

Chapter 2

Motorcycle and Its Aesthetics: A Glimpse in History

History is but a confused heap of facts
—Chesterfield

Therefore, looking at history, any history, is a complicated exercise. If it would have been just listing the chronology of events, it would have been easy. To be honest, even that is not easy. In fact, at any point of time, hundreds of incidents happen in many parts of the world. To judge the incidents, to select the ones worth a mention and to link them through a narrative is a daunting task. But this is not what we mean by looking at history. Because, when we do this, we have to decide the insight that needs to be derived. To decide the insight, we need to answer this question-why at all we need to look at the history of motorcycles in a book discussing motorcycle aesthetics. You can guess the answer is not very difficult. The parameters of aesthetics are inextricably linked to the social sensibilities across the world and the social sensibilities traverse diverse trajectories in different societies. The evolution of these sensibilities depends not only on the histories of societies themselves but the evolution of cultures and technologies as well. Moreover, the parameters of semantics themselves evolve with history. So, the insights that we want to derive from history are twofold:

- a. The relationship between the technological evolution of motorcycles and social and cultural evolutions.
- b. The evolution of semantic parameters linked to motorcycle technology.

So the contours of the discussion are getting clearer. Like all histories, we will divide the history of motorcycles in periods and each period will be discussed across different geographies. Each of these small pieces will be discussed for the technological evolution, the impact of social and cultural changes on them and the semantic parameters.

2.1 1869 to First World War: The Birth-Pangs

Europe was the center of global awakening in this period and America was on the cusp of greatness. The decline of Vatican in the affairs of state and feudalism shedding the space to capitalism had heralded new ideas in areas of science, arts, and literature. Capitalism was a fresh flower free from feudal prejudices and goading people to invest in new ideas. At the same time, industrial revolution, as the industry was moving from craft to mass manufacturing, for the first time created the necessity for people to commute long distances on a daily basis. Moreover, the frequent Napoleonic wars had caused the fodder prices to go through the roof and personal transport using horses and horse carriages became unaffordable. So, the three factors—industrial revolution and scientific awakening, the shift from craft to mass manufacturing and high fodder prices—made the situation ripe for invention of a cheap, fast and automated (not animal driven) mode of transport for lower income group.

The invention of motorcycle was, of course, the logical consequence of two great breakthroughs—the internal combustion engine and bicycle and obviously the starting visual metaphor was exactly the reflection of that (Fig. 2.1; Table 2.1). The visual metaphor of motorcycle was clearly derived from bicycle with an engine added to that.

Before we talk about the semantics in this period, we can have a look at the causative factors—cultural and socioeconomic influences leading to the semantics. This was the time when Europe was abuzz with Marxist thought in midst of



Fig. 2.1 The evolution of the visual metaphor

Table 2.1 Engineering specifications

Specification	Daimler Einsper (1885)	Hildebrand and Wolfmuller (1894)	Harley Davidson (1903)
Engine	Single-cylinder air cooled, inlet over exhaust two valves	Water cooled four-stroke parallel twin	Air cooled, inlet over exhaust two valves
Capacity	264 cc (58 × 100 mm)	1489 cc (90 × 117 mm)	412 cc (76 × 89 mm)
Max power	0.5 hp@600 rpm	2.5 hp@240 rpm	4 hp
Transmission	Single speed belt final drive	Drive to rear axle	Single speed shaft final drive
Frame	Wood	Tubular steel	Steel twin down-tube
Suspension	None	None	Telescopic front, rigid rear
Brakes	None in front, shoe in rear	Friction spoon in front, bar in rear	None in front, contracting band in rear
Top speed	7 mph	28 mph	40 mph

industrial revolution and “the spectre of communism was haunting Europe”—to quote the Communist Manifesto. This was not an isolated influence. From Architecture to literature to fine arts—every field of cultural life was seeing an awakening of progressive thought with protest against the old order and the downtrodden at the center of the cultural process. The two dominant streams both in literature and fine arts were romanticism and realism—both expressions of revolt against the elitism and classicism of earlier ages. Whereas the romanticist poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge portrayed the life and times of shepherds and grass-cutters, the realist fiction of Mark Twain and O’ Henry chronicled the lives of people at the margins of society.

