Desiring Love, Desiring Freedom: A Close Study of Tamil Romances

Divya KB

Abstract

This article analyses two texts, *Maane Maane Maane* (1986) and *Naan* (1987) by Tamil authors Ramanichandran and Vidya Subramaniam respectively, to assess how the Tamil romance genre uses narratives of desire to speak of female agency and autonomy. It traces the history of female subjectivity of the Tamil woman as her image became co-opted in the imagining of the postcolonial Tamil state, limiting their roles to wives, mothers, and daughters. This article seeks to examine how Tamil romances written by female authors utilized the concepts of romantic love and pleasure to speak of pursuits larger than companionship. Through a close reading of the aforementioned texts supplemented by scholarship on twentieth century Tamil print journalism and cinema, this article attempts to highlight the romance form's ability to subvert and challenge the norm from within. Thus, this article intends to show how Tamil romances build on the complex articulations of desire to develop a nuanced critique of female subjectivity in postcolonial Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Tamil; Romance; Desire; Women; Subjectivity

Introduction

In her study of the romance novel titled *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction* (2014), Jayashree Kamblé summarizes that the scholarship on romance fiction is torn between two extremes. One commends the form as an aspirational medium while the other condemns it as formulaic and aligning with oppressive ideologies (Kamblé 2). The juxtaposition of positive representation of female pleasure with the importance conferred on marriage, a patriarchal institution, has divided scholarship on the feminist potential of romance fiction. To read romance fiction as a subversive form has been further complicated by how the scenes depicting female pleasure tend to reinforce the subject-object dynamic between the male and female characters. However,

it still emerges as an important form to study due to its position as a cultural object that reflects and reworks gender relations.

In India, scholarship on contemporary romance fiction is relatively new and few, with a large majority focusing on Indian English romance fiction as well as imported Mills and Boons (Singh and Uberoi 115) (Parameswaran 837-48). There has been negligible critical attention given to regional romances, especially those produced post-independence. In Tamil scholarship, there has been a disproportionate focus on Sangam literature which contains texts codifying aspects of romance and courtship. Contemporary Tamil romances are considered pulp fiction which has only recently come under academic review. These romances prove to be a compelling area for research due to their conspicuous aversion to sex and intimacy. They emerge in stark contrast to their western inspirations of Mills and Boons fame or even their Indian English counterparts. Thus, their large and steady readership raises questions as to the genre's allure.

Usually revolving around unmarried, educated, working women, Tamil romances focus on their interpersonal relationships with the opposite sex across family, friends, and coworkers. While desire frequently occurs as a topic of discussion, it is pinned by cultural anxieties surrounding chastity, grounded in Tamil history. These discussions on desire surpass sexual desire as they speak to concerns of female agency and autonomy amidst gendered societal restrictions. Traditionally such concerns were washed over by the postcolonial Tamil state's preoccupation with female sexuality. This preoccupation was strengthened by the historical emphasis on *karpu* or female chastity. As it was envisioned with the virtuous Tamil woman at the centre, it bound her to filial and social duties. However, these duties were also affected and transformed by various political movements that engaged with female agency as well as education and mass employment. Thus, female desire became a complicated terrain fraught with cultural constraints in twentieth century Tamil Nadu.

Modern Tamil romances not only reflect these constraints but also take the form to explore questions of female agency and gender relations through the concept of desire. This article contends that Tamil romances written by female authors utilized desire as a device to speak of pursuits larger than companionship. Through a close reading of works by Ramanichandran and Vidya Subramaniam, it analyzes how through the concepts of *katal* (romantic

love) and pleasure, Tamil romances sought to reconfigure gender relations with an emphasis on individuation. It attempts to do so through a close reading of *Maane Maane Maane* (1986) and *Naan* (1987) by Ramanichandran and Vidya Subramaniam respectively. In these texts, through education and employment, women, distanced from their families and filial obligations, become encouraged to explore their purpose and identities under the guise of burgeoning romance. The analysis will be supplemented by the highly publicised discourse on gender and desire in print journalism and cinema of twentieth century Tamil Nadu. Ultimately this article intends to demonstrate how Tamil romances build on the complex articulations of desire to develop a nuanced critique of female subjectivity in post-colonial Tamil Nadu.

