 Accepted for publication in *Social and Cultural Geography*

Scooty Girls are Safe Girls: Risk, Respectability and Brand Assemblages in Urban India

Sneha Krishnan

School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX13QY, UK.

(Received 27 February 2019; Accepted 4 February 2020)

Advancing an emergent scholarship on brands as having spatial and scalar effects, this paper examines the brand as an assemblage. In doing so, it focuses on youth engagement with the brandedness of motorbikes in the South Indian city of Chennai to examine in particular how brand assemblages shape gendered engagements with risk in Indian cities. Scooters and Motorbikes are important markers of 'youth' and middle classness in urban South Asia, representing freedom, mobility and fun. The Scooter has further been celebrated for putting women - literally and otherwise - in the driver's seat: creating the possibility for transgression and rebellion. This article complicates this narrative, by positioning scooters and motorbikes instead as sites upon which ‘respectable’ femininities are calibrated and articulated through young women's engagement with brands. In doing so, it unpacks the ways in which brand assemblages enliven the agency of commodities and participate in the disciplinary processes that shape gendered urban geographies of risk and respectability.

Keywords: gender, brand, consumption, scooters, respectability

Introduction

Darshana, a nineteen-year-old college student in Chennai, sat on her bed, telling me about an unpleasant experience she had had with an auto rickshaw driver. The three-wheeled motorised ‘auto rickshaw’ is many middle-class women’s preferred mode of transport in Chennai, where

I was conducting fieldwork with college-going women. While more expensive than buses, the 'auto' is often regarded safer. On this occasion, Darshana had had a dispute with the driver over payment and he had sworn at her and roughly driven off, splashing her with mud in the process. Bristling with anger, Darshana said, 'I want a bike'. 'Bike' and 'two-wheeler' are the popularly used terms among college students for scooters and motorbikes. Then before I could respond, she qualified her longing: 'I'm not a biker dyke type. I want a Scooty.'

Scooty is a popular brand of motorbikes, manufactured near Chennai and distributed all over South Asia (Brunson, 2013). Since the late 1990s, Scooty's manufacturers – TVS Motors – have explicitly targeted young women as buyers, capitalizing on the boom in this period, of young women traveling around Indian cities on their own for higher education and work (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Fuller and Narasimhan, 2012). Scooty advertisements also reference key themes in campus politics and popular discourse about gender and spatiality in urban India, including controversies about hostel curfews and dress codes that have dominated this debate in recent times (Roy, 2016). Scooties, as I learned, were 'smart' and 'cool' – incontestably modern – while also being 'girly' and 'cute': not too transgressive. In a context where LGBT-identified subjects were in the media more than ever (Dasgupta, 2014), women like Darshana felt the need to distance themselves from cultural markers – including brands such as Doc Marten shoes, as well as the motorbikes in question on that day – that might identify them as 'dykes'. Desiring not just any motorbike but specifically a Scooty allowed her to do this.

In this paper I draw on ethnographic research conducted with college students in the city of Chennai to trace the life of brands as assemblages that incite intimacies and shape urban geographies of risk and respectability in South India. Geeta Patel (2004, p. 133) writes that the figure of the Indian woman is iterated as a point of stillness in the multi-scalar traffic of 'capital invested in education, debt financing, global corporations, information, morality,

resources, commodities, and modes of governmentality.' The paradigmatic figure of the middle-class woman – as the subject at the heart of national and neoliberal imaginaries of the good life (Krishnan, 2019; Sunder Rajan, 2003) – is thus a point of convergence at which geographies of consumption engage the domestic as a site of moral investment. It is in this context that commodities like motorbikes – as well as televisions, kitchen appliances and mobile phones – have been shown to be central to embodied and gendered projects of embourgeoisement in India (Ciotti, 2010; Osella and Osella, 2000). Processes of 'becoming middle class' further often also signal journeys out of 'backward' caste status, and are closely linked to practices of respectable self-making through sartorial choices and other aspects of consumption (McDowell, 2011; Ciotti, 2010; Kent, 2004). As in Darshana's case above, these disciplinary discourses also inscribe normative heterosexuality – 'not a biker dyke' – as entangled with the consumption of branded commodities and imaginaries of social mobility. Indeed, Patel (2004) goes on to write that the potential for proper heterosexual marriage is at the heart of the fantasy of ordinary middle-class life in India: its boundaries marked by lurking figures of sexual dissent, among them, the hijra and the lesbian.

The case of motorbikes explored in this paper brings into particular relief an urban geography on which gendered respectability in its entanglement with consumption is inscribed. Even as growing numbers of Indian women migrate to cities like Chennai for education and employment, anxieties about opportunities for sex and romance, particularly outside caste and communal boundaries, sound aloud (Krishnan, 2016; Radhakrishnan, 2011). In this context, a discourse about risk increasingly serves as justification for proliferating networks of surveillance and control that subject young middle-class women – particularly college-students and young professionals – to a range of restrictions with regard to mobility. This discourse conflates dangers of sexual violence in the city with fears about young women's exercise of sexual agency (Krishnan, 2016, 2019), in the process stigmatising areas

of the city inhabited by lower-caste and working-class populations as 'dangerous' to middle-class women, whilst spaces of elite consumption such as malls and cafes come to be celebrated as sites of unshackling for these women (Shandilya, 2015). In the lives of college-students, this surveillance is particularly heightened as most live in hostels – such as the one where I lived during fieldwork – which have curfews as early as four in the afternoon, and strict rules of dress and conduct. Using motorbikes allows the young women I met to access 'out-of-the-way' places in the city (Aengst, 2014; Brunson, 2013), whilst at the same time, their participation in particular brand assemblages allows them to temper these transgressions, and mark themselves as respectable heterosexual women.