The life and struggles of the common people (in both the romanticist and realist school of art and literature) juxtaposed against the classicist tastes of neo-classicist school, was common thematic thread of this period (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3). The same evolution of consciousness was evidenced in architectural evolutions in the form of neo-renaissance school (Fig. 2.5) and gothic revival (Fig. 2.4). Both these schools were predominantly the product of the new consciousness. At the level of structural themes, both these schools of architecture emphasized on simplicity of shapes in form of triangles, rectangles, and arcs. At the level of literature as well, the emphasis was on simple narrative structure in fiction and simple rhythmic style in poetry. As we will see through the design language of motorcycles of this period, these thematic and structural influences were present despite the technological limitations in the field of manufacturing process as well as the fundamental physics of engines and dynamics.

Gottlieb Daimler joined Gasmotoren Fabrik Deutz, a company owned by Nicolaus Otto making stationary engines based on Lenoir cycle, as factory manager in 1872. In 1876, Otto and Daimler together created the compressed charged cycle,



Fig. 2.2 The realist art of nineteenth century. Third Class Carriage by Domier (*left*) and painting by Millet (*right*)

Fig. 2.3 Romanticism in art. “Liberty” by Delcroix



known as Otto Cycle. After this invention, two more important inventions took place. Otto created the Magneto to create the spark and Daimler invented the Carburetor with Wilhelm Maybach to mix fuel with air. In 1883, Otto and Daimler developed differences. Otto wanted to continue making stationary engines and Daimler wanted to apply the concept for transportation with small engine. The differences got to a level where they parted ways and Daimler took Maybach with him to establish another company, which is today known as Daimler-Benz. This pair of Daimler and Maybach, while making the initial concept for the car, added two wheels to the engine and created the first prototype of a motorcycle. (see Fig. 2.1, Daimler Einsper).

The first production motorcycle, however, was designed by Hildebrand and Wolfmuller and launched in 1894. The inspiration had been taken from a steam

Fig. 2.4 Gothic revivalist architecture. Note the linear structure (where length is considerably more than width) and *triangular* shapes formed by *double* arches



Fig. 2.5 Neo-renaissance architecture. Note the *rectangular* structures (where length is almost equal to width) and *semi-circular* arches



powered design by Hildebrand brothers, where the rear wheel was directly driven by connecting rod and the rear mudguard doubled as water tank for engine cooling (see Fig. 2.6).

This was the time, when three iconic brands were taking their first steps—Harley Davidson, Indian and Royal Enfield. After making many attempts, Royal Enfield made its first V-Twin engine bike in 1910 in Birmingham. Harley and Davidson while attempting to make a motored boat created their first motorcycle in Milwaukee (Fig. 2.1). And George M. Hendee, who was making bicycles in his company from 1897, teamed up with a fellow bicycle racer Oscar Hedstrom to produce a 1.75 bhp single-cylinder bike in 1900 and by 1916, they made their V-twin motorcycle Powerplus (see Fig. 2.7).

2.2 Between the Wars: The Baby Steps

The period between the two wars is known for two critical events. The first is the occurrence of the two wars themselves and the second was peaking of social unrest in Europe resulting in two exactly opposite streams of social tendencies. On one hand, the quest for economic equality reflected in Soviet Revolution leading to spread of socialist thought throughout the world, on the other hand, it gave rise to right wing fascist thought which ultimately resulted in the Second World War. But technologically the most important change was the settling down and scaling up of mass production. This effect was augmented by the technological advances due to the wars like hardening of metals.

The field of art and literature saw the onset of three important schools—expressionism, cubism, and surrealism (Fig. 2.8). Expressionism is a school where an artist or a writer seeks to express the inner world of emotions rather than the external realities. We will see in the later chapters of the book that this school of art had the most profound impact on automobile design as emotions became the most important aspect of design language. Cubism, the most prominent exponent being Pablo Picasso, was to become a very prominent harbinger of things to come with its emphasis on simple geometric shapes, as the modernist movement in design was actually the continuation of this thought. The first motorcycle made by BMW was actually an expression of cubism in design. Surrealism, Salvador Dali being the most celebrated proponent, was the school which was in fact realism with a surprising element. All these three art movements, along with the fourth one, impressionism (which laid emphasis on use of primary colors) had a profound impact on motorcycle design which saw the experimentation with colors with gay abandon.