The Novel and Its Women

In her book *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987), Nancy Armstrong had famously asserted that "the modern individual was first and foremost a woman" (8). She argues that the domestic novel, in separating itself from the realm of men and politics, created a new political system with the woman at centre. As the novel disassociated itself from aristocratic powers, it shaped itself for the middle class, particularly through its female characters and their choices pertaining sex and marriage. Through her survey of writers such as Samuel Richardson and Jane Austen, Armstrong illustrates how women were depicted as central to maintaining the social order. The novel, in delving deep into the emotions and decisions of women, made "subjectivity a female domain" (Armstrong 12). As the male and female characters became differentiated primarily by their thoughts, the novel transformed itself to "form the masculine and feminine spheres that characterise modern culture" (Armstrong 22). In order to speak of the society and social relationships, the domestic novel became governed by the discourse on gender, particularly as to what constituted the ideal woman. Here, she asserts that "the modern, gendered form of subjectivity developed first as feminine discourse" through the proliferation of literature, primarily domestic fiction and conduct books. She comments:

> …narratives which seemed to be concerned solely with matters of courtship and marriage in fact seized the authority

> to say what was female, and that they did so in order to contest the reigning notion of kinship relations that attached most power and privilege to certain family lines. (Armstrong 12)

According to Armstrong, defining femininity was a crucial step to demarcate the working classes from the middle class, giving rise to social reformers who could 'guide' the working classes into civil society, successfully quashing any chances of political resistance. However, the more domestic novels attempted to define and represent 'ideal' femininity, the more they exposed it as not natural but rather constructed. Thus, she establishes that domestic novels did not merely reflect society but actively shaped society, especially society's relationship with women.

In colonial India, the novel form was embroiled in complicated cultural contestations from its beginning. Its history as an imported form has been challenged by numerous scholars who have proposed alternate, nuanced understandings of the interaction between the western novel and the Indian prose forms. Sascha Ebeling comments that the earliest Tamil novel:

> emerged as sites of dialogues between tradition and modernity, reality and imagination, didacticism and entertainment, the self and the colonial other, the written and the spoken word, and Tamil and English… the novel was not simply "imported" from English into Tamil literature, …and that it was not a mere "response to a Western impact." (206)

However, it was clear that the Tamil novel was seen as a new medium full of possibilities as its early names *naveenam* and *puthinam*, all suggested newness and novelty. The early Tamil novelists considered the novel both a fertile medium as well as the defense against western critiques of Tamil literature. Many of them were products of Missionary education and worked in the colonial administration, including the author of the first Tamil novel, Mayuram Vedanayakam Pillai. Sita Anantha Raman argues that the authors of the early Tamil novels were "brahman or vellala (upper-caste) men who used fiction to challenge women's unequal access to education and the ritually sanctified customs constraining women's sexual lives" (94). However, their focus on women's welfare also revealed a disillusionment with traditional institutions

such as marriage. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes that the English novel's attempt to redefine gender relations strongly resonated with the educated, upper-class Indians. She notes that:

> In depicting the man-woman relationship each major Indian writer attempted in his own way to reconcile the demands of the novel with its emphasis on self-determination for the individual with the intransigence of contemporary social reality. (Mukherjee 69)

Marriage thus emerged as an important concept through which the early Indian novelists could not only explore gender relations but also subjectivity. One of the early concerns in the first Tamil novel *Pratapa Mudaliar Charithram* (1879) is the protagonist Pratapa's marriage. When their families oppose their marriage, Pratapa writes to his childhood friend and lover Gnanambal, asking her to elope with him. Her reply reflects conflicted emotions:

> I was greatly saddened by your letter. The likes of which one would hesitate to address even to a prostitute. What impropriety did you notice in my behaviour that made you write to me thus? But should parents ignore the feelings of their children who are of an age to know their mind and proceed as if with cattle in an auction, the right to reject such marriage proposals rests with the children (60-61).

There's a clear gendering of emotions here as Pratapa considered his elopement plan to be a rational and justified move in the face of filial opposition whereas Gnanambal's plea reads as melodramatic. This is understandable considering how women were bestowed with the duty of upholding traditional values. However, Gnanambal also voices her disapproval of arranged marriages, allowing Pratapa (and the reader) to hope for change. Later Pratapa rescues Gnanambal when she gets abducted, following which her father finally permits their marriage. Throughout this Gnanambal exercises great discipline while yearning for Pratapa. While in love with him, she holds on to her father's words and almost marries someone else. Mukherjee had argued that women became "a site for the contestation between traditional norms and modernity" in the early Indian novel (xiv). This is reflected in Gnanambal's characterisation

as she was educated and critical of oppressive traditions but conformed nonetheless. The role of rejecting oppressive traditions lay within the male protagonist who was often modelled on the social reformer or reform-oriented writer.

