

Draft. Not to be cited. Comments welcome.

E. Annamalai, University of Chicago  
Fall 2018, Class Notes 1-3

தொல்காப்பியம் பொருளதிகாரம் உவமையியல்:  
இளம்பூரணர் உரை, பேராசிரியர் உரை

## Theory of உவமை in Tolkappiyam-2

### Source of உவமை

Difference between உவமை and பொருள்

There are so many things to be employed as உவமை by the virtue of sharing some common feature with பொருள். But not anything that has ஒப்புமை could be உவமை. Similarity is a necessary condition to make உவமை, but not a sufficient one. There are other conditions to be met whose awareness will help the readers or listeners of poetry to know the full significance of உவமை. Source is used in two senses, viz., the materials available for choice and the basis of the motivation for choice. The latter is called நிலக்களன் 'ground, vantage point' to make உவமை in Tolkappiyam (S 4). The former does not have a name (S 1) and it is termed in English here as 'site of meaning' for உவமை.

Among the materials available for use as உவமை, the choice is the one that is superior (உயர்ந்தது, S. 3). This is about the choice as உவமை from among the ones that are similar in one or more respects to compare with பொருள். Commentators read உயர்ந்தது in two ways. One is that the choice must be the best of the class representing the four sites of meaning (இளம்பூரணர்: உயர்ச்சியாவது வினை முதலாகச் சொல்லப்பட்டன உயர்தல் 'the superior is one on top in action etc.');

the other is that the chosen one is superior relative to பொருள், according to பேராசிரியர்'s commentary of S 9. This sutra is about பொருள் itself being உவமை; that is, the two are reversed in their relationship. This reversal does not change the relative relationship of உவமை being superior to பொருள்; it is still the பொருள் that is superior in spite of being used as உவமை and so it has the excellence (சிறப்பு) that is brought out by the use of உவமை. In the words of பேராசிரியர்: ...பொருளினை உவமாக்கி உவமையை உவமிக்கப்படும் பொருளாக்கி மயங்கக் கூறுங்காலும் அஃது உவமம்போல் உயர்ந்ததாக்கி

வைக்கப்படும்... ‘even when (a poet) switches, resulting in the possibility of mistaken identity, by making a பொருள் into a comparing உவமை and an உவமை into the compared பொருள், it (பொருள்) is placed higher (in comparison)’. Sutra 3 expresses the view about உவமை that being similar is not being equal.

The reason for the thing chosen for உவமை to be superior is to bring out the excellence or the special nature of பொருள். In the words of பேராசிரியர் (S 3), the superiority of உவமை is to bring out the special nature of பொருள் (உவம உயர்ச்சியானே உவமிக்கப்படும் பொருட்குச் சிறப்பு எய்துவித்தவாறு ‘making the உவமை superior is to bring out the excellence of the பொருள் that is compared’). The examples of உயர்ச்சி are: அரிமா அன்ன

அணங்குடைத் துப்பு ‘fearsome strength like a lion’ (பட்டினப்பாலை வரி 298), தாமரை புரையும் காமர் சேவடி ‘loveable red feet like the lotus’ (குறுந்தொகை கடவுள் வாழ்த்து), மாரி அம்பின் மழைத்தோல் சோழர் ‘Cholan, who has arrows like the rain and the quiver like a cloud’ (அகநானூறு 336, Note here that மாரி is not a உவமை for பயன் ‘benefit’ but for மெய் ‘form, here the reference is to அளவு ‘size’). The superior thing may not be the only one in the class; tiger would substitute the lion in the first citation. Lotus is a superior flower in cultural imagination. When the rain refers to incessant rain in the third citation it becomes the representative of superiority of size.

The superiority of உவமை is not independently defined; it is defined on the basis of உவமப் பொருள். It resides in உவமப் பொருள். The citation of the commentators is a poem from புறநானூறு (28): *the king’s getting ready for the war against the invading enemy to take his town is swift and anxiety-filled like the cobbler who is weaving a seat (for the god) that is to be finished before the start of the imminent village festival on the same day which is getting dark and it is raining while at the same time his child is expected to be born (demanding his presence)*. The உவமை is the வினை of getting something ready by a cobbler with that of a king preparing for war. The weaving (by a cobbler) is superior in speed and anxiety to going to war (by a king). The cobbler and the king are incidental to the comparison.

There could be a பொருள், which has nothing superior to it. Denying the existence of anything superior also brings out the special nature -the uniqueness- of பொருள். This is the crucial condition in உவமை. This has, however, not been noted by the commentators. An example could be cited: இன்மையின் இன்மையே இன்னாதது ‘poverty is painful like poverty’ (திருக்குறள் 1041).