The visual and engineering architecture of motorcycles saw a revolutionary change in this period- scooter branched out as a completely new category of two-wheelers. The most important change was in the visual metaphor. As the bicycle had derived its visual metaphor from horse and motorcycle from the bicycle, the bike retained the metaphor of a horse. But the scooter will have none of

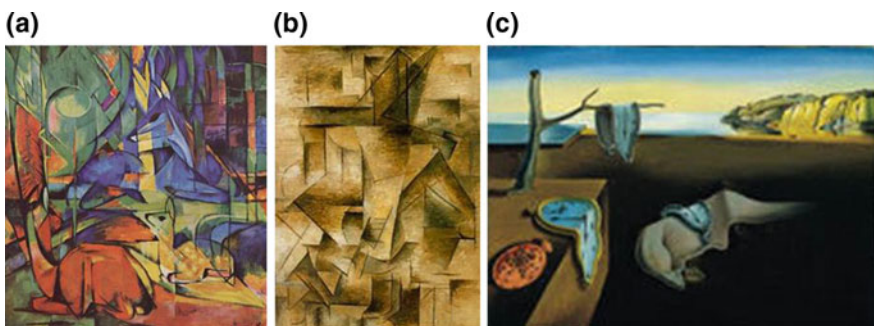


Fig. 2.8 a Expressionism by Franz b Cubism by Picasso c Surrealism by Dali

that and derived its visual metaphor from a chair where the user is sitting comfortably with his legs resting in front.

The most important brand that came out during this period and is still holding strong was BMW. It was a company by the name Rapp Motorenwerke, making aircraft engines and had to stop making them due to the restrictions put on Germany after the treaty of Versailles in 1919. As a result the company started making, besides other things, engine for Helios motorcycles (Fig. 2.9a) by a company Bayerische Flugzeugwerke. Later on, BMW acquired this company and finally in 1923, it introduced its first product called R32 (Fig. 2.9b) with an across the frame boxer engine designed by Max Friz. The engine was unique in the way that it featured a recirculating wet sump oiling system with a drip feed to roller bearings. Not only this, it was unique in its frame architecture and visual architecture as well with its double down-tube frame forming its visual style as well. The style statement was well ahead of its time with cubist design as the main attraction. So far as performance is concerned, it was the first bike to develop its maximum torque at crankshaft speed as low as 3200 rpm and achieve a maximum speed of 55 miles per hour.

This was only the beginning of the post-war technological explosion in motorcycles. Many new names appeared on the scene with hitherto unseen power and speed. George Brough from Nottingham came in with Brough Superior SS100 at 100 mph in 1925 fitted with drum brakes in front and rear, girder fork suspension in front, double spring suspension in rear and a four speed transmission. Another brand Triumph from England appeared in 1938. But, the pioneer Harley, by this time established its DNA of cruiser with a trademark V-twin engine with its typical exhaust sound. But the most remarkable aspect of this DNA was the design language with minimalism and slow smooth curvatures at its core (see Fig. 2.10).

The highlight of this era was the technological evolution as result of first war on one hand and the increasing interplay between art, emotion, and design on the other hand. So far as the ecological evolution is concerned, scooter branched out as separate category of personal transport and even among motorcycles, cruiser evolved as a category of motorcycles.



Fig. 2.9 a Helios motorcycle b BMW R32



Fig. 2.10 Brough, Harley, and Triumph

2.3 The Metamorphosis (1945–60)

The period after the war saw the scene completely turned on its head. Till now the whole game was being played out in Europe and US. After the war, as if by the flip of a coin, these actors exited the stage and new actors, mostly from Japan entered in a big way. All this happened in a short span from 1945 to 1960, when BSA, the manufacturers of Triumph brand, surrendered their position of world’s largest motorcycle manufacturer to Honda. What actually happened that changed the game so suddenly?

What actually happened was that this period brought a revolution in the way motorcycles were perceived due to different political and sociological factors. Whereas the end of the war saw US emerging as one of the poles in a bipolar world, Roosevelt’s new deal put money in common people’s pocket. This factor gave birth to baby boomers’ generation, where people wanted best of life for their children. This period saw cheap cars replacing motorcycles as the main mode of personal transport and motorcycle became a means of thrill, adventure, and enjoyment for the baby boomers. This was the period when motorcycles became a social and emotional statement as a result of cult movies like “The Wild One” and “Easy Rider.” This saw the emergence of giant cruiser and sports bikes dominating the scene.

