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Center and Periphery in the Hymns of the Atharvaveda. Analysis of Image Schemas in Ancient Magic-religious Text

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to apply the cognitive theory of image schemas in the field of Vedic studies. The study is based on analysis of selected magical formulas of the Atharvaveda. In the paper the possible presence of the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema in the Atharvavedic formulas is considered. The conclusion is that the application of cognitive linguistics in Vedic studies can enrich our interpretations and understanding of Vedic worldview.

Keywords: Atharvaveda, magic, cognitive linguistics, image schemas, Vedic Studies.

Introduction

The paper presents the results of previous research[2] and is an example of the application of the methodology of cognitive linguistics in the study of ancient magical-religious texts represented here by the Atharvaveda – canonical Vedic text composed in Vedic Sanskrit on the Indian Subcontinent. Due to the need to focus on the possibility of using new research tools in the analysis of the above-mentioned text, the presentation of classical studies on magic in the Atharvaveda and the current state of philological research were reduced to a minimum. The text contains basic information about the Atharvaveda and Vedic tradition. The image schemas theory is also briefly introduced. The third part is an analysis of selected fragments of the Atharvaveda in terms of the reconstruction of the mental schemas expressed in the text. The issue of redefining ritual phenomena and magical formulas in the context of cognitive and evolutionary sciences remains a topic for future research and this article should be seen as a presentation of preliminary research and the formulation of the topic for further research.

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2   Author's unpublished M.A. thesis: "Cognitive Analysis of the Selected Hymns of the Atharvaveda. The Methodological Issues" – Gutowski 2016.

The Atharvaveda

The Atharvaveda (hereinafter AV) is one of the four collections (*saṃhitā*) of Sanskrit hymns, which constitutes the oldest layer of Vedic literature in India.[3] The composers of the Saṃhitās called themselves "Aryas" (*ārya*) and belonged to the groups of the speakers of the Indo-European language (later called Sanskrit) during the second millennium BC. One of the oldest names of the text analyzed in this paper is the Atharvāṅgirasa. J. Gonda stated that the term is derived from the names of two priestly clans: Atharvan and Aṅgiras.[4] This is to some extent, an explanation of the dual nature of the AV itself. The Atharvans were associated with blessings, while the Aṅgiras' activities were linked to aggressive practices. It is extremely important that at first this text was not included in the Vedic canon and did not have a status comparable to the other Vedas that formed the Triple Knowledge (*trayī vidyā*). Non-acceptance of this text as a canonical text by religious authorities was probably a result of the private and intimate nature of many of the practices described in it. A. Parpola suggests that Atharvavedic tradition is as old – or even older – than the Ṛgvedic one.[5] The Atharvavedic world-view would be then included in the younger parts of the Ṛgveda (books I and X) independent of its relatively late canonization. Its contents and structure do not indicate that the process of addition to the Vedic corpus was continuous. But – if Parpola is right – it was rather the result of cultural fusion of two Aryan traditions.

Dating and place of origin

Despite many attempts, the absolute dating of Vedic literature is unclear. This paper does not aim to analyze the extensive and often controversial theories of the time and location of the composition of the Vedic Saṃhitās, but for the purposes of this work the period of 1200-1000 BC can be assumed as a probable time of the compilation of the analyzed text.[6] Relative chronology, although it also causes many problems for researchers, allows for further hypotheses. The Atharvaveda as a constituted and edited whole text seems to be the youngest of the Vedas. The basis for such a statement are the geographical locations described in the text. The Ganges and central areas of the Hindustan Plain are known. The structure and form of the text also speak for the relatively

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3   The Vedic literature is – apart of Mitanni texts – the oldest attestation of Indo-Aryan language: Vedic language. The evolution of this language in the context of migration of its users and external influences is described inter alia in: Erdosy 1995, Southworth 2005 and Staal 2008.
4   Gonda 1975: 267.
5   Parpola 2015, chapter 12.
6   Witzel 1997: 280; Parpola proposes the dates 1000-800 BCE as a time of the AV composition, see Parpola 2015, chapter 2.

late origin of the AV as it is known in its present shape. In the text it is easy to find many fragments of prose that resemble those known from the Brāhmaṇa texts.[7]

According to M. Witzel, in the case of the AV we are dealing with a text whose creation (or at least the oldest part of it) may reach the time of widespread use of iron in South Asia, i.e. around 1200 BC.[8] Despite the fact that the AV was added to the canon relatively late its relation to the other parts of the canon is complicated. What is visible are not merely chronological, but also dialectal differences.

