*” means “great flood”. If the meaning of “Śeṣa” is taken as the great serpent, then the literary expression means “after the elephants of the quarters have perished, the king of serpents (*śeṣah*) alone can support the weight of the earth”. The context of the expression is fixed on the disaster that happened in Harshavardhana’s life. However, the poet suggested a simile to compare the qualities of King Harshavardhana to the great serpent Śeṣa. The serpent Śeṣa was left alone to bear the weight of the world. Similarly, Harshavardhana is left alone to bear the weight of the kingdom. The support given by the serpent and the king is not for their own benefit but for the benefit of others. In this literary expression, a mythological story is placed within a revitalised backdrop. The poet has appropriated two similar situations using the suggestive potential of words.

Departing from the Familiar: Venturing a New Narrative Path

*prāpta-śrīr eṣa kasmāt punar api mayi taṃ mantha-khedam vidadhyān
nidrām apy asya pūrvām anala-manaso naiva sambhāvayāmi /
setuṃ badhnāti bhūyaḥ kim iti ca sakala-dvīpa-nāthānuyātas tvayy āyāte
vitarkāniti dadhata ivābhāti kampaḥ payodheḥ /*

(Ānandavardhana, 1974)

Why should he, who has attained to royal glory,
who has won Śrī for wife,
burden me again with the pain of churning?
I cannot believe that one so active
should seek his former sleep.

¹¹⁹ The word *dharanī* means the yoke beam

Why, when he is attended by lords of all the islands,
should he build a bridge once more?
Such are the doubts, it seems, which make the ocean tremble
when your Majesty marches to its shore

(Ānandavardhana, 1974)

In the literary expression, a very handsome king has come near an ocean and is standing on the seashore. In real-life situations, as well as in many literary motifs, there is a common belief or notion that when the full moon rises, the ocean starts to agitate. The face of the king is like a full moon. With the entry of the king, it seems as if the moon (king) has risen, so the ocean is agitated. The trembling ocean expresses some concerns when it sees the king approaching the shore. So the poet says it seems the ocean is getting agitated by seeing the entry of the king into the ocean. Here, the ocean is confused. The ocean is asking, why has this king come to me again? The king already has Lakshmi¹²⁰. Why is he again trying to churn me or put me through the same difficulty I faced earlier? The churning of the ocean happened before, during the time of Satya Yuga. Lakshmi came up from the ocean. Lord Vishnu came near the ocean once, and he gained Lakshmi after the churning of the ocean. Whereas this king has everything. He even has his kingdom as the Lakshmi. In the next instance, Lord Vishnu was very tired after the hard times, so he was sleeping on the ocean bed. In comparison, the king's mind is not at all tired. The ocean does not think that the king had come there to sleep and to use the ocean as a bed. The king, who is very active, does not need any bed to sleep in. Another thought is that, unlike Rama, the king does not have anyone else to conquer. Rama had to win over Ravana and kill him to get Sita. But here, this king is the lord of all these islands, and he is followed by those kings. So he does not have to cross any ocean to conquer another island. So, he does not have any need to build a bridge to conquer other islands. As everyone follows him, he does not need to destroy anybody. He is the master of all islands. Here, the ocean is confused about whether this person is Vasudeva, who came near the ocean. This is an example of the figure of speech called *Sandeha alankāra*.

¹²⁰ Here it is *rajyalakshmi*

Through the words of the ocean, the poet suggests that the king is better than Vishnu¹²¹. There is a suggestion of the figures of speech *rūpaka dhvani*. *Utpreksha* and *Sandeha alankāra* are present here, forming a mixture (*sankara*) of these two. However, the poet does not mention any figure of speech literally in this literary expression. The figure of speech is only suggested. Every word in the literary expression has been placed in such a manner that the focus is turned towards the suggested meaning. Once the suggested meaning is understood, it becomes more beautiful than the literal meaning.

