CHAPTER III

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE WORKS OF THE AVVAIYAR OF THE CAṆKAM ERA

1. The theme of the Poems of Caṅkam Avvaiyār.
2. The stature of Avvaiyār among the poets of the Caṅkam Era.
4. Other Poems of Avvaiyār.
5. The Poetic power of Avvaiyār.
7. Metaphor.
8. Imagery.

Introduction:

There are disputes about some poems as to which of the many Avvaiyārs composed them; there are misattribution of the authorship of some poems between the various Avvaiyārs; and there are instances of attributing the pieces of some other authors to Avvaiyār. Thus there is scope for some uncertainty about the authorship of many poems attributed to Avvaiyār. However, the poems of the Avvaiyār of the Cāṅkam Era do not lend scope for entertaining such doubts if misattribution and uncertainties. They have a quality of their own, and are homogeneous. The poems of the Avvaiyār of the Cāṅkam Era conforms to the canons of the Cāṅkam Era, neatly fall under the two fold classification of "Subjective" (Ākām) and "Objective" (Puram) domain and display poetic techniques of fancy, simile, metaphor relating to structure and content.

Hence, this part is divided into two sections namely "Theme" and "Powers of poetic Expression" and considered accordingly:

1. The 2361 poems in the Anthologies of "Eṭṭutokai" and "Pattupāṭṭu" together labelled as "Patiņeņmēlkaṇṇaku" are
called Cauñam Poems. They fall under the two major domains "Subjective" and Objective. The Subjective deals with love. It is about the love between the Hero and the Heroine. It has two phases namely that of romantic love and the phase of chastity that is the post-marital phase; war, politics, economics, society, religion etc., are deemed to fall under the Objective domain.

**Ways of Portraying Themes of the Subjective Domain:**

The phases of the Subjective Domain, romantic love (Kālāvui and the phase of chastity (Karpu) are subsumed under five settings namely "Kurinīci", "Mullai", "Pālai", "Marutam", and "Neital" and dealt with. Only in Kurinīci the episodes relating to the romantic phase are treated. Parting and separation between the Hero and the Heroine are treated as a theme common to both the romantic phase and the post marital chaste phase. The themes of parting and separation is treated in the "Pālai" setting in the romantic phase. In the post marital phase it is treated against "Pālai", "Mullai" "Marutam" and "Neital" settings. In the Mullai setting the suffering and the endurance of the heroine in "Neital" the inability of the heroine to endure the parting; in "Marutam" the hero's coquettish with prostitutes and the heroine deliberate alienation are treated. The Cauñam poems are expressions of the emotions that throb and pound in the hearts of the hero and the heroine in the various modes of relating to each other.
Primary theme: The theme of the literature of the subjective domain can be analysed in terms of three major categories. They are "Primary Theme." (Mutal porul) "Nuclear Theme" (Karupporul) and the "Theme Proper". (Tripporul). In the setting of each poem the appropriate scene of action is indicated. The season and the time are also indicated explicitly or implicitly. Together they provide the spatial and temporal axes of the framework. These are the primary themes.

The Nuclear theme: The man who is the actor in the events in the scene, his activities, its consequence and the flora and the fauna constitute the nuclear theme.

The Theme proper: In the poems of the subjective domain the qualities of sexual conjugation, parting and separation, cohabiting, deliberate entrapment and pathos are treated. The canons of the Tamil grammatical tradition refer to them as the themes proper. The theme proper is the very life breath of the verbal painting that the poem of the subjective domain is. We can perceive the primary theme to be its anatomy. It is on account of this feature that the primary and the nuclear themes that belong to a particular setting blur and shade into another. In such instances of blurring and shading the intimate criterion for deciding the setting in the theme proper of the poem. This is illustrated to us in a number of poems of the subjective domain.
Thematic grammar is a unique feature of Tamil. All languages treat of love and valour. But auxiliary episodes, time and modes of relationship appropriate for bringing about this episodes, norms therefore, the methods and techniques for expressing them have been defined as principles of literary construction only in Tamil literature, especially Ānikam literature. Literary works must conform to these norms, definitions and specifications, such canons for poetic expression stand out as the proud basis, feature and significance of the thematic grammar of Tamil Literature.

The Objective Domain: The objective domain subsumes human themes other than sex; songs about minor gods are also subsumed under this category. Other themes in the objective domain are war, valour munificence the description and prescriptions about social dynamics by scholars etc. Like poems of the subjective domain these themes have been classified and treated under settings and scenes. These settings and scenes are also in the poetic form and tradition. However the themes, the personas and the events relating to them are not fictitious.

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1. Dr. S.V. Subramaniyan, Tamil IlakkiyakKalkai, p. 30.
The Caṅkam Poems of Avvaiyar:

Two propositions are maintainable about Caṅkam poems of Avvaiyar. One of them is; among the 'Eṭṭutokai' anthologies excluding the four works that have unique themes namely, Patirruppattu, Aṅkurunuru, Kalittokai and Pārīpātal. There are 4 poems in 'Aṅkurunuru', 15 poems in 'Kuruntokai', 4 in 'Aṅkurunuru' 7 in 'Nārīṇai' and 33 in 'Puranānūru' anthologies which constitute the remaining four units in the 'Eṭṭutokai' compendium. The other proposition is the among these 4 anthologies, Kapilar, paraṇar and Avvaiyar have made the maximum contributions in terms of number of poems. There are 104 poems by Kapilar, 65 by Paraṇar and 59 by Avvaiyar. Each of the others has contributed less than 40 poems.

2. The Place of Avvaiyar among Women Poets of the Caṅkam Era

In the ancient Tamil world women enjoyed equal rights with men and shone as exemplary poets with power of expression and clarity of thought. Like men poets these women poets also have contributed innumerable poems both to the subjective and objective domains. Among the poets of the literature of Caṅkam Era about one either were women. Their poems are no way inferior to those of the men poets in terms of artistic dexterity.

But it is very difficult to differentiate and identify the feminine names among poets of the Caṅkam Era. Most of the names terminate with the stem 'ar'. Hence we have to
identify them through the contents of the poems. As a result of this indiscriminable nomenclature, each scholar estimates in his own way. That is, Pulavar Ka. Govinan makes a count of their number 28 postesses excluding Avvaiyār. Prof. Va. Canjeevi counts 30; Prof. Va. Supa. Manikan counts up to 32. The reason for this discrepancy in their estimates is the cross classification of certain men and women poets under the opposite sex.

Prof. Va. Canjeevi makes a count of 30 because he does not deem Ponnuṣṭiyr and 'Aḷūr Vamullaiyār as women poets Va. Supa. takes them to be women poets and hence makes a count of 32. According to Saṅka Ilakiya 'Pāṭum Takaivar' there are about 32 women poets' poems are found. Thus when we consider all these references we may conclude that probably the number of women poets then was only 32. Among this 32 poets, 15 wrote poems belonging exclusively to the subjective domain; 9 composed poems in the objective domain. 8 made contributions both to the subjective and the objective domain. Avvaiyār is one among these 8.

The Subjective Domain: The absence of contributions by women poets to Āṅkurumūru, Kalittokai, and Paripāṭal in the

4. Dr. V.C. Manikan, Tamil Kēṭal, p. 398.
Ettutokai compendium is conspicuous. It merits research inquiry. Again it is noteworthy that women poets do not at all find a place in the 'Pattupāṭṭu' compendium.

The place of Āvvaiyār among poets: Among the women poets of Caukam literature, Āvvaiyār occupies the foremost place in terms of number of poems contributed. Among the 50 poems contributed by her, 26 belong to the subjective domain and 33 to the objective domain. Among all the poetesses who contribute to the Puranānūru compendium including the men poets it is noteworthy that Āvvaiyār contributed the highest number of poems.