Witzel locates the origins of the AV in the area of the Kuru tribe (Kurukṣetra) and the area to the east of this place (the headquarters of Pāñcāla tribe).[9]

Recensions and the history of transmission

Despite the traditional nine "schools" associated with the AV in the texts, only two recensions of this Saṃhitā survived to this day. Gonda claimed that the text was differentiated very early and was transmitted only in two versions known until today.[10] The preserved versions are Śaunakīya (abbreviated to AVŚ) and Paippalāda (abbreviated to AVP). They differ to some extent in the content and arrangement of the material. The AVP is a more extensive text, although it is the AVŚ that has been better preserved and has a richer analytical tradition (texts in various recitative versions and supplementary literature).[11] For many years, the AVŚ was mistakenly considered as a kind of Vulgate or the UR-Atharvaveda.[12] The AVŚ review enjoyed, until a very recent time, a greater interest of researchers, even after discovering the existence of a second AV transmission tradition. The history of research on the AVP dates back to 1873, when an extraordinary discovery of the Kashmiri AV manuscript was made.[13] For decades, the manuscript from Kashmir written in the *śāradā* script was the only remnant of the Paippalādin tradition. The situation changed dramatically when in the 1950s the living tradition of the Paippalāda Atharvaveda in Orissa was discovered.[14] Its discoverer Durgamohan Bhattacharyya prepared and

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7   More information in: Renou 1955. Cf. Kubisch 2007.

8   Witzel 1997: 281.

9   Witzel 1997: 280.

10   Gonda 1975: 272.

11   Gonda 1975: 272.

12   It has been described in this way for example by W. Whitney (Whitney 1905) and M. Bloomfield (Bloomfield 1899).

13   History of the research on the AV in: Selva 2019.

14   Lubotsky 2002: 5.

ublished the edition of the first four books of the Atharvaveda of Orissa[15]. Currently, when it comes to the AVP, we have access to most AVP texts. This is so thanks to the work of the Durgamohan Bhattacharya, his son Dipak Bhattacharya and the work of other researchers. Witzel, however, emphasized the need for further research and re-editing of these texts (partly already done since then – cf. the Online Edition of the Paippalāda Recension of the Atharvaveda at the University of Zurich).[16]

To the list of research goals should be added the postulate formulated at the beginning of this paper to enrich the classical philological perspective in the interpretation and understanding of the texts of the Vedic canon with the application of the entire repertoire of theoretical approaches and research tools proposed by modern humanities.

Structure and content

The Atharvaveda belongs to the Vedic Saṃhitās and, similarly to the Ṛgveda, it contains primarily metric hymns (*sūkta*). The text is divided into 21 books or parts (*kāṇḍa*). The arrangement of the hymns in the AVP seems less coherent and not so strict, which in Gonda's opinion proves the autonomous origin and archaic nature of this version.[17] In the AV it is easy to notice many elements typical for the Vedic poetics. We also find in the text many examples of magical formulas that seem to show many similarities and parallels in many other cultures. Therefore, in the AV we are dealing, among others, with archaization, alliterations, numerous parallels and the presence of refrains, as well as the presence of direct invocations to deities, demons, personified diseases, objects and phenomena. Extremely frequent are references to mythical events and comparisons that are meant to intensify the impact and adequacy of magical procedures.

The presence of archaisms can be explained both by the history of the text and conscious stylization, which in turn may result from a certain tendency common in magical texts to use old and to some extent incomprehensible words. It is possible, however, that the priest editors are responsible for the language characteristics of the AV. They, according to Witzel,[18] sought to

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15   It is quite remarkable that nowadays the AV has survived mostly on the peripheries of the Vedic world. In other parts of India this tradition is extinct or extremely endangered. This peripheral location of the AV may be related with its additional status in Vedic corpus. About the efforts of Atharvavedins to establish its symbolical importance see: Parpola 2015: chapter 12 or Witzel 1997: 275–283.

16   Witzel 1997: 283–84, Online Edition of the Paippalāda Recension of the Atharvaveda (www. atharvavedapaippalada.uzh.ch – 26.06.2020).

17   Gonda 1975: 274.

18   Witzel 1997: 278.

demonstrate its antiquity, wishing to find a place for this Saṃhitā in the Vedic canon, and for themselves in the political and social structures of the time.