Another related development was the economic revival of Japan in post-war effort by US. This resulted in the emergence of biking giants like Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha, who eventually dominated the late twentieth century. Whereas BMW continued experimentation with earl fork and Ducati made a humble beginning with Cucciolo, it was Moto Guzzi in Italy which made daring experiments with color. The stylistic influences in this period mainly came from modernist architecture (Fig. 2.11) where clean lines with high use of technology ruled the roost.

Fig. 2.11 Modernist architecture. Note the simple geometric shapes with modern materials



Soichiro Honda, an auto repair shop owner speed maniac in Hamamatsu built a race car himself to participate in car racing. In 1936 he got injured in one of the races, formed a company to produce piston rings and started supplying to Toyota. After the war, when Japan was rebuilding itself, Honda sensed a need for affordable transport and started grafting two-stroke engines on to bicycles. Encouraged by the success of these machines, he started Honda Motor Company in 1948 and in 1949, brought the first machine, the model D (Fig. 2.12 left) with a 100 cc two-stroke engine. It was a complete departure in visual architecture from its western cousins. This was the first proper step-through motorcycle where the fuel tank was placed under the seat. Then after making model E with a four-stroke 125 cc engine and Honda cub with a 50 cc engine, finally Honda returned to normal step-over architecture with a 250 cc parallel twin (Fig. 2.12 right) in 1960. The highlight of this journey was Honda's obsession and success with racing which afforded very high reputation internationally.

Yamaha Motor Company started as an offshoot of Yamaha Corporation in 1955 with YA-1 (Fig. 2.13 left), a copy of German bike DKW-1RT-125 with a single-cylinder air-cooled 125 cc engine and coil spring suspension in front and

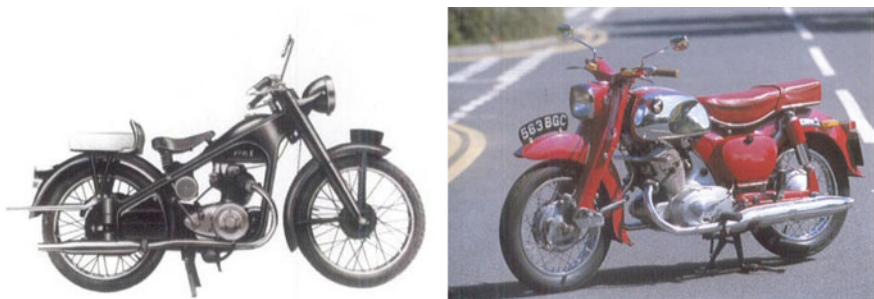


Fig. 2.12 Honda Model D (*left*) and 230 cc Parallel twin (*right*)



Fig. 2.13 Yamaha and Suzuki starters

rear. There was nothing new in engineering or visual architecture but the bike excelled at national and international races. The company continued with YA series and later started YD and YDS series for 250 and 250 cc performance engines.

Suzuki, a textile company established in 1909, started experimenting with engines clipped on to bicycles and came out with Diamond Free (Fig. 2.13 center) with double-sprocket wheel mechanism for two-speed transmission in 1953 and in 1955 improved upon to make Colleda COX (Fig. 2.13 right), a bike with a down-tube frame and an overhead valve 125 cc four-stroke engine.

As we can very clearly see from these events that this period saw a major shifting in motorcycle manufacturing from west to Japan and this brought about the shift from heavy multi-cylinder high capacity bikes to small single-cylinder bikes with major changes in visual architecture and semantics.

2.4 1960–1984: Decline of the Empire

As the baby boomers generation matured in US, oil crisis hit the world and the interest in motorcycles waned in US and Europe. Concurrently Japan established itself as the new automotive hub of the world and became the leading player in bike manufacturing, with Ducati and Harley barely holding on to their positions with Ducati Scrambler and HD Electra Glide. But it was predominantly a show by the Japanese quartet. Yes, the fourth of the Quartet, Kawasaki Aircraft started manufacturing motorcycles after taking over Meguro Manufacturing in 1962 with a 250 cc OHV engine. But this period is known for consolidation of Honda. It firmed its grip on 125 and 250 cc segments by winning races continuously, expanding its manufacturing bases in west and sweeping the American market with its campaign —“you meet the nicest people on Honda”—for its step-through bikes. This was the time when bikers had become infamous in US with self-inflicted badges of honor like “one-percenters” and “outlaws” due to biker-gangs and gang-wars immortalized by the movie “The Wild One.” Eventually, Honda ventured into multi-cylinder arena with 6-cylinder 250 cc bike 3RC164 (Fig. 2.14 left) which was an engineering marvel fitted with disc brakes for the first time. And then, in 1968, it made a big splash, both in market and race tracks, with the first mass-market four-cylinder CB750 (Fig. 2.14 center), again with disc brakes. And again in 1974, it made its