While the study of brands is relatively new in geography, scholars have long shown that brands have spatial attributes – they link to geographies of belonging and origin – and engage commodities in scalar relations by invoking trans-local mobility and global capital circulations, even as they establish local territorial claims (Warren and Gibson, 2017; Edensor and Kothari, 2006; Pike, 2009). A complementary scholarship in Anthropology has shown also that in constructing semiotic links between material commodities and the 'essences' attributed to them (Mazzarella, 2003), brands are citational and performative (Lury, 2004; Laikwan, 2008). Highlighting the agencies that brands enable in customers who co-create and disorder the semiotic chains of brand recognition, this scholarship has demonstrated that brand performativities are prone to excesses and slippages captured in practices of 'bluffing', 'faking' and 'style' (Newell, 2012; Nakassis, 2012). This scholarship links to geographical debates in its elaboration of the gendered, classed and caste-inflected body politics of branding. This paper departs from the overwhelming focus on the economics of branding, to unpack the ways in which the brand is implicated in cultural and political geographies of gendered discipline. The heterogeneous processes that go into the making of brands have received wide acknowledgement among cultural theorists, who have shown that the entities

that we know as 'brands' are agglomerations of technological and media processes, as well as of geographical imaginaries of origin and identity, located within the context of international capital mobility (Lury, 2004; Ong and Collier, 2008). They are assemblages, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of *agencement*: 'a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms' (Deleuze, 2006, p. 52). Deleuze and Guattari's 'assemblage' has been widely used in human geography and its cognate fields as a mode of critique that attends to multi-scalar configurations of affect, discourse and practice as contingent and open-ended (Dewsbury, 2011; Legg, 2009; Anderson and McFarlane, 2011). The framework of the assemblage has allowed scholars to account for the agencies that governmental structures, non-human and even non-organic things exert in shaping human life (Bennett, 2009).

In building on this literature, the paper responds to Celia Lury's call to read not only back from the commodity to unpack the heterogeneity encompassed in the brand but also forward to the brand assemblage as a site of potentiality (Lury, 2009, p. 68). Using ethnographic research conducted from 2012 onwards it asks what moral and territorial claims brands make on those who engage with them, and how they participate in shaping gendered geographies of urban mobility in the lives of young women. Brands further unsettle distinctions between geographies of proximate reality and the fantastic spatiality that the commodity invokes. Engaging with brands enables consumers to aspire, and desire to be elsewhere and to be otherwise: capable of feelings and intensities that they may not otherwise inhabit. At the same time, I show that brand assemblages are also subject to forms of territorialisation (Legg, 2011): they make claims on human subjects that draw them into gendered, caste-inflected and classed disciplinary formations.

The remainder of this paper is divided into six sections that begin by laying out the contextual and methodological basis for its arguments. The two sections that follow lay out the ways in which branding assemblages engage spatial disciplinary formations in the context

of urban India. In two further sections I unpack the ways in which young women engage motorbike and scooter brands as a site of aspiration and desire, as well as a mode through which they inhabit forms of moral and spatial discipline. In the conclusion, I unpack the paper's wider implications for making sense of the contingent and shifting ways in which disciplinary structures and discourses act on gendered subjects.

Context and Methods

This paper is based on ethnographic research conducted in Chennai among middle-class college-going women from 2012 onward. I lived in a women's hostel – dormitories in which students live in most Indian cities – in 2012 and 2013 and have since periodically conducted interviews and focus-group discussions with college-going women. Whilst living in the hostel – an institution I will call Teresa Home – I spoke with each of my seven roommates, and ten residents in neighbouring rooms several times in long ethnographic interviews, averaging about three hours each. I also conducted similarly long interviews with two groups of five young women at university, including residents of hostels and those living in family homes in the city. In addition, I conducted six focus groups of ten women each, and shorter interviews – an hour to two hours each – in 2012 and 2013 with forty women. Since 2013, I have returned to Chennai every summer and conducted shorter interviews with a total of fifteen students.

The young women I met typically came from small towns in the state of Tamil Nadu, of which Chennai is the capital, and nearby Kerala. They belonged largely to the middle castes from these places: Other Backward Classes, in the bureaucratic classification. A small number were Forward Class (Brahmin and other upper caste), and an equally small number was Dalit. They typically lived in hostels and had only moved to Chennai for higher education. A nexus of technological development – the wide prevalence of mobile phones, as well as cheaply available motorbikes – and aspiration, which is the basis for young single women's migration

to large cities for education and employment, have made women increasingly mobile (Fuller and Narasimhan, 2012; Fuller and Narasimhan, 2007; Radhakrishnan, 2011).

While all the women I met identified as 'middle-class', I treat this category as aspirational and processual rather than suggesting a finite or homogenous social group (Gilbertson, 2014; Radhakrishnan, 2011). A rich scholarship on embourgeoisement in India has shown that historically, women's education and embodied performance of respectability have been key markers of being middle-class in this region (Ciotti, 2010; Ramberg, 2016). The women I interviewed were all between eighteen and twenty-three years of age. The colleges they attended were all autonomous private institutions for women, aided by the government of Tamil Nadu – the state of which Chennai is the capital – and belonging to the collegiate University of Madras. This public-private political economy of education is increasingly widely prevalent in India and in Chennai, there are very few institutions of higher education that are wholly public. As autonomous institutions, these women's colleges were free to establish rules of dress and curfew, most requiring students to abide by a code of conduct that specified rules of respectable behaviour. The hostel where I lived was not on campus at a College but was privately run and located in close proximity to three such women's colleges. Off-campus hostels were typically more expensive: for instance, Teresa hostel, where I lived, charged a monthly rate of eight thousand rupees (approximately £80) for room, board, cleaning and laundry. The on-campus hostel at Women's Christian College down the road charged ten thousand rupees (£100) for a whole semester, bringing the year's cost to no more than twenty thousand rupees (£200), also for room and board though not including laundry and cleaning. I interviewed students living in both types of accommodations, thus drawing together a 'middle-class' group that spans the wide economic range of this bracket.