3. Kings treated by Āvvaiyār in her poems:

The complaint that the Tamil people are unhistorical is commonly made by professors of history. If the date of birth, the date of death, the dates of victory and defeat are the stuff of history then the Tamil people are liable for that complaint. Put if politics, public administration, munificence, strength of the army, welfare of the people, the renown of poets and the rights of great men are the basis of history certainly the Tamil people are not liable to this complaint. Puranānūru Patirruppattu and many poems of the Pattuppāṭṭu as well as a number of landmarks scattered in the poems of the subjective domain are really resource treasures for a historical base.
From this perspective many of the poems of Avvaiyār portray to us the life and history of many kings. If we examine the contributions of Avvaiyār to Puranānūra the following are the kings treated by Avvaiyār in her poems.

Atiyāmān, his son Poguttēnīnā, Wājilporumān, Sēramān, Māvenkō, Chōlen Rājassūm Vēṭā Perumarkīlly, Pēntān Kānapōr tanta Tkkrip - Perulūlti.

Now, we will know about each of them individually through the poems of Avvaiyār.

**Atiyāmān:** Of all the king's sung about by Avvaiyār Atiyāmān has been the one to get the highest number of poems. She has composed twenty two poems about him. When we study all these poems we get a picture of his figure and many more details about him. Atiyāmān's Radiant personality, valour, simplicity, generosity, stateliness and magnanimity are very clearly brought home by those poems. Avvaiyār could sing about him in so much details because she had been the poet laureate of his court. He appears as the captain, a great army, a warrior who commands such an army majestically, as one who has large, and drum like shoulders, broad chest and a firm...
Statelyness: The most important among the traits indispensable for a king is statelyness. It comes out of education dauntless courage, renown and generosity. Of these, we come to know from Auvaiyar's poems statelyness by virtue of dauntless courage, renown and generosity. There are many poems about his statelyness. While describing his power, she says, that his firmness resembles a royal car shape during the whole of a month by a carpenter who is capable of producing eight car everyday. She explains this idea in the poem "Tirukkāl Valitta Kālamōndū." The way she tells him about his undaunted activities towards counseling him is admirable. When a tiger is fiercely aroused, there is no deer that dare to confront it. Does darkness tarry after the golden sun rises in radiance? When the powerful ox strides its way through deep sand to the spray of the sands and the breaking of the stones, with such a heavy load on the cart that the hub and the cone of its axis rub against each other, no one can presume to show the ox his path. "O, thou Atiyamān who art so strong and powerful (as the tiger and the ox): When thou set out on to the battle field, are there

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10. T.L.K: Neippattiyal, s.9.
11. P.W. 87, 89, 90, 97, 98, 100, 104.
12. ibid. 87, 1.4.
enemies who dare confront thee? May thee set out towards the battle field". Thus she advises him to embark on war. In another poem, which is in the form of setting the birth before the chiefs who had chosen to decline the payment of the regular ransom to Atiyamān and had chosen to offer battle instead, she has appreciated the valour of Atiyamān:

"(His arms) lost their shape being sheathed in flesh and bone."  
She also aptly elevates the valour of Atiyamān in her saying "O! king thy skin is perforate by the arrows, on the cause of thy valour deeds in the war." In another poem, by focusing on the fun of his enemies fear and trembling, she indirectly explains the renown of Atiyamān: That is, his enemies, on seeing the war-torn tusks and trunks of Atiyamān's Elephants, replaced their old palace gates with new and stronger ones. On seeing the bloody hoofs of his horses which had waded through the corpses of the battle field, they fenced their gateways with sharp and venomous thistles. The soldiers who saw the arrows of Atiyamān's men but their own into the quivers. If this is the state of the satellite king's when Atiyamān marches past, alas, what is going to be the fate of

13. P.N. 90.
14. ibid. 97, 1.3.
15. ibid. 97, 1. 16.
the Malāṣar king who is ruling, Kōvalūr. She describes as follows the figure of Atiyamān who is returning home from the battle field to have a look at his newly born son: She describes beautifully his valour, that Atiyamān's reddish eyes have not turned into normal even after seeing his new born baby.

She majestically describes the valour of Atiyamān against the derision of his enemies that he was young and immature.

ūrkkuru mākkal āṭak kalāḥkum
ṭāṭaṭu cinnīrk kaliraṭṭu vīkkum
īppuṭai karattam ena

He could not stand the position of being second to another king. One Malayamān ruled at Tirukkōvalūr during his days. Malayamān was in alliance with three major kings the Chēra, Chōla, and Pāṇṭiyan on victories. This inspired immense envy in Atiyamān. He gathered a large army and charged Kōvalūr. Kōvalūr was completely destroyed and Malayamān was defeated. His love of battle was also quenched. This glorious episode has been the theme of a poem by Paranār also. (This fact is mentioned in the line.)

17. ibid. 100, 11. 7,8,11.
18. ibid. 104, 11. 2,4.
"Paran pāṭinān" 19

Avvaiyār also gives a new fact that the credit for having brought sugar can which finds many uses goes to Atiyānān 20. Thus she has treated of the stateliness of Avvaiyār in many poems and from many points of view.

As a foundation for all these traits, Atiyānān had the large heart to host poets who broadcast and recorded his renown. He had a generous hand which was offering gifts and prizes unceasingly like a torrent of rains. There were many days in his life when he was in court and offered cars as gifts with a loving heart and a smiling countenance. He had a large enough heart that showered undiminishing love. He was the same on the first day as well as on any number of subsequent days. Whether the poet goes alone or with increasing bonds of his relatives. Perhaps he may procrastinate the offer of the gift but he would not fail to offer them eventually. 21

By way of guiding the women artistś to Atiyānānś palace Avvaiyār beautifully describes the generosity of Atiyānān. "O, thou singer, your utensils are dry because

20. ibid. 99, 1.2.
they are in need of a "donor. But if you go to him they
will always be wet with food".

Thus she describes the bounteous nature of Atiyamān.
Moreover, whatever the quantum of food he got he would first
offer it to poets and he himself would take only the reminder. In case there is not enough food to go around he would go
without food, offering all that is available to poets. He
would give more to those who seek arms and gifts from him
than to his own creditors. Even if we knock at his doors
at night, he would put off our moss-like dirty clothes, put
on us flower, like new clothes, offer toddy and meat and food
in silver dishes; besides he would also give unlimited paddy
for our kith and kin. Thus Avvaiyār has composed a number
of poems about his bounteousness.

Atiyamān offered to others not only his wealth but
had even proffered his own life for them. He might have taken
the rare kind of emblic myrobalan fruit that he got and lived
and ruled for a very long time. But he did not want to live
long and be the cause for many wars. He desired that Avvaiyār,
who offered people valuable advice and helped them lead a

22. P.W. 103, l. 10.
23. ibid. 235, ll. 4-5.
24. ibid. 315.
good life, should live long and so gave the fruit to her. The credit for the longevity of Avvaiyar belongs to Atiyamān himself.

Pathos:
Tolkāppiār explains pathos in a poem as follows:

"Abjectness, bereavement, degradation and penury Are the four causes of pathos."\(^{27}\)

Moreover, whether these four causes have their genesis either in self or in others, it gives rise to the feeling of pathos. In our context, the three poems composed by Avvaiyar in a mood of pathos are due to her bereavement, on account of the loss of Atiyamān. Again, according to Tolkāppiār's categorisation, this mood has its genesis in an even pertaining to another person.

