**The (Im)possibility of decolonising gender in South Asia: A reading of Bollywood’s ‘new women’**

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**Abstract**

This paper highlights tensions in the continuity of coloniality and the decoloniality of gender as represented within portrayals of new women in Bollywood, through an analysis of the heroines’ dance, sexuality, anger and consumption. This reading of Bollywood’s new women alludes to the (im)possibility of decolonising gender in South Asia, arguing that the emergent female subjects of these movies find themselves in cross-pulls between the need for self-realisation, neo-liberalism, and national identity. Our analysis reveals within these multiple cross-pulls there are moments that rupture the narratives of coloniality/modernity, by proposing a version of what Partha Chatterjee’s called ‘our modernity’. These narrative ruptures allow us to challenge historically received notions of identity and representations of Third World women, and of gender in South Asia. At the same time, the characters analysed within this paper continue to uncritically subscribe to colonial forms of modernity, through active participation as workers and consumers in the capitalist economy.

**Keywords**

Bollywood, New Woman, Coloniality, Decolonisation, Third World Woman, Modernity

**Introduction**

In 2018, Tanushree Dutta, a little-known female Bollywood actor and former beauty queen, was credited for her role in initiating the #Metoo movement in India, after publicly disclosing her experience of sexual harassment at the hands of Nana Patekar, a famous male actor. Dutta had previously spoken out about her harassment following the incident in 2008. She was attacked by an angry mob for raising such allegations against the widely popular Patekar, and had to flee to the United States, where she fell into relative obscurity. Until now, sexual harassment within Bollywood has remained an open secret, as female actors feared loss of position and roles that could follow in the wake of public disclosures. Following, the rising international power of female Bollywood stars such as Deepika Padukone, Alia Bhatt, Priyanka Chopra, and an emerging crop of mainstream female directors and writers such as Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti and Gauri Shinde, many commentators believe that the time is ripe for the emergence of Bollywood’s #Metoo movement. Not only are these women making and starring in commercially successful films with strong female lead characters, but like their male counterparts, are increasingly becoming more involved in consolidating their ‘star power’ by owning production houses, cricket and football teams, financing start-up businesses, etc.

This paper explores recent representations of the new women in Bollywood cinema, through an analysis of four selected movies. We argue that the new women characters in these movies represent both India, and Indian culture’s transnational position on the global map, while also highlighting Indian women’s negotiations with the boundaries of ideal Indian femininity. Such successful negotiations enable their claims to decolonise gender relations in India. However, a ‘new patriarchy’ in practices of consumption and consumerism re-colonises these characters in patriarchal gender regimes, making the process of decolonising gender impossible in this context.[[1]](#endnote-2) We draw on the concept of the New Woman to investigate and compare character narratives of women from four commercially successful, critically acclaimed women centered mainstream movies in the last five years - *Queen* (2014), *Piku* (2015) *Dear Zindagi* (2016) and *Veere di Wedding* (2018). In so doing, we trace Bollywood’s representations of new Indian women who are renegotiating the boundaries of tradition and modernity, while securing a transnational identity, whereby local and global practices of femininity interact to create complex, multiple and heterogenous modernities. We argue that in their renegotiations, these characters contribute to the creation of what Partha Chatterjee called ‘our modernity’, an Indigenised form of modernity that merges the universal modernity of the West - in which the colonised were only ever consumers, never producers - and ‘the modernity of the once colonised’, who cherish certain traditional values perceived by Westerners as backward and unprogressive.[[2]](#endnote-3) In this paper, we appropriate Chatterjee’s theory in relation to Western neo-liberalism, and nationalist defined respectable femininity performed by women of the Indian middle- and upper-classes. In the selected movies, the female subjects are transformed into transnational consumer subjects where transnationalism stands for the intricate negotiations between the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ to re-negotiate gender regimes.[[3]](#endnote-4) We argue that this transnationality is a defining characteristic of Bollywood’s new women, who reflect the neoliberal outlook of their audience, while being attentive to local indigenous traditions. We acknowledge that this specific subject position of new womanhood is granted to these characters due to their status as urban, upper caste, middle and upper-class, and internationally mobile subjectivities. We conclude that embodying new womanhood enables these characters to construct alternative, individualised, multiple forms of modernities which marks their newness.

Partha Chatterjee argues that new women are subjected to a *new* patriarchy’.[[4]](#endnote-5) In this paper, we articulate this new patriarchy as neo-liberal patriarchy, which makes specific demands of consumerism, public and international mobility to the new women, seen through practices of dressing, leisure, drinking alcohol, travelling and so on. Patriarchy and other exclusionary regimes are not transcended in transnationalism, but these negotiations of modernity and tradition produce a unique hybridity that works in-between borders to frame new possibilities of gender, class, religion, language, and so on. We also highlight the possibility and impossibility of decolonisation of gender, in the portrayals of new women in Bollywood, by paying attention to how transnationality is embodied through dance, expressions of sexual desires, and the claiming of public spaces through emotional expression and consumptive practices. We demonstrate that the new women of our selected Bollywood movies provide valuable insights into the complex subject position of transnationality, which is constructing *and* constructed by the new patriarchy. Herein, ‘multiple histories and political frames intersect to create possibilities for certain redefinitions that speak to different cartographies’.[[5]](#endnote-6) In particular, viewing these women’s source of negotiating power as rooted in their participation in the neo-liberal economy, or a new patriarchy, which is critical in thinking about the continued coloniality of these depictions by neoliberal forces, despite the possibility of rupture and change by forging ‘Our modernity’.

Understanding portrayals of the new women in Bollywood is significant given its powerful role in transnationally disseminating visual expressions of Indian-ness to the world.[[6]](#endnote-7) It presents India as it ‘should be’ for the global Indian middle class, using various gendered tropes around nation, culture and modernity.[[7]](#endnote-8) Studying Bollywood enables us to probe how cultural forms move transnationally, creating and re-creating a neo-liberal yet Indian subject position of new women, whilst normalising and invisibilising the new patriarchy of consumerism. This paper begins by introducing the key female characters at the centre of this analysis. It then offers a theorisation of the decolonial lens through which the construction of new women in Bollywood is probed. Next, by looking at the dance and expressions of sexual desires this paper argues that the transnational location of Bollywood’s new women allows them to construct and perform ‘our modernity’. In the case of Bollywood’s new women this modernity is premised upon the neoliberal idea of women as bearers of the choice to consume. Such depictions both reproduce and challenge the coloniality of gender at the same time. The paper concludes by highlighting the (im)possibility of the decolonial project in Bollywood’s representation of women.