Characters in Motion: Infusing *Rasa* into Literary Expressions

*munir jayati yogīndro mahātmā kumbha-sambhavaḥ /
yenaika-culake dr̥ṣṭau tau divyau matsya-kacchapau //ity ādau /*

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 281)

Victorious is the great sage,
the prince of yogis, born of a water jar,
who, in one cupped handful saw
the Divine Fish and the Divine Tortoise.

(Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 693)

The literary expression quoted above is based on the mythological story of Saint Agastya. According to the myth, Agasthya was born from a jar (*kumbha*), and he was known as Muni Yogīndra. According to the myth, Indra wanted to destroy the demons who were hiding inside the ocean. He asked Agasthya to drain the entire ocean so that Indra could go and fight with the demons. Accordingly, Agasthya took the whole ocean in one cupped hand. This is a very well-known myth. People already knew the story from the epics that the great sage Agasthya held the whole ocean in his cupped hands. So, while recreating a literary expression from the same incident, the poet needs to add some novel elements into the narrative to catch the attention of the readers. In this literary expression, such a change from the popular narrative is clearly brought in. The poet has narrated the

¹²¹ Vishnu as in the one before getting Sita or killing enemies like Ravana

same incident from a different angle. The myth about the divine incarnations of Vishnu as tortoise and fish is also popular, like the myth of Agastya collecting the ocean in one handful. The beauty of the literary expression quoted above lies in the combination of these two incidents in an unexpected fashion. The literary expression says that the sage saw the divine incarnations of Fish and Tortoise in his hands, which had collected the entire ocean. Within the handful of water, Agastya saw both of these divine incarnations together. Though these two incidents happened in different stages of time in mythology, the poet creatively captures the two incidents together. This added element heightens the sentiment of wonder as well. In this literary expression, with respect to the storyline, there is nothing new. Two famous incidents from mythology are taken. However, both popular myths are combined together in an unexpected manner, giving an unexpected twist to the popular narratives. As the idea is already familiar to many, repeated encounters may not surprise them. However, no one has combined both these narratives together before. The two incarnations of Fish and Tortoise are brought together, giving divine vision to Agasthya. This grand vision adds to the element of wonder in the literary expression. Being blessed to get these divine visions from a single shot heightens the greatness of the sage as well.

Novelty in Fictional Characters

Ohm hrim Kuttichatha... an expression that is heard across Kerala, is capable of stirring childhood memories for many people. Kuṭṭiccāttan is an illusionary character familiar to the people of Kerala, yet they capture the character through different narratives. Kuṭṭiccāttan is presented in various forms as a saviour, a troublemaker, a god, a friend, and a destroyer. He is also known by many names, such as Kuṭṭiccāttan, Krishnankuṭṭiccāttan, Chāttansvāmi, Viṣṇumāya chāttan, Śāstāv, and Pōttin purattu chāttan.

In northern Kerala, Kuṭṭiccāttan is worshipped and idolised, and divine status is attributed to him. Even though he is brought to the form of an idol, through ethnic performances like *Tiṛayāṭṭam* and *Teyyam*, he comes alive to reflect upon the untold narratives that

were kept aside for many years. Teyyam and Tīrayāṭṭam usually depict characters who have fought against social injustices and are granted divine status. Kuṭṭiccāttan also tries to question the many traditional norms, and what makes this character heroic is his acts of resistance towards the existing power structure and the maintenance of an egalitarian society. However, minor variations can be found in the depiction of Kuṭṭiccāttan in ethnic performances as well. The Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra is different from the Kuṭṭiccāttan teyyam performed in Kannur district.