Research with youth demands a shift from traditional ethnographic practice (Osella and Osella, 1998; Nisbett, 2007) and the themes of this paper are drawn from this methodological difference. Rather than spend time at home, or in a family-setting, my time with college-girls was located mostly in their 'hang-out' spots: college canteens, malls, cafés and restaurants, and in the hostel. For the young people I met, the iconic practice that defined their participation in 'youth culture' was to wander around town: in Tamil, *ur sutharathu*. While such practices of mobility come easily to young men – and are indeed seen as necessary to their maturation from boyhood (Nakassis, 2016) – 'loitering' around town renders women precarious (Phadke et al., 2011). As feminist scholars have shown, the anxiety about 'risk' in this context conflates fears about gender violence with social concern for middle-class women's respectability (Phadke, 2007; Lukose, 2009). 'Risk' as a popular category among India's urban middle classes refers ambiguously to the danger of urban sexual violence – heightened in the wake of the widely-reported gang rape and murder of a Delhi student in 2012 (Butalia, 2014) – as well as social anxieties about women's exercise of sexual autonomy outside the bounds of caste and communal endogamy (Phadke, 2007). These discourses of risk and the attending stigmatization of lower-caste, working class and immigrant men's bodies further lend themselves to deployment as justification for the widespread and increasingly violent policing of middle-class women's mobility and sexuality (Srinivasan, 2016; Shandilya, 2015). This debate on risk and respectability might be located more widely within a feminist scholarship on pleasure and danger that emerged in the context of the 1980s sex wars in North America (Vance, 1984; Echols, 2016), extending to questions of sex work and sexual violence in South Asia (Sunder Rajan, 2003; Govindan, 2013). This work has shown that women's sexual pleasure holds disordering potentials – as 'dangerous' and 'risky' – in its transgression of classed, racialised and caste-inflected norms of 'good womanhood'.

In this context, participation in consumption and branding plays a significant role in the lives of young women, drawing them into scalar engagements, through which they inhabit new aspirations and desires, while also being subject to the claims of nation-states and global capital (Tarlo, 1996; Nakassis, 2016; Radhakrishnan, 2011). Sartorial practices among young women inscribe scalar moral geographies. At Teresa Home, one of my roommates, who came from an 'Other Backward Class' Christian family in Kerala saved up to buy a salwar kameez set from Shilpi, a local brand that sells cotton and silk 'ethnic' fabrics, whereas most others from her background wore cheaper polyester clothing. Her goal was to make friends with the 'Tam-Brahm crowd' – Tamil Brahmins – in her year at College and believed the brand would enable her entry into that circle. To become and consolidate middle-class status thus carried different valences for different women and brands participated in the contestations over this category.

Intervening in this context, this paper unpacks brand assemblages as they engage the gendered urban security apparatus that young women encounter as they navigate the terrain of 'risk' and respectability in their everyday lives. In doing so, the paper contributes to a geographical scholarship that builds dialogue between biopolitics in Foucault and Deleuze's writing to show that while assemblages have deterritorializing potentials, they also cohere into disciplinary formations, and evoke striating potentials (Legg, 2011). The concept of the brand has been diversified beyond its application to particular commodities, or even just corporate entities (Manning and Uplisashvili, 2007; Pike, 2009; Warren and Gibson, 2017). Brands, that is, pervade everyday life: shaping social connections and relations with non-human entities, as well as with place. In this, I demonstrate, they also undergird the geographies of gendered risk and discipline. The brand invites relationalities through which young women mark themselves as moral subjects, and the assemblage of the brand engages the scalar implications of moral geographies as formations of geopolitical power rendered intimate.

Branding Gendered Selves

As the object of the colonial gaze of mission and reform (Mills, 1996; Kent, 2004), as well as the symbolic last frontier of anti-colonial defence (Chatterjee, 1989; Sarkar, 2014), women in postcolonial contexts have long been educated, dressed, pruned and primped to appropriately fit notions of a modern India. Both within imperialist and nationalist discourses, educated and modern women were widely iterated as vulnerable subjects at risk of corruption from contagious forms of disrepute (Gupta, 2001). Emphasising a politics of scale, scholars have shown that moral geographies emerge relative to 'the obligations and geographical imaginaries of their empires; the rhythms and intimacies of their social networks; the freedoms and liberties of their states and citizenries, or; in relation to modernity and its dreams of moral universalism' (Legg and Brown, 2013, p.135).

Brands played a central role in the construction of 'girlhood' in this context, identifying young women with the affective and aesthetic orientations that particular commodity identities invited. Historians like Ann McClintock (1995) have noted that gendered life in imperial contexts was closely intertwined with the internationalization of capital in the 19th century, and the economy of competition that produced brands in the forms in which we encounter them today. In England in the late 19th century, commodities like soap, sweets and beverages were sold as branded products for the first time, and linked to national and imperial geopolitics (McClintock, 1995). Coca Cola in the US for instance, was sold as a 'national drink'. In Chennai, a septuagenarian who attended College in the city in the 1950s and 1960s recalled the Atlas bicycle – manufactured and sold in India from 1950 onward – as a subject of aspiration for young women in her time. The Atlas brand was identified, as she recalled, with freedom of mobility, and with being 'a modern Indian girl'.

Indeed, the 'modern girl' has been historically located within a 20th century world of consumption, glamour and urban mobility that historians argue circulated globally from the

1920s and 1930s (Lewis, 2008; Thomas, 2006). In India, the college-girl became in this period, an iconic figure: identified both by her conspicuous and morally ambiguous presence in urban public spaces, as well as her association with emergent advertising cultures that marketed soaps, clothing, record players and make-up through their association with this quintessentially 'modern' subject (Ramamurthy, 2006). Automobility was central to the iteration of modernity in this context, and scholars note that bicycles became essential to 'modern girl' subjectivities: signifying independence and education, as well as allowing young women to access respectable forms of mobility in urban spaces (Mackintosh and Norcliffe, 2007; Arnold, 2013). Brands invited young women to inhabit 'girl' cultures that were shared but not homogenous globally, and continually remade in scalar assemblages in imperial contexts (Barlow et al., 2005).

The question of brand geographies – the origins of commodities and their meanings – also took on particular significance in India in the early 20th century in the context of the nationalist boycott of Western and mass-made products. William Mazzarella (2010) notes that Gandhian nationalist selfhood was drawn into branding cultures in this period through the embodied construction of gendered Indian selfhood in relation with a lived ethic of protest, epitomised in practices such as the hand-spinning of cloth. Women in South India recalled forming attachments with brands like Co-optex, short for the Tamil Nadu Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society, that signified a continued allegiance to locally-made and handwoven cloth in a newly-independent India. In linking to the geopolitical formation of the nation-state, the brand assemblage inscribes a geography of gendered subjectivity: iterating the middle-class women who bought and wore Co-optex *saris* as subjects of national virtue. They simultaneously also engage in local caste and class subjectivities: Gandhian handloom cultures in Chennai are widely associated with upper-caste women, and mapped onto a caste geography of respectability in the city. As such, South Chennai and its neighbourhoods of

Besant Nagar, Adyar and Thiruvanmiyur are both marked as Brahmin in the local imagination, and associated with institutions like the Kalakshetra Foundation which produces the cotton handloom saris that the women I met identified with upper-caste womanhood in the city. This further maps the national onto upper-caste inhabitations of femininity, highlighting the tenuous claim to proper middle-class womanhood that women from lower caste and lower middle-class backgrounds feel.