**The characters**

*Piku* is the film title and the name of the lead character, played by Deepika Padukone. An independent, ill-tempered woman charged with caring responsibilities for an aging father, Piku must carefully balance this traditionally feminine role with a career and a casual sexual relationship, while seeking a permanent relationship. For Piku, stability means a love marriage and financial solvency, the latter which she hopes to achieve with the sale of her ancestral home.

In the movie *Queen* (Rani in Hindi), Kangana Ranaut plays Rani, a middle - lower middle class young woman from Delhi’s Rajouri Garden market and shopping district dominated by a Punjabi trading community. Rani is left distraught and publicly humiliated after her fiancé calls off their wedding at the last minute. His excuse? Rani, he claims lacks the necessary Western finesse befitting his future transnational life in London. Yet courageously, Rani decides to use the pre-booked honeymoon package to travel alone to Europe, and the film takes the viewers on her journey to independent womanhood as she learns to live life on her own terms.

*Dear Zindagi* (Dear Life) features Alia Bhat as Kaira, a cinematographer working and living alone in Mumbai. As the movie opens, Kaira grapples with dilemmas arising from having slept with Raghu, a film producer, while being in a relationship with another man. A series of unfortunate events unfold, starting with Raghu’s engagement to another girl, her dream project folding, and eviction from her rented home, leads to an emotional breakdown, prompting Kaira’s return to her parental home in Goa. The film depicts Kaira’s journey of self-discovery through a series of conversations with her therapist, Dr Jahangir Khan, played by I Shah Rukh Khan, currently enjoying superstardom status in India

*Veere di Wedding*, often referred to as the *Sex and the City* of Bollywood, is a movie about female friendship between Kalindi, Avni, Shakshi and Meera, played by mainstream Bollywood heroines Kareena Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor, Swara Bhaskar and Shikha Talsania. The four friends are career professionals or independently wealthy, internationally mobile and avid consumers, who enjoy luxury holidays, brand label clothing, and expensive jewelry. The film revolves Kalindi’s reluctant acceptance of a marriage proposal from her fiancé, whom she subsequently jilts, and the parallel journeys of her three friends as they respectively find a partner, obtain divorce, find acceptance of a post-pregnancy body. In short, *Veere di Wedding* is a celebration of female bonding, female sexuality, and LGBT families.

**Reading Bollywood’s new women through a decolonial lens[[8]](#footnote-1)**

AnabelQuijano argues that we live in a global, Eurocentric capitalist formation organized around two axes, namely, ‘the coloniality of power’ and ‘modernity’.[[9]](#endnote-9) These axes order the disputes over control of each area of existence: sex, labour, collective authority and subjectivity/intersubjectivity, their resources and products. Since it has permeated every area of social existence, coloniality constitutes the most effective form of material and inter-subjective social domination.[[10]](#endnote-10) In Quijano’s model, modernity is characterised by a way of knowing, labelled rational, arising from the main hegemonic centres of colonial power in the West. The concept of ‘modernity/coloniality’ was proposed by Quijano and further developed by Walter Mignolo to describe their inseparability.[[11]](#endnote-11) Like postcolonialists, decolonial scholars also draw attention to the relationship between colonialism and the narrative of modernity, through which much of the world’s history has come to be understood. Modernity, then, is viewed as an epistemological frame that is inseparably bound to the European colonial project.

María Lugones builds on the coloniality of power to conceptualise the coloniality of gender and gender relations in former colonies. Lugones shows how coloniality permeates all aspects of social existence and gives rise to new social and geo-cultural identities, thereby creating gendered and racialized identity[[12]](#endnote-12). From a coloniality of gender perspective, modernity/coloniality implemented European understandings of gender and sex, erasing the various conceptualisations that pre-existed European modern/colonial gender systems. The concept of gender imposed by colonial rulers became a tool for domination that designated two binary oppositions and hierarchical social categories; women became defined by their subordinate relation to men in all categories. Colonisation thereby created the modern understandings of race and gender; the imposition of race theory and racism accompanied the inferiorisation of indigenous peoples, as the imposition of gender accompanied the inferiorisation of indigenous women. Thus, even though European empires ended, women of the former colonies remain integral projects of nation building and of decolonisation, both on account of their race and gender. [[13]](#endnote-13)

Much like decolonial scholars, postcolonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha and Partha Chatterjee are also critical of a Eurocentric idea of universal understanding of modernity in the context of postcolonial south Asia. For Bhabha, modernity is negotiated *within* the ‘enunciative’ present of the discourse.[[14]](#endnote-14) In this paper we are interested in interrogating the concept of modernity through its ‘continual contestation in the present’ in Bollywood’s portrayals of new women[[15]](#endnote-15). These negotiation calls into question both the conditions with which modernity is typically associated, and the agents who can or cannot lay claim to it. Following Mignolo’s ‘decolonial option’ we aim to break ‘the Western code’ of modernity/coloniality both epistemologically and materially by challenging the universality of the idea of modernity.[[16]](#endnote-16) Our decolonial reading of Bollywood’s new women pays attention to the coloniality of gender in South Asia. This reading also moves beyond the realm of culture by highlighting the transnational capitalist economic processes that inscribe Bollywood’s new women in certain ways.

Discussing decolonisation under the conditions of globalisation and multicultural capitalism, it is important to look beyond binaries of coloniser vs. colonised, tradition vs. modernity, rational vs. barbaric, feminine vs. masculine, and so on. Rather, in this context of ‘revamped imperial discourses’ decolonisation ‘challenges received notions of identity, temporal unevenness as well as knowledge and forms of representation’. In doing so, decolonisation ‘transforms and indigenises colonial codes and creates novel forms of translation/transculturation’.[[17]](#endnote-17) Alluding to this paper’s focus on the possibility and impossibility of decolonization, Schiwy shows that gender concepts engaged in decolonisation show different angles and depths of transformation, while continuing to work with tropes that have categorised the colonised.[[18]](#endnote-18) In this paper whilst staying attentive to critiques of modernity as coloniality, we draw attention to an indigenised form of modernity or ‘Our modernity’, enacted through the representation of new women in Bollywood. In doing so we point towards the simultaneous possibility and impossibility of decolonising gender in Bollywood.