J. Gonda divided AV hymns by their nature and main topic. Based on such criteria, magical, speculative ("mystical") and ritual hymns can be distinguished.[19] Comparing the nature of individual hymns and their location within both reviews, Witzel suggests the following scheme:

Table 1.   Hymns sections of the AV20

Hymns	*AVŚ*	*AVP*
sorcery hymns (black and white magic)	I–VII	I–XV
speculative hymns ("mystical")	VIII–XII	XVI–XVII
special topics of *gṛhya* and royal ritual	XII–XVIII	XVIII
various appendixes	XIX–XX	XIX–XX

This division is very general and could certainly be criticized. Many hymns have a heterogeneous character. Moreover, from the point of view of the Vedic thought itself, the division into magical and ritual hymns seems extremely risky, because practices described in them both have 1) the nature of a ritual and 2) use exactly the same source of power ("sacred word" – *brahman*). These hymns do not differ in quality. They all relate to rituals intended to produce specific effects in reality. Indeed, they differ in what effects are to be produced and whether they are personal, "home-related" or public. However, according to the division into magical and ritual hymns, the first group includes, among others: spell formulas, exorcisms, healing hymns and formulas causing various other effects based on the action of the sacred word and additional elements (plants, amulets, etc.). They often deal with universal human problems such as: illness, issue of love and jealousy, hatred, protection against evil, etc. The second group will contain speculative hymns, sometimes referred to, quite vaguely and ambiguously, as "mystical". In most cases, these are cosmogonic and cosmological hymns, presenting concepts of the creation and of the world, as well as reflections of the Vedic composers on the mechanisms and laws of reality. The third group consists of separate hymns that directly relate to home rituals. Very often they are the earliest references to the rites de passage in Indian tradition (later developed into the *saṃskāra* rituals). Many other hymns

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19   Gonda 1975: 270.
20   Witzel 1997: 277.

found in the AV cannot be classified into any of these three groups – so they were included in the category of "other hymns" by Witzel. These include ritual riddles (*brahmodya*), Kuntāpa hymns, or narrative sequences. The Atharvaveda tradition – both of the Saṃhitā text itself and the later ancillary literature as well – can be of great importance in studying the mentality of people who are culturally different and distant in time. The study of such a text gives the opportunity to learn about the architecture of the mind – both its universal cognitive foundations and specific cultural realization. Cognitive linguistics is the approach that enables the aforementioned reconstruction of the expressed in the language of sacred formulas Vedic worldview of the composers of the Atharvaveda.

Cognitive linguistics and image schemas

Cognitivism as a research trend in linguistics grew in opposition to the tradition of transformational and generative grammar and was a kind of continuation of earlier linguistic ideas, such as the American school of anthropology of F. Boas, E. Sapir and B. Whorf. Researchers whose works have become the basis of the new paradigm include: G. Lakoff, R. W. Langacker, M. Johnson and Ch. Fillmore. "Metaphors We Live By" by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson published in 1980 is considered the first linguistic work written in the cognitive approach.[21]

It is impossible to summarize even in brief the whole range of theoretical ideas and proposition presented within this linguistic paradigm. But it should be noted that cognitive linguistics originated mainly in opposition to N. Chomsky's generative grammar. Rejecting the thesis about the possibility of precise and sufficient description of the language using mathematical and logical symbols and other tools of formal science is then linked to the fact that cognitive linguists assume that human cognitive processes (expressed in language) are closely related to the human experiences that form their basis. Along with regular experience, there appear structures that represent the cognitive representation of experience in the mind. These are image schemas.[22]

Image schemas

Image schemas are "a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programmes that gives coherence and structure to our experience".[23] Image schemas result from human interaction with the

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21   Lakoff & Johnson 2008.
22   Classic version of the image schemas theory was formulated by M. Johnson in: Johnson 1987.
23   Johnson 1987: 14.

environment and provide a way to classify and capture experiences in the system of mental representations. The schema consists of a small number of elements and simple relationships between them, often having the character of simple oppositions (for example: CENTER- PERIPHERIES). Some researchers, such as T. Krzeszowski, believe that imaginary schemas can be much more complex. He considers it necessary to include an additional SCALE schema, which is an internal element in some other image schemas, conditioning the axiological evaluation of such cognitive representations.[24]

The author of the basic concept of imaginary schemas, M. Johnson, specified about 30 schemes that he considered basic.[25] This list, along with new research and theoretical proposals, is constantly changing. Some of the schemas may be particularly useful in analyzing magic formulas. A scheme that can be considered as the basic one for this kind of studies is the FORCE image schema.