In central Kerala, especially in the Thrissur district, Kuṭṭiccāttan is worshipped as the main deity in temples. He is worshipped as Viṣṇumāya, son of Siva and Parvati (in the form of Koolivaka). In Peringottukara Devasthanam Vishnumaya Bhuvaneswari temple, Kathakali offerings depicting the stories of Viṣṇumāya are dedicated to the god during Pournami and Amavasi days. In some myths, he is considered a *mantramoorthi*. Kuṭṭiccāttan appears as *sevamoorthi*, a form that can be controlled through *mantras*. Here, Kuṭṭiccāttan is seen as submissive to the *Mantravadi*. Some myths portray Kuṭṭiccāttan as a servant of Kalakatu Namboothiri. When he was hungry, he drank the blood of a bull. This action angered Kalakattu Namboothiri, leading him to scold and beat Kuṭṭiccāttan. In his anger, Kuṭṭiccāttan killed all the bulls and cows, piled them on the *illam*, and set them ablaze. Namboothiri caught him, tore him into various pieces, and threw them to fire. (Peethambaran, 2017) Upon realising the power of Kuṭṭiccāttan, Namboothiri begged for his pardon and promised to perform poojas for him. Another narrative depicts Kuṭṭiccāttan as the child of Kalakat Namboothiri and Nagasoothra. Some myths say that Kalakatu Namboothiri was performing a sacrifice ritual, *homa*, and he acquired some objects through a mantra. When he attempted to destroy them, three hundred and ninety *chathans* were formed (Bharathan, 2016).

Fictional characters are born out of literary and artistic expressions, with some vanishing soon and others living for ages. The myths surrounding Kuṭṭiccāttan resonate with the deeds of a heroic man from the marginalised section who ferociously battled against the caste hierarchies. It is also the story of a man who faced exclusion due to his birth to a lower-caste mother. These narratives unveil hidden histories and open up the stories of caste discrimination that prevailed in our society. Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra goes beyond mere

worship; it also exposes a way of life that was hidden behind. It offers an opportunity to reflect upon the cultural activities, social interactions, religious notions, social structure, and traditions that shape our society. These myths also bring the history and socio-cultural experiences of the marginalised community into the limelight. Kuṭṭiccāttan was compelled to rebel against societal norms as they restricted his freedom because of his lower caste status. On numerous occasions, Kuṭṭiccāttan has raised his voice against injustice. For instance, when the milkmaid refused to provide milk to the newborn baby after considering his caste, she was punished by Kuṭṭiccāttan. When the teacher revealed his casteist biases through his actions, Kuṭṭiccāttan taught him a lesson. He breaks his cane, which symbolises power, and destroys his caste-dominated education centre. The act of burning the institution and eliminating the master stemmed from the recognition that these establishments perpetuated the caste structure. He also assists Kunkan, who was denied the right to offer an umbrella to the temple. He had revolted against the caste structure and power politics that denied equality. Kuṭṭiccāttan is depicted as the one from the marginalised section who fought for their rights and stood against injustices. However, these acts of resistance, which challenged social inequalities, found no place in any historical texts.

Oral songs, such as Vadakkanpattukal, narrate the glorious tales of heroes. In contrast, the *Thottampātu* become the voice of the marginalised, recounting their heroic deeds. These *thottams* also reflect upon social stratification, the caste system, and the rights and rules that once prevailed. They also bring attention to the historical practice of dowry. For instance, when Kunki was given a dowry along with the herd of cows and bulls, she was reduced to the status of a slave. She was denied rest even during pregnancy. Kalakat Namboothiri took her child and raised him in the *illam*, but the child was mistreated due to his lower caste status. *Thottampātu* becomes the song of the marginalised (Pratheepan, 2016). The heroic acts of a social reformer who fought against social injustices reverberate in the tales of Kuṭṭiccāttan. Those acts of resistance find a place in performances like Teyyam and Tīrayāṭṭam, keeping them alive and relevant in contemporary times.

Besides these ritualistic traditions, Kuṭṭiccāttan appears before us through various literary forms such as dramas, serials, films, cartoons, and comic strips. Most of these forms present us with a character who is mystical, magical, and supernatural. Because of the fantasy elements, the character became very popular among children. With the introduction of these literary narratives, Kuṭṭiccāttan is presented as a mischievous demon who likes to prank people but does not cause serious harm. The comic strip called *Mayavi*, which was first published in 1984, gained popularity and acceptance from a wider audience. *My Dear Kuttichathan* is a Malayalam fantasy film that was released in the same year. *Hello Kuttichathan* is a Malayalam TV series that aired on Asianet from 2008 to 2009. *Hello Kuttichathan* is a show about four kids, Kuttichathan and a witch. Kuttichathan helps the children solve various problems, and in return, the children try to save the chathan from the witch. This show was very entertaining and suitable for children.