Under various names, the ‘new Indian women’ have been conceptualised as a subject position that matches the emerging identity of the Indian nation as modern – the ‘new India’. New women are part of a distinct social group - the neoliberal middle class - whose ‘newness’ is expressed in their performance of gender, class and culturally attuned selfhood, striking a balance between ‘tradition’ and ‘modern’, simultaneously embodying the post-colonial nation and the national modernity. This is achieved through balancing appropriate sexual behaviour, work and family, culturally appropriate practices and the ‘right’ amount of freedom.[[19]](#endnote-19) Postcolonial India’s ongoing struggle to reconcile notions of cosmopolitan Indian femininity and virtuous, submissive, deeply religious femininity have been visible in debates about beauty pageants[[20]](#endnote-20), consumerism of beauty products[[21]](#endnote-21), colourism as embodied in the dominance of light skinned actresses[[22]](#endnote-22), the limits of ‘newness’ confined within the ‘old’ in Bollywood[[23]](#endnote-23), shifting social economies of gender and sexuality in post 1990s films[[24]](#endnote-24), and the complex negotiation between subjection and empowerment in Bollywood.[[25]](#endnote-25)

The new women represent a transnational subject position which recognises nationalist history, tradition, culture and gender regimes, while being mindful of movements, interconnections and exchanges across borders.[[26]](#endnote-26) The transnationalism of India’s new women can be read in relation to Partha Chatterjee’s notion of ‘our modernity’, whereby in colonial India both ‘biological (mixed race) and intellectual hybridities (Western competitiveness)’ were feared. While Chatterjee’s subject is ‘modernity’ he suggests that in nineteenth century colonial India - or more specifically Bengal - the word *adhunik*, (meaning ‘modern’ in contemporary usage), was not in use. Instead the terms *nabya* (new) and *unnati* (progress/ improvement)were commonly used to refer to modernity, whereby the ‘new’ was inextricably associated with Western education and thought. Therefore, in colonial India the New Woman signified women who had acquired education and the cultural refinement to make her a worthy companion to her husband, but would not lose her feminine spiritual (domestic) virtues, or jeopardize her place in the home.[[27]](#endnote-27) The New Woman became the ideal representation of Indian femininity. They were construed as superior to Western woman and to culturally conservative ‘common’ Indian women. Defined in this way, the New Woman was subjected to a new patriarchy, explicitly distinguishable from the indigenous patriarchy. This new patriarchy was a more classed practice, and a condition reformed and reconstructed against old patriarchy, which confined Indian women to only domesticity, creating a superior national culture to mark middle-class woman's newly acquired freedom in the public and intellectual sphere.[[28]](#endnote-28) In this paper, we draw from Chatterjee’s analysis to flag a different configuration of patriarchy in contemporary India that moves in consonance with selected elements of traditional Indian society, while at the same time appropriates western influences of capitalism and consumerism.

Using examples from recent Bollywood movies, we show that ‘transgressive’ dancing, sexual agency and public expressions of emotions side by side with acceptance of gendered restraint and women’s caring responsibilities enable Bollywood’s new women to forge an indigenised ‘our modernity’. This form of modernity epistemologically disrupts the Western codes of coloniality/modernity and generates possibilities for the decolonisation of gender. However, we also find that being materially grounded in a transnational consumer-subject location, India’s new women are deeply rooted in a coloniality/modernity, which renders the project of decolonisation impossible. A reading of the new women of Bollywood enable us to ask, what kind of femininities are validated in contemporary India? The answer is transnational subject positions, which contritutes mindfulness of Western cultural exchanges, whilst prioritising national cultures. It is an important source of positive identity which ultimately contributes to the construction of ‘our modernity’ or their own version of modernity. Moreover, it challenges older articulations of gender regimes in India, which bound women within strict boundaries of ideal or respectable Indian femininity. This version of modernity acknowledges structural constraints of national borders, with its specific nuances and histories, while being mindful about ‘flows, inter-connections, exchanges, and influences that cross borders’.[[29]](#endnote-29) We draw attention to the emergent consuming subjects, deploying Chatterjee’s concept of new patriarchy to demonstrate how Bollywood’s new women are constituted through their acts of consumption – of goods, services and a certain aspirational lifestyle. Our theorisation stresses Mohanty’s call to attend to borders of identity, such as gender, sexuality, culture, and geography, while also learning to transcend them, thus creating an expansive and inclusive vision of gender within which women are active participants in the production of their own version of modernity’.[[30]](#endnote-30) In doing so, new women transform the narratives about colonial modernity, by rejecting subaltern status, and as agents in the construction of their own discourse of modernity.[[31]](#endnote-31) This new discourse of modernity, challenges certain elements of colonial modernity, leading to decolonial outcomes while reinforcing other aspects of its reproduction within the coloniality of gender categories. Ultimately this shows us the impossibility of the decolonial project in a transnational industry like Bollywood which relies on specific representations of womanhood to produce cultural and economic value under a capitalist system.

**Embodied Transgressions: Dance and Sexuality**

Through its elaborate song-dance sequences, Bollywood speaks of new forms of gender politics.[[32]](#endnote-32) Dancing women re-produce and/or rupture Indian myths about femininity. Indian mythology associates dancing women with sexual, erotic and spiritual aptitude, as well as their beauty and talent for the art form.[[33]](#endnote-33) Until the 1990s, the majority of Bollywood’s female characters could be categorised into two dichotomous dispositions from the *Mahabharata* the Indian mythological epic - Meneka, the ‘other woman’, temptress, dancer vs. Sita, the ideal wife with bowed head, downcast eyes and *sindhoor* (vermilion).[[34]](#endnote-34) During India’s anti-colonial struggle, the nationalist movement and the Hindu nationalist sentiment of the 1990s supported these trends in gender signification to construct further binaries of nationalist (Sita/Heroine) vs. Western (Meneka/Vamp) Bollywood female characters. Figures of Anglo-Indian women in the 1950s-1970s and the Indo-Anglo Heroine (Indian women in the West) of the 1990s-2000s were presented in opposition to the nationalist heroine as the epitome of sexually active and/or sensual promiscuous women. [[35]](#endnote-35) Such nationalist promotions of the mythical dichotomous representation of dancing women in Bollywood negates women’s individuality, freedom of choice, while also repressing narratives of real world stories of oppression of mistreatment of Indian women. Recent trends in dances produce a space for the articulation of female sexuality that seems less confined by nationalist and spiritual ideals that marked colonial and postcolonial women’s position within the nation, reflected in Bollywood’s heroine characters. For example, in today’s ‘item songs’ rather than vamps as in the past, it is the heroines who take part in sexually suggestive dances such as Kareena Kapoor in *Dabangg 2* (2012) or Priyanka Chopra in *Goliyon ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* (2013) transgressing the Sita/Heroine vs. Meneka/Vamp binary.