The brand is thus implicated in the gendered making of territory (Hyndman, 2007; Smith, 2012) and collides with geographies of subjectivity. This is also reflected in the substantial literature on globalisation and gender in India (Oza, 2001; Lukose, 2005; Gilbertson, 2014), which suggests that women's bodies are typically the site where the complicities and boundaries between 'Western' and 'Indian'; 'modern' and 'traditional'; 'global' and 'national' are negotiated, through practices of consumption. In this, brands enact a scalar politics: producing the locally-rooted 'authentic subject' through the imbrication of global capital networks and marketing strategies in the making and selling of 'ethnic' commodities (Tarlo, 1996). Further, as the poster-girls of a neoliberal consumer polity, young women are implicated in the intersection of territory and brand (Smith, 2012; Radhakrishnan, 2011). Their participation in global economies of aspiration, as well as in fiscal practices of credit and insurance iterate them as responsible neoliberal subjects (Patel, 2006).

Motorbikes and Brand Assemblages

Motorbikes are a particularly loaded commodity in the lives of Indian youth. While only six per cent of Indian households own cars, as many as forty-seven per cent own a motorbike or scooter (Poushter, 2015). Thousands of young women in cities like Chennai ride motorbikes to places of education and work every day. The college authorities at the women's colleges where I did fieldwork issued motorbike parking permits to at least fifty per cent of enrolled students annually, i.e. as many as 1500 motorbikes were registered and parked on these

campuses. This is a substantial number in institutions where most students cannot afford other technologies that they think of as 'essential', and which increasingly form integral parts of students' lives around the world, like laptops or smart phones. The Scooty brand is also the biggest sponsor of cultural events on many women's college campuses.

'Two wheelers' as they are widely called, are particularly popular among youth, because they are affordable, easy to maintain and allow youth – particularly women – to participate in urban cultures of consumption, partying, and leisure, in addition to giving them a modicum of privacy in a world where they find themselves constantly under surveillance. In this, motorbikes also facilitate subversion – or as the college-girls I met evocatively called it: 'boundary crossing' – allowing young women to access 'out of the way' places and transgressive practices (Brunson, 2013; Aengst, 2014), as well as anonymity as young women wear helmets and sun-protective masks that keep their faces hidden as they ride around the city. As Brunson (2013) has argued in the Nepali case, Scooties have come to represent freedom for middle class women in South Asia in many ways. Whereas in the past, women may have been dependent on male chaperonage, they have moved, as Brunson (2013) notes, from being pillion riders, to the drivers' seat – both literally and metaphorically. In other contexts, scholars have noted the significance of car and motorbike ownership to troubling distinctions between 'public' and 'private' and shaping the terms of middle-class life (Truitt, 2008; Sheller and Urry, 2000). While this paper focuses on young women's aspiration for and consumption of motorbikes, it shifts the conversation on motorbikes and middle-class geographies away from urban traffic and automobility to think instead about how the brandedness of motorbikes engages middle-class subject-making practices.

Motorbike branding practices in India developed in conjunction with the major socio-political and cultural changes that shaped young people's lives from the 1990s onward. 'Two wheelers' have long been significant symbols for India's middle classes. Mankekar (1999)

and others indicate their visibility in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the desire to own a 'moped' or a 'scooter' was a signal aspect of belonging to the emerging 'new middle classes' (Fernandes, 2006). Marketing campaigns by Bajaj – one of the most popular motorbike brands in the country – present a powerful archive of the meanings that the motorbike holds for India's middle classes. Targeted at upwardly mobile lower middle-class families that could not afford a car, the Bajaj Scooter was the mid-level office worker's bike. Many young women I met remembered riding pillion on their fathers' Bajaj Scooters to school. When we spoke about this, they chimed in with the iconic *Hamara Bajaj* (Our Bajaj) jingle that punctuated 1990s television in India. Appropriately, the men in these advertisements are good middle-class householders, working office jobs, owning homes and enjoying the social mobility that their ownership of the Bajaj motorbike demonstrates.

Since the late 1990s, with the substantive cultural changes ushered in with 'liberalization' – the structural adjustment of India's economy as well as a shift in sensibilities towards expanded consumer aspirations a growing middle-class (Jeffrey, 2010; Lukose, 2009) – the motorbike has evolved in urban India, to being a youth status symbol. With their dark metal bodies, and marketing images that show urban dystopic wastelands, these machines tell a very different story. They are instruments of leisure, pleasure and most of all, a youth unencumbered by the demands and responsibilities epitomised in previous marketing campaigns. In this, the motorbike has also come to be more explicitly gendered. While the Bajaj scooter of the 1980s and early 1990s was a lightweight unisex bike, the company now markets heavy motorbikes with more muscular bodies and greater speed, as well as names that suggest danger: for instance, the 'Avenger' and 'Pulsar', the latter marketed as 'definitely male.' The early 1990s also saw the introduction of feminised scooters for women, most prominently the Scooty by TVS: sold in colours such as pink and red, and marketed at the growing number of working and college-going women who sought means of automobility in

those years. Economic analyses also note that Indian motorbike brands are iterated as high-quality commodities worldwide, comparable to Japanese-made technologies for cars (Mundy, 2017). The brand assemblage of the Indian motorbike from the mid-1990s onwards thus evoked the inhabitation of global middle-class prosperity and consumption rather than the distinctly regional and national sensibilities suggested by previous branding strategies. The brand's engagement with the moral imaginary of middle-class life also shifted, charting a new geography of pleasure, urban risk and gendered mobility. Brand assemblages are sites of fantasy and possibility in the lives of young women, even as they cohere on gendered geographies of respectability. A favourite game in the hostel was to decide what colour Scooty – the bike comes in ninety-nine different hues – reflected each roommate's personality. So, the young women made comments to each other like 'Dude, you're such a red Scooty: so hot' or 'Don't be such a grey Scooty.'