A considerable shift in the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan happened after the introduction of the fictional tale *Mayavi* and the release of the movie *My Dear Kuttichathan* in 1984. Children accepted the character and the phrase *Ohm hrim Kuttichatha* very fondly. In the film, Kuṭṭiccāttan is portrayed as a friendly companion to children, even though he is said to be a formless creature or someone who is capable of taking any form. A small kid takes the role of Kuṭṭiccāttan throughout the movie. The appealing appearance of Kuṭṭiccāttan as an innocent boy got embossed into the minds of children after the release of the movie. Similar to the myths, Kuṭṭiccāttan in the film also helps the children and performs some tricks to make them happy. He helps the children to fight against the angry master. However, the *rasa* in the movie is that of humour (*hasya*) rather than that of valour (*veera rasa*).

Most of these depictions of Kuṭṭiccāttan are based on the foundations laid by the oral narratives of *Tiṛayāṭṭam* and *mantravada* traditions. However, some narratives are pushed towards the margins when they create a literary character. In *mantravada* tradition, Kuṭṭiccāttan is portrayed as a troublesome character who is used to performing harmful activities, such as burning clothes, putting waste in food, and displacing objects. For the characterisations in movies, sentiments of fury and fear are left behind. In children's

literature, he is considered a mischievous character who performs naughty acts to entertain children and protect them.

In the case of Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra, it was *veera rasa* that was prominent. However, in the movie, *veera rasa* is secondary, and *hasya* has a more prominent status. Kuṭṭiccāttan is depicted as a child, and his actions are considered the acts of a child. Even though the same act of protesting against the master is shown in the myths of Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra and in the plot of the movie, it is considered a naughty act of a kid in the film. He does these acts out of love for the children, but in the Tīrayāṭṭam, it becomes an act of resistance after facing social injustices. This enhances the heroic nature of Kuṭṭiccāttan in a Tīrayāṭṭam performance. In the movie, it is portrayed in a positive light, so it becomes a prototype for the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan among a wider audience. Unlike the character of Mayavi, who is portrayed as a good cāttan and Luttappi, who is portrayed as a bad cāttan, though in Tīrayāṭṭam we cannot classify the character as good or bad.

Kuṭṭiccāttan vellat represents the childhood stage of the Kuṭṭiccāttan; he is very friendly with children, and *hasya rasa* is evoked. He catches children playing with them and doing all mischievous acts. He becomes a “dear” figure to the children. However, in Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra, it is more serious. Similar to the Kuṭṭiccāttan who had drunk the blood of the bull, Kuṭṭiccāttan Tīra enacts this by drinking the blood of the cock after the sacrifice. There is a transformation that happens from the naughty and mischievous kid to that brave fighter who stood against social injustices that prevailed in our society. When we closely examine the myths, it exposes a character who wishes for an egalitarian society. His fights were to provide equal rights to all. When he helped Kunkan, Kuṭṭiccāttan was actually enabling him to act according to his wish. When he fights with his father and guru, he is fighting for a world that is equal for all.

In Tīrayāṭṭam, Kuṭṭiccāttan is shown as a heroic figure who fights for his rights. In Vellatam, Kuṭṭiccāttan is portrayed as a troublesome character in the beginning, but towards the end, he takes the role of a friend or a playmate. He engages with the audience and invites their participation as well. As Barathamuni says, *kavyam bavanukirthanam*, not *bhavanukaranam*, is about creating new styles and not simply imitating the same roles.