Atiyamān is vanquished by one perumāra (rumporai)\(^{29}\). Avvaiyar is deeply grief stricken on hearing about the death of Atiyamān. Her heart was obsessed with grief on account of the irrevocable loss of the great king who held the cool and pleasant language of Tamil higher than his own life. The spear that pierced his heart not only killed him; it penetrated

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27. T. L. K. Mal. s. 6.
29. Patirrupathy, Pathikam, 8.
the head of the band of great minstrels, the hands held for receiving alms from him, dimmed the tearful eyes of their kith and kin and finally landed on the tongue of poets well-versed in the choice of (Tamil) words. Hereafter there are neither singers and poets and minstrels nor any patron for them.30

The precious body of Atiyamana who met with a warrior's death was mounted on the funeral pyre. Atiyamana's dear son, Pokuṭṭalini, let the pyre, with tears in his eyes and blood seething with rage in heart. The fire left up in spiral of flames and glowed. Āvaiyar lamented like a mother who had lost her son. "O flames of the funeral pyre; you have not burnt my patron's body. You are leaping to the heavens and burning him to ashes. Put you cannot burn down his glory, which radiates like the sun."31. Without you the rest of my days will not hear the dawn and dusk. Let my life be engulfed in darkness. Your people have planted an epitaph pur fermenting wine on you from small pegs hoping that you would drink it. Would you, who would not accept a kingdom surrounded by high mountains, accept these petty drops of wine?32. Thus Āvaiyar, who sing poems that melted the hearts

31. ibid. 231.
32. ibid. 232.
of the learned and provoked floods of tears, it is understood, survived the death of Atiyamān in despair that death did not come to her soon and that her life had become vain.33

Other character traits: Though Atiyamān had an insatiable love of war towards haughty kings, he was full of a number of other desirable qualities. He was simple and accessible to poets and artists. She describes this trait with the aid of an apt simile: "the big, strong elephant's head is within the reach of small children when it is bending and bathing in the pond; likewise, you are O, great King.34. "Even if he gets only a little wine he would take it only after we had it. Similarly whether he gets little or much food, he would share it with us on the same table". Thus she describes his sociability. She also expresses his tenderness for her.

"He would softly stroke my odorous head
With his fragrant scented hands.35

Finally, while giving expression to the great love he had for her, she makes use of a very imaginative simile:
"Just as the lisplings of his child, which are neither sonorous as the music of 'Yāl' nor meaningful, nevertheless are a joy for the father, my words are a joy to you.36. How great is your

34. ibid. 94, 11. 1-3.
35. ibid. 235, 11.6,9.
36. ibid. 92.
loving heart thus Avvaiyār praises him in many ways.

Pokuttelini: It is not clearly known as to how many children Atiyanān had. But Avvaiyār mentions in one of her poems that a son was born to him and that when he wanted to see the new born baby, his eyes that were already red with anger as he was looking at his enemies, did not change in their hue whilst he was looking at his son. An ancient commentator while paraphrasing the poem refers to the son in a footnote as "tava māman" that is, "the fruit of penance". It is this son who must have grown into Pokuttelini. In another poem of the objective domain she describes the youthful style and handsomeness as follows:

"Alarpīn tumpai ampakāṭu māripin
Miraṇṭunīṭu taṭakkai."38

He must have been crowned as the prince even when Atiyanān had been on the throne and must have assisted his father. Avvaiyār refers to this through a beautiful simile: 'he was an auxiliary king pin' 39.

After the demise of Atiyanān, Pokuttelini himself must have ascended throne and become the king of Ṭakaṭūr. Pokuttelini

37. P.W. 100.
38. ibid. 96, 1.1-2.
39. ibid. 102.
40. ibid.-392.
had the capability for ruling his kingdom in such a way that the subjects of the land who were upset by the death of Atiyamān did not lose their heart and become happy again. Observing this Avvaiyār praises his generosity in a verbal picture through the mouth of a wandering artist. A wandering artist reaches his palace in early morning and sings the glory of his valour. Trup Kēni Pakāṭīlaip pāsi vēr purai sitār nikki.\(^{40}\) He dressed him fine clothes, offered him effervescent wine in a golden cup and had a sumptuous feast with him and also his other relatives. Thus Avvaiyār has written passionately about Pokuttalini.

\textbf{Vāṭil Valluvan:} There was a chief to whom the Vāṭil hills belonged. He was called both Vāṭil Porunan and Vāṭil Valluvan. He was a great warrior and generous patron. Poets who desired the benefit of his generosity did not even mind the difficult and dangerous tract leading to his kingdom and went ahead and received his gifts. Avvaiyār too wanted to enlogise him and receive gifts from him. She reached his palace and sung poems in praise of him. True to his status he offered her an elephant as his gift. The poem that Avvaiyār sung in praise of his bounteouness is very subtle and refined. "As there was dearth of rice the women at home culled green leaves from the back yard and cooked it up for food. I went to

\(^{40}\) P.W. 392
him and sang his praise in order to sprinkle the leaves with some grains of rice. But he gave me an elephant as large as a hill in the midst of a desert. When I asked him "what are we to do with this? (elephant) and how are we to rear it?" he replied: 'You sought from me gifts appropriate to your station. I too offered you as my gift an elephant that was proper to my station. Offering a gift that is becoming of my station is proper for my glory and my stature'. How admirable is his generosity'\(^{41}\) says Avvaiyār.

The three major kings: Avvaiyār found the kings of the three major Tamil dynasties - Cēramān Nāri Vēṇko, Pāṇṭiyan Kanna-pper Tanta Ukkirapperuvalutu and the Chōla King Rasasuyam Perumār Kili Vēṭta Ukkirapperuvalutu - unusually at peace with one another. The scene of all the three sitting together in friendliness immensely Avvaiyār's heart in a great sea of joy. She wanted this amity to endure. She began giving advice to them towards the fulfilment of her desire. "All the three of you sitting together resembles the flame of trinity raised by Brahmins. Even if one of the flames is missing the Brahmins cannot fully perform their prescribed rites. Similarly if just one among the three major kings becomes antagonistic, the life of Tamil Vātu will not be prosperous. Hence all the three of you may continue to live in amity and cooperation as you do today.

\(^{41}\) P.W. 140.
Moreover, when we die there is nothing we take with us to the other world. Hence so long as you are be bounteous to the poor’. Thus Avvaiyar counseled, blessed and took leave of them.

Tontaiman: During the period of Atiyaman Tontaiman of Chola genealogy was ruling over ‘Tontai Naatu’ with Kasi as the capital. There was a dispute between Tontaiman and Atiyaman. Tontaiman made preparations for war with Atiyaman. Atiyaman, who came to know of the preparation of Tontaiman, was also eager to gather and alert the army of brave warriors and beat the drums of war. But Avvaiyar who knew very well the severity of war and the possible disintegration of Tamil Kingdoms in the course of time on account of it, made up her mind to avert the war at all costs. Avvaiyar, who was equalled and excelled by none in compassion, wisdom and rhetoric, herself decided to embark on a diplomatic mission to Tontaiman. Atiyaman, who understood the heart of Avvaiyar, agreed to her idea, controlling his heart which was throbbing for battle. Avvaiyar went to the Tontaiman Kingdom. The king of that country received the superior poet of Tamil with love and entertained her with enthusiasm. Avvaiyar was looking for an occasion when she could impress upon him and influences his mind smoothly with the ideas in her mind. Tontaiman took Avvaiyar to his armoury and showed her the shining plates and edges of his arms. While

42. P.9. 367.
looking at the sparkling arms before her eyes, a number of ideas flashed across the horizon of her thought. She wanted to enlighten Tontaiman, who was enveloped in dark ignorance but facts relating the Atiyaman without, however, affending Tontaiman in any way. She sung a poem to the effect: "O, the Lord of Kâici, your arms in this well guarded palace are well-decorated with garlands and peacock feathers. Sharply and strong edges are bright sharpened and lubricated. But the arms of Atiyaman are always heaped in the workshop of the blacksmith for repair because the tip and edges are broken as they had been repeatedly struck on the enemies."