The brandedness of the motorbike creates capacities for the motorbike to affect and evoke potentials in those who desire and ride it. An emergent scholarship in new materialism delinks agency from intentionality to instead unpack the ways in which non-organic things act on and affect human life. Assemblages attune us to the modes in which these potentials are enlivened, not merely as a matter of human agency but through an 'ontological intervention [that] reconfigures the possibilities of existing-in-the-world through a nascent material drift between bodies and their environments' (Roberts, 2012, p. 2519). The 'muscular motorbike' here takes on human capacities for gendered muscularity as well as for evoking erotic affects. Its smooth texture and capacity for speed engendered a particular relation with the urban space that charted a geography of youth, excitement and possibility. The Harley Davidson or Honda motorbike evoked the sense of being in a fairy-tale: being swept off one's feet. On these bikes, typically clinging to the backs of the men who drove them, the young women I met told me they could forget the city: proximate geography was replaced by fantasy. Scooties on the other

hand were 'cool' but 'safe'. The small, light and brightly coloured bikes did not go particularly fast and grounded the women I met in the urban: in its consumer phantasm around them.

Safe Girls on Scooties

The cheapest option for travel in Chennai is the bus: rides across the breadth of this metropolitan city rarely cost more than thirty rupees (three pence). However, buses have come to be widely regarded 'dangerous' for young middle-class women: an opinion that intensified after the rape of a student in Delhi in December 2012 (Shandilya, 2015; Butalia, 2014). Scooties were a 'safe' option because if you owned one you wouldn't have to 'loiter' at bus stops and auto rickshaw stands. Phadke et al. (2011) argue that loitering is a form of dissent against the violent surveillance that young women are often placed under. Riding a motorbike is often a means to loiter that doesn't carry as much risk or danger as simply walking. At the same time, when parents hesitate to buy their daughters motorbikes it is because there is also anxiety that having access to unsupervised automobility will allow young women access to 'unsafe' and 'risky' parts of the city: categories that simultaneously refer to places of potential sexual transgression, as well as to urban neighbourhoods occupied largely by lower-caste and working-class communities.

The TVS Scooty was initially marketed in 1994 as an easy-starting, lightweight motorbike for urban, and predominantly male riders. In 1996, TVS decided to rebrand Scooty as a women's bike, targeting young and urban-located women in need of independent means of transport to commute to work and university. Moving from a functional focus on mobility in the 1990s, the Scooty in the 2000s launched a pink bike endorsed by a popular Bollywood star. In 2012, when I began fieldwork, the Scooty marketing campaign addressed the burning issue of the moment: sexual violence and the control of women's attire and behaviour. This year had seen a number of politicians across the spectrum make speculative statements on why women are raped: a mounting spectacle that angered the young women I met and resulted

in the beginning of a social movement to contest hostel curfews and other forms of institutional control over young women's mobility (Roy, 2016). In Scooty advertisements released in that year, a popular Bollywood actor plays a defiant college-girl who refuses dress-codes and rides in on a Scooty. The tagline reads 'Shake 'em up with *Scooty-giri*' (Shake them up with Scooty-ness). The Scooty is an essential accessory, in these images, to the modern student's political dissent: the motorbike's branding co-opts and individualizes student mobilization. The brand assemblage, in this instance, materializes the 'Scooty girl' as the subject of urban rebellion: evading the curfews and boundaries of the disciplinary institution that is the College, and 'shaking up' the order of gendered urban security. In a recent advertisement that Scooty has made, a young woman visits her boyfriend at his hostel in a different city: her Scooty lets her overcome the long-distance character of their relationship.

Simultaneously, the appropriate Scooty rider is a 'gal' as the scooter's promotional website calls her: both scooter and rider are sexy, urban, and defiant, but normatively feminine, and upper middle-class. Scooty comes in ninety-nine colours – as opposed to a palate of exclusively dark metallic hues for most brands marketed at men – feminizing the bike explicitly, placing its design within an evocative register of global 'girl-culture'(McRobbie, 2004). As one group of women told me, Scooty is a 'girls' bike' – it is not for 'biker dykes', as Darshana whom I introduced at the beginning of this paper argued: i.e. it is not to be confused with women's claiming of male youth cultures of biking, usually associated with lesbians – 'dykes' – but a heterosexual and feminine woman's bike. It rises, thus, to the level of a post-feminist icon, rejecting a cultural discourse of potentially non-heterosexual female masculinity and embracing liberal common sense about the right to automobility. In its girly heterosexuality, this bike is also unthreateningly feminine and middle class. Scooty, as I was invariably told in any conversation about the bike, is 'safe'. A number of parents see Scooties as an investment in their daughters' safety. On the other hand, a self-

described 'tomboy' I met had asked her parents if they might buy her a Royal Enfield motorbike and they had 'thrown a fit', in her description. In the end, they agreed on a black Scooty. The branding of the Scooty as a heterosexualised motorbike shapes young women's embodied inhabitation of selfhood as empowered consumers who are nevertheless rebels within boundaries. In Western contexts, scholars have noted that self-policing among girls is often key to the articulation of straight space (McRobbie, 2004). This further echoes the wider argument that heterosexuality is as much a construct (Hubbard, 2000) and produced through gendered labour (Berlant, 2007) as its others.

In participating in the brand assemblage of the Scooty, its rider is also, by extension 'safe': a good middle-class girl, who does not take risks. Indeed, the Scooty-rider is the ideal female youth subject for a post-liberalisation nation: she shops, goes to college, and wanders the city with her friends. The Scooty rider is independent, Darshana told me. She doesn't have to depend on 'strange auto drivers' and always feels safe. Darshana's friend, Nivedita, a Brahmin woman, had recently gotten a Scooty for a birthday present from her grandparents, with whom she lived. They had made the purchase because they feared that public transport might afford encounters with lower caste or Muslim men, by whom she might be seduced. Echoing wider social anxieties about sex and love outside communal lines (Gupta, 2009; Sarkar, 2018), this further suggests the significance of brands to caste-inflected geographies of 'safety' in the city. The Scooty is only shown, in its promotional material, in well-lit urban settings, unlike the bikes marketed to men, mentioned above, whose settings appear decidedly more rugged and dangerous. Reinforcing as it does the prevailing middle-class notion of women's places and times, the Scooty builds the image of the middle-class woman who 'knows her limits' and 'knows how to be safe'.