Fig. 2.14 Honda: the developing into banyan tree

first foray in tourer segment, till now dominated by HD Electra Glide with Goldwing GL1000 (Fig. 2.14 right), having the first water cooled engine fitted with a fuel pump. This was a vehicle with completely new engine architecture, new vehicle engineering architecture and a conventional look. The trick was to put the fuel tank below the seat and use the conventional fuel tank position as an electronic bay.

But, why have I chosen this period of 1960–84 as a period worth a separate mention. And what is the intriguing significance of 1984? For a person looking at motorcycle history from India, 1984 is special year, the significance of which, we will discuss later in this chapter. But somewhere in the first half of this decade, motorcycle design changed gears. Important point to remember is that the seeds of this top gear were sown in this period when the ecological diversification of motorcycles had taken shape. The categorization in commuter, cruiser, tourer, and sports had taken place. Another significance of this period was the consolidation of Honda as the undisputed leader so far as numbers and spread are concerned.

2.5 Post 1984: Return of the East

As US became the undisputed leader of post-cold war unipolar world, it decisively shifted to service economy. As the growth rates of western economies remained almost stagnant, India and China became the fastest growing economies. As the Japanese giants started looking for spreading their wings in Asia as their own demands shrank, they found readymade hungry markets in India, China, Thailand, and Indonesia. As all of them are third world emerging economies, motorcycles were predominantly for commuting in these countries. This resulted in the bike world getting polarized between western market (including Japan) with higher capacity cruiser and sport bikes and Asian markets with lower capacity commuter bikes. The US motorcycle industry saw a revival of sorts with the return of the baby boomers and the rise of motorcycling as a subculture. The recession of 2007 was another factor which helped the two-wheeler to make a comeback in Europe.

Fine arts, literature and architecture (Fig. 2.15) are dominated by minimalist (best illustrated by Hemingway's hard and metallic style of writing), modernist (simplification of form without ornamentation), and post-modernist (reaction to modernism with return to glamor and ornamentation) schools. The portrayal of motorcycle in movies saw an interesting twist. Instead of signifying defiance and



Fig. 2.15 Minimalist (*left*) and Postmodernist (*right*) architecture

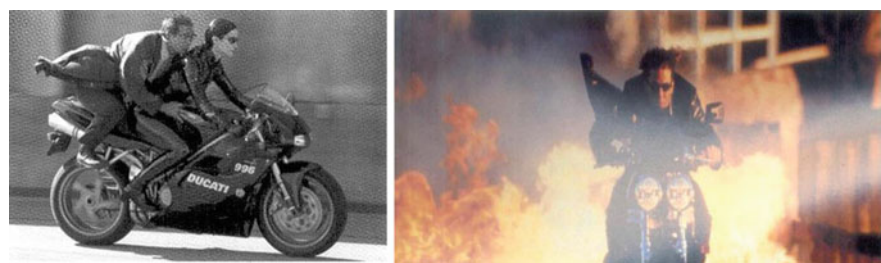


Fig. 2.16 Movies: matrix reloaded (*left*) and mission impossible (*right*)

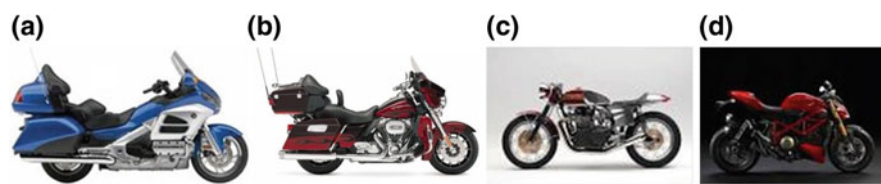


Fig. 2.17 **a** Touring Honda Goldwing **b** Touring Harley Electra Glide **c** Cafe-racer **d** Street-fighter

tryst with raw nature (the predominant trend in immediate post-war period), motorcycle identified more with speed and raw aggression (Fig. 2.16). As lyricism was lost somewhere in these movements (particularly in field of poetry), motorcycle styling saw an interesting phenomenon. It adopted the above schools with fresh whiff of lyricism, made possible due to advances in technology like CAD-CAM and plastics.