The impact of force is one of the most basic and culturally universal experiences. The image schema that is formed as a result of this experience plays a fundamental role in organizing our entire experience. The FORCE image schema evokes a physical or metaphorical causal relationship.

It can be considered as consisting of the following components:

1. A source and target of the force
2. A direction and intensity of the force
3. A path of motion of the source and/or target
4. A sequence of causation.[26]

CONTAINMENT schema is another fundamental for research into the magic of imaginary schemes. It evokes the idea of physical or metaphorical:

- boundary
- enclosed area or volume, or
- excluded area or volume.[27]

Z. Kövecses gives two experimental foundations for this schema. Firstly, people experience their body as a container. Secondly, in terms of the container,

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24   Libura 2000: 32 see also: Krzeszowski 1994.
25   Johnson 1987: 126.
26   http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAForceSchema.htm [Accessed: 28.06.2020].
27   http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAContainmentSchema.htm [Accessed: 28.06.2020].

we perceive larger objects, space and places where we are (e.g. room, house, forest, etc.).[28] Childhood experiences also seem important – games based on manipulation of objects, i.e. placing them in containers, matching, etc. Perhaps it is the experience of contact with simple real containers that influences the constitution of this schema more strongly than the much more abstract perception of your body as a container.

The research on magical thinking should also include the study on the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema. This schema refers to the physical or metaphorical core and edges of the object.[29] Thus, "object", "center" and "periphery" are elements of the structure of this schema. Examples where the structure of the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema is revealed are, among others:

- Apple structure (at the level of physical matter – the inside of the apple is the center, the surface is the periphery);
- Individual sphere of perception (with the perceiver in the center and the perception limit in the periphery);
- Idea of the *axis mundi* in mythologies (located in the center of the universe);
- The sphere of individual social relations (family and friends in the center).

In opinion of A. Libura, there are two separate forms of the CENTER–PERIPHERY image schemas:[30]

1. **The CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema 1.** (hereinafter: C-P1) – is based on the perception of space available to the senses from a specific point where the perceiving subject is located and makes an observation. It often combines with the image schemas of BALANCE, PART-WHOLE, NEAR-FAR and similar.

2. **The CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema 2**. (hereinafter: C-P2) – is related to the space perceived through a single view, i.e. the perception of an area that is available within the conceptualizer's sight. Therefore, it is associated with the organization of space and its evaluation. An important experiential basis for this scheme may also be the perception of one's own body (related to the CONTAINMENT image schema) and perceiving it as a being having a central (corpus) and peripheral (limbs) part.

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28   Kövecses 2011: 307.
29   http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/ [Accessed: 28.06.2020].
30   Libura 2000: 158.

As a model, it should be assumed that in the case of C-P1 the peripheral space is evaluated positively and in C-P2 negatively. However, such valuation may be the opposite, and it depends only on the specific scene being described or on specific ontologies and axiologies represented in a particular culture. The cognitive division into the center and periphery may function on many levels, both linguistic and cultural.[31]

There are many other schemes that may be relevant to the subject of the study, just to mention one here: PART-WHOLE schema, CONTACT schema, CONTROL and BALANCE schemas.[32] Complete analysis of the AV from the cognitive linguistic perspective (especially with the application of image schemas theory) would require taking into consideration the whole range of the image schemas.

CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema in Atharvaveda

Another important imaginary schema strictly related to the first one is the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema. As already mentioned, these are de facto two schemas emphasizing different aspects of the relation described by it: schema C-P1 (extensive experience of space) and schema C-P2 (relative experience of space narrowed to object). Both versions of this schema can be certified in a wide spectrum of AV hymns.

In most cases of healing, defensive or offensive hymns, the periphery is evaluated negatively, which is usually associated with placing the speaker *and / or* conceptualizer in the center of the scene. Dangerous supernatural beings, diseases or enemies are eliminated from the center on the peripheries – a remote place characterized as dangerous. An example where the C-P schema is subtly revealed is the anthem AVŚ 1.14. Here, the basic assumption about placing the conceptualizer in the center is required. A woman making these words wants to get rid of her rival in love.

