Comparison is defined as the distinctive cause of the valid knowledge of similarity.\(^1\) Annambhaṭṭa defined it as the distinctive cause of assimilative knowledge.\(^2\) A person who knows a cow goes to a forest and sees a gavaya. Then the cognition ‘this figure is similar to a cow’ results. This perception of similarity leads to the certitude ‘similar to this is my cow’. This perception of the similarity to the cow present in the gavaya is the distinctive cause of the upamiti. The perception of similarity to the gavaya present in the cow is the upamiti.\(^3\)

Cārvakas say that we can reduce upamāna in perception. But the Buddhist says that ‘the knowledge by comparison is not perception because the cow of which the judgement is asserted is not experienced by the senses.’\(^4\) It is not inference, either, for the similarity from a comparative knowledge is secured is a subject to inference. It is not even a combination of perception and memory i.e. Perception of the gavaya and memory of the cow, in so far as they have similar features, because what we have in upamāna is a ‘unitary act of knowing’ a single pulsation of intelligence. A simultaneous perception of cow and gavaya does not happen there. If there were such a contact, then the knowledge by comparison of similarity will arise by direct perception itself and that, in that case, no separate pramāṇa called upamāna
is necessary. It is true that only gavaya is directly seen. Only because of this, the knowledge of similarity in the aspect of gavaya is direct and in the aspect of the form of the cow, indirect. The first knowledge that this form (of gavaya) is similar to the cow arises on the perception of similarities in general like having horns, tail etc, while there is no complete identity with the cow. From the knowledge ‘this form is similar to the cow’ it follows that my cow is similar to this.

Upamāna is the instrument of assimilative knowledge. It is the knowledge of the relation existing between a name and the object denoted by it. The knowledge of similarity is its immediate special cause; the remembrance of the meaning of a former direction conveying similarity between two objects is the intermediary operation; This may be exemplified thus; a person who is ignorant of the object denoted by the word gavaya learns from a certain forester that the gavaya is similar to a cow, and remembers the declaration. Then arises in him the knowledge; this is the animal denoted by the word gavaya.

The Sāṅkhya argue that upamāna can be classed under perception on the ground that the features of similarity between the gavaya and the cow is evolved are identical in the cow and the gavaya, the Advaitin replies that if the common features were identical, then on perceiving the common features in the gavaya, one should remember not only that he had perceived the similarity to a cow in a gavaya but also that he had perceived the
similarity to a gavaya in a cow. The Advaitins insist that they cannot be so perceived by the same cognition where the similarity to the cow in the gavaya is brought out, there the cow is the qualifier and gavaya is the qualified; where the similarity to the gavaya in the cow is brought out, the gavaya is the qualifier and the cow qualified, ie similarity of the gavaya to the cow and vice versa. Thus they cannot be object of the same cognition.

The Prābhākaras also say: that analogical cognition is not born out of mere sense contact. The similarity of the gavaya to the cow, which, is known by analogical cognition, is not perception for the reason that the cow is not before us. The analogical cognition, cow-cum-similarity to the seen animal is not the result of either perception or remembrance. So upamāna cannot be brought under perception.

Some opponents argue that upamana is a matter for inference. But Vēdānta Paribhāṣā says that cow is like gavaya because of the similar features that they possess. It is like saying that cow and gavaya are similar because they are similar. There cannot be an inference from being a counter correlate to similarity unless similarity itself is already apprehended. Apart from this, the cognition ‘similar to this is my cow’ is not so much a matter for inference as for direct experience. More over the cognition is not of the form ‘I infer’ but ‘I compare’. So upamāna is a distinct source of knowledge.6 The Naiyāyikas was more cautious in so restricting the usefulness of upamāna as a pramāṇa, that upamāna should not be reduced to
inference. So in order to save themselves from every danger, the Naiyāyikas have taken the cautious position that the upamiti is in the form of knowledge of the primary significative power of the word gavaya. Against the position of the Naiyāyika, the Advaitin urges that the word ‘gavaya’ denotes the class of objects similar to the cow can be known either through verbal testimony or through inference. As for verbal testimony, there is already the forester’s word. It is only the knowledge of the similarity to the gavaya that is present in the cow through the instrumentality of the knowledge of the similarity to the cow, which is present in the gavaya that constitutes the upamiti. We can see that, to establish the case of upamāṇa, we must in addition to proving that it cannot be inference mediate or immediate, also prove that it is really a case of acquisition of new knowledge and not a mere verbal transformation of an old piece of knowledge, contained in a proposition of a different form.