On hearing the song of subtle satires from Avvaiyâr, Tontaiman was taken aback and gave up for ever the idea of war. No educated man in the Tamil world is ignorant of this episode. Thus there are a few poems about King's attributed in Avvaiyâr in the Purananuru compendium.

4. Other Themes in Avvaiyâr's Poems:

In the remaining six poems of the objective domain, Avvaiyâr seeks to make the common people too (besides kings) strong and good. Of these six, three are about brave warriors, two about the states of mind of brave women and one is to the

43. P.N. 95.
effect that good male citizens are the basis of the welfare of a nation.

Avvaiyar passionately describes the brave deeds of a brave knight. There is a feast before the first phase of waging a war (Virai kavartal). During the feast strong toddy red like the eyes of a tiger, is served. Everyone took it and became giddy with dancing. Within a while the drummer sounded the drum and announced that everyone set out for the war. Another round of well-strained wine was served. But the noble knight declined it, instead, he demanded his sword. All the learned and the great who were around, were full of praise for him. The noble warrior also charged ahead and returned victorious bringing home a number of cattle as capture. How admirable his sense of honour and courage.

When there is a pre-battle feast, it is the duty of the Lord to meet many of the leaders in person, enquire about the welfare of each and compliment each on his special qualities or contributions. In such an occasion it is the work of the learned to speak in the choicest words about the pedigree and qualities of each. Avvai goes to one such feast and announces the pedigree of one such knight. 'Lord, offer the wine to this knight before you taste it. The father of this knight charged on the enemy and gave up his own life. This knight too will shield you from the spears of the enemy aimed at you like a

44. P.W. 339.
palmyra umbrella that wards off the rain.

A knight who helped many people in many ways once offered severe battle and ultimately emerged victorious. There were many in the battlefield who had received help from his hands. He was attacked by enemies with their arms. He shielded them away with his buckle and won them single handed. Avvaiyar observed him in the midst of the battle, fighting single handed, clashing up sparks of fire. Her heart was filled with joy and admiration. She sung the following poem: a robe that had been whitened with the sand from a saline land by the doby women, has been turned brown with the loamy soil of the battle field in the indispensable rescue he provided to many others in the battle field. "obody came to the help of such a knight in the battle (and he fought out his success, alone, unaided)."

She distils the passions stirring in the heart of a brave woman in two poems: Many went to war. Of them many won. Some were felled. Of those who had fallen, the son of this mother also was one. Her heart is thumping with courage. But, still, her heart seems to have some reservation. That is, in the pre-battle feast, the king would give more wine to my

45. P.N. 290.
46. ibid. 311.
son then to all others. Such a wise reused his courage and ultimately laid him on the legless cot (of the coffin plank) and enwrapped him with a pure, white cloth. 47

Thus Auvaiyār describes the rejoicement of the brave mother. In the next poem, she renders the joy of an old woman. On hearing the bodies of the knights were mutilated by the enemies, the mother rushed to the scene of the battle. Her heart melted when she found the mutilated body of her son also. Due to the overflow of love there was lactation in her breasts.

"Vāṭu mulai ūric ourantāna
ūṭāp puṭkai vitai tāikkē" 48

Thus by rendering the feeling of the brave mother of the old, Auvaiyār possibly sought the inspire courage in the hearts of posterity too.

In the course of her life Auvaiyār had met many king's and philanthropists. She had seen the soils, the seas and the hills they had ruled over. The five natural regions also she had seen and enjoyed. Such a poet has bequeathed one truth mellowed in her wide experience has the offer of her life.

'O, land, you field and form in one region, woods in one,

47. P.N. 306, ll. 4,5.
48. Ibid. 295, ll. 7,8.
valley in one and table land in another. Wherever you are, if the men are good you are also good and you have no quality of your own. May you live long.

This poem which salutes the land that gave birth to her and also ourselves is an immortal elixir that has been bequeathed by Avvaiyar for us to enjoy and realise. We must duly recognise such thoughtful poems by Avvaiyar.

5. Avvaiyar's Poetic of Poetic Expression:

Some additional techniques found in the poems about Atiyaman:
The poems about Atiyaman have been dropped in many scenes and settings. In terms of settings they are: 'Tumpai', 'Vakai', 'Patan', and 'Potuviyal'. In terms of scenes they are 'Arasa Vakai', 'Tanai Maram' and ten other scenes.

There are six poems in 'Arasa Vakai', four in 'Tanai Maram', three in 'Iyan Holi' and two in 'Kaiyaru Ilai'. Again, there are one each in the following scenes: 'Valltiyal', 'Van Manikal', Parisil Katu 'Ilai', Viraliyarruppatai', 'Parisil turni' and 'Vallan Mullai'. 'Tumpai tinai' and 'Tanai Marappatiai' - four in number - all refer to the excellence of Atiyaman's army. But each poem has a uniqueness about it. One poem is addressed to those who dare set foot against Atiyam in the battle field, another to those who haughtily presume that they would vanquish

49. P.W. 167.
50. Ibid. 87, 88, 89, 90.
51. Ibid. 87.
him with the armies of Kūla and tār, and another in the form of a reply to those who challenge "Thou artist, are there brave men in your country?". One is addressed to the leader of the brave in which his power, enthusiasm for battle and his dauntlessness are brought into light. Thus alternating the position of the speaker and the hearer is an excellent literary device.

The six scenes of victory (Arasa Vākai Tūrāi) in the setting of victory (Vākai Tāpanī) deal with his victory in his superior valour that led to victory, the defences his enemies build in panic at every manifestation of his valour and the consequent victory and the special event of his besieging of Kōvalū. His fierce demeanour in the battle field did not change even when he came home to look at his new born son. This fact is known through a poem by Ayyaiyār. Another poems is to the effect that Atiyān was capable of felling down his enemies like the small crocodile in water that can vanquish the large elephant.

There are three poems in 'Iyan moli tūrāi' in 'Pāṭān tāpanī'. One of them indicates the deep love Atiyān had

52. P.R. 88. 53. ibid. 69. 54. ibid. 90. 55. ibid. 93. 56. ibid. 94. 57. P.R. 98. 58. ibid. 99. 59. ibid. 100. 60. ibid. 104.
towards her through the imagery of the lisping child. The second is a glorification Atiyān's valour by way of explaining the truth about into the satellite king's who refuse (at their own peril) to pay the tributary ransom to him. The third poem is an appreciation of his bounteouness through the words of an artist (poruṇan).

There are two poems in Potuviyal (General setting), Kaiyaru Wilai Purai (Sereavement and Despair). On seeing his body that was being cremated, Avvaiyār says, whether his body is charred by the fire or goes untouched by the flames to the heavēn, the victories he won and the glories he earned shall never decay. Another poem is in the form of a reminiscence after his death about his bounteouness and simplicity and accessibility.

Thus Avvaiyār has eulogised Atiyānā in according to the literary traditions of the objective domain in very many ways.