AVŚ 1.14.1

> *bhágam asyā várca ādiṣy ádhi vṛkṣād iva srájam /*
> *mahābudhna iva párvato jyók pitṛ́ṣv āstām //*

Her portion (*bhága*), splendor have I taken to myself, as from off a tree a garland; like a mountain with great base, let her sit long with the Fathers.[33]

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31   It seems potentially interesting to describe and analyse the Vedic canon and its parts in the categories of C-P schema and historical and cultural sources of such conceptualisation.

32   About the application of cognitive image schemas in religious and folklore studies see: Masłowska 2012: 20–21 and Masłowska 2020.

33   All the translations of AVŚ are from Whitney 1905, those of AVP from Lubotsky 2002.

AVŚ 1.14.2

> *eṣắ te rājan kanyằ vadhū́r ní dhūyatām yama /*
> *sắ mātúr badhyatāṃ gr̥hé 'tho bhrắtur átho pitúḥ //*

Let this girl, O king, be shaken down to thee [as] bride, O Yama; be she bound in her mother's house, also in her brother's, also in her father's.

AVŚ 1.14.4

> *ásitasya te bráhmaṇā kaśyápasya gáyasya ca /*
> *antaḥkośám iva jāmáyó 'pi nahyāmi te bhágam //*

With the incantation (*bráhman*) of Asita, of Kaçyapa, and of Gaya, I shut up (*api-nah*) thy portion (*vulva?*), as sisters do what is within a box (*-kóça*).

This is one of the typical hymns against a rival in love. A woman wants to make her rival not to threaten her love for a man. Therefore, in AVŚ 1.14.1. the opponent's features are mentioned, i.e. fertility and splendour. The word *bhaga* translated by Whitney as "portion" can also have the meaning of fertility. These features are seen metaphorically as something that clings to a woman like a garland. In AVŚ 1.14.2. Yama – the ruler of the realm of death is summoned. The purpose of the ritual is to make the wife Yama's wife. It is unclear whether the aim is only to avoid her from entering to a relationship with a man during her life and become a partner of Yama after her natural death, or whether the effect of the ritual is to be the death of the opponent. VERTICALITY image schema is also activated in this stanza. The object located at the bottom is negatively valued. So, not only center-periphery oppositions appear in AV hymns, but also those based on verticality and up and down opposition.

In AVŚ 1.14.1 CONTAINMENT image schema[34] is a part of the conceptualization of taking over significant features of the rival. Features are understood in terms of material objects that can be taken from the other person – it can be understood as a manipulation of the object between two containers. At the same time, the rival is to be immobilized in the home of her parents. It is important to determine where the center is located in the conceptualized scene. This center can be either the current localization of the conceptualist (where the magic activity takes place?) or the destination (future family home; husband's home?). In this case, the rivals' family home should be located on the periphery. We do not have full conceptualization of the perfect circle here (as the C-P schema often presents), but it seems that it is not required to recreate this scene in C-P categories. The term: *quasi-C-P* image schema can be introduced to keep the formula of this schema for the situation just

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34   More about the CONTAINMENT image schema in the AV in: Gutowski 2017.

discussed. It means that the general principle of presenting C-P image schema is absent here, but within this scene the opposition between the close (center) and distant (peripheral) space is maintained, even if the particular "center" is not defined.

AVŚ 1.14.2. and 3. contain phrases addressed to Yama – the ruler of the Vedic realm of the Dead. The purpose of the spell is to place the rival in Yama's abode, which undoubtedly from the point of view of everyday life and the temporal world (understood as the center), is located on the periphery of the universe. In addition, there is an expectation that the rival should not get married, but stay with the family, away from the person reciting the spell-hymn (that she would keep her virginal status until old age and death, and achieve the socially expected wife status only in the land of Ancestors, i.e. after death). In the last stanza, there is probably described some kind of manual magical procedure performed during the ritual along with the recitation of the formulas. Here, the CONTAINMENT image schema is evoked. The rival's luck (or fertility) is to be hidden, covered, just like women hide objects in a box. The CONTAINMENT schema is almost directly referenced here. In this case most likely there is an imitation of the real actions performed during the ritual in the verbal sphere. This would require analysis based on a broad perception of magic action as a conceptual blend or multimodal metaphor.[35]

Some AV hymns express the displacement of a rival on the periphery in a more direct way. An example can be found in AVŚ 3.18.2-4. This spell was performed with a magic plant.