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In northern Kerala, he was turned into an idol because he acted against conventional society. Such actions also restrict some freedom. But through these ritualistic performances, he gets his life back. It has opened up a new space for accepting diversity. A performance that invites the participation of children to adults, from differently abled to marginalised, from boys to girls. It is a space that gave voice and visibility to the people who were sidelined. The performance has erased the boundaries. The performance tries to hold on to the ideas of compassion, love, and togetherness by breaking the shackles and the bonds of caste, class, and gender. It creates a space that is accessible to all. It also opens up the possibility of building and maintaining relationships across religious and geographical boundaries. Kuṭṭiccāttan Vellattam has created a space that brings everyone together. People from various communities gather in the sacred grooves to watch these performances. We could see a new generation that has taken Kuṭṭiccāttan into a new form by incorporating everyone without any boundaries. It is also a place where these differences are merged together to expand spaces of creativity.

¹²² Kuṭṭiccāttan tira entertaining kids

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Human beings convey and entertain the very same idea through a variety of expressions. But not everything is expressed directly through words or signs. Even when it is expressed through words or signs, not everything is delivered directly. Some are meant to be expressed explicitly, and some implicitly. To meet this expressive need and requirement, different verbal functions such as denotation, indication, suggestion, or a combination of these are used in literary and artistic expressions. Expressions, as a general term, include responses to stimuli, words or utterances in a language, non-linguistic communicative devices, and language-neutral propositions. However, expressions can be categorised into three types: *tightly anchored* non-human expressions, *openly anchored* linguistic expressions and *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions. Aesthetic expressions categorised under *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions” differ from *tightly anchored* non-human expressions and *openly anchored* linguistic expressions. *Openly anchored* linguistic expressions form a slightly permeable yet restricted kind of association between the sign and the signifier. Hence, it is hard-hitting to alter the relationship between the word and its meaning at the literal level due to pre-determined linguistic conventions. However, *openly anchored* linguistic expressions are not rigid as compared to *tightly anchored* expressions. Though bounded metaphorical expressions attempt to break the conventional relationship between word and meaning, it is still associated with their semantic counterpart for some purpose. On the other hand, there is an additional level of flexibility added to *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions. The potential to generate more than one meaning favours the flexibility in *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions. Nevertheless, this suggestive potential to generate more than one meaning is not just limited to words or verbal expressions. It is applicable to any form of expression that is symbolic in nature. Paintings, performances, oral narratives, be it any form of artistic expression, if it

is an *unleashed* aesthetic expression with suggestions, then all the features of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions will be applicable to those expressions as well.

Art is a ubiquitous element found in all cultures. However, its realisation is not universal. Even while all human beings share the same general cognitive structure that makes art appreciation possible for the species, there are individual variations in art appreciation. Though *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions provide creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation get realised only when all circumstances, such as cultural context, intellectual ability, and social interactions that influence the internal temperament, combine in conveying it. Otherwise, it will not be apprehended at all. Similarly, when words with similar phonic elements are not brought out in translation, the target expression shortfalls poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). In the translation of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, we encounter linguistic clogging not in terms of primary meaning but due to the linguistic and aesthetic constraints in capturing the suggestive aspects. Nevertheless, when the translation succeeds in capturing the parameters of sound (*śabda*), that is, the structural elements of the source expressions, along with the meaning, reference, and other semantic features, then the lyrical beauty and aesthetic attributes of the expression can be maintained even in the translation of aesthetic expressions with poetic suggestions. But the adaptation of ethnic performances into another form is even more challenging. Ethnic performances like *Tirayāṭṭam* and *Sarppaṁtuḷḷal* are closely linked to the sacred groves, and taking them away from their pristine environment not just affects the aesthetic beauty of the performance but indirectly affects its natural habitat as well.

However, repeated encounters with the same form might not create any particular impact on the spectators. Human beings can transform even a point or a line into genuine works of art through improvisations. Even those minimal expressions outstep the perceptible contents of a line or a point. The flexibility of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions helps to add novelty to any artistic composition. Mythological stories can be

reintroduced into an artistic composition without losing their aesthetic appeal with the help of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions. Not just mythological stories, mythical characters, though bound by social and cultural ties, resurrect across various cultures even after centuries through literary works. As Ānandavardhana says, though the path of art is being explored by numerous people of the past, with the suggestive potential of words, the path of art will still be infinite.