The Woman and the Nation

C.S. Lakshmi observes that the Tamil nationalist movement of the twentieth century had intrinsically tied the image of the woman to the Tamil state, limiting their roles to mothers, daughters and wives. As a result, she comments that "how a woman generates life, how she dresses, how she lives, what she reads – what she does with her body – become the most crucial issues of debate" (Lakshmi 2954). Women, thus, began to occupy an integral part of Tamil print journalism and cinema in the twentieth century. However, they largely figured in terms of the cultural anxieties they presented in a newly independent state.

For instance, in an essay titled *A good woman, a very good woman: Tamil cinema's women* (2008), Lakshmi elucidates how the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the face of Dravidian politics, co-opted cinema as the "vehicle for projecting its identity, political claims and elaboration of Tamil culture" (17). Here she notes the attempts of early Tamil cinema in erasing the factual presence of women in public spaces, especially their participation in revolts related to the Anti-Hindi agitation and the Self-Respect movement. Instead, it worked towards reinstating a vision of the world where women and their chastity was always at risk, encouraging them to stay within the folds of domestic security (Lakshmi, *A good woman* 21-22). Popular cinema sought to reinforce the sexual vulnerability of women through active demonisation of the public sphere, aligning with cultural calls for restricting women's freedoms.

Meanwhile, popular journals contributed heavily to the objectification of women as recorded by Gita Wolf. Analysing textual and paratextual elements of popular periodicals, she cogently notes that they:

> gratify, in a crude and often perverse fashion, male fantasies and projections of female sexuality; and secondly, they also project, on their large female readership, continually limiting traditional versions of women's notions of themselves and their possibilities (Wolf WS-71)

Wolf further notes how these periodicals condemned working women and financial independence, with narratives situating happy endings within a return to tradition. Through its largely negative focus on women's sexuality, popular media provided little room for agential narratives for women.

Meanwhile, political outfits and their affiliated journals recognized sexuality as a productive topic for their ideological means. This was particularly visible in the Dravidian journals associated with the Self-Respect movement. E.V. Periyar, the leader of the Self-Respect movement, contested traditional Hindu Brahmanic family values through his prolonged critique of women's exploitation. Sarah Hodges notes that he located the performance of the Self-Respect philosophy in women and their conjugal lives. Starting with de-ritualised marriages, promotion of widow remarriage and the eschewal of insignia of married women such as *tali* and *bindi*, he called for companionate marriages and family planning that prioritised the woman's health and recognised her as an autonomous individual (Hodges 258-273). In this light, one of Periyar's greatest contributions was his location of sex within individual pleasure, outside of family planning and cultural restrictions (Hodges 270-274) (Sreenivas, *Reproductive Politics* 87-88).

On the other hand, women's magazines influenced by the rise of the Dravidian and the Nationalist movement as well as the establishment of women's organizations were greatly concerned with the institution of marriage. Mytheli Sreenivas in her study of women's magazines published from 1890-1940 records how some texts explicitly politicized marriage, situating it in the larger debate on women's oppression. While most texts focused on the concept of appropriate domesticity that prepared women to be "suitable partners for their newly urbanized and western educated husbands" (Sreenivas, Emotion 64); Sreenivas argues that they also argued for society to transform to meet the conjugal couple's emotional needs, partly alleviating the responsibility placed on the wives. These magazines wished to displace marriage from its social and economic contexts and located it within emotion and *katal* (romantic love) to not only view the husband and wife as equals but also to prioritise conjugal happiness (Sreenivas, Emotion 75-77). *Katal* not only became a means to reform marriage but also emphasised female autonomy as it mandated that women chose their paths (and husbands). Ideas surrounding *katal* were also

linked to the theme of companionate marriages that were popularized in the early Tamil novels. Within this context, women's magazines and romance novels emerged as an alternative medium that sought to view women outside of their sexual vulnerability, focusing on their emotional needs.