Grounds for the choice to have உவமை

The choice of உவமை (that is superior) is motivated by four factors. They are called here the grounds for having உவமை (நிலைக்களன், S 4). Etymologically, this term means ‘the ground of standing or establishing’. This is different from the sites of meaning (S 1) that refer to the generation (தோற்றம்) of meanings of உவமை (உவமப்பொருள்). The grounds, on the other hand, are reasons for creating உவமை. They are சிறப்பு, நயம், காதல் and வலி; we need to tease out their meanings. The first question is if these four qualities inhere in the பொருள் to be compared. Assuming that they do, சிறப்பு is not simple excellence or special property; it is something that is extra-ordinary or above-par (sur-par); பேராசிரியர் (S 4) calls it விகாரம் (உலகத்துள் இயல்பு வகையானன்றி விகார வகையால் பெறும் சிறப்பு ‘special property that is of unusual kind different from the natural or common kinds’). Like the invisible waist of a woman, for example. நயம் is a common kind of பொருள் but is especially beautiful. Like the big eyes of a woman, for example. காதல் is the love or affection the பொருள் evokes. Like the girl for her lover or mother, for example. வலி ‘strength’ is problematic; commentators do not differentiate it from a site of meaning, which is quality (பண்பு); the illustrations for the latter are repeated for the former by them. It is, however, possible to interpret it to refer to the strength of similarity; the similarity is so strong that the உவமை jumps to the mind of the poet.

Both commentators cite for சிறப்பு lines from பொருநராற்றுப்படை (வரி 54-56), which compare *the rare joint presence of the three great kings of armies of warring drums to the song sung on a lute with a rare, usually conflicting, combination of ragas*. This is a rare event and so is சிறப்பு befitting the rare musical performance, the பொருள். For நயம், the citation is: *the broad hills like a painting*. Here the natural beauty of the hills (in the wide space) is compared to a painting (on a wide screen) (புறநானூறு 251). This choice of citation for நயம் by commentators is probably because of the attraction of the comparison of a natural object with a man-created object. The citation for காதல் is: *‘there is one who is like the (pupil of) the eye’* to express her love for him; he is as precious as the eye. The citation for வலி is *‘fearsome strength like that of a lion’* (பட்டினப்பாலை வரி 218). This is not appropriate for நிலைக்களன், as it is for a site of meaning. May be an appropriate உவமை would be *‘her waist like the drum of Shiva’*.

A fifth ground could be added to the four, which is the lack of the normal property and is sub-par (S 5, கிழக்கு from the root கீழ் ‘down’) such as the face of a girl which lost its luster. The lusterless face is inferior. Inferiority is the opposite of சிறப்பு. சிறப்பு is above the normal and கிழக்கு is below it. The உவமை is below the normal state of affairs like the lunar eclipse. பேராசிரியர்’s example is *‘the faded luster of the forehead (of the girl) like the moon grabbed by its mouth by the snake (Rāgu)’* (அகநானூறு 313).

## Parity between பொருள் and உவமை

### Semantic parity

There is a categorical parity between பொருள் and உவமை; that is, the comparison will be between பொருள் and உவமை that are nouns or verbs and such. There is also parity in the semantic class of பொருள் and உவமை. Thus super-ordinates will be compared with super-ordinates and subordinates with subordinates, primary things with primary things and secondary things, males with males and females with females etc. But there is an exception with regard to whole (முதல்) and part (சினை). They may not match or maintain parity. முதல் பொருள் could have சினை உவமை and vice versa. The illustrations given by இளம்பூரணர் are (the citations except the first one are shared by பேராசிரியர்):

whole பொருள் and whole உவமை: *the (white) katampam tree with flowers like (the white) Balaraman wearing flowers in his ears* (கலித்தொகை 26). Here the tree and the person are wholes and there is parity.

part பொருள் and part உவமை: *the red loveable feet (of the god) like the lotus (flower)* (குறுந்தொகை கடவுள் வாழ்த்து). The word used in the உவமை is தாமரை, but the meaning, as ஆகுபெயர், is lotus flower. Here the feet and flower are parts. There is parity.

whole பொருள் and part உவமை: *your scion who is sitting under the shade of the parasol like the lotus bud of beautiful petals that is concealed under the lotus leaf* (கலித்தொகை 84). Here the scion is a whole and the lotus bud is a part. There is lack of parity.

part பொருள் and whole உவமை: *the boar with small eyes shining red like fire* (அகநானூறு 84). Here the eyes are a part (of the body) and fire is a whole (element). The primary comparison is the fierceness of the fire itself. This is lack of parity. If the comparison were for the color red, the உவமை will be a part, being a property of the fire unless one takes fire to be a ஆகுபெயர் meaning red color. This shows the interplay between உவமை and ஆகுபெயர், which also allows transference of meaning between the whole and the part.