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Glossary

Abhidhā: Denotative function

Abhidhāmula dhvani: Denotation-based suggestion - Literary expressions where the literal meaning is intended but is overpowered by a different, aesthetically appealing meaning

Alaṅkāra dhvani: Suggestion where a figure of speech is suggested

Ālambana vibhāva: Stimulus

Anjatis: Summarised versions of myths of ancestral gods and goddesses

Anubhāva: Consequent or effect

Apahnuti: Denial or negation

Artha-śakti-mūla dhvani: Meaning-based suggestion is a sub-variety of dhvani where a fact or a figure of speech is suggested because of the suggestive potential of meaning.

Arthāntare saṅkramita vācya dhvani: Suggestion of progressive denotation - Literary expressions where the literal meaning is shifted to an associated meaning.

Asaṃlakṣya-krama dhvani: The suggested meaning is produced immediately along with the literal meaning

Atyanta tiraskṛta vācya dhvani: The suggestion of totally discarded denotation - Literary expressions where the literal meaning is entirely set aside to an associated meaning.

Dhvani: Expressions where the literal meaning is subordinated and implied meaning with aesthetic appeal termed as suggested meaning (vyaṅgyārtham) gets prominence are termed as dhvani or poetic suggestion.

Kaḷam: Sacred drawings on the floor for a Sarppantūḷal performance

Lakṣaṇika śabda: Metaphorical word

Lakshanāmula dhvani: Indication-based suggestion

Lakshyārtha: Metaphorical meaning

Lakshanāvritti: Metaphorical function

Mukhyarthabada: Incompatibility in literal meaning

Nāgapātu: Sacred songs praising serpents sung during the Sarppantūḷal performance

Prayojana: Purpose

Rasa dhvani: Suggestion where sentiments are prominent

Samlakṣya-krama dhvani: The suggestion of discerned sequence - Literary expressions where the suggested meaning is perceived after a momentary interval from perceiving the literal meaning

Sambandha: Relation

Śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani: Phonic-based suggestion is a sub-variety of dhvani where a fact or a figure of speech is suggested because of the suggestive potential of sound.

Sahṛdaya: Connoisseur

Sthāyibhāva: Dominant emotion

Thottampātu: Invocatory song sung to awaken an intended deity in Tīrayāṭṭam performances

Uddīpana Vibhāva: Excitant

Utprekṣā: Fancy or Exaggeration

Vastu dhvani: Suggestion where a fact is suggested

Vibhāva: Determinant or cause

Vyābhicāribhāva: Transitory emotions

Vyañjana: Suggestive function

Vyaṁjaka śabda: Suggestive sound

Vyaṅgyārtham: Suggested meaning

Vyatireka ālankāra: Figure of contrast or Contradiction

Vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani: Literary expressions where the literal meaning is intended but is overpowered by a different, aesthetically appealing meaning

Virodhabhāsa alankāra: Figure of speech involving the semblance of contradiction

Vācaka śabda: Expressed sound

Vācyartha: Literal meaning

Appendix: A Photo Essay

Tirayāṭṭam is divided into three phases- vellāṭṭam, tirayāṭṭam and cāntāṭṭam. Vellāṭṭam represents the adolescence of a deity. It is performed during the daytime and ends by dusk. In vellāṭṭam, costumes are not colourful and vibrant as in tirayāṭṭam. Tirayāṭṭam represents the adulthood of a deity. It is performed at night with the background of fired coconut leaves. Cāntāṭṭam represents the old age of the deity. It is performed during the dawn. Cāntāṭṭam is usually performed for mountain gods like Karumakan, Kariyāthan and Karivilli. During Cāntāṭṭam, headgears are removed from the performer.