Sensuous imagery in Avvaiyār's poetry: "If poetry is the incarnation of the spirit of a people, then the poetry of the ancient Tamas is only the form taken by their love of nature as a background for the manifestation of their own inner

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61. P.W. 92, 1.3. 64. ibid. 231.
62. ibid. 97. 65. ibid. 235.
63. ibid. 390.
feelings and passions. Every poem of the Caukas age has
the mind that observes and received and there is in their
works, of fuller and more accurate knowledge of nature than
in the literary works of the later periods. The pictures are
so accurate that it almost seems as if the poets were wakening
from flower to flower, from bird to bird and so on all the
while taking notes. So minute is the characterisation, so
exact each epithet in the representation of the various
colours, forms, sounds, odours and ways and growth and life
of the entire plant and animal kingdoms as well as their
habitations and sojourns. The poet feels the beauties and
influence of the tangible world mostly through the eye which
has the advantage of having the receptor, the retina, as a
part of the brain instead of being a separate thing connected
with the brain more or less remotely by a peripheral nerve as
in the case of the other senses. Next to the eye, the senses
of sound and smell have some prominence. The sense of taste
comes next and the least important is that of touch. 66
Tolkāppiyar says that,

"Kaṭṭunūṉ ceviyinum tittiti ṅuparum
uparuṭai māntark kallatu teriyin
nannayap porulko ḍeṅnarūṉ kurittē" 67

Imagery in poetry is an appeal to the senses through
words. Through the senses the emotions and intellect of the

Literature, p. 23.
67. T.L.K. Nci, s.97.
reader can be swiftly stirred, consequently poetry makes much use of imagery. This is not to say that all good poetry must contain imagery.

Imagery can be classified according to the sense to which they are directed: sound, sight (colour or shape images); taste; smell; touch (thermal or tactual images); movement (kinaesthetic image).

The tradition of Cañkam literature is, a-via the treatment of nature is obtain a fresh and first hand perception of nature and utilise that perception to record the themes of the subjective, and objective domains symbolically. Besides, these facts of life and descriptions were signified with similes from nature which they enjoyed abundantly with a voluptuous and sensitive delight.

Avvaiyar has described in her songs a number of natural scenes which constitute a sumptuous feast to our five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

Visual Imagery: By her powers of the evocation, Avvaiyar virtually brings before our eyes each natural scene she focuses on. In the setting of the seashore the petals of flowers gather and close, the shadows reach towards the east and the glowing sun sinks in the west, giving relief from his fierceness 69.

69. N.W. 187, 11.1, 2.
Another beautiful scene: The lightening flashes between the hills like the marigold flower on the trees on the hills which are capped with curbs of clouds.  

Avvaiyār's attention has been attracted also by the monkey that sits on a twig in the top of a tree hugging its young. The flowers of ilavam which appear without leaves and buds are in a beautiful circle like the lamps set by maids assembling happily in the Kartikai festival. Like the garland of a kūtalam, the white bird with green feet fluttered its wings and settled on the seashore. This is another beautiful scene. She assimilates the flowers in a garland to the sharp beak of the cuckoo. The moonlight is dim in the moments before dawn. Thus she brings before our eyes a number of beautiful scenes.

Auditory imagery: Avvaiyār describes a number of scenes and events which have an interesting sound element. The owl on the Remai tree raised its plaintive burden like the sound of the goldsmith's workshop. The car of the hero had a number of bells that mingled. The thunder roared so loud that the cobra trembled. The ringing of the dragon flies

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in the decadent tree sounds like the bells on the oxen of the salt vendors. The rumours about the heroine spread like the roars of the waterfalls descending from the top of high hills.

In order to satiate the hunger of its mate, the male tiger intently listens for the voice of the male deer with horns. As a result of intense heat the vākai seeds dry up. When the hot wind blows on it they jostle with a tripping sound. Thunder roars the cobra into death. The monsoon rain clouds raise a pleasing peals of thunder. The epithet 'pleasing' characterises the peals of thunder here because the heroine is expecting the return of the hero in the rainy season. Thus Avvaiyār brings to an ears many types of sounds - with power and realism.

Bodily imagery: Avvaiyār also describes a number of events and actions that make us feel them bodily. As the heroine has been imprisoned at home, her youthful beauty is spoiled, the vessel for today that had been fermenting for like too long. The heroine suffered the parting of the hero like one smitten by the Cobra. The hero goes to the wood.

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80. ibid. 303, 11. 12,13. 4,7. 84. ibid. 200, 11. 3,6.
81. ibid. 303, 11. 4,7. 147, 1.7. 85. W.N. 295, 11. 7,8.
82. K.T. 39, 1.2. 86. K.T. 43, 11. 4,5.
which is hot as an angry fire. As the winter breeze flows ceaselessly, the desire of the heroine that began in her breasts, was growing.

Thus Avvaiyar's poems are also a feast to the senses.

6. **Similes:**

In a simile items from different classes are explicitly compared by a connective such as 'like', 'as' or 'than' or by a verb such as 'appears' or 'seems'.

A simile is a subject of the poet's experience. The subject is a new discovery in the horizon of his mind. We may say he compares what is already there in his experience with the new discovery and announces the results of this comparison through a simile. Bringing home the theme through a proper object of comparison is the function of a simile. Tolkāppiār clarifies the features of a simile in the section on 'similes' in 'oruḻatikāram'. According to him simile means making clear the nature of the subject. Action, results, body, form - these are the qualities that are enhanced by the employment of similes'. This is the explanatory comment that he offers.

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57. A.7. 11, 1.2.
58. ibid. 273, 11.10,11.
60. R. Srinivasan, *Cankam Iłakkiyathil vumika\[*, p. 2.
"Action, results, body and form
Are the features to be enhanced by the use of similes."

'Kept like a tiger' is an action simile. It is an action simile because the phenomenon compared here is the activity of leaping (and not the person). 'Māriyānna Vaṅkai' (A generous hand like the rains) is a simile with references to result because it is the end product, the utility of the phenomena that are compared. In neither case is there an expectation for reciprocation. 'A body like a tender leaf' is a simile of form because it compares the complexion of the leaf and the skin. This is the interpretation given by Iḻampūṟaṇar.

Of all the literary ornaments adopted by Tamil poets of yore the simile has the pride of place. We are not far from the truth even if we say the simile is the one ornament that they adopted by and large. Pandits deem that the later literary embellishments are but off shoots of the simile. That is why Pulkāppiḷḷai has defined and dealt with simile only. This, however, does not mean that poets did not know of other ornaments. They found the simile was adequate for communicating their conceptions and experiences with beauty and clarity.

Avvaiyār too has utilised similes for bringing home the truths are sought to convey, to transmit the verbal paintings

91. P.L.K. Porul, Tamilkan, s. 272.
she visualised.

In Cankam literature, the number of similes adopted by Avvaiyar is about forty eight. In the rest of this section the similes found in Avvaiyar's poems are studied with reference to Tolkappiar's conception, definition and scheme of classification.

**Similes of action:** Two illustrations each from the subjective and the objective domains are given for similes of action.

The heroine laments the onset of the season of the year. Even after the season whereby he promised to return had set in, the hero had not arrived. I am alive in spite of this, how can I endure this prolonged agony of separation with a heart that is tender as the fresh leaf of the mango tree that vacillates in the wind and which is shaken at the roots by the baltering floods of the wild river". Thus as the activity of the tree is compared to the activity of the heroine. Hence it is called a simile of action.

A prostitute speaks sarcastically within the range of hearing of the companions of the heroine as follows: "She

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92. W.W. 381, 11.3-5.
thinks it is blameworthy on us that we go for game with the hero in the river garden. Hence, as the wealth (third) of Aföci is guarded in the battle front, let her guard her hero's powerful shoulders.\textsuperscript{93}

Even when Aföci was in power his son Pokuttalini had been assisting him like "a protective axis". When Aföci died he himself took over the administration. Avvaiyar beautifully records this as follows: "O, thou prince of a great crown, thou shinest like a protective axis, full of renown.\textsuperscript{94}

Once, one of the enemies of Atiyamö, met Avvaiyar and inquired of her "Are there knights good at battle?". She proudly replied:

There are young men like the Cobra
That fiercely rises,
Fearless in the face of fast flying staffs.\textsuperscript{95}

Besides these there are a number of other action similes

\textsuperscript{93} K.J. 80, 11.4-7.
\textsuperscript{94} P.W. 102, 11.5,6.
\textsuperscript{95} ibid. 89, 11. 5,9.
both in the subjective and the objective domains in the poems of Avvaiyār.