In the establishment of Brahman upamāṇa holds comparatively less importance. Regarding upamāṇa pramāṇa the second chapter of Tatvānusandhāna points as follows. The disciple, who knows that ether is unattached and all pervasive by who does not know that Brahman is unattached and all pervasive, approaches the preceptor for instruction in the knowledge of Brahman. The preceptor tells him that Brahman is unattached and all-pervasive like ether. Then the disciple goes in to solitude meditates on this sadṛśya or comparison brought out by the preceptor and experiences the unattachedness and the all-pervasiveness of the self. The scripture
declares – The Ātman is all pervasive and eternal like ether. The Bhagavadgītā puts it – Just as ether, though all-pervasive, is unattached to everything, due to its nature of unattachedness, even so the self, though present in all the bodies, is not attached to them. Again, to the question, what is the sense of the word ‘Ātman’ or self? The preceptor replies that the ‘self’ is of a nature dissimilar to that of body etc’. The nature of body etc is perishability, painfulness, impurity etc. But Ātman is eternal, of the nature of Bliss and Pure. The disciple returns in to solitude with this answer and mediates on the dissimilarity of Ātman to body etc. and gets the knowledge of Ātman through comparison. If upamiti is accepted to arise only from similarity, then that is not possible in the case of Ātman, since there is nothing like Ātman in the things that one sees. Thus by upamiti both the knowledge from similarity and dissimilarity should be accepted. It has shown that where there is the form for the knowledge as ‘I compare’ there is upamāna employed.

If by upamiti both the knowledge from similarity and dissimilarity should be accepted it could be known through anupalabdhi pramāṇa or non-cognition. But the dissimilarity of cow and camel is similar to that of cow and gavaya. There the similarity of the cow in the gavaya is perceptual. Here also the dissimilarity of the camel in the cow is perceived. This point does not seen to be altogether unsound. If from similarity between two objects, upamiti is secured from dissimilarity also that should be possible by
parity of reasoning. In the knowledge generated by the perception of similarity, as in the case of cow and gavaya, certain elements are found common between them that are positively different. If the cow and the gavaya are totally identical then they will be one and the same, and the resulting knowledge will be one of recognition as in the case of “This is that Dēvadatta” and not one of comparison. From these arguments we can agree with the modern Naiyāyikas here but differs from the Advaitic view as expressed in Vēdānta Paribhāṣā

Admitting that dissimilarity is known through upamāna, Anantakṛṣṇa śāstri arises and solves a very pertinent question, ie what is the use of this source of knowledge for the Advaitin? He points out that it enables the Advaitins to know the exact phenomenal nature of the world through the knowledge that the world is dissimilar to the Absolute Reality, on the one hand and to the utterly unreal, on the other. In the light of the forgoing critical enquiry, this solution would appear to be unacceptable, since the world is a perceived object. In fact, if the narrow sense of upamāna expounded above were accepted it would be hard to find its application in Advaita or even in ordinary life, (as illustrated by him) as well as in Vēdānta. For example the Brahman can be understood, analogically as being like the material cause of a perceived object, or like the substratum of an illusory object and so on. The upaniṣads are full of such uses of upamāna we have already discussed the attempts of the teachers to convey to disciples the idea
of the suprasensible in terms of its similarity to the sensible. The illusoriness of the world also established to the disciples by preceptor is, like the world is illusory like nacre-silver or dream. Thus the disciple meditating on solitude and he can analogically realize the illusoriness of the world like the nacre-silver or dream.

Here we can see that the common features inhering in the two different objects cannot be considered to be identical. They are different in some respects and that is why the form of judgment ‘my cow resembles this gavaya’. There are many things in common like ‘having four legs’ and so on. But there are differences also to be compared. If they are totally different then also, no comparison is possible, as in the case of total identity. Mere difference or mere identity, therefore, can never be the ground for upamiti. Identity in difference, or difference in identity is alone the ground. In the case of cow and gavaya identity in difference was noted because resemblences were greater than differences. There would not be differences greater than resemblences. As such comparison is possible either on account of marked resemblance or marked difference. In either case, a new knowledge is certainly secured in the identification of the animal. This view is recorded according to which knowledge of similarity by comparison is admitted. Knowing that gavaya is like the cow and that camel is different from cow if a person subsequently at another place comes across a gavaya
and understands that his cow is dissimilar to the camel, the knowledge that has arises in this way is legitimately to be called comparison.

This has to be proved that both similarity and dissimilarity can be characterized as ‘knowledge of the objects compared as correlates and counter correlates’ respectively. This definition will be applicable even to other cases especially in four types of negation. The absolute non-existence of say a pot, its anteriar non-existence, its posterior non-existence, its difference from cloth has each respectively its counter correlates. The anyōnyābhāva or absence between pot and cloth is similar to the knowledge ‘any cow is dissimilar to camel.’ So it is too wide. To this objection it can be said that, the determinant of such knowledge is not knowledge of the counter correlates them. But in analogy, the aspect of being mutual counter correlates, cow to gavaya and vice versa is all-important. Thus there is not too much wideness in the definition.
References.

1. Vēdānta Paribhāṣa P. 106. सादृश्यप्रमाकरणं उपमानन्तः.

2. उपमितिकरणं उपमानन्तः Tarkasaṅgraha. P. 117.

3. Ibid.


7. Nyāya theory of knowledge P. 338. गवयनितशक्रितः

8. Vēdānta Paribhāṣa P. 106. गवयनिद्वृद्याजनं करणं, गोनिष्ठ गवयसादृश्याजनं फलम्.


10. Ibid. P. 180. यथा सर्वार्थं, सौक्ष्मादाकारं नोपलिप्ते सर्वार्थविष्ठतं ददे तथत्मा नोपलिप्ते।

11. Ibid. P. 189. दृश्यस्वरूपं गगनोपरं परम्.