Mughathezhuth: The art of face painting

Elaborate ornamentation and decorative accessories are just as crucial as the lively and vibrant dance steps in Tirayāṭṭam. Apart from decorative accessories such as costumes and ornaments, camayam (decorative ornamentation) in Tirayāṭṭam includes mughathezhuth (facial art) and melezhuth (body art). Each deity depicted through Tirayāṭṭam has a distinct and unique set of facial designs known as mughathezhuth. When performers reach the dressing chamber (aniyara), a lamp is lit and sacred prayers are offered for their teachers, elders, and ancestors. A white cloth is folded diagonally into four folds (ammaram) and tied to the performer's head. After this, begins the

mughathezhuth. The performer lies on the ground, and a trained person with artistic ability takes up the task of decorating the face and chest with colourful patterns. There are specific rules and conventions to be followed while decorating the face. The mughathezhuth is tailored to suit each deity, and the variations in designs depend on the role portrayed by the performer. Colours used for designing the face and body are prepared from natural dyes. Arichānt (rice powder paste), Kāram/ Chāyilyam, Manayola, and Maṣi are used to get white, red, yellow, and black, respectively. The midrib of a coconut stem (īrkkil) is twisted to form the brush. Usually, arichānt is applied first in broad lines, and maṣi is applied in the end.



Adorning the divinity

After decorating the face, costumes and ornaments are worn. This process of tying the ornaments and garments is called *keṭṭi uṛappikkal*. The initial stage of *keṭṭi uṛappikkal* is to wear *kacca maṇi* (ankle bells) and *maṭakku taṇṭa* (cloth anklets) by the performer. *Netti tunnaṁ* is placed on the forehead, and a white cloth is tightly tied over the head. The process of wearing *uṭayāṭa* (garment) is called *aṭukk uṭukkuka*. A white cloth of about three metres, soaked in rice water and dried, is wrapped around the performer. *Paṭiyaraññāṇaṁ* (waist chains) are tied around the waist. *Koralāraṁ* is tied over the chest, and *kāra* is worn on the neck. *Toḷpūṭṭ* is tied below the shoulders. *Cakkamuḷḷan*, *paruttikkāyimaṇi*, *vala*, *kaichendu* and *hastāṭakaṁ* are worn on arms to hands. The process of fixing ornaments on the head is called *tala uṛappikkal*. On the cheeks, *kaviḷ kaṇṇāṭi* is worn. Deities like *Nāgakāḷi* wear *tāṭṭaṭṭi* with serpent motifs. *Kāṭila*, *cevippūv* and *toda* (flower-like circular ornaments) are worn just below the headgear. Later, *talappāḷi* is tied over the *netti tunnaṁ*. The long hair of the deity is known as *śari*. On top

of talappāli, śari and mara vaṭṭam are tied. Depending on the deity oṭuvattam (flat crown-like ornament of Kāli), eṭatala (flat crown like ornament) or kūmpa can be used. Below the talappāli, ammaram is tied. Otta nāṭa is tied to fixing the headgears.



The rhythm of sacred songs

Sacred invocatory songs dedicated to various deities is known as *Thottam pāttu*. *Thottam pātu* is invocatory songs sung to awaken the intended deity. Such sacred songs of *Tirayāṭṭam* narrate myths and legends related to these deities. One person will recite the *thottam pāttu*, and other companions will repeat it. Anjaṭis are summarised versions of myths of ancestral gods and goddesses, whereas *thottam pāttu* are more extended versions of the same. Though they are praises of the intended deities, they add some local colour and flavour to the narratives. Along with lyrical beauty, such locally approved myths are important historical records too. They narrate the life and lifestyle of common people. Chenda, Ilathālam, thuḍi and panjayudham are musical instruments used for *Tirayāṭṭam* performance. Musical instruments bear notable significance in creating a wave of emotions and devotion in the minds of the audience. Some famous female divinities worshipped are Bhagavatī, Bhadrakāli, Raktēśvari, Oṭakāli and, Nīlabhaṭṭāri. Ghaṇṭākarnan, Karivilli, Karumakan, Kariyāṭtan, and Bhairavan are some popular male deities that are venerated through *Tirayāṭṭam*. Apart from them, legendary social figures and important ancestors are also depicted and venerated through *Tirayāṭṭam*. Deities like Kuṭṭiccātan and Guḷikan also hold an important position in *Tirayāṭṭam*.