The two most dominant trends in this period are the proliferation of categories and explosion of stylistic schools. The high initial torque motorcycles expanded into cruiser, off-roader and tourer and high high-speed torque category virtually exploded into street-fighter, café-racer, and racing bikes (see Fig. 2.17). The commuter, which was earlier existing in step-over and step-through versions



Fig. 2.18 Minimalist styling (*left and center*) and Post-modernist styling (*right*)

developed into micro-segments. Technologically engine development saw a new high with highest ever bhp/cc of engine size.

The minimalist and post-modern schools of art and architecture have a profound influence on the styling of bikes (see Fig. 2.18). The minimalist school has found expression both in small size commuter bikes as well as high-powered naked styling of racing and cruisers bikes. One of the finest examples of minimalist styling was Harley's V-Rod, where Harley changed its visual architecture matching its brand-new engineering architecture but maintained its DNA of minimalist styling found. On the other hand, the post-modern sensibility is prevalent in full-cowl and unified body styling.

Talking about the brands, very clearly the global brands are divided into two categories—niche brands having a very narrow product line with strong company DNAs like Harley, Triumph, BMW, Ducati and Royal Enfield and Umbrella brands like Honda, Yamaha, and Suzuki having presence in all product lines. Another dominant trend of this period is the continental drift. With the center of gravity shifting to India almost all global brands like Harley (which prided itself for its true-blue Americanism), Indian, and Triumph scrambled to have a piece of the Indian pie. Royal Enfield is another category, which downed its shutters in UK and shifted to India with an Indian ownership. We will discuss more of the Indian story in the section, well, "The Indian Story".

Talking about the semantics of this period, the story is simple. With categories to cater to all possible emotions, there are as many narratives as there can be. And there are bikes to cater to each of the narrative.

2.6 The Indian Story

Though motorcycle manufacturing started in India only in 1961, with Indian Army placing an order to Royal Enfield on the condition that it sets up a manufacturing facility in India, the history of Indian popular culture has the seeds of future motorcycles in twenty-first century. As India leads motorcycle manufacturing quantitatively today, motorcycles are increasingly being designed with Indian sensibilities in mind. Till 1984, basically three brands Enfield, Rajdoot, and Yezdi



Fig. 2.19 Bullet (*left*) Yezdi (*center*) and Rajdoot (*right*)

(see Fig. 2.19) dominated the Indian scene. Henceforth with advent of lower capacity motorcycles, there was a dramatic shift as far styling goes.

From 1961 to 1984, same three vehicles ruled the roost, with miniscule quantities. But in the post-1984 period, Indian motorcycle matched the global styling quotient neck to neck. Why? In the period from 1960 to 1984, the motorcycle designing was shifting its center of gravity from US and Europe to Japan, whereas Indian motorcycles were completely depending on British and Czechoslovak designs. Moreover, since the quantities were miniscule, Indian sensibility was not catered to. But in post-1984 period, as the quantities increased dramatically and manufacturers (mostly aligned to Japanese global modernizers) kept their ears to the Indian ground. These factors coupled with the advent of CAD-CAM and new plastic materials, resulted in breathtaking array of lyrical designs.

There is another interesting sidelight to the Indian scenario, which is largely similar in South Asia and extends to South East Asia. While the global motorcycle designs have largely concentrated on high capacity bikes based on the concept of fun an adventure, motorcycle in Asian (when we say Asia, please exclude Japan for the current context) part of the globe, for all practical considerations, remained a medium of transport. Considerations of economy have restricted these motorcycles to capacities from 100 to 250 cc. Though, Asia has segmented the markets into power and economy bikes, even the power bike capacities are miniscule compared to global standards. Since, the hugest volumes are coming from Asia, the sensibilities have shifted from high street Western sensibility to main street Indian sensibility, which, as we have argued earlier, are essentially lyrical. With ready help coming from technology in form of CAD-CAM, flexibility of design and materials, the last barriers on road to lyricism are being lifted.