பேராசிரியர் raises the question of abstract nouns such as விசும்பு 'universe', which cannot be perceived as having a whole and parts. His answer is that the indivisible things will be treated as whole. 'knowledge as broad as the universe' (புறநானூறு 2) will be an example of comparison between two wholes. His question points to the problem of identifying something as a whole or as a part, which is not a straightforward one.

பேராசிரியர் extends the parity from lexical categories such as the above to grammatical categories such as gender and number. *The hero appeared like an elephant coming in the rain* (குறுந்தொகை 61). பேராசிரியர் cites this line to illustrate திணை மயக்கம் of human பொருள் having non-human உவமை. But such உவமைs are common (e. g. comparing a warrior with a tiger). The setting in the poem is this: The hero and heroine set up a rendezvous in a rainy night, but, sensing this, the heroine is secured inside her house by her parents; the hero, not finding the heroine at the rendezvous, comes to her house and waits outside, which she comes to know from the fragrance of the sandal on his chest from his hill. The hero's arrival is the result of a rational decision on his part whereas the elephant's movement is routine. By this difference, பேராசிரியர் probably thinks that this உவமை is problematic, but accommodates this with his extended understanding of this sutra (6) instead of calling it an error (உவமக் குற்றம் or வழு). But this is unwarranted. The comparison here is of a state (which is a kind of வினை), viz., 'be soaked': the strong hero is soaked in desire (to come to her house in spite of the risk) like the strong elephant soaked in the rain.

Another illustration of this is in the words of the heroine: *I am not able to bear the suffering from my love sickness, like the dumb person* (உயர்திணை ஊமன்), *who saw at night the agony of a kurāl cow that had fallen in a well*. Here the comparison is not between heroine's agony (neuter, அஃறிணை) and the dumb (human, உயர்திணை), as the meaning was not that she is speechless like the dumb person; it is between heroine's agony and the dumb person's agony (for not being able to call for help). The உவமை is a noun (ஊமன், dumb) but what is compared is its transferred sense (as ஆகுபெயர்) of agony of him. A principle of உவமை is that the meaning may not be the obvious one but an extension of meaning through semantic processes like ஆகுபெயர்

பேராசிரியர்'s illustration for எண் மயக்கம் (mixing singular and plural) is this: the broad armed enemies holding always the spear like the god of death, who do not run from the battle field, are like the ancient Murugan of *kaṭampu* tree (பெரும்பாணாற்றுப்படை வரி 75). The பொருள் is in the plural (enemies) while the உவமை is in the singular (Murugan). To consider this a மயக்கம் is unwarranted because this is grammatically well-formed. In புலி போல் மறவர் பொருதனர் 'the warriors fought like a tiger', each warrior is compared to a tiger.

This extension of பேராசிரியர் is a misstep theoretically (which however is legitimate in தண்டியலங்காரம்) because உவமை is a semantic match, not a grammatical match. உவமப்பொருள் is not affected by any grammatical mismatch between பொருள் and உவமை.

Ambivalence about உவமை

Lack of transparent connection

உவமப்பொருள் in its broad sense of all manifestations of the foundational four sites of meaning such as specific acts, benefits, shapes and colors is not explicit to be understood in all உவமைs. This is because the உவமச்சொல் is not present to get the four basic meanings, or the specific element of comparison is not mentioned (see above). This is called (S 7) சுட்டிக்கூறா உவமம் ‘உவமம் that is not pointed out (by words)’. The sutra says that the meaning of உவமம் is obtained by matching the meaning of பொருள் and உவமை and deciding on the one that matches appropriately (பொருள் எதிர்புணர்த்துப் புணர்த்தன கொளல் ‘getting the semantic match by matching உவமை and பொருள் with each other’). The appropriate meaning is inferred by poetic knowledge (முன்னம்), according to பேராசிரியர் (see above).

Non-transparency includes, for இளம்பூரணர் (S 7), the ambivalence whether an expression is உவமை at all and he cites a couplet from திருக்குறள் (90): *aniccam flower withers at someone smelling it; guests are offended to look at an unpleasant face of the host*. Two propositions are stated parallel. One has to infer that the two propositions are compared (and are not separate propositions) and one of them is பொருள் and another உவமை. Which is which also falls under inference. In the above couplet, the second proposition is பொருள் and the first is உவமை.