In the selected movies, narrative progression and character development is the main purpose of the songs, except in *Veere di Wedding*. In *Queen* the sole conventional dance song is that of Rani’s Mehndi celebration. The next time we see Rani dancing is when, after several shots of vodka, she starts dancing to an old Bollywood song playing at a French club, which underlines Bollywood’s transnational circulation, and its positioning of India on the global map through cultural flows. She is joined by scantily dressed white women who eventually start stripping. Rani tries to emulate them, yet manages to keep her kurta and jeans on, metaphorically representing the sexual restraint of respectable Indian women, in contrast to the perceived uncontrolled sexuality of white women. Rani is also shown dancing with scantily clad men in the club, but the scene mobilises the awkwardness of their interaction for comic purposes, rather than pointing to the sexual transgressions of ideal Indian femininity. Arora argues the remixed old Hindi song, a Vamp number from *Anhonee*, a 1973 film, represents Rani’s defiance within a gendered historical context, and is suggestive of blurred lines between heroine and vamp, to create a liminal space where Bollywood’s new Indian woman emerges.[[36]](#endnote-36) Throughout the song, Rani continuously speaks of her heartbreak to her new friend, who barely understands the language. Through dancing and talking about her recent heartbreak openly with clubgoers, Rani is seen to be healing her heart on her own terms, and as though taking revenge for the pain and disappointment she had been subjected to.

In *Dear Zindagi*, similarly, Kaira puts on her headphones and dances to her own music in a busy club to a song titled ‘Let’s break up’, to show her former boyfriend that she is over him. At the club, she says, ‘Dancing helps. Social or solo, it always helps’ (dialogue is in English). And like Rani in *Queen*, Kaira uses dance to overcome heartache. The other time we see Kaira dancing is in her imagination when she realises she is falling in love with her therapist. In this scene, Kaira copies her therapist’s body language through dance. None of the dances are choreographed pieces to entertain the audience, they are free style or seemingly ‘real life’ dance scenes reinstating the realism of Kaira’s life. Healing emotional turmoil through dance is not a new Bollywood trope. In the 1980s and 1990s Sridevi’s films often included a solo dance sequence intended to signify the release of the female protagonist’s anger or sadness. This is notable in films such as *Chaalbaz* (1989), *Chandni* (1989) and *Lamhe* (1991) where a choreographed *Tandav* (a vigorous dance that is the source of the cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution in Hindu mythology) is performed. Unlike Sridevi, Rani and Kaira heal their heartbreak and anger in public rather than in private. Rani presents her own individuality, without being hypersexual, yet hinting to sexual transgressions e.g. she allows men to get close to her, and in a later scene discussed below, gives into temptation to kiss an acquaintance. Both Rani and Kaira represent a transnational ideal of modern Indian femininity, a hybrid of Meneka and Sita, legitimising women’s individuality, establishing interconnections and influences of local traditions and global notions of sexual expressions. Unlike in ‘item numbers’ or ‘romantic songs’ however, their dancing is neither about satisfying the national or global male gaze or achieving satisfaction within a heterosexual relationship. Instead, their dancing is suggestive of a rejection of their gendered inferiority, a refusal to conform to the exoticism imputed on Indian women in transnational spaces.

The most popular song from *Veere di Wedding* is *Tareefan* (praise), which uses misogynistic, sexist and chauvinist language to objectify faceless, scantily dressed men who are shown being spanked by the four female protagonists. The women exude sexual desire, symbolised by scantily clothed bodies, coy facial expressions, hand gestures and writhing bodies, as they lip sync a misogynistic song to the males around them, reversing the male gaze. Yet, that the song is sung by a male singer, problematises suggestions of a reversed male gaze. Undoubtedly, *Veere* women transgress the norms of respectable Indian femininity e.g. in songs where Mira announces ‘*aaj hum kutte ki tarha piyenge’* (today we will drink [alcohol] like dogs), for Kalindi’s engagement, and competes with other men and women to lick alcohol from a bowl on the floor. In another scene, Kalindi and her friends go on stage at a stripping joint and strip for fun. By selectively appropriating misogynistic language and indulging in Western practices - consuming alcohol and stripping- *Veere* women can be read as attempting to connect the local and global through construction of a transgressive femininity - a subject location traditionally not granted to heroines. These women resist being defined by their subordinate relationship to men, and frequently adopt masculine or laddish characteristics.

Dance, however, is not the sole vehicle through which ideas about ideal Indian femininity and womanhood are carried. Piku’s character, for instance, is never shown dancing. She often appears in fusion clothing, that is, a long Indian tunic, palazzo trousers and scarf, as opposed to the regular (*Veere* and *Dear Zindagi*) or occasional (*Queen*) Western dress favoured by the heroines of the other movies. Notably, in Bollywood films like *Kabhi khushi kabhie gham* (2003) and *Veere*, Punjabi characters tend to represent wealth and extravagance, associated with vulgarity and public display of affluence. Both *Queen* and *Veere* bank on reputed Punjabi flamboyance for song and dance and comic relief. While female Bengali characters in Bollywood are represented as ‘modern’, yet exhibiting traditional qualities embodied in Sita, the Hindu goddess - patience, purity, and faithfulness - evidenced in movies like *Devdas* (2002), *Parineeta* (2005) and *Lootera* (2013). In colonial India, Bengalis represented a new social elite emerging around the institutions of colonial administration and trade. Colonial Bengali womens’ spiritual and cultural identity was valorised over flamboyant lower-class and Western femininity, despite a certain degree of imitation in clothing being granted.[[37]](#endnote-37) Piku’s body embodies these distinctions; as a Bengali woman she establishes her cultural and caste superiority through restraint from spontaneously breaking into dances and through her fusion clothing, elements which distinguish her from *Veere* and *Queen,* the Punjabi characters. At the same time, Piku establishes her transnationality in her active sexual life, financial independence and her choice of fusion clothing.