Similes of Result: On account of parting with the hero, the heroine's mind suffered like one that had been smitten by the Cobra. Here, the coma that results from snake-bite is compared to the state of mind of the heroine.

"The parting with the hero
Smite the heroine
Like a cobra." 98

The suppressed desires of the heroine for the hero and her fear of discovery resembles the fear of the people at night in the battlefield of Atci who has a hand as generous at the rains. 99

The eyes of Atiyaman which are red with rage even when he looks at his new born son after vanquishing his enemies resemble those of the elephant which is quivering in rage.

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96. V.W. 381, 11.2-10, 394, 11.2,3.
A.N. 303, 11.3,4.
11, 1.13.
147, 11.8,9.
303, 11.4,7.
303, 11.11-15.
303, 11.17,18.
303, 11.19,20.
K.T. 99, 11.4-6.
98. K.T. 45, 11.4,5.
99. Ibid. 91, 11.5-8.
after having fought with and vanquished the tiger.

"Like an angry elephant

Quivering in anger

After having conquered the tiger

He showed persisting signs of anger."

So describes Avvaiyar with an apt simile.

In order to bring out that the offer of prizes and gifts by Atiyaman to poets who come to his court and sing his glory is certainly Avvaiyar makes uses of a simile: "like the food that is on the tusks of the elephant is sure to be eaten by it." In addition there are a number of other similes in the poems of Avvaiyar.

Tightly Similes: For the shoulders of the hero which are like the wild bamboos of the woods, the shoulders of maids which resemble the finer species of bamboo pine. This is expressed in the line.

"Varai vey puraiyum narpol."

100. P.W. 100, 11, 7, 8.
102. ibid. 102, 11, 4-8.
103. "". 390, 1.e.
102. ibid. 87, 11.2-4.
ibid. 91, 11.5, 4.
ibid. 231, 11,8, 4.
ibid. 238, 11.18-20.
ibid. 290, 11. 7, 8.
K.R. 29, 11.2,1,2.
The heroine longs for the return of the hero who had promised to return by winter (though winter had come). The winter scene is described in the following lines:

"Pullan kāyāp pūkkelu pēruścinsai memmayil eruttir tōnrum." 104.

The Kāyām flowers flowered like the neck of the peacock at the onset of the winter.

While describing the flowers in the garlands worn by the knight during a pre-battle feast in a poem in the objective domain, she states "the garland of flowers that resemble the beak of the cuckoo." 105.

A number of such bodily similes are found in the poems of the subjective domain. 106.

**Similes of Form:** Similes of form are based on colour and complexion. While describing the path traversed by him after accomplishing his task the hero states:

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105. P.V. 209, 1.1.
106. K.V. 350, 1.9.
ibid. 350, 1.9.
K.T. 29, 1.2.
ibid. 163, 11.5–9.
A.V. 11.1.5.
ibid. 11,1.10.
"The flowering of the marigold in the back drop of the hills where the blue bell flowers abound resembles a golden lightening on the hills capped by dark clouds.\(^*\) "The hero who had parted", the heroine tells herself, "when he looks at the 'green' Kongri flowers, will remember that I will be 'green' with longing and love and so will return home soon."\(^1\)

"During the pre-battle feast wine that resembles the eyeballs of the tiger is toasted around" says Avvaiyar in one of the poems of the objective domain.\(^2\)

While describing Atiyam's bounteouness she says he would remove moss-like, dirty robes of the poets and offer golden coloured robes that were soft as flowers.

"Inverting them of dress that was dirty
As the moss in the stagnant water
and offering new robes that were
soft as flowers and golden in colour.\(^3\)

Like this a number of other similes of this type are found in the Cañam poems of Avvaiyar.\(^4\)

\(^{107}\) N.W. 371, 11.1,2.
\(^{108}\) K.T. 163, 11.1,2.
\(^{109}\) P.W. 269, 11.4.
\(^{110}\) ibid. 390, 11.14,13.
\(^{111}\) N.W. 359, 11.1,2.
K.T. 344, 1.1.
ibid. 23, 1.2.
ibid. 163, 11.4,7.
A.W. 147, 2,3.
ibid. 11, 1.2.
7. **Metaphor:**

A metaphor asserts the identity without a connective such as "like" or a verb such as "appears" of terms that are literally incompatible.\textsuperscript{112}

We must distinguish metaphor as the omnipresent principle of language (Richards) from the specifically poetic metaphor. Metaphor which has, had the attention of poetic theorists and rhetoricians since Aristotle, who was (both) has won large attention in recent years from linguistic theorists also Richards has protested vehemently against treating metaphor as deviation from normal linguistic practice instead of as its characteristic and indispensable resource. Of course difficult to classify probably the most important is that of metaphors common to a literary school or generation shared poetic metaphors.\textsuperscript{113}

The symbolical use of imagery reaches its zenith in metaphor, the most intense form, that imagery can take. Metaphor identifies two distinct objects and fuses them unforgettable in a white heat of imagination. So swiftly does it work, that it often finds expression in one word, and the

\textsuperscript{112} Sylvan Barnett, Norton Berman and William Burto

\textit{An introduction to Literature}, p. 334.

sense impression that it conveys is always subordinate to the emotional and intellectual associations that it is its business to arouse. The way in which metaphor is used is a major test of poetic ability. Only the greatest can handle it greatly. Great metaphors like poetry should surprise by a fire excess, and yet have the unmistakable ring of imaginative truth.\footnote{114}

Telkāppiar has not mentioned anything at all about metaphor in the section on poetic embellishments. However, his formula is given interpretation on two lines\footnote{115}. If the object of the theme compared is transformed into the very subject of comparison, it is called simile. This is the line of interpretation given by Iļampūraṇar. When the subject itself becomes the object—the reverse transformation, it is a metaphor which is also a species of simile. This is the line of interpretation chosen by Pērūsirirar\footnote{116}. Except these there are no other references about metaphors or parts there of anywhere in Telkāppiam. This is the conclusion reached by R. Srinivasan\footnote{117}.

If the difference between the subject and the object of comparison are eliminated and they are integrated it becomes

a metaphor - this is the idea explicated by Tanti Āsiriyar. In simile the object pole of the comparison has an autonomous status and function. In metaphor the subject and the object and the object poles of comparison are integrated into a single image. Similes sometimes become metaphors when the subject pole is not explicitly given. Due to traditions simple similes become metaphors. Metaphors are more powerful than similes. "ākā" and "ākile" are the prepositions of metaphor.

Metaphor in the poems of Avvaiyār: There are not many metaphors in Avvaiyār's poems. But the few that are there are excellent.

"Tolmāttālattu" is considered to be a metaphorical expression embodying the image of an old banyan tree. "Pulam Kantu Ākā" one's intelligence becoming the prop and stay. "Orahkuiraitēr koṭpinavāki" having searched where the blade of paddy grows and is transformed - are metaphorical expressions. A poem of Avvaiyār in the subjective domain exemplifies her poetic talents by being full of metaphors throughout. Prof. Va. Supa Manickam says there is no other poem in the literature of the subjective domain which is so rich in metaphors.

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118. Tanti, s.36.
119. K. Srinivasa, Āvaiyār: Ilakkiattil Ilamaiakai, p. 82.
120. K.T. 15,1.2.
121. A.V. 303, 1.8.
122. Ibid. 303, 1.13.
123. Dr. V.S. Manikkan, Tamilkātal, p.237.
The tender seeding of desire grew in the breast with the winter breeze, lengthened into a long stem of sadness in the chest, flourished with beautiful branches on the dais provided by the community, spread the tender leaves of love around, grew into a big, shameless tree, enveloped in its shade all the boundaries of the field and showered the flowers of rumour; still the hero has not come.  