Another ambivalence of உவமை is the acceptance of the choice of a உவமை from the many available. This is not semantic, but is communal. பேராசிரியர்’s examples for non-acceptance of a meaning are these two: *dark hair like the feathers of a crow, charged like a cat*. The acceptable உவமைs correspondingly are: *tress of hair like the feathers of a peacock, charged like a tiger*. Though the darkness of hair color would compare semantically better with the black feathers of crow than the dark blue feathers of a peacock, the former is disfavored for உவமை because of cultural evaluation, which creates the convention (மரபு). Thus convention is formed from culturally acceptable usage (வழக்கு). This lays the foundation for the aesthetic appreciation of உவமை.

Appropriateness in உவமை

The sutra (S 8) is உவமும் பொருளும் ஒத்தல் வேண்டும் ‘உவமம் and பொருள் must agree with each other, or உவமம் must agree with பொருள்’. பேராசிரியர் interprets this sutra where the match of உவமம் and பொருள் is the object of ஒத்தல் (in the sense of cooperation as ஒப்புரவு as used in திருக்குறள், which he cites) and the subject of ஒத்தல் is the unspecified உலகம், which stands for the community (of poets and readers). இளம்பூரணர், on the other hand, takes உவமம் and பொருள் as the subject of ஒத்தல் and posits that the agreement

(ஒத்தல்) lies in the உவமை structure. One example is the requirement that two பொருள் in a உவமை structure must have two உவமம் to correspond.

This sutra is about parity between உவமம் and பொருள், which is stated in a generic way, which is refined in other sutras. பேராசிரியர்'s point can be taken from S 21 and இளம்பூரணர்'s from S 22. As there is parity, உவமம் and பொருள் are exchangeable. That is, உவமம் could be பொருள் (S 9). There are things in the world, some of which are used as உவமம் by convention. This convention about what could be a உவமம் could however be broken because of the requirement parity discussed above. The reverse of தாமரைமுகம் 'face like a lotus' is முகத்தாமரை 'lotus like a face', both of which are acceptable. The illustration given for the latter by பேராசிரியர் is this: *the divine lotus that opens its beautiful face by breaking the solid petals of the bud like the emerging breast* (சிறுபாணாற்றுப்படை வரி 72-73).

This reversal raises the question whether it changes the defined relationship between உவமம் and பொருள்: உவமம் must be superior to பொருள் (உயர்ச்சி, S 3) and must bring out the excellence (சிறப்பு S 9, 10) of பொருள். பேராசிரியர்'s answer to this question is that the relationship does not change. He argues that the excellence of பொருள் i.e. முகம்) is not diminished even in the reversal (முகத்தாமரை) because of the general principle that உவமம் is the top in the class of comparable things ; பொருள் as the உவமம் in the reversal is therefore on the top. Therefore, the list of things (such as தாமரை) for உவமம் remains unaltered functionally irrespective of the usage of the reversed உவமம் and பொருள்.

Metaphor

இளம்பூரணர் uses this sutra (S 9) to account for உருவகம் 'metaphor', which Tolkappiyam does not mention at all. For both commentators உருவகம் is not a separate category of comparison but is a kind of உவமை. It is the absence of உவமச்சொல். பேராசிரியர் does not look for a sutra to make this point, but இளம்பூரணர் does. He interprets பொருளே உவமம் செய்தனர் to mean 'பொருள் by itself is made out to be a உவமம்' (while பேராசிரியர் interprets as 'பொருள் itself is made into (= used as) a உவமம்'). In one example (புறநானூறு 399) given by இளம்பூரணர், the description of the actions in the battlefield (போர்க்களம்) is wrapped metaphorically into the description of the actions in the agricultural field (ஏர்க்களம்). The connecting link is not any of the உவமச்சொல் but is ஆக 'becoming'. Another example is from மணிமேகலை (4:8:13), which describes a scene of nature in a garden, which is a metaphor for a

dance performance in a royal court. There is no connecting link at all; the word அரசு அன்னம் 'royal swan' suggests the metaphor of 'a royal court'.