Despite Piku’s efforts to distinguish herself from ‘low’ and ‘loud’ cultures, she tries (along with Kaira and the *Veere* characters) to renegotiate the dichotomised Heroine vs. Vamp, Westernised Indian women and Anglo-Indian women identities that are typically represented as sexually permissive and indifferent to family allegiances.[[38]](#endnote-38) In our selected movies, with the exception of Rani, the characters all merge family centered and caring aspects of ideal Indian femininity (Heroine), with the sensuality of the Westernised Vamp, perhaps to appeal to a globalised Indian/Hindu audience of Bollywood. Piku’s father’s acceptance of her active sex life is established early in the plot. At the same time her role as primary care-giver for her father, her fusion dressing, her assertiveness and her professional skills construct her as a strong and confident person in relation to the film’s male characters. In fact, the audiences are encouraged to empathise with her inability to enjoy a stable heterosexual relationship via marriage due to the extraordinary demands of caring for her ailing father. When an aunt introduces her to a potential suitor at a party, Piku’s father intervenes, declaring that his daughter is a strong, economically independent and sexually active woman who does not need a man. Piku’s sexual independence evidenced through past friendships with sexual benefits, is not really free from the limits of respectable sexual behaviour embodied in chastity; rather she is free to transcend it, but is subsequently undermined as a suitable ‘patri’ (a bride to be), for eligible bachelors. However, both Piku and Avni in *Veere* are clearly looking for a life partner/ husband despite their active sexual lives. Both are shown meeting men on first dates or searching for partners on dating websites, upholding the respectability norm which requires Indian women to be in a legitimate heterosexual relationship. Piku’s thrice married aunt and Avni’s mother’s constant references to the biological clock demonstrates that the rhetoric of these women’s emancipated ‘choices’ in the movies may be that of the modern Indian women, but they are still reminded of their gendered cultural role of reproduction through marriage.

In *Dear Zindagi* Kaira pushes the discussion around women’s sexuality and relationships. In the dancefloor scene discussed above, Kaira resists being tied down into monogamous relationship with a former lover. This scene represents a pivotal moment in Bollywood’s history, where women’s sexual desires are untangled from their desires for a romantic relationship and family. Similarly, Piku’s causal relationship with Sayed, and Avni’s with Bhandari in *Veere* depict women having sexual desires independent of their desire for love and marriage. Viewed in this way, the coloniality of gender is challenged by these women’s resistance to their subordination to men or simply in relation to men.

In a sexual scenario never before shown in Bollywood, Sakshi from *Veere* is caught masturbating by her husband. While this scene ruptures traditional depictions of women’s passive male centred sexuality and pleasure, the film’s narrative highlights the shame that surrounds women’s claims to sexual pleasure, with Sakshi hiding the incident from her family and best friends. Yet when Sakshi finally reveals the incident to friends and family, a powerful disruptive counter narrative around women’s solidarity and the normalisation of women’s sexual pleasure is produced. The scene in which she reveals the masturbation incident to her parents symbolises the tension between Sakshi’s sense of shame, and the expression of relief on her face when, instead of the expected rebuke and shaming, her parent’s laugh at their daughter’s story. This scene perhaps symbolises the emergence of transnational lifestyles among certain classes in India, where women’s need for sexual pleasure is recognised. Furthermore, it disrupts the coloniality of gender by representing women’s sexual pleasure outside of a heterosexual and patriarchal lens. As McClintock states ‘sexual purity emerged as a controlling metaphor for racial, economic and political power’ in the 19th century. The sexual behaviour of colonised women came to be used as the ‘anatomical criteria … sought for determining the relative position of races in the human series.’.[[39]](#endnote-39) Through their assertions to the right to seek out and practice sexual pleasure, and the evolving social legitimacy of women’s sexual freedoms, such women challenge the coloniality of gender as they defy Eurocentric views of the inhibited sexuality of Indian women.

In *Queen,* despite her sexual naivety, Rani’s character opens up a space for discussion about sex and sexual desire among less Westernised Indian women. Rani’s journey of self-discovery takes her to Europe, where she explores the world of a women making sexual and reproductive choices through the eyes of her free spirited, French Indian friend Vijaylaxmi. Rani’s sexual naivety is signalled when, on a visit to a sex shop, she purchases sex toys as gifts for family members, unaware of their intended purpose. Following Arora in Rani we see the desirable ‘modernisation-without-westernisation’ subject position required of the new woman and new India, while the film leaves room for the possibilities of the new woman’s self-fulfilment through romantic, sexual and emotional self-actualization.[[40]](#endnote-40) So for this paper the selected characters represent the idea of ‘balance’ (Piku and Rani) and ‘Connectivity’ (all characters through travel, dress, dance and expressions of sexuality) embedded in the concept of transnationality.

In this section we claim that the transnational new woman disrupts the vamp vs. heroine binary and the private vs. public dichotomy through displays of emotions expressed in dance form and desire for sexuality pleasure. Furthermore, by their achievement in creating a ‘balance’ between family life and sexual desire, new women create their own multiple versions of modernity. By forging ‘our modernity’ these transnational subjects create the possibility of decolonising gender or challenging the coloniality/modernity of gender by disrupting colonial imposed racial and gender hierarchies. In the next section, we continue these analyses around transnationalism but also highlight how new women are subjected to the new patriarchy of neo-liberal consumerism in the selected movies.