In a poem of 'Puranānūru' "tulittōlan" that is one who has perforated shield because of frequent piercing by the arrow, 'ṣemal mūtūr', the tall intertwined stems of the paddy plants bear the grain of paddy all over the place', 'tūmaic oil ōti'.

8. Imagery:

In general, the term imagery refers to the use of language to represent descriptively things, actions, or even abstract ideas. This word, however has been so widely used by recent critics that it can not be said to have a single agreed upon meaning. In its most common use, imagery suggests visual pictures though many critics insist that words denoting other sensory experiences are properly speaking, images.

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125. P.N. 97, 1.16.
126. P.N. 97, 1.18.
127. Ibid. 97, 1.23.
In accordance with the aforesaid definition Avvaiyār upholds a number of beautiful scenes in description. The phrase 'uraiphuli ālai',\textsuperscript{128} brings before our eyes the scene of a man being shielded from the showers of rain by palmyra leaves; \textsuperscript{129} suggests kittens with curved nails from which the covering muscles have not been removed.

In short imagery serves as the vehicle for the imaginative thought, the aesthetic experience, which the writer attempts to communicate\textsuperscript{130}.

Avvaiyār has enriched her poems with imaginative ideas and the essential trusts of experience. In order to bring home that the offer of prizes and gifts by Atiyamān is an undoubted certainty she utilises the imaginative idea of the food held on the tusks by the elephant\textsuperscript{131}. She also directly and succinctly expresses the truth that the welfare of a nation depends upon its menfolk: 'avvali nallavar āṭavar avvali nallai vājia nilanē\textsuperscript{132}.

We must be clear first of all that imagery, diction and versification alike are expressions of the way in which a poet conceives his theme\textsuperscript{133}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{128} P.W. 290, l.7.  \\
\textsuperscript{129} A.W. 147, l.3.  \\
\textsuperscript{130} Karl Rockson & Arthur Gans, A readers guide to Literary Tamil, p. 93.  \\
\textsuperscript{131} Røyen N.E. The Criticism of poetry, p.  \\
\textsuperscript{132} P.W. 101, l.7.8.
\end{flushleft}
If we study the ideas of Rolkappiar in this regard we may take it that the nature of simile is but the nature of imagination. Even though the sensory images pertaining to all the five senses also indicate the fertility of imagination, the reason for this (study) is that it must be approached from the perspective of Western scholars too.

C.T. Winchester, an English literary critic, classifies imagination into three types: creative imagination, associative imagination, and interpretative imagination. In the Thantham poems of Avvaiyar manifestations of each of these types of imagination are found in some poems.

Creative imagination: "Creative imagination spontaneously selects from among the elements given by experience and combines them into new wholes. If this combination be arbitrary or irrational, the faculty is called fancy."134.

A poem in ‘kuruntokai’ is in the form of a response of a hero who had been denied the night (iravukkuri) signal for love. Like water kept in a mud pot that had not been dried and hardened in fire, all my desires had gone waste. "May you embrace on one who fulfills your wishes, like a monkey on the top twig of a tree hugs its young."135. In this poem the

scenes of water dissolving an unheated mudpot and a monkey
on the top branch of a tree hugging its young have been the
cause of these new creations. Hence these are instances of
creative imagination. Another instance: A poem in 'puramāṇa
is in the form of inspiring Atiyambū to set out on war. "If
the tiger is roused, there is no flock of deer that can stand
against it; if the sun is roused, darkness cannot stand; there
is no room for vain haughtiness. Similarly if you enter the
battle field there is no one to stand up against you" - says
Avvaiyar.136.

In order to explain the glory of Atiyambū she has
gathered images of all these events and woven them into a
new creation. There are some more instances of this type
of imagination.137

Assessive imagination: The perception of events in the
outer world stir up the feelings dormant in the inner heart.
However, we may say that mostly the changes in the inner states
of being stir such feelings. Therefore, for sparking the flame
of imagination the inner experiences stored in the depths of
the heart act as catalysts. This type of imagination is called
'associative imagination' by Winchester.138

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134. P.W. 80.
137. ibid. 290, 11.7-8.
A.W. 273.
138. C.T. Winchester, Some Principles of Literary Criticis,
p. 127.
Two of the poems of Avvaiyar can be taken under associative imagination. Atiyamani offers her the emliche myrobalan fruit to Avvaiyar because he wanted her to live long. This action of his immersed Avvaiyar in an ocean of joy. She thinks that virtually Atiyamani had offered his own life for her. She wants to announce in a proper way this sacrifice of Atiyamani for her. This action of Atiyamani reminds her of Lord Siva who swallowed the venom that turned out first, without making the devas take it, when the 'tiruppappangat' was churned. (Thus Siva took the burden of and prospect of death on himself and protected the devas). Spontaneously she assimilates the action of the mortal Atiyamani to that of Lord Siva in the poem \(^\text{139}\). This is considered as an instance of associative imagination.

On account of the overflowing love she has for him, she babblers when she sings about him. She tries to explain the love that Atiyamani has towards her. Though she was a simple poet the love he bore for her was great. This reminds her of the joy of the father at the lisping words, the sweet nothings this child. Just like that, whatever she may sing, it delights Atiyamani\(^\text{140}\). Thus she gives expression to her idea through the lispings of the child. The idea of a lisping child had been there only in her mind at the time of composing this poem.

\(^\text{139}\). P.Y. 91, 11.5,6.

\(^\text{140}\). ibid. 92.
and not out there in the physical world. Hence this is also an instance of associative imagination. A few more instances of associative imagination are there among her poems.

Interpretative Imagination: If the poet gives expressions to only the feelings and emotions that stir in his mind when he perceives a natural scene or event, without bringing the scene or event directly in the text of the poem, such a treatment may be called an instance of interpretative imagination. Winchester explains interpretative imagination as follows:

The interpretative imagination perceives spiritual value of significance, and renders objects by presenting those parts or qualities in which spiritual value resides. It is only such imagination that adds genuine feeling to the poem. Poetic geniuses do not describe in minute details all the scenes and events they perceive. Their attention will be on communication rather than description.

The poems of Avvaiyar which may be taken as instances of interpretative imagination are studied here:

Rain with strong winds is an event of nature. But when the hero does not reach home on account of this rain it appears in the mind of the heroine in many ways. "Even though

   ibid. 91, 11.3,6.

142. C.T. Winchester, Some Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 130.
this rain is powerful enough to shake the Himalayas somehow it is angry with me and troubles me. How cruel is your act?" Complains the heroine 143. Thus the natural event of rain is treated here as increasing the despair of the heroine.

When we see a carpenter at working axing down a tree the scene suggests to us no more truth than what it contains. But Avvaiyar expresses a rare idea through this scene. If a carpenter who has the necessary will and the skill enters a forest with his axe, he can earn his livelihood on any spot. Similarly the learned can live wherever they go. Thus she expresses a new idea through a common place scene. 144

Thus instances for all the three types of imagination are found in the poems of Avvaiyar.

**Literary ornaments/Embellishments:** Some of the literary ornaments that have been conceptualised and labelled only in later periods beautify Avvaiyar's poems. When the hero embarks on a journey for earning money, the heroine also rests out with him. When he comes to know of this, he seeks to prevent her by describing to her the hardships of the desert tract he would be crossing in the course of his journey. But, the comparison of the heroine states that the heroine was capable of enduring those hardships.