#### Modification in parity

The requirement of parity between உவமம் and பொருள் is modifiable (S 10). உவமம் might not be equal to பொருள் but could be upsized (பெருமை) or downsized (சிறுமை). The modification is conditioned by the requirement that they do not go beyond the out of ordinary property (சிறப்பு), which is one of the four grounds (நிலைக்களன்) for choosing the உவமம்; the modification of ground is suggestive (குறிப்பு). That is, upsizing and downsizing must be within limits and implicit. This modification is necessitated by common usage (நெறிப்பாடு). பேராசிரியர் calls it வழக்கு வலி 'strength of use'(S 10). It is an open question if this excludes super-natural objects or acts as in mythologies. This sutra probably suggests the arrival of new உவமை forcing this conditioned allowance to relax the classical equality (ஒப்புமை) of உவமை and பொருள். This is indicated by the observation of பேராசிரியர் relating to some உவமை that they have become the usage in Tamil (தமிழ் வழக்கு ஆகின்றது). His example regarding a super-natural உவமை based on shape (வடிவு) is this: *the sky is the umbrella whose handle is the Meru hill and the stars strung in the sky are the pearls strung on the umbrella*.

An attested and acceptable prototypical உவமை which is upsized is illustrated by this: *her narrow forehead below the tress of hair is like the young bright moon in its eighth phase in the middle of the broad ocean* (குறுந்தொகை 129). Here the size of the உவமை is enormous compared to the பொருள்.

பேராசிரியர் considers acceptable the following உவமை, though are an exaggeration, because they are in use: *like the elephants that slipped on the sandal paste running on the street from the water poured on the breasts of women (unsourced); the starchy water from the rice cooked runs on the street like a river* (பட்டினப்பாலை வரி 44-45).

#### Role of convention

Other acceptable upsized and downsized உவமை that are contrasted and have come into use and have the strength of use include the following, according to பேராசிரியர்: *the alkul of the girl as large as the desire of the common people and her waist as razor sharp as the questions of the learned (unsourced); avoid friendship of a person who is like an elephant (a large animal) and embrace the friendship of a person who is like a dog (a small animal)* (நாலடியார் 213). It is the contrast that puts in relief the size, not the animals by themselves, which are ordinary உவமை.



பேராசிரியர் brings in things that are not normally found in the world under பெருமை for acceptable உவமைs. His example is: *like the kāntal flower that is not swarmed by honey bees*. Later grammarians give a name to it: இல்பொருள் உவமை ‘உவமை by a non-existent thing’. This is பெருமை, for பேராசிரியர், because non-existent things are a kind of exaggeration (பெருமை) in the sense of making it exist artificially for the purpose of உவமை. This sutra may be read in a general way as தொல்காப்பியர் allowing, with some reluctance, artificial உவமை, which is on the increase in the history of Tamil poetry.

இளம்பூரணர் gives some examples that are not acceptable because of their upsizing or downsizing are not in practice (i.e. a large number of poets have not used those உவமைs). They are: *the young Cāttan like Indra wearing a fragrant garland* (யாப்பருங்கல விருத்தி ஒழிபியல்); *the sword-carrying army large like the sea moves fast on the ground like the herd of deer running screaming when a wide-mouthed, sharp-toothed wild dog chases them* (யாப்பருங்கல விருத்தி ஒழிபியல்). In the first example, Indra, the lord of the skies, is too high up for comparison for the young, inexperienced cāttan; this is not acceptable because it is not in use and it is not in practice because of the inappropriateness in the comparison. In the second example, the உவமை is a downsized one (இறப்ப இழிதல் ‘excessively degrading’); it is not acceptable because it is not in practice and it is not in use because the comparison is infelicitous between an advancing army to take the lives of enemies and a herd of deer running for life. These citations show that a உவமை is not in practice because of inappropriateness or infelicity, and therefore does not become part of the tradition of practice (மரபு). Note that the citations for non-acceptable உவமை come not from actual poems but from the constructed ones by grammarians to illustrate a point.

இளம்பூரணர் does not take the உவமை of *embracing the friendship of a person like a dog* to be an instance of downsized (சிறுமை) உவமை. This is because he takes the dog to be the best example of loyalty and not a lowly animal. This raises the question how பெருமை and சிறுமை of உவமை differ from உயர்ச்சி (above-par, S 3) and கிழக்கு (sub-par, S 5). The inferior characteristic (கிழக்கு) is of பொருள் and is the ground or motivation for choosing a உவமை; it becomes a characteristic of உவமை only through the comparison for which the poet chooses it. The dim moon grabbed by the snake used as a உவமை for the face of a woman losing the luster of her face by the separation of her lover is not an instance of downsizing (சிறுமை); it is a normal happening in nature; the poet has not chosen the best state of the moon as it does not fit the purpose of the comparison. The superior characteristic (உயர்ச்சி), on the other hand, is of உவமை, but is not of its enormity or rarity. It is closer to பொருள் in equality (ஒப்புமை), not distanced from it, like upsizing (பெருமை).