**Claiming ‘public’ spaces: Expression of anger and the consuming subject**

Bollywood’s representation of masculinity and femininity have seen extensive cultural shifts a in the post globalisation era, with the emergence of the metrosexual hero in the 1990s, followed by the twenty-first century re-emergence of the hyper-masculine hero. Masculine anger continues to anchor many of Bollywood’s mainstream storylines - whether expressed as anger against social or personal injustices, or anger towards enemies of the nation or comminity. These emotions are often played out in public spaces, and typically depict the leading men delivering angst-driven dialogues, fighting the ‘other’, and so on. Significations of male anger in Bollywood are performed through their authoritative claiming of public spaces e.g. entry into scenes on loud motorcycles/bikes, through physical altercations with other men, acts of male bonding or their harassment of women in public spaces. In contrast, women’s expression anger is seen as an aberration, so when it does exist it takes the forms of transcendental revenge in dramas such as *Khoon Bhari Mang* (1988), *Bhool Bhoolaiya* (2007*)* and *Kahani* (2012*),* relying heavily on tropes of Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction. These women don’t express anger and frustration in their everyday lives, instead expressing a potentially destructive violence to avenge being wronged in motherhood and/or in love. Alternatively, character portrayals of police such as Rani Mukherjee in *Mardani* (2014) and Tabu in *Drishyam* (2015) can be seen as holders of legitimate anger as a way to fulfil the gendered expectations of masculine behaviour in their careers within the police force. Another popular representational trope of women’s anger is that of the strict, disciplinarian matriarch, such as that played by Ratna Pathak Shah in *Khoobsurat* (2014*).* These characters are largely shown as protectors of the heterosexual family unit, of culture and tradition, and hence their anger is legitimised. Moreover, such characters are often shown wielding a lot of symbolic, social and economic influence, inherited through husbands who are either sick or dead. In such circumstances, women may access power generally denied them. Overall, expressions of female anger in Bollywood is mobilised in support of the family and accepted cultural norms, hence maintaining the coloniality of gender discussed earlier. In *Eloquent Rage,* Brittney Cooper posits black women’s anger as a political response to historic injustices and the continued forms of gendered and racialised violence. Viewed through this lens, anger is not an emotional response to individual experiences of injustice. Cooper argues that black women’s anger and rage is weaponized against them to violent ends.[[41]](#endnote-41) Though not a explicitly a decolonial project, Cooper’s narrative shows how women of color/colonized women were subjected to and disempowered by colonial racial and gender regimes.

The women characters discussed in this paper express anger in the public sphere in distinct ways. Yet unlike Cooper’s theory of black women’s rage as rooted within a collective sense of historic injustice, Bollywood’s new women express individualised rage not necessarily connected to the socio-political realities of Indian women. When Kaira gets the news of ex-boyfriend Raghu’s engagement, she expresses her anger by eating chillies in a restaurant, and later, smashing jars of ‘Ragu’ pasta sauce in a supermarket because the brand name prompted reminders of her former lover. In a subsequent scene, in which the sound track of *‘Just go to hell, Dil’* plays in the background,Kaira’s emotional unravelling is manifested when she rips up photographs, dances alone, and struggles to maintain the appearance of normality. Her actions depict Kaira’s anger and frustration at her situation, but they also show control over her physical space, where she feels free to express her personal emotional turmoil. By contrast, Piku expresses her anger and frustrations in a far more restrained manner, e.g. burying her face in a pillow in order to muffle her anguished loud shouts. However, Piku is frequently seen countering her father’s views, and closing a door on his face during arguments. Piku shows restraint in expressing her anger and frustration, but like Kaira, she is also seen expressing herself vocally with her father, co-workers and friends. In one scene she tells her boss, *‘I need a break, I am not coming to work for a few days.’* Such individual rage stands in sharp contrast to the transcendental rage expressed by the lead female characters in *Bhool Bhoolaya (2007)*, *Khoon Bhari Maang (1988), Kahaani (2012), Nagin (1986).* This range is also distinctively personal compared against the more collective forms of rage expressed by female characters played by Madhuri Dixit in *Gulab Gang* (2014) and *Lajja (2001), Mrityudand (1997)* and Smitha Patil in *Mirch Malsala (1987).*

Notably, in addition to being granted the right to public expressions of anger, Bollywood’s new women are also authorised to loiter in public spaces. Loitering by women in the public space is inextricably linked to pleasure seeking. According to this view, women who loiter in public make claims to equal citizenship by making claims to the right of equal enjoyment of public spaces, without having to demonstrate a well-defined purpose.[[42]](#endnote-42) The four friends in *Veere* are shown loitering in public spaces in India and abroad, crossing the boundaries of public and private, as well as boundaries of the nation state. Similarly, Rani and her friend Vijaylaxmi are seen loitering in public spaces in Paris. Kaira and Piku are also seen seeking pleasure in public spaces such as shops, malls and cafes. Such a claim to pleasure and unrestricted access to public spaces through loitering undermines the social order which traditionally locates women in private spaces such as homes. Loitering women transcend the dichotomy of public - private spaces, by suggesting that women, like men, can seek pleasure outside the confines of the home. The characters in this paper extend the concept of loitering by highlighting women’s expression of a fuller range of emotions, especially anger, as integral to their claims upon public spaces, and thereby upon citizenship, as Phadke *et.al* suggest. Women’s expressions of a fuller range of emotions including anger we discuss in this paper is tied to two things. First the emergence of a ‘safe’ transnational public space such as malls and cafes in urban India (as seen in *Piku* an *Dear Zindagi*) and accessible gateways outside India such as Thailand (in *Veere*), Europe (in *Queen*). Secondly, the rise of neo-liberal female subject who is authorised to present these spaces on account of her ability consumption, care of self and work on self.[[43]](#endnote-43)

Immediately after having an argument with her employer, Piku is shown heading to a mall, where she spends the rest of the day, eating sweets purchased in the mall. The *Veere* women mark the various important moments in their lives by going out, dressing in expensive Western designer brands, drinking, eating, shopping and holidaying overseas. These examples indicate that women’s access to public spaces and their expression of emotions publicly rests upon their location as consumers within the transnational economy. When her wedding was suddenly cancelled, Rani decides to go it alone on her planned honeymoon trip. Commenting on Bollywood’s recent women centered films Sharma (2014) says that the “new film projects are focused on the ‘woman’, seeking to empower her through ‘transnational publics’ instead of the national (Indian) publics that are fraught with danger.”.[[44]](#endnote-44) In other words, public spaces within which Bollywood’s women can be seen are heard are either geographically located outside India (e.g. in *Queen* and *Veere*), or metaphorically disconnected from the lives of the majority of Indians such as in malls, clubs, discos, shopping complexes, cafes (e.g. *in Piku, Veere, Dear Zindagi*). We extend Sharma’s argument further by showing that such depictions allow certain types of women - the cosmopolitan and wealthy, who are able to consume both local and global goods and services e.g. fashion, accessories, services, luxury holidays, food, and so on - are now increasingly authorised by Bollywood to be seen and heard in public spaces. Viewed in this way, new women have conditional loitering privileges granted by their ability to spend and consume in these public spaces, as the characters discussed in this paper show. In these portrayals, public spaces can be viewed as consumable items for a select few, much like food, clothes, etc. We read the female protagonists’ consumerism in the films analysed as an outcome of their exposure to neo-capitalism, a new patriarchy based on global processes of enlarging markets and the transnational flows of goods and services. New women’s consumerism can be understood as manifestations not only of their classed (and gendered) femininity, but also of their subjection to new patriarchy, which places specific demands of consumerism, international mobility, practices of dressing, leisure, drinking (alcohol), travelling and so on. Thus, these recent portrayals have created a space for women to publicly express emotions - especially anger - and to make certain claims to be seen and heard in public spaces. Yet, their subjection to new patriarchy determines the ways in which new women negotiate class, caste and gender in India, upholding the colonial ordering of races and genders. Thus, once considered amoral or decadent, participation in modern economy as a worker and consumer has been identified as one of the main characteristics of new womanhood in India.[[45]](#endnote-45)