Dahlia, an Anglo-Indian student at one of the Colleges told me how women who went on dates to the beaches on the East Coast Road just beyond the city limits, often found that

they were stuck there until the men they had gone with were ready to leave. This might mean that they would have to participate in sexual relationships even if they did not want to. Girls with Scooties, on the other hand, Dahlia explained, suggested by their possession of this scooter that they were not 'that type of girl'. Dahlia's own concern with marking her respectability had particularly to do with her being Anglo-Indian, which many men she met associated with moral looseness. As such, for her, owning a Scooty allowed her to signal respectability in the face of caste and communally based assumptions about her sexual availability. The Scooty becomes, in this context, itself a boundary-marker: allowing women as much to return to private spaces, and consolidate respectability as it allows them to access urban publics.

The limits of mobility that the Scooty suggested further allowed young women to articulate a limited geography of mobility in the city. Most women I met had never been to North Madras – usually imagined from among middle-class and upper caste communities as 'dangerous' and, as one young woman evocatively put it, full of *cheri* people. *Cheri* literally refers to Dalit colonies and is loosely used among young people in Chennai to refer to lower-caste groups: communities that they evocatively – especially for a scalar moral geography – call 'local' (Krishnan, 2016). This reading of the city was typically reiterated in the discourse on safety widely disseminated at the colleges themselves. Indeed, many college deans I interviewed saw their institutions as oases of safety in a city marked as dangerous on account of 'uncivilised' and 'uncultured' people – all typically code for working-class and lower-caste groups.

The Dangers of the Brand

'Write about my life' one of my roommates at Theresa Hostel, Arti, instructed me one evening, as we were about to go to bed, 'it has everything in it: song, dance, stunt, fight, everything…' she said, adding that if I wrote about her alone, I would have enough material

for a book. Thus, she began telling me about an incident that occurred when she had just started seeing her boyfriend, Varun, a classmate at her secondary school in the city of Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala where her family then lived. Both of them were fourteen at the time. One afternoon, as classes were ending for the day, Varun came up to Arti and asked her if she would go on a motorcycle ride with him after her Maths tuition class that day. His brother had recently bought a Bajaj Pulsar, and had told Varun he could take it out for a spin that evening. Though the fourteen-year-old would not have had a license to ride a motorbike, this is quite common especially among young men in India, many of who ride motorbikes from their early teenage years. Arti told me that the Pulsar was, in those years, her ideal motorbike.

Arti was tempted by Varun's offer but she was too aware that many friends of her family lived near the tuition centre. Arti's parents had enrolled her in these extra lessons to help her make the required marks to enter a good college. If someone saw her on the back of a boy's motorbike after class, she could get into serious trouble. 'But I wanted to ride' Arti told me. She wanted to experience the city, she told me, as Varun's girlfriend, clinging to his body: something only the Pulsar could afford them. The fantasy of riding along with a lover on a motorbike is popular in South India. From the annals of Tamil cinema, many young women brought up the image of the motorbike-riding lover in the Mani Ratnam's *Alaipayuthe* (2002, The Waves). Though the film is now several years old, the image of the popular R Madhavan, nodding along to music, while riding on Southern Chennai's wide roads remains central to student fantasy. This young man, I was told, represents the appropriate mix of 'cool' and 'decent'. In such fantasies, the machismo of the bike, is transferred to its rider: the city is reconfigured in the dreamed possibility of weaving through the streets unobstructed as in the filmic sequence. Through the anthropomorphic subjectivity of the bike, the (male) rider and the woman riding pillion materialise heterosexual desire as inextricable from consumption.

Arti explained to me that you couldn't have that kind of fun on a Scooty. It was a 'girly bike', so she couldn't imagine a boy buying one to begin with. It also did not lend itself to pace, and to losing oneself in the urban traffic while clinging to each other. The Bajaj Pulsar, Arti told me, was a good bike because it was not 'over': the local idiom for 'too much'. It was 'decent' but still exciting. So, on that day, Arti told Varun to come and see her after class and told her friend's parents that her own parents would be coming by to pick her up later. At seven-thirty, Arti went and sat on the kerb and waited for Varun to show up. At eight, he was still nowhere to be found, and just as Arti was about to catch an auto-rickshaw home, she saw him arrive. By this point, she was not only angry but also increasingly aware of the eyes on her. As she waited, Arti knew that her desire to be on the pillion of a Pulsar had drawn her into a spatial location that was 'risky'. As a young woman sitting in public – 'loitering' (Phadke et al., 2009) – she was marking herself as less than respectable.

An added complication was the inter-caste nature of the couple's relationship. Varun came from an upper caste Nair family, whereas Arti was Izhava: a formerly 'untouchable' group that achieved social mobility in the early twentieth century and is now classified as Other Backward Class. Arti's parents would worry that an upper-caste boyfriend would refuse to marry her, especially if she were to appear less than respectable. Scholars have shown that social mobility for lower caste communities has been historically marked through restrictions on women's behaviour that mark them as 'respectable' (Ciotti, 2010; Osella and Osella, 2000). The weight of this history fell to Arti as she felt drawn to a fantasy of urban romance mediated by filmic narratives. The motorbike's brand – in Arti's narrative – was linked to this burden: the Pulsar had clouded her judgement, and now she was 'in the middle of the road': a widely-used geographical metaphor among South Indian women to suggest abandonment.

So, when she finally saw Varun approaching, Arti was angry. From the mud on the motorbike, she gathered that Varun had been wandering for a while and had simply lost track

of time. She told him that she couldn't go riding with him and got into an auto-rickshaw. Varun got angry, she told me, smiling at the memory, and began to chase her auto-rickshaw on his bike, honking aggressively and calling out to her as he passed it, doubling back to follow again. Arti herself was 'just full of emotion'. She wanted to ask the auto-rickshaw driver to stop, and to run to Varun. To her, the weaving motorbike in traffic, its revving that reached her ears were all signs of his desire. 'But I had no words' she continued, 'only actions'. So, she leapt out of the auto-rickshaw, landing on the road, and skinning both knees, now calling out to Varun, still overwhelmed with desire for him. Varun stopped the bike abruptly, letting it skid away from him as he ran to her.