AVŚ 3.18.2

> *úttānaparṇe súbhage dévajūte sáhasvati /*
> *sapátnīṃ me párāṇuda pátiṃ me kévalaṃ kṛdhi //*

O thou of outstretched leaves, fortunate, god-quickened, powerful, do thou thrust away my rival, make my husband wholly mine.

AVŚ 3.18.3

> *nahí te nā́ma jagrā́ha nó asmín ramase pátau /*
> *párām evá parāvátaṃ sapátnīṃ gamayāmasi //*

Since he has not named (*grah*) thy name, thou also stayest (*ram*) not with him as husband; unto distant distance make we my rival go.

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35 The theory on the magic ritual as a conceptual blend is presented in: Sørensen 2007. There is also an important approach based on understanding the Vedic ritual as a kind of multimodal metaphor presented by J. Jurewicz in: Jurewicz 2014.

AVŚ 3.18.4

> *úttarāhám uttara úttaréd úttarābhyaḥ /*
> *adháḥ sapátnī yā́ mámā́dharā sā́dharābhyaḥ //*

Superior [am] I, O superior one; superior, indeed, to them (f.) that are superior; below [is] she that is my rival; lower [is] she than they (f.) that are lower.

In this hymn, the rival is to be banished far (*pára-kṛ̥*), over a great distance. Based on the action of the plant and the spoken word formula, the removing or displacement of the wife should happen by ritual manipulations with a plant and a verbal formula. The family home, although not explicitly mentioned here, is an easily identifiable center, while the periphery is a distant space – a destination for the hated rival.

In the hymns of the AV, far distance is repeatedly mentioned, expressing peripheral areas where stay such creatures, which, being too close, may be dangerous or may pose a threat to the life of the individual or social order. Below there are selected stanzas in which the C-P image schema is recalled by the image of the postulated distance, the space "over there".

AVP 5.20.1

> *paro ʼpehi paraś cara paras tarda parastaram /*
> *agner vātasya dhrāj ̣yā apa bādhe ahaṃ t ̣uvām//*

Go far away, move far away, away, O borer, still farther away. I repel you with the force of fire, of wind.

AVP 5.20 is a spell against the destroyers of barley. Probably some kind of field pest – unseen, but personified. The threat is chased "further away" to a "distant" place (*paras*). Getting rid of the pest is conceptualized in terms of moving it by force. The place where the conceptualizer is located is the center. It is positively evaluated as a space for living. The barley destroyer as an enemy creature must be moved far from the conceptualizer – to the periphery.

The idea of getting rid of something undesirable can also be evoked by verbs expressing relocation directly or indirectly. This is the case with the verb "to lead" (√*nī*) in the stanza AVP 5.17.3, in which madness is removed from a silent person (*muni*).

AVP 5.17.3

> *yathāgne devā ṛbhavo manīṣiṇo*
> *munim unmattam asṛjan nir enasaḥ /*
> *evā te śakro abhayaṃ kṛṇotu*
> *mucyasvainaso vi nayāmi rakṣaḥ //*

O Agni, just like the divine, wise bhus [in old times] let loose the mad muni from the mischief, so let the powerful one (Indra) make peace for you (the patient). Get released from the mischief. I lead the demon away.

A similar scene based on the C-P image schema with motion verbs is certified in AVP 5.1.1:

AVP 5.1.1

> *namaḥ piśaṅgabāhᵤvai sindhau jātāyā ugrāyai /*
> *yo asyai nama it karad aped asya gṛhād ayat //*

Homage to her, with tawny arms, born in the Sindhu, mighty. She will certainly go away from the house of this [man], who will pay her homage.

The idea of the periphery can also be evoked not only through purely spatial terms, but also by means of recalling different, "foreign" social or ethnic groups associated with distance (possibly supernatural beings – see Yama in AVŚ 1.14.2-3). The undesirable phenomenon is banished to the place where other, by definition, hostile tribes reside. This is evidenced by the hymn against the fever (AVP 5.21). The first stanza generally defines the long distance to which the disease is to be banished (horizontally – far and vertically – down). In verses 3 and 8, there are additionally tribes of the Maraṭas and the Mahāvṛṣas, the tribes which are foreign to the composers of the AV.