The character of Rani in *Queen* stands out from the others in not expressing anger in any obvious ways, even when her fiancé cancels the wedding at the last minute, causing her much public embarrassment. This can be read through the depiction of her location in Delhi’s Rajori Garden, and her lack of a professional career, in contrast to the other main characters discussed in this paper. Consequently, Rani’s character is unable to consume commodities or public space in the same manner as the other characters. This is illustrated in a previously discussed scene where Rani, in a moment of flamboyance, copies the dancers and takes off her cardigan, but quickly regaining composure, removes and stuffs the cardigan into her bag, thereby metaphorically keeping her ‘honor’ as an Indian woman intact. Rani, however, is not uncritical of the rigid socio-cultural structures governing women’s actions. Describing how women and girls in India are not authorised to express themselves freely, an intoxicated Rani on a taxi ride with her confidante Vijaylaxmi in Paris says *“In India girls are not allowed to burp…but then in Rajori girls aren’t allowed to do much…Let’s try burping today.* Becoming intoxicated by her consumption of alcohol, andloudly burping in a public space in a foreign land, Rani temporarily transgresses the norms of respectable femininity. Yet, Rani remains essentially Indian in her sexual naivety, her sexual restraint and her ‘middle-class’ values, while still offering an internal critique of the disciplinary regimes that prescribe the autonomy of many middle or lower middle-class women in India. Thus, creating a transnational subject position that on one hand self-disciplines but is also critical of the disciplinary regime. At the same time, Rani is also a victim of new patriarchy, who inscribes her own subordination through her actions. According to Sharma, acting out her freedom in public, as if she is unfree and at the same time naıve, is how Rani unloads indigenous patriarchy and its rules of female conduct in new places.[[46]](#endnote-46)

Unlike the characters in the other three films, Rani’s character is interesting in its invocation of the ‘local’ and ‘national’ identities to rationalize certain forms of transgression. In a scene where Rani’s character is mugged in Paris, she successfully defends herself, fighting tooth and nail, overcoming fears for her physical safety, and limited linguistic ability in a foreign country. Later, Rani triumphantly remarks *“Jebkatre ko maine aise sabak sikhaya…woh Dilliwalo ke saath panga nahi lega life meh”* (I taught the pick pocket a lesson…he will never mess with people from Delhi in his life again). Through Rani, a new type of locally rooted but transnationally mobile woman is constituted, who when pushed to the corner is not scared to fight back - symbolising the imagery of an assertive post-colonial nation. Similarly, Rani agrees to kissing an Italian chef for whom she feels attraction, only to prove the point that ‘*Indians are the best at kissing*,’ again invoking the idea of an assertive nation able to successfully compete with global powers. Yet keeping the scene devoid of sexual tension between Rani and the chef, creates a safe subject location for Rani, who is not westernised. From this location, certain ‘good’ (read still upholding nationalist superiority) transgressions become possible, even for ideal, chaste Indian women like Rani. Unlike the consuming subject authorised to enact certain transgression discussed among *Veere* girls Kaira and Piku, in this case, a nationalist subject emerges. Given Rani’s relative lower socio-economic status compared to the more urbane and professional women discussed in this paper, perhaps the consuming subject location is unavailable to her; therefore, the nationalist subject location mediates her transgressions.

The use of language is another way in which Bollywood’s new women claim physical and discursive space. The use of language spoken by all the characters discussed indicates certain forms of hybridization of languages to articulate new forms of subjectivities. For instance, though dressed in western attire and located transnationally, the four women in *Veere* speak a Delhi specific dialect of Hindi with strong Punjabi undertones, frequently interspersed with English phrases. However, when they resort to using swear words, it is always in Hindi, indicating their Indian/Delhite ‘inner world’ amidst a cosmopolitan life. Similarly, Piku transitions smoothly between English-Hindi-Bengali, often switching to Bengali in conversations with her father. Rani’s character doesn’t speak much English, but in Paris she uses a combination of weak English, Hindi and bodily gestures to communicate. Kaira’s character also swiftly switches between English and Hindi to produce hybrid sentences such as “Just go to hell, dil” (Just go to hell, heart). Trivedi discerns various language shifts and writes about the ‘hybrid Hindi’ popular in films from the 1970s.[[47]](#endnote-47) Mazumdar argues that the *tapori* language ‘embodies a polygot culture that does not fix itself within the traditional Hindi-Urdu conflict,’ and that this new language serves ‘to contest the power of a unitary language’ (i.e. Hindi/Urdu/English) and to ‘expose the vanity of elite linguistic formations.’.[[48]](#endnote-48) Applying Mazumdar and Trivedi’s insights to our analysis of the characters discussed herein we find that Bollywood’s new women are developing hybrid linguistic practices to articulate their subject positions, linguistic practices that betray binaries of Hindi-English or high and low culture. Using ‘local’ language and dialects, they are also able to nuance their geocultural and racial identities which facilitates the Third World feminist project of challenging the claimed universality of ‘Third World women’ or ‘Indian women’ as suggested by Mohanty.[[49]](#endnote-49) By doing so, these women challenge the geocultural and racial identities imposed by colonialism - “America” and “Europe” are among the new geocultural identities. “European,” “Indian,” “African” are among the “racial” identities as conceptualised by Quijano.[[50]](#endnote-50) This exercise connects Rajauri Garden with Paris and Amsterdam, connects Delhi with Kolkata, connects Delhi with Phuket and London, and it connects Mumbai with Goa through the neo-liberal economy of consumption, labour and self-care. On one hand these women’s local and transnational connection creates the possibility of decolonising identity categories, but their reliance on the neo-liberal economy to do so, simultaneously renders decolonisation impossible. Overall this section showed that whether through language, or through public expression of anger and making claims to transnational public spaces e.g. through acts of loitering, new women in Bollywood are able to rupture colonial gendered and racial categories such as public vs. private, angry brown men vs. docile brown women, and so on. However, new women in this paper are able to create these disruptions from their various locations of privilege. In particular the portrayals of new women suggest that their ability to consume enables them to claim such vocality and visibility, traditionally not accorded to female protagonists in Bollywood.