Within the diverse narratives surrounding female sexuality as espoused by popular media and political journalism emerged complicated notions of female subjectivity that grappled with the changing boundaries of women's cultural freedoms. They revealed a recognition and anxiety around women's growing autonomy, particularly through their education and employment that translated into unrestricted movement within the public sphere. These changes meant new opportunities for interactions between the sexes outside of filial control and cultural restrictions, especially in urban areas. Tamil romances juxtaposed these legitimate fears with generic tropes and cliches, creating a diverse range of stories exploring women's desires under a patriarchal economy.

Of Love and Pleasure

Ramanichandran's novel *Maane Maane Maane* (1986) begins with the protagonist Udhaya's decision to go to Chennai for work despite the opposition at home. While this decision is rooted in concern for her family's finances, Udhaya's experience in Chennai opens her up to new experiences that challenge her conservative worldviews. Her disciplined, sober lifestyle is constantly challenged by her boss Gauthaman, who is foreign-educated, smooth-talking, and liberal. The duo soon find pleasure in debating their contrasting views regarding culture, tradition, romance, and relationships. Chennai being a metropolis, also exposes Udhaya to people participating in casual sex, dating, and live-in relationships. Gauthaman remains a steady influence as he guides her through these experiences, rationalising them and encourages her to live life on her own terms. For instance, when Udhaya discovers that her friend Anitha is in a live-in relationship with her lover, her immediate reaction is disgust. However, Gauthaman helps her recognize the sincerity of the duo's feelings despite their premarital intimacy. While Udhaya is heavily repulsed by Gauthaman's attitudes towards love and desire, he inspires her to acknowledge her personal feelings from her cultural learnings. This is best seen in her decision to break off her impending marriage to her childhood friend Pasupathy. While

she remains faithful to him as she was 'promised to him' by her family, his frequent dismissal of her job, and in extension her independent lifestyle forces her to rethink their engagement. Gauthaman encourages her to put herself first, inspiring her to discover herself outside of her filial duties. Gauthaman is ultimately proven right as Udhaya's family eventually disregard her sacrifices and accuse her of engaging in prostitution and casual sex. Thinking back on her life of severe abstinence she bemoans to Gauthaman:

> Do I have an iron heart that I just watched Anitha and Sadanand [fall in love] and then I saw you? Do I have a body that lacks feelings? Discipline, tradition, family; I exercised caution in every aspect of my life. Finally, I am the one who created a scene? Body…Body…Body…What is this word? This prick...what does this mean Gauthaman? (Ramanichandran 202)

Recollecting how everyone else around her acted as per their desires, a broken Udhaya throws herself onto Gauthaman, deciding to give up on her life of propriety. However, Gauthaman, finally convinced of his love for her, proposes marriage instead. Meanwhile her stepmother Abhirami brings the police, accusing Udhaya of prostitution. By then, Gauthaman and Udhaya have married, much to Abhirami's dismay. It is then revealed that Udhaya's father was not as ill as she thought and that Abhirami was hoping to permanently ruin Udhaya's reputation to retain her as their primary breadwinner. This series of events helps Udhaya to break away from her family as she prepares herself to start anew with now husband, Gauthaman.

Udhaya's story reflects the impact of employment and education on women as they were able to break free from their restrictive homes. However, the emphasis on female propriety cannot be overlooked. It is through Gauthaman, the worldly, progressive male hero's guidance and acceptance that Udhaya's quest for agency becomes legitimate. The title *Maane Maane Maane* (Translated to Deer, Deer, Deer) too alludes to this as Udhaya is referred to as an innocent deer who can be directed to the right path. Gauthaman's acceptance of Udhaya is positioned as the reward for her sexual abstinence which is verified through the various 'tests' he imposes on her, some of which prove to be quite dangerous. As with standard romances, the

story culminates into a marriage. While it would be wrong to assume the Tamil romance as a feminist narrative, its romance arc provides its female characters the means to recognise their oppression and strive for their agency.

However, *Naan* (1987) (Translated to 'Me'), the short story written by Vidya Subramaniam could be considered a feminist narrative. Fittingly some readers and translators choose to read it as a 'working woman' tale and not a romance. From the beginning, it sets itself apart from other Tamil romances through its limited cast of two characters and lengthy dialogues. The story revolves around an unnamed narrator who is confronted by her mother regarding her promiscuous lifestyle. In the form of a first-person narrative, the story presents the contrasting perspectives of mother and daughter as they argue about marriage and sexual pleasure.