AVP 5.21.1

> *dyauś ca naḥ pitā pṛthivī ca mātā-*
> *-agniś ca nṛcakṣā jātavedāḥ /*
> *te takmānam adharāñcaṃ nᵧañcaṃ*
> *daśāhnam asyantᵤv adhi dūram asmat //*

Heaven, our father, and Earth, [our] mother, and Agni Jātavedas, the men-watcher – let them send the ten-days-fever, going low, going downwards, far away from us.

AVP 5.21.3

>*takman parvatā ime himavantaḥ somapr̥ṣṭhāḥ /*
>*vātaṃ dūtaṃ bhiṣajaṃ no akran naśyeto maraṭā́m̐ abhi //*

O fever, these snowy [mountains] with Soma on their back have made the wind, the messenger, the healer for us. Disappear from here to the Maraṭas.

AVP 5.21.8

>*takman na ta iḫₐāśvā na gāvo neha te gr̥hāḥ /*
>*śakambharasya muṣṭihā punar gacha mahāvr̥ṣān //*

O fever, here are not your horses, not [your] cows, here not your homestead. The fist-slayer of śakambhara, go again to the Mahāvr̥ṣas.

The hymn contains references to deities (Heaven and Earth, Agni-Fire) and probable mythical analogies. These are the elements provided to strengthen the power of the verbal formula. References to individual entities and mythical events are hierarchical. The cosmologically basic Heaven and Earth and Agni-Fire, fundamental for Vedic thought, are mentioned in the first stanza, while the following stanzas refer to the minor deities and mythically relevant reinforcement elements. Cited stanzas AVŚ 5.21.3. and 8. recollect the Maraṭas and the Mahāvr̥ṣas. These groups can be interpreted as tribes. They are to become the target of harmful fever. It can be assumed that their headquarters are located at a certain distance, somewhere on the periphery of the conceptualist's world, whose center, according to a common tendency, can be located in the place where he resides (depending on the interpretation, one can propose: a village, a household, a mythologically significant sacred place – *axis mundi*, or simply a place where sacrificial fire burns). The presence of the adverb "again" (*punar*) in stanza 8. is intriguing. The spell is to send the fever back to the Mahāvr̥ṣas, which may mean that their sinister activity was the source of this misfortune. This interpretative suggestion, however, requires a compilation of different and more extensive material, which would go beyond the scope of this study.

It is also worth noting that the analyzed C-P image schema is also implied in almost all these cases when the CONTAINMENT image schema is present in the AV. These two patterns seem conceptually very close. The CONTAINMENT image schema assumes the interior-exterior relationship based on the C-P schema. The opposition of the Center – Periphery appears in many contexts. Often, this pattern is difficult to grasp and expressed explicitly. A complete study of this scheme would require a much more detailed reconstruction of scenes conceptualized in the text (both ritual and mythical).

Conclusions

It has been shown that magic formulas in the Atharvaveda contain numerous realizations of image schemas. Taking these patterns into account enables an in-depth analysis of the hymns and obtaining important interpretative conclusions. The magical thinking that is attested in the AV is based on universal cognitive processes that can be described with the use of theoretical models developed on the basis of cognitive linguistics. In the analyzed fragments, it was often possible to show more than one image schema, that could be used to characterize the presented scene. The cognitive theories presented in the paper may require some adaptation to the specificity of the research material. For it seems that the mere consideration of the theory of mental schemas is insufficient for a complete analysis of the Atharvaveda hymns. A better perspective is obtained when we additionally take into account the theory of conceptual blends, which is the starting point for Sørensen's theory of magic.[36] Image schemas should then be treated primarily as elements that can become the basis for creating a common generic space in the reconstructed conceptual blends. It is an important research postulate for further studies.

It seems too early to develop a coherent cognitive theory of AV magic. This paper presents to some extent an experiment. The presentation of selected theoretical approach and an attempt to apply it in the analysis of the AV is only an introduction to possible detailed studies using the methodology of cognitive linguistics in future. Further research perspectives relate primarily to testing a wider spectrum of cognitive theories and analyzing larger parts of the text. These studies should be conducted with application of classical and cognitive linguistics, but also psychological theories, achievements of neuroscience and altered states of consciousness studies. It would certainly be valuable to compare an image known from Vedic literature with archaeological data. This work is only an introduction to further interdisciplinary research of the worldview of the Vedic period in ancient India.

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36   Sørensen 2007.

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