**The impossibility of the decolonial project: Transnationality, consumerism and ‘Our modernity’**

In the aftermath of the #Metoo movement, in this paper we attempted to expose changes and continuities in the representation(s) of femininity in Bollywood, through the concept of new women. We conclude that the characters we identify as new women are a segment of urban, middle to upper-class, educated, sometimes professional women, who are also internationally mobile, and exposed to Indian nationalist and Western ideals of femininity. However, what makes them new is their individual level negotiations with postcolonial gender regimes. These gender regimes have been studied in relation to normalising women’s sexual desires, previously granted only to Anglo-Indian or Western ‘Vamps’, claims to public spaces which was previously preserved for men through aggressive behaviour and language in Bollywood movies, and finally, the ability to participate in Western consumer cultures. The transnational framing of gender can only be understood in relation to the continuity of nationalist expressions of ideal respectable Indian femininity. Whether through emphasising the desire for romantic relationships and marriage for Piku and Avni*,* or through the adoption of fusion clothing by most heroines discussed in this paper. What allows these women a degree of negotiation power is their access to consumer culture, sometimes through their professional and economic power, or through access to family’s wealth. Hence, the urban, middle and upper class, internationally mobile female characters of the selected movies are able to introduce their own version of individualised yet multiple versions of modernity. Despite its ambiguous nature this modernity does not stem from any uncertainty about whether to be for or against Western modernity. Rather, the uncertainty is about how to shape ‘our modernity’, whereby we need to reject the modernities established by others. In the age of post-colonial nationalism, there were many efforts which prioritised Indian women’s cultural and spiritual superiority over other women. Today, in the age of neo-liberalisation, the selected characters of the movies actively construct their modernities in relation to consumerism and transnationality which challenge older regimes of normative femininity in both Bollywood and India at large.

Theoretically, this reading of Bollywood’s new women alludes to the (im)possibility of decolonising gender in South Asia, given that the female subjects of these movies find themselves in cross pulls between neo-liberalism, national identity and need for self-realisation. Yet within these multiple cross pulls there are moments that rupture the narratives of coloniality/modernity by proposing a version of an indigenised ‘our modernity’ - one that is ever changing, contextual and largely individual i.e. a *pluri*versal understanding of ‘modernity’[[51]](#endnote-51). These narrative ruptures allow us to challenge historically received notions of identity and representations of the Third World women and of gender *per se*. At the same time the characters analysed throughout this paper continue to uncritically subscribe to colonial forms of modernity through active participation as workers and consumers in the capitalist economy. In fact, their newness largely rests upon their ability to leverage the neo-liberal economic structures to their benefit. Herein lies the (im)possibility of decolonising gender in our readings of Bollywood’s new women. Thus, following Maldonado-Torres,[[52]](#endnote-52) we view the supposedly unfinished (democratic) project of modernity - as theorised by Habermas - as ‘the unfinished project of decolonisation.’.

1. Chatterjee, ‘Colonialism, nationalism’, 622 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Chatterjee, ‘Our Modernity’, 3 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Chatterjee, ‘English Vinglish’, 1181 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. Chatterjee, ‘Nationalist Resolution’, 244 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Ibid, 1190 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. Osuri, ‘Ash-coloured Whiteness’, 110 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. Dwyer, ‘Bollywood’s India’, 381 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. On a clarificatory note, we would like to signpost to readers that while the term ‘decolonial/decolonisation’ is used to indicate the theorization and the process, the term postcolonial is used in this paper as a geographical and spatial location to describe former British colonies, unless stated clearly as post-colonial theories or scholars. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
9. Quijano, “Coloniality of Power” and “modernity” 215 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Lugones ‘ Coloniality and material and inter-subjective social domination’, 2 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Mignolo ‘Coloniality/Moderniy’, 450 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Lugones ‘coloniality of gender’ 9 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Lugones ‘coloniality of gender’ 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 201 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Bhambra ‘continual contestation in the present’, 123 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Mignolo, ‘Delinking’, 451 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Schiwy ‘Decolonization and Subjectivity’, Schiwy and Magnelo ‘Double translation’ [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Schiwy Decolonization and Subjectivity, 271-294 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Talukdar and Linders, ‘Gender, Class Aspirations’; Radhakrishnan, ‘Professional Women’; and Mankekar, ‘Women Oriented’. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Talukdar and Linders, ‘Gender, Class Aspirations’; and Parameswaran, ‘Global Queens’. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Thapan, ‘Embodiment and Identity’ [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. See note 5 above [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. See note 3 above [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Arora, ‘Nobody puts Rani’, 146 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Sharma, ‘Transnational Publics’, 106 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Chatterjee, ‘English Vinglish’, 1182 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Chatterjee, ‘Colonialism, nationalism’, 628 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Chatterjee, ‘Colonialism, nationalism’, 627 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Chatterjee, ‘English Vinglish’, 1182 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Mohanty, ‘Feminism without Borders’, 2 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Bhambra ‘Connected Sociologies’, 123 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. See note 3 above [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Nirjhawan, ‘Excusing the female Dancer’, 101 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Arora, ‘Nobody puts Rani’, 148 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Hussein, ‘Rethinking Newwomanhood’. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Vasudevan, ‘Another History’ 2917-2925. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. McCLintock, ‘Sexual purity’, 45 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Arora, ‘Nobody puts Rani’, 147 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Cooper ‘rage’ ‘women of color’ ‘violent ends’, 7 [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Phadke et al ‘Why loiter?’, 26 [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Sharma ‘safe’ transnational public space, 109 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Daya, ‘Embodying Modernity’, 98 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Sharma, “Acting out her freedom in ‘free’ publics, as if she is unfree”, 110 [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Trivedi ‘All Kinds of Hindi’, 54 [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Mazumdar, ‘Figure of the Tapori’, 4873 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. See note 17 above [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Quijano, “America” and “Europe” “European,” “Indian,” “African”, 171. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Mignolo ‘"Delinking’, 497 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Maldonado-Torres ‘On the Coloniality of Being’, 263

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