The narrator's mother chastises her, claiming that she is unable to keep her head held high due to her actions. However, the narrator retorts whether the mother was able to keep her head high with the eldest daughter unmarried. It is then revealed that the narrator, the eldest daughter, had taken on her father's job after he died. Laden with both financial responsibilities as well as the filial duties of getting her younger sisters married off, the narrator misses her chance to get married. She then accuses her mother of intentionally disrupting her chances of marriage in order to retain her as their primary breadwinner. The mother deflects the argument to the person the narrator is involved with. When her mother asks her whether she married him, the narrator calmly replies that she has only slept with him. When the mother, incensed, berates her, she retorts:

> Is it my fate or a curse that I have to live with a darkened future to ensure that yours is filled with three meals a day and two new sarees a year; that I have to live as a virgin experiencing no pleasure? (Subramaniam 3)

She further justifies herself that she views marriage as purely a license which she deems unnecessary. When her mother continues to berate her, calling her a sinner, the narrator demonstrates how marriage would not be a feasible option as that would entail her leaving the former. She asserts, "I am not some god who can sacrifice her petty desires for your greed. I am just an ordinary

human being" (Subramaniam 4). She also argues that her mother has no say in the matter as she has nowhere else to go and should respect her decision. She finally concludes:

> Even if you cannot witness a wedding, rejoice that your daughter is with the man she loves. If you truly birthed me with difficulty in ten months, then find it in your heart to bless me. (Subramaniam 4)

In this tale, the narrator, emboldened by her status as the primary breadwinner, asserts her right to seek pleasure, even if it means to deviate from societal convention. However, she also argues for her case that she has fulfilled her duties and more. The narrator's case proves to be a unique one as she performs the duties of her late father but yearns for what is rightfully hers as a woman i.e., a happy marriage. As her mother failed in arranging a marriage for her, the narrator sought a partner who understands her and her commitments towards her family.

It must be noted that an active career and financial independence are clearly established as the means through which both protagonists can not only move unrestricted but also build the resolve to resist their family's controlling demands. Although Udhaya is emotionally dependent on her family's approval of her lifestyle, her position as the breadwinner enables her to reject an unsuitable marriage match, Pasupathy. It is after this rejection that she decides to seriously think about her feelings for Gauthaman. In pitting Pasupathy's conservatism against Gauthaman's progressive attitude, the novel also establishes Udhaya's future with the latter as liberatory. Meanwhile, the protagonist in *Naan* appears to have even more agency through her unconventional romance outside of the constraints of marriage. While female writers of the fifties saw the emergence of working women as the price to be paid for progress (Lakshmi, Tradition), writers such as Ramanichandran and Vidya Subramaniam saw the working women trope as a means through which they could explore the binds of tradition and modernity. However, both of the writers seem to question the validity of the happy endings that society promises to women who follow the path of tradition. The Tamil romance, despite its reputation as a conservative form, emerges as a questioning form, one that challenges women's ties to their community.

Most Indian theorists have read the failure of Indianised romances in light of the success of international series such as Mills and Boons as indicative of readers wanting their romances exotic fantasies situated away from their claustrophobic patriarchal realities (Parmeswaran 840) (Bagchi 36). However, I argue that the success of Tamil romances points towards readers wanting to engage directly with their patriarchal realities and its victories prove to be much more familiar and rewarding. Linda J. Lee suggests reading romances within their ability "to subvert and challenge existing social structures within the confines of its form" (Lee 54). Building off Lee, I suggest that Tamil romances utilise their patriarchal elements to question whether aligning with patriarchy can actually lead to a truly happy ending for its women. *Maane Maane Maane* (1986) and *Naan* (1987) simultaneously tests and rewards its protagonists on their performance as selfless and dutiful daughters. However, these novels also hold families and societies as potentially destructive to women's happiness, suggesting that blind subservience might not be fruitful. Both novels frame pleasure as a right that is initially refused to its protagonists on account of cultural restrictions and as something that needs to be fought for. The romance arc then becomes a quest for their rightful pleasure, realised through the support of the hero. However, it is only after the heroine takes a stand for herself that her romance is realised. Here, the path to romantic and sexual pleasure is framed as a path to liberation. Ultimately, they take on the universal concepts of desire and pleasure to pose questions of agency and autonomy.