143. K.T. 158.
144. P.W. 209.
Even when hot winds blow, the water lily will never dry up and die. Similarly, even the hot desert will be sweet for the heroine when she is accompanying you. Here, in order to explain one activity, another event is given as an example. This is called "Exemplifying Simile" - "Ettuttukāṭṭu 'Narmā ani".

Toñtaimān takes Avvaiyār, who came to him on a mission of peace, to his armory. There all types of arms are beautifully arranged and kept in order. On seeing them Avvaiyār tells him: "Your arms are well oiled, decorated and are kept in a well-guarded palace. But Ațiyāmān's arms, because he goes to battle frequently, are blunted, twisted and broken; they are found in the workshop of the blacksmith." Here, Avvaiyār apparently praises Toñtaimān's arms but really she is mocking at him; on the other hand, though she is condemning the condition of Ațiyāmān's arms, she is indirectly glorifying him. This is called 'Vaṅcappukācci ani' (satirical eulogy).

9. Suggestion:

Beyond the sense and the sound of words, the ideas, feelings, impulses that they evoke are considered by the artist, who seeks to choose and to use words with an eye also

145. K.T. 398, 11. 1,2.
146. P.W. 95.
to their effects in combination so that they will enriched beyond their meaning with whatever may serve his purpose. He will regard not only their usual connotations but their special literary associations also any linkage that may be in the minds of the particular receptors for whom the work is intended. He may leave such suggestions for the receptor to discern or point them with allusion or reference. In many works, through figure or pervasive symbolism or allegory the most important element is the suggestion legory symbol figure" 147.

Imagery is used to move emotion. To do this, it employs two different methods, description and symbolizing. Of course many imagery make use of both methods, but such a distinction can be made and is useful when we are trying to deepen our understanding of imagery" 148.

Suggestion has been classified into five types. They are: 'ţanurai' (parallel meaning), 'ţvamam' (simile), 'ţutu' (reference), 'ţakai' (ornament) and 'ţirappu' (significance).

The significance of such similarities (and suggestions) are obtained on the basis of the nature of action, results, body, form and genesis 149. Suggestive poems are in the forms of

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149. T.L.K. Poruliyal, s. 233.
150. T.L.K. Ūvamairial, s. 299.
monologues of human beings. Hence they conform in 'Inituru Kidavi' and 'Ippiyuru Kidavi'. Suggestion is a great aid in determining 'tipai' (the setting). All objects excluding divinities may constitute the referents of suggestion. Suggestion must be attuned to and agreeable with the referent. This is the definition and explanation of 'Suggestion' given by Tolkappiar.

'Suggestion' in the Cankam poems of Avvaiyar: Many of the Cankam poets have embellished their poems with suggestive similes. Avvaiyar is no exception. She has composed many poems that touch our hearts through their suggestive significance.

A poem in Varrinai is in the form of a suggestive statement about a prostitute:

"As the valai fish jumped and played in the water
The sea-dog would sleep on unmindful of its prey."

That is, without thinking of utilising the fish in the pond as its prey the sea-dog (nir-nay) sleeps on. Similarly, at the festival site a prostitute turns up. Without realising

151. T.L.K. 'Vamaiyal, s. 301.
152. T.L.K. Akattipaical, s. 49.
153. ibid. s. 50.
154. ibid. s. 51.
that her hero would be attracted by her beauty and go away to her, without chiding the prostitute away, the heroine sat innocently at home. Thus the suggestive statement refers to the prostitute. The sea-dog stands for the heroine and the fish for the prostitute.

Unable to endure the separation from the hero, the heroine wails about the path on which the hero set out:

"Ventiran katuvali poikkap ponpet
Veppuvilai uliseil varral erkum
Malaivuvali aruicurum .......156.

As hot air blow in waves, in the heat the 'vākai' seeds dry up and raise a jostling noise. The hero went on such a hot tract. This is the manifest content. But the latent content is as follows: because of separation from the hero her breath comes out like hot air. As a result of this her body is hot, lustreless and run down. Her lean body is oscillating in her own hot breath. This is the latent content of the poem.

When the hero who part ed with the heroine for prostitutes returns, the heroine tells her heart but within the reach of the heroes ears.

The fruits of the cane (which have stripes on them) on the turning plant are snatched and swallowed by the carp fish

in the water. The hero belongs to such a place.\footnote{157}

The fish that lives in water does not take its food from water but from the land. This is the manifest content. But the suggestion latent content is: the hero who is born in a noble family seeks prostitutes who are from low families instead of enjoying his wife who is from a noble family.

'When one prostitute comes to know that another prostitute spoke ill of her in her absence she speaks as follows in the presence of the friends of the former.\footnote{156}

'The hero belongs to the place where the sea-dog which has a striped back like the fruit of the cane has 'vālai' fishes for its food.'\footnote{156}

As the sea-dog would wander as it pleases and prey when the 'vālai' fish, the hero also cohabits with this prostitute of his own accord out of his love/lust for her.

The 'vālai' fish is the best among the fishes. Similarly the prostitute who speaks like this is the best among those around. This is the suggested content. The prostitute in the outskirts of the village of a still lowlier origin and quality blames that the prostitute within the village had intercepted the hero. The poem implies that the latter did not go out of her way and intercept the hero but the hero

\footnote{157. K.T. 91, 11. 1-3.}
\footnote{158. ibid. 364, 11. 1-2.}
came to her of his own accord due to his own preference for her.

**Multiple level of meaning:** (Iraiñci) Each layer of the multiple levels of meaning is of course derived only from the nuclear theme. Just as a number of waves ripple from the spot when a stone had been thrown into a surface of water, in poems also multiple waves of interpretation arise.

This concept has been explained by Tolkçppiar. There are meanings that transcend the semantic content of the given text. Such meanings are marginal and those who perceive such meanings, it is evident, are small in number.

If simile is given leading position and significance, it is taken as latent (suggestive) simile. On the other hand if the referents are given primacy and significance they are taken as levels of meaning.

In the poems by Avvaiyar in the subjective domain such multiple levels of meaning are seldom, if ever, found.

The heroine regrets the delay in the return of the hero who had promised to return by winter.

The thinks of the winter scenes he would come across on his way. He would perceive the 'green' petals of the 'Konrai'.

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159. T.L.K. Poruçiyal, s. 228.
140. ibid. s. 34.
161. R. Srinivasan, [Sanka Ilakkivattil Urwaiñiñal], p. 230.
flower as also the male deer separated from the female.\textsuperscript{162}

The latent content is that the hero who comes across such scenes would remember that the heroine would be 'green' with love and appreciate to some extent, her sufferings in this regard. Hence the heroine expects him to return soon. This is a layer of meaning beneath the semantic content.

In another poem the heroine is ruminating on the path on which the hero set out.

"Turukan vițaralai pînâvuppai kûrntenap
Porîkilâr uluvaip pîlvai ërrrai
Arûkoştû ulaisîn ânkural ërkkum.\textsuperscript{163}

**Interpretation:** As the tired female tiger is hungry the male tiger, with a wide open mouth, would intently listen for the voice of the male deer with horns. So, even in the single there is love between the male and the female. But the hero who has parted as not yet returned to me for love-making. This is the latent meaning.

**Conclusion:** Of all the Avvaiyâr's who have found a place in the history of Tamil literature, the one who deserve the pride of place by virtue of her poetic genius, poers of

\textsuperscript{162} K.T. 183, II. 1-4.
\textsuperscript{163} A.M. 147, II. 5-7.
expression, refinement of imagination, portrayal of fine feelings and wealth of ideas is the Cankam Avvaiyar. She is the one who evokes the image of a princess of poetry in the minds of the people at the pronunciation of the word 'Avvai'. In this chapter she has been studied from many points of view. The poetic themes in her works, her powerful expression of the same and her literary dexterity have been sought to be outlined here.