The brand assemblage played a significant part here. Arti spoke of being 'taken by' and 'moved by' the Pulsar: the motorbike, as a site of relational possibility, invoked aphasia in the young woman to the point where she found her body moving as if she had no control over it. Varun's behaviour - weaving through the traffic and aggressively honking - was also shaped by the sensorium that the motorbike invoked in its presence within the urban traffic assemblage: the bike was calling to her, begging for an adventure that she knew she ought not to have. The incident resulted in drastic consequences as a relative spotted the couple before they could make their escape and called Varun's parents. The ontology of the Pulsar motorbike was, in this case, tethered to the possibility of affective disorder. The Pulsar's attraction drew Arti away from the labour of modern self-making as an educated and socially-mobile Izhava woman, into potentially rendering herself less-than-respectable. In this, the brand is a site where moral geographies of caste and class mobility, as well as appropriately respectable heterosexual womanhood converge and are articulated.

Conclusion

At the heart of this paper is a concern about the fantasy of ordinary middle-class life (Ahmed, 2004) and its materialisation in the gendered bodies of young women. A focus on consumption

and brandedness allows this paper to locate the governmental discourses that produce this ordinary life within scalar geographies of morality (Legg and Brown, 2014) that implicate gendered bodies in transnational circulations of capital and commodities (Patel, 2006), whilst also engaging local and national discourses about caste and class mobility (Ciotti, 2010; Gilbertson, 2014). In examining the urban geography of Chennai in this context using the case of motorbikes and their brandedness, I argue that in engaging with brands young women access fantasies of transgression whilst simultaneously inscribing the boundaries of permitted 'risk' – i.e. threats to reputation – and consolidating their respectability as middle-class subjects. As such, through consumption, they make investments in reproducing appropriately national albeit globally-inflected and decidedly heterosexual female subjectivities.

Drawing on ethnographic research, I have argued that the brandedness of motorbikes integrally shapes young women's engagements with and desires for these commodities. Beyond their functionality in allowing young women automobility in a context where they are under perpetual surveillance, on which scholars like Brunson (2013) have focused, I have shown that young women are drawn into brand assemblages through which they calibrate their implication in geographies of risk and respectability. This viewpoint moderates claims about the freeing potentials of motorbikes (Truitt, 2008; Brunson, 2013) by asking how engagement with brands shapes the ways in which young women strike balances between transgression and self-construction as respectable subjects. The brand assemblage, as I have shown, is a site of fantasy – a mode through which youth experience pleasures and embodied inhabitations that may otherwise be unimaginable – but it is also a site of discipline in the claims the brand makes on its users as 'good' occupants of urban spaces.

Thinking more broadly, this paper contributes to unpacking the ways in which commodities and their semiotic and cultural identities shape disciplinary geographies and practices of self-making. A rich interdisciplinary scholarship (Mankekar, 1999; Fernandes,

2006; Lukose, 2009) shows that middle-class cultural politics are central to understanding the ways in which imperial and postcolonial disciplinary structures pervade everyday life and shape the ways in which people engage in a politics of selfhood. While economic geographers and scholars of consumption have long shown that commodities and their circulation – whether transnationally or otherwise – undergird self-making practices (Newell, 2012; Edensor and Kothari, 2006; Patel, 2006), this article contributes to an emergent understanding of the brand as a cultural form that brings together technology, media, design and the material commodity form.

The paper shows that this brand assemblage is agential: it affects and evokes potentials for feeling, invites attachment and tethers embodied patterns of mobility to territorial constructions. In this the brand assemblage, while suggesting an affective agglomeration that exceeds manufacturers' imaginaries and proliferates into 'fakes' that suggest sites of excess semiotic meaning, also coheres into disciplinary formations. In the context of young women's engagement with motorbike brands, I have shown that the brand assemblage shapes the ways in which young women articulate boundaries of transgression and consolidate respectable selfhood.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Gavin Brown as editor, and to the anonymous reviewers of this paper for a very productive dialogue in the process of review. I am also grateful to Anusha Hariharan, Miriam Driessen, Nandini Gooptu, Sarah Hodges and Caroline Osella for comments on previous versions, and conversations that shaped my thinking.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004). Affective economies. *Social Text*, 22, 117-139.

Aengst, J. (2014). Adolescent movements: Dating, elopements, and youth policing in Ladakh, India. *Ethnos*, 79, 630-649.

Anderson, B and McFarlane, C. (2011). Assemblage and geography. *Area*, 43, 124-127.

Arnold, D. (2013). *Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India's Modernity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Barlow, TE, Yue Dong, M, Poiger, UG, Ramamurthy, P, Thomas L, and Weinbaum, A. (2005). The Modern Girl around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings. *Gender and History*, 17, 245-294.

Bennett, J. (2009). *Vibrant matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Brunson, J. (2013). 'Scooty Girls': Mobility and Intimacy at the Margins of Kathmandu. *Ethnos,* 79, 610-629.

Butalia, U. (2014). December 16th 2012: A Rape, A Murder and A Movement. *Feminism and Gender Democracy Resource: The Gunda Werner Institute, Heinrich Böll Foundation (GWI)*. Retrieved from https://www.gwi-boell.de/en/2014/04/02/december-16th-2012-rape-murder-and-movement

Chatterjee, P. (1989). Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India. *American Ethnologist,* 16, 622-633.

Dasgupta, RK. (2014). Parties, advocacy and activism: Interrogating community and class in digital queer India. In Pullen, C. (ed). *Queer Youth and Media Cultures* (pp. 265-277). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Deleuze, G (2006). *Dialogues II*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Dewsbury, JD. (2011). The Deleuze-Guattarian assemblage: plastic habits. *Area*, 43, 148-153.

Edensor, T and Kothari, U. (2006). Extending networks and mediating brands: stallholder strategies in a Mauritian market. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31, 323-336.

Fernandes, L. (2006). *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Fuller, C and Narasimhan, H. (2012). Empowerment and Constraint: Women, Work and the Family in Chennai's Software Industry. In: Upadhya C and Vasavi AR (eds) *In an Outpost of the Global Economy: Work and Workers in India's Information Technology Industry.* (pp. 190 – 210). London: Routledge.

Fuller, CJ and Narasimhan, H. (2007). Information technology professionals and the new-rich middle class in Chennai (Madras). *Modern Asian Studies,* 41, 121-150.

Gilbertson, A. (2014). A Fine Balance: Negotiating fashion and respectable femininity in middle-class Hyderabad, India. *Modern Asian Studies,* 48, 120-158.