In the immediate aftermath of India getting freedom, Indian society was divided along three types of hierarchies-administrative, caste and feudal hierarchies running along identical lines, i.e., the people at top of the three hierarchies were the same. Similarly, People at the bottom of the three pyramids were also the same. In this period, cars were meant only for the select few among the urban rich. Motorcycles were meant for the rural rich and those forming the creamy layer of the urban middle class. This resulted in the fundamental social codes of rural dominance and urban quest for grace and class for motorcycle owners. In 1970 movie “Andaaz,” the chartbuster song has boy driving a Bullet 350 with the girl in pillion seat in sidesaddle posture (Fig. 2.20 left). This inhibited expression of love finds



Fig. 2.20 Movies: “Bobby” (*left*) and “Sholay” (*right*)

expression in flat contours of seat and fuel tank and horizontal muffler. In the path breaking movie Bobby (1974), the girl, who claims to belong to twenty-first century, sits in parted legs position facing the front and nibbling the earlobes of the boy (Fig. 2.20 right). Now, the motorcycle was Rajdoot GTS 175. (interestingly supposed to be made especially for this movie, hence nicknamed “Bobby Rajdoot”) with smaller wheels and long handlebars. Though the seat and tank contours remained flat due to technological constraint, muffler was made inclined to give a relatively dynamic look. This image was a precursor of future social behavior, when this sitting posture became common in metros.

The period from 1984 to 2000 was a watershed both for post-colonial India and the motorcycle landscape of the country. After her comeback from near oblivion, Indira Gandhi, having discarded her socialist pretensions, opened the windows for foreign technology, leading the Japanese giants to open shops in India. Hero-Honda, Escorts-Yamaha, TVS-Suzuki, and Kawasaki-Bajaj were the joint ventures as the result, which brought 100 cc fuel efficient bikes to India. At the same time, a much deeper development was taking place at sociopolitical level. The feudal, caste and administrative hierarchies, instead of remaining parallel as ever, started crossing each other as the aspirations of the people on the fringes started coming to the fore. With the arrival of the Maruti car, cars became affordable by upwardly mobile middle class. Inter-gender discourse became more forthright and upfront, at least in urban areas. The way a boy and a girl interacted with the motorcycle, was the extension of the Bobby phenomenon, with the difference that now, motorcycle was a willing participant in the process. All this social and moral upheaval produced another set of fundamental social codes.

The period after 2000 is significant on many counts. For such a populous country, we cannot expect gender equations to change significantly in such a short time. But the attitude of urban middle class certainly changed, at least in appearance. The social upheaval in the hinterland consolidated itself and the new power equations brought the marginal sections to the forefront resulting in increasing motorcycle penetration in country side. This was further helped by increased road coverage in countryside.

Today, having overcome the global recession, the Indian motorcycle manufacturing is on the cusp of the proverbial leap waiting for the direction that the economy takes. But whatever the direction of the economy some trends for the industry can be predicted with reasonable confidence:

- a. The major chunk of the motorcycle population will always remain the commuter with the small size single-cylinder engine.
- b. There will be shift to alternatives of fossil fuel keeping in view the limited global stocks and environmental pressures.
- c. The lyrical sensibility of Indian civilizational memory will keep the styling of the bikes on the track of high unity design and high saturation colors with curvaceous surfaces.
- d. As India becomes the hub of global styling the visual architecture and metaphor will see a major shift.

2.7 Summary

Looking at the whole journey of motorcycles some major trends can be spotted. With the West shifting to service economy, the hub of motorcycle manufacturing shifted to India and China. The collateral impact of this was a shift from modernist to post-modernist styling. At the same time, the global and niche brands have maintained a preference for both minimalist and post-modern.

The technological evolution in engine design has been in two directions—packing more power in every cubic-centimeters to achieve ever-improving performance and improving fuel-efficiency. One of the major reasons for this has been the increasing intervention of digital technology. The third dimension of reducing emissions has been added recently. The improvement in manufacturing technology has brought better fit and finish, durability and efficiency.

There has been a proliferation of categories with expansion in visual architecture and visual metaphor. Today the visual metaphor of bicycle coupled with an engine and a fuel tank has become extinct. Moreover, there are as many categories as there are narratives. Merging of the experiential and visual narrative has been the highlight of this story.

Coming to the fundamental question, what do you derive from this history to resolve the question of deconstructing the aesthetics? One thing has come out loud and clear. Emotions are an essential part of the civilizational sensibility. On one hand, the art, literature, and architecture of the times always impact the visual and experiential narrative. At the same time, the civilizational memory of the society also plays a vital role. The interplay of these components can be clearly studied only if we are able to deconstruct the emotions. The next chapters will take us there.

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