These novels highlight the importance of choosing the right partner. This itself proves to be subversive in a country that traditionally practices arranged marriages. However, this choice is first predated by the women choosing to go against filial and cultural expectations. The novel seems to encourage women to choose themselves. Here the act of choosing is, thus, not merely posited as fantastical and aspirational but rather as a staunchly feminist practice.

Final Caveats

While romance remains one of the few genres that, historically speaking, is exclusively female-coded; it becomes clear that its narratives largely operate within the confines of patriarchy. Given the history of the representation of desire in Tamil literature as outlined in one of the earlier sections, female desire

is seen as a potent force that cannot be contained outside of marriage.

Tamil romances dislocate female desire from its sexual contexts to provide a reinterpretation that is grounded in a quest for freedom. The heroines in these texts desire acknowledgment, respect and harmony, often from their own families. Under the labels of homely and submissive, they voice out their frustration against a moral economy that curtails their desire for recognition and independence. These texts also expose filial ties as attached to larger systems that compromise on the woman's desires, thus encouraging her to look out for herself. They frame desire and pleasure as natural rights that women are entitled to.

However, these texts also show Tamil romances' tendency to uphold marriage as the ultimate form of validation. While they appear to conform with patriarchal expectations of women, they represent a long history of a mediation of gender and desire. They utilise the medium to open up sites of dialogue for pressing women's issues in a form that is accessible, reproducible and highly disseminable.

Works Cited and Consulted

Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Oxford University Press, 1989.

Bagchi, Jayeeta. "Looking for Reality in Romance." *Social Scientist*, vol. 28, no. 3/4, 2000, pp. 30–39. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3518188.

Ebeling, Sascha. *Colonizing the Realm of Words: The Transformation of Tamil Literature in Nineteenth Century South India*. State University of New York Press, 2010.

Hodges, Sarah. "Revolutionary Family Life and the Self Respect Movement in Tamil South India, 1926–49." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. 39, no. 2, June 2005, pp. 251–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/006996670503900203.

Kamblé, Jayashree. *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction: An Epistemology*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Lakshmi, C. S. "A Good Woman, a Very Good Woman: Tamil Cinema's Women." *Tamil Cinema: The Cultural Politics of India's Other Film Industry*, edited by Selvaraj Velayutham, Routledge, 2008, pp. 16–28.

—. "Bodies Called Women: Some Thoughts on Gender, Ethnicity and Nation." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 32, no. 46, 1997, pp. 2953-62. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4406067.

—. "Tradition and Modernity of Tamil Women Writers." *Social Scientist*, vol. 4, no. 9, 1976, pp. 37–45. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3516176.

Lee, Linda J. "Guilty Pleasures: Reading Romance Novels as Reworked Fairy Tales." *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2008, pp. 52–66. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41388858.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *Early Novels in India*. Sahitya Akademi, 2002.

Parameswaran, Radhika. "Reading Fictions of Romance: Gender, Sexuality, and Nationalism in Postcolonial India." *Journal of Communication*, vol. 52, no. 4, Dec. 2002, pp. 832–51. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02576.x.

Raman, Sita Anantha. "Old Norms in New Bottles: Constructions of Gender and Ethnicity in the Early Tamil Novel." *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2000, pp. 93–119. https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2000.0063.

Ramanichandran. *Maane Maane Maane*. Arunodhayam, 1986.

Singh, Amita Tyagi and Patricia Oberoi. "Learning to 'Adjust': Conjugal Relations in Indian Popular Fiction." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, Mar. 1994, pp. 93–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/097152159400100106.

Sreenivas, Mytheli. "Emotion, Identity, and the Female Subject: Tamil Women's Magazines in Colonial India, 1890–1940." *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2003, pp. 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2003.0016.

—. *Reproductive Politics and the Making of Modern India*. University of Washington Press, 2021.

Subramaniam, Vidya. *Naan.* Pustaka, 1987.

Pi77ai, Vçtanâyakam Samuel. *The Life and Times of Pratapa Mudaliar*. Katha, 2005.

Wolf, Gita. "Construction of Gender Identity: Women in Popular Tamil Magazines." Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 26, no. 43, 1991, pp. WS71–WS73. *JSTOR*,https://www.jstor.org/stable/4398216.

— * —