shoes laced up. (There is an interesting historical anecdote that makes my point clearer: in 1911, an Indian team Mohun Bagan, played *foot*ball *barefoot* with an English team who were appropriately *boot*ed for the occasion. Indians take pride in the fact that Mohun Bagan went on to win the match and they add with evident pride, *bare feet*). The ancient Indian *khorom* (an entirely uncovered slipper with just a knob between the big toe and its neighbour) has given way to a slipper or the flip-flop while, in spite of many stylistic innovations, the western woman has retained the covered shoe for work, the sneakers/ sports shoes for the outdoors, and the tied-up shoe / variations of the Roman slippers for the evening out. The Indian woman will keep her feet uncovered to show off her *alta* (a red-coloured dye used to border the entire feet), anklet or *chutk*i (a toe ring). Such is the importance of the woman's feet in Hindu custom that when she enters her husband's house for the first time after marriage, she leaves impressions of her *alta*-smeared feet on a white sari. Even after a person's death, her feet are smeared with *alta* and the impression taken on paper, to be framed for remembrance later.

The hair is only too visible an example of how one culture is another's other. The hair worn short, in many ways seen as a kind of empowering statement in the west, an effort at equality, has a totally different connotation in India. If the "boys' cut" (as it is popularly called in India) is an act of choice for the empowered women (who might "wear the trousers" in the home) in the west or even the Indian elite today, for the Hindu woman (five decades back, and even now in the heart of rural India), the barbaric act of "raping the lock" after her husband's death was a standard practice, a conscious effort at de-beautification. There is a widely prevalent superstition in India that a woman who leaves her hair open in the evening and goes out of the house, finds a ghost trapped in her

which to script his desire, often using it as a proxy for the frontal grammatology. The erotics of the back are best reve(a)led in the cut of the draping fabric. Since the culture of fashion has been such that emphasis been placed on covering the organs associated with reproduction (right from the fig leaf to the bikini), the back has eluded Indian culture's censorious scissors. In doing so, the territory of the back has allowed the back-scooped-out garments like the *choli* to flourish in the Indian subcontinent.

The question of complexion constructs a unique parallelogram of othering. Matrimonial advertisements in

hands and eyes of culture, and, also more importantly, how the body, through the materialisation of *habitus*, is inevitably rendered a "cultural other."

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[1] Adrienne Rich, *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985* (London: Norton, 1986), 212.

[2] Robyn Longhurst, "(Dis)embodied geographies" (*Progress in Human Geography*, 21.4, 1997), 486-501.

[3] Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 6.

[4] Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1990), 6.

[5] Quoted in Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London:Routledge, 1997), 8.

[6] Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-cities," in Beatriz Colomina, ed., *Sexuality and Space* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 12.