

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Linguistic identity and passion for one's language – newly identified as 'mother tongue' during modernity – plays a significant role in the modern subjectivity constitution. This is very true especially in a multilingual country like India where the united Indian identity itself was/is groomed by vernacular public spheres. These vernacular public spheres also had created a strong political ground for rights relating to vernacular languages and identities. Though, in the country at large language seems to have lost its predominance in determining the political identity of the people, in a state like Tamil Nadu it still seems to hold a palpable ground. The 2009 mass uprising against the genocide of Tamils in Srilanka and the political parties and movements that emerged/consolidated during this context like *Naam Thamizhar* (We are Tamils) stand as veritable proof for the availability of a ground for politics based on linguistic identity in Tamil Nadu. It is in this context that the study of the Tamil political subjectivity – subjectivity constructed via the self-proclaimed loyalty to Tamil language and a self-assertive Tamilian identity – of the 1930-60s becomes significant.

Research works on the passion for language during modern times have already questioned the natural and universal ground claimed for it. More particularly, the recent works that deal with language passion of South India like Sumathi Ramaswamy's *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970* have pointed out the discursive nature of such passion and highlighted the significance of subject formation in relation to this passion. She focuses on the Tamil subject's dedication of love, labour and life for Tamil language during colonial modernity and studies how such repeated proclamations of loyalty constructs subjects like Chinnasamy who willfully dies for safeguarding his mother tongue.

As Lisa Mitchell demonstrates in her work on a similar subject in the Telugu context, the transformations in the representation of and in relationship to languages undoubtedly play a vital role in the recognition of the anti-Hindi suicides and students' protests as an expression of the collective will of the Tamil-speaking people. But what constitutes the willful self-sacrificial protest against the safeguard of Tamil? Do the continuous dedications of love, labour and life for Tamil in poetry, academia and journalistic print, as Sumathi Ramasamy argues, play an over-deterministic role in the making of the Tamil subjectivity? The answer that this thesis attempts to give is: Though such performances have a role in the constitution of the Dravidian-Tamil subjectivity it cannot be seen as playing a deterministic role. It highlights that Tamil Subjectification does not just happen through the disciplining of the socio-political and cultural institutions but also in the subject's active participation and interaction with them.

Chapter I of this thesis drew attention to the fact that all 'martyrs' and most of the anti-Hindi protestors are men and it set the hypothetical ground that the Tamil political subjectivity – constructed via the self-assertive passion for Tamil language – is masculine in its constitution. Chapter II discussed the emergence of a new affective relationship with language in South Asia with a specific focus on the context of Tamil. Through a genealogical account it highlighted the diversities and disjunctures that mark modern *tamilpatru* and reveals the problems in approaching modern *Tamilpatru* as a singular ideation. It drew attention to the significance of Annadurai and the 1930s' disjuncture of *tamilpatru* and highlighted their indelible role in the constitution of Tamil subjects like Chinnasamy and student anti-Hindi protestors. It also pointed out the limitations in approaching Anna as an individual and explained how approaching him as an assemblage enables deeper insights into the process of Tamil subjectification.

Chapter III demonstrated the subjects' relation with Tamil cannot be separated from its relation to C.N. Annadurai. The subject's recognition as a domain of taste and pleasure, field of progress and empowerment and a domain of new domesticity plays a crucial role in recognizing itself as a subject – one which desires a specific style of Tamil language, aspires a certain kind of progress, craves for certain kind of empowerment, values a certain type of family structure and so on. As Mitchell observes, the transformation of languages from features of a land or geography to fundamental basis of individual identities is the major shift in the modern subject's relation to language. However, this recognition of language as fundamental basis of individual identities is also constructed by the subject recognizing itself as a realm for new kinds of 1) tastes and pleasures, 2) progress and empowerment and 3) possibilities for imagining and reordering societies.

Chapter IV drew attention to the new sense of self exhibited by Chinnasamy and other anti-Hindi protestors. Pointing out the strangeness in a modern political subject imagining itself as a “lion” – a classical and medieval symbol of bravery – it demonstrated how such a cognizance of self is enabled by an unbroken history for the ethics – *Maanam*, *Veeram* and *Tamilpattru* – that Anna's discourse constructs as normative for Tamil self. As against the Marxist and feminist critique which identify these ethics as ‘feudal’, it demonstrated their modern characteristics by revealing their close relation with the values of nation-formation during colonial modernity. This reveals the problems involved in studying the Tamil subject as a devotional subject. This chapter also drew attention to the gendering function of these ethics and revealed how the process of subjectification is also a process of en-gendering.

Chapter V revealed the heterogeneity that characterizes the categories ‘woman’ and ‘domestic’ in this discourse and highlighted their crucial role in the construction of ‘Tamilian’ – the self-assertive masculine Tamil political subjectivity. It explains how the juxtaposition of these different categories of women – the moral domestic woman, the

immoral *dasi*, and the ignorant girl prone to deception – and legitimization of the moral domestic woman over others is the context of subject production in this discourse. One could see these juxtapositions both in the political and literary discourse. Demonstrating how the discrimination among these diverse kinds of women happen via the presence of *ethical interiority*, it reveals the problems with feminist critique which sees this discourse as limiting women to their biology or physicality. It highlights the disciplinary function of this discourse which recognizes only those who fall under its ethical boundary as subjects and devoid others of any claims to subjecthood. The difference between the descriptions of Parvathi, Rangoon Radha, Nagavalli and that of Charubala and Kumari reveals this to us. However, it also notes the problems in seeing this discourse as only disciplinary and repressive by highlighting certain moments of employment of agency by women. It pointed out how these moments stand as instances that cannot be exhausted completely by a disciplinary framework. Revealing the glimpses of women agency in them it foregrounds the challenges that gender critique face in situating such discourses. It also reveals that the culturing of different kinds of gazes towards the different categories of women that the ideal masculine Tamil subject is produced. This reveals how both the literary and political function as realms of production and exhibits that the co-existence of different gazes towards women cannot be seen as the duplicity of the progressiveness that this subjectivity claims.

This productive nature of this discourse shows that the will of Tamil subjects like Chinnaasamy and others who laid down their life for Tamil language is not over-determined by the socio-political and cultural institutions but exhibit their active participation in the process of subjectification. Their recognition of themselves as a domain of new set of tastes, pleasures, values, beliefs and ethics happens via their recognition of gender as a foundational entity in determining a person's political identity. Hence the performance of Tamilian identity by Chinnaasamy cannot be separated from his gender identity.