Gupta, C. (2001). *Sexuality, Obscenity and Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Gupta, C. (2009). Hindu women, Muslim men: Love Jihad and conversions. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 44(51), 13-15.

Hyndman, J. (2007). Feminist geopolitics revisited: Body counts in Iraq. *The Professional Geographer*, 59, 35-46.

Jeffrey, C. (2010). *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kent, EF. (2004). *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Krishnan, S. 2016. Agency, intimacy, and rape jokes: an ethnographic study of young women and sexual risk in Chennai. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 22, 67-83.

Krishnan, S. (2019). Killing Us Slowly: Pre-Empting Suicide at a Women's Hostel in Chennai. *Antipode*, 51, 1515 – 1533.

Laikwan, P. (2008). 'China Who Makes and Fakes': A Semiotics of the Counterfeit. *Theory, Culture and Society,* 25, 117-140.

Legg, S. (2009). Of scales, networks and assemblages: the League of Nations apparatus and the scalar sovereignty of the Government of India. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 34, 234-253.

Legg, S. (2011). Assemblage/Apparatus: Using Deleuze and Foucault. *Area,* 43, 128-133.

Legg, S and Brown, M. (2013). Moral Regulation: Historical Geography and Scale. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 42, 134-139.

Lewis, SL. (2008). Cosmopolitanism and the Modern Girl: A Cross-Cultural Discourse in 1930s Penang. *Modern Asian Studies,* 43, 1385-1419.

Lukose, RA. (2009). *Liberalization's children: Gender, Youth, and Consumer Citizenship in Globalizing India.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lury, C. (2004). *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy.* London: Routledge.

Lury, C. (2009). Brand as Assemblage. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 2, 67-82.

Mackintosh, PG and Norcliffe, G. (2007). Men, women and the bicycle: gender and social geography of cycling in the late nineteenth-century. In Horton, D., Rosen, P., and Cox, P. (eds). *Cycling and Society*, (pp. 153-177). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Mankekar, P. (1999). *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Manning, P and Uplisashvili, A. (2007). "Our Beer": Ethnographic Brands in Postsocialist Georgia. *American Anthropologist*, 109, 626-641.

Mazzarella, W. (2003). *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mazzarella, W. (2010). Branding the Mahatma: The Untimely Provocation of Gandhian Publicity. *Cultural Anthropology*, 25, 1-39.

McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. London: Routledge.

McFarlane, C. (2011). Assemblage and critical urbanism. *City*, 15, 204-224.

McRobbie, A. (2004). Post-feminism and popular culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 4, 255-264.

Mills, S. (1996). Gender and Colonial Space. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 3, 125-148.

Mundy, S. (2017). *India's motorcycle makers burnish brand credentials*. Retrieved from https://www.ft.com/content/8f526d52-1add-11e7-bcac-6d03d067f81f.

Nakassis, CV. (2012). Counterfeiting What? Aesthetics of Brandedness and BRAND in Tamil Nadu, India. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 85, 701-721.

Nakassis, CV. (2016). *Doing style: youth and mass mediation in South India*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Newell, S. (2012). *The Modernity Bluff: crime, consumption, and citizenship in Côte d'Ivoire*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Nisbett, N. (2007). Friendship, consumption, morality: practising identity, negotiating hierarchy in middle-class Bangalore. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13, 935-950.

Ong, A and Collier, SJ. (2008). *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Oxford: Wiley.

Osella, C and Osella, F. (1998). Friendship and flirting: micro-politics in Kerala, South India. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 4, 189-206.

Patel, G. (2004). Homely housewives run amok: Lesbians in marital fixes. *Public Culture*, 16, 131-157.

Patel, G. (2006). Risky subjects: Insurance, sexuality, and capital. *Social Text*, 24, 25-65.

Phadke S. (2007). Dangerous liaisons: Women and men: Risk and reputation in Mumbai. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, 1510-1518.

Phadke, S, Khan, S and Ranade, S. (2011). *Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets,* New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Pike, A. (2009). Brand and Branding Geographies. *Geography Compass*, 3, 190-213.

Poushter, J. (2015). *Car, bike or motorcycle? Depends on where you live*. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/16/car-bike-or-motorcycle-depends-on-where-you-live/#.

Radhakrishnan, S. (2011). *Appropriately Indian: gender and culture in a new transnational class,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ramamurthy, P. (2006). The Modern Girl in India in the Interwar Years: Interracial Intimacies, International Competition, and Historical Eclipsing. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 34, 197-226.

Roberts, T. (2012). From 'New Materialism' to 'Machinic Assemblage': Agency and Affect in IKEA. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 44, 2512-2529.

Roy, S. (2016). Breaking the Cage. *Dissent*, 63, 74-83.

Sarkar, T. (2014). Strishiksha or Education for Women. *Words to Win: The Making of Amar Jiban: A Modern Autobiography* (pp. 1-16). New Delhi: Zubaan Books.

Sarkar, T. (2018). Special Guest Contribution: "Is love without borders possible?" *Feminist Review*, 119, 7-19.

Shandilya, K. (2015). Nirbhaya's Body: The Politics of Protest in the Aftermath of the 2012 Delhi Gang Rape. *Gender and History*, 27, 465-486.

Sheller, M and Urry, J. (2000). The City and the Car. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24, 737-757.

Smith, S. (2012). Intimate geopolitics: Religion, marriage, and reproductive bodies in Leh, Ladakh. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102, 1511-1528.

Srinivasan, P. (2016). Love Meets Death: "Honour," Violence, and Inter-caste Marriages in Tamil Nadu. Presented at the Chicago Tamil Forum, University of Chicago, Chicago. Retrieved from http://chicagotamilforum.uchicago.edu/workshops/2016/ewExternalFiles/Perundevi%2C%20S_Love%20Meets%20Death%20%28CTF%2C%202016%29.pdf

Tarlo, E. (1996). *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*. London: Hurst.

Thomas, LM. (2006). The modern girl and racial respectability in 1930s South Africa. *The Journal of African History*, 47, 461-490.

Truitt, A. (2008). On the back of a motorbike: Middle-class mobility in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. *American Ethnologist,* 35, 3-19.

Warren, A and Gibson, C. (2017). Subcultural enterprises, brand value, and limits to financialized growth: The rise and fall of corporate surfing brands. *Geoforum*, 